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**Devolution and democratisation
of natural resource management in
southern Africa:
A comparative analysis of
CBNRM policy processes in
Botswana and Zimbabwe**

**Elizabeth Rihoy and
Brian Maguranyanga**



CASS/PLAAS occasional paper series

Devolution and democratisation of natural resource management in southern Africa:
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First published: June 2007
Cover illustrations: Colleen Crawford Cousins
Layout: Designs4development
Copy-editing: Roelien Theron

An output of the joint Centre for Applied Social Sciences/Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies project 'Breaking new ground: Approaches to people-centred natural resource management for development in southern Africa' (www.cassplaas.org)

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Centre for
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Programme for
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March 2007

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AA	Appropriate Authority
ACORD	Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development
AGM	Annual General Meeting
ARB	Agricultural Resources Board
BDP	Botswana Democratic Party
BNRMP	Botswana Natural Resource Management Programme
BOCOBONET	Botswana Community-based Organisation Network
CA	CAMPFIRE Association
CAMPFIRE	Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CASS	Centre for Applied Social Sciences
CBNRM	Community-based Natural Resource Management
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CCG	CAMPFIRE Collaborative Group
CDC	Chizvirizvi Development Committee
CECT	Chobe Enclave Conservation Trust
CHA	Controlled Hunting Area
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CKGR	Central Kalahari Game Reserve
CTT	Cgaecgae Tlhabololo Trust
DC	District Council
DNPWLM	Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management
DWNP	Department of Wildlife National Parks (Botswana)
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HATAB	Hotel and Tourism Association of Botswana
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
JVP	Joint Venture Partnership
KDT	Khwai Development Trust
MCC	Mahenye CAMPFIRE Committee
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MILGRUD	Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development
MLGLH	Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing
MP	Member of Parliament
MZCDT	Mababe Zokotsama Community Development Trust
NAPD	National Policy on Agricultural Development
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NRMP	Natural Resources Management Project
OCT	Okavango Community Trust
PLAAS	Programme for Land and Agrarian Studies
PVO	Private Voluntary Organisations
RDC	Rural District Council
SARPO	Southern African Regional Programme Office – WWF
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
TGLP	Tribal Grazing Land Policy
TLA	Traditional Leaders Act
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VIDCO	Village Development Committee
VTC	Village Trust Committee
WADCO	Ward Development Committee
WDC	Wildlife Development Committee
WMA	Wildlife Management Area (Botswana)
WMA	Wildlife Management Authority (Zimbabwe)
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

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Abstract

This paper examines the policy processes of devolution and democratisation of natural resource management as they relate to community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) outcomes in Botswana and Zimbabwe. Devolution and democratisation of natural resource management are socially and politically contested issues that reveal interesting insights about the nature of local governance and democratic practices in these two countries. Through an analysis of factors affecting the CBNRM policy process – including the role of key actors, sets of policy ideas and narratives, and political influences – the authors identified evidence of shrinking political and policy spaces for local communities and civil society to effectively influence policy. This shrinking of political and policy spaces reflects a limitation of democratic practice and space in Botswana and Zimbabwe due to authoritarian political practices and socio-political and economic challenges. These factors have stifled opportunities for devolution of natural resource management and positive CBNRM outcomes. Based on primary and secondary data, this study argues that if this impasse is to be overcome, policy making and implementation of CBNRM should take cognisance of socio-economic and political forces at local and national levels and recognise the intimate links between these levels. Evidence from the two countries indicates that strong and influential actor-networks – which are

necessarily locally driven – are vital in mobilising strong political support which in turn is central in the development of an appropriate policy environment. The evidence further suggests that local government can play a crucial role in sustaining CBNRM in the face of threats of recentralisation from political and economic elites in whose interest recentralisation lies. At the national level, local government can play a critical role in maintaining political support and legitimacy for CBNRM. At the local level, it provides essential checks and balances that can prevent elite capture of benefits and provide neutral arbitration services when community polarisation stalls momentum. Ultimately, the paper argues that local government can be a vital element in ensuring democratic outcomes, serving as an effective link between local and national scales. CBNRM implementers and advocates need to ensure that institutional and legal arrangements strike a delicate balance in serving the interests of marginalised communities through devolution and allowing decentralisation to empower local communities to direct their destiny through the creation of democratic policy spaces. This requires paying attention to the political landscape of CBNRM and engaging in innovative and strategic political manoeuvring and dialogue with government bureaucrats, politicians and other relevant stakeholders.

1. Introduction

This paper provides a comparative analysis of CBNRM policy processes and outcomes in Botswana and Zimbabwe, and highlights the challenges and implications of devolving authority over natural resources to local-level institutions.¹ It explores whether further devolution is desirable and/or achievable, and, if so, under what conditions. Its focus is the process of policy development and programme implementation. This illustrates how process and outcomes comprise reactions to social complexity where decision making is dominated by politics at both national and local levels. Ultimately, it brings into question whether devolution is the ‘panacea’ and decentralisation the ‘problem’ that they are often portrayed to be by CBNRM advocates.²

A comparative analysis of CBNRM policy processes and outcomes in Botswana and Zimbabwe was conducted. The operational realities of CBNRM in these two countries revealed interesting similarities and differences, which have constantly and differentially fed into and informed policy development in each country. Particular attention was paid to the degree to which CBNRM policy makers, implementers and advocates engaged mainstream political and development processes in the two countries and considering whether such engagement translated into the development of sufficient political momentum to ensure sustainability. This specific interest in ‘strategic’ political dimensions of CBNRM was driven by the recognition that its political ‘landscape’ has far-reaching implications for devolution and, ultimately, for changing the status quo and levers of power. After all, control over valuable resources is an inherently contested political process.

Given these far-reaching political implications, it is naive to see CBNRM as merely a technically and economically feasible and apolitical conservation strategy. An alternative view is that it is a socio-political process with the potential to stimulate significant social and political transformation by including rural communities in national political processes and inculcating democratic values and good governance, as well as promoting economic development on marginal rural and communal lands. When viewed from this standpoint, CBNRM becomes a platform for empowering and strengthening national and local processes of democracy and governance. Understanding this objective requires ‘passionate’ exploration and examination of the potential of CBNRM in strengthening ‘constituent accountability’ (Murphree 2000).

The study contextualises CBNRM policy processes within the broader social, political and economic conditions of the two countries. This illustrates how national and international political, social, economic, legal and policy factors shape outcomes. The development of governance, devolution and decentralisation structures, processes and systems depends on whether there is an enabling and supportive framework (legislative and institutional) as well as on the social capital upon which CBNRM can thrive. These factors are essential in creating an environment which enables the appropriate legal rights and status of local communities to be conferred and nurtured. An examination of these factors allowed the authors to infer the opportunities and threats to devolution and democratisation of natural resource management in Botswana and Zimbabwe.

2. Study methodology

This paper is based on primary research, secondary sources and interviews undertaken by the lead author. The research protocol consisted of interviews or focus group discussions with key informants, who were or are involved in CBNRM implementation, were keen observers of it or were affected by it. This group included government officials (both politicians and bureaucrats), members of selected rural communities, staff from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), CBNRM practitioners, donors, academics and the media. Over 100 interviews were conducted in each country over a six-month period. The authors acknowledge that we, like all other researchers, have our own personal and research biases. The approach adopted when conducting interviews, letting others tell their stories rather than working with a pre-defined, structured academic agenda, was intentionally chosen to minimise bias. This approach forced us to hear, acknowledge and move some way towards understanding the complexity and nuanced interpretations

of situations than would otherwise have been possible. When specific facts or incidences were revealed, we made every effort to verify these through triangulation. Given the sensitivity of the information collected, the authors have withheld names of some interviewees on ethical grounds.

The document analysis of official government documents, NGO documents and correspondence, newspaper articles and academic publications provides insight into official perspectives.

Quantitative data collection and analysis focused primarily on generating descriptive statistics to quantify and substantiate the qualitative material.³

On a cautionary note, the detailed village-level findings of this study cannot be generalised to all CBNRM programmes in southern Africa or even within Botswana or Zimbabwe. However, the analysis of the policy process and the implications this has for effective outcomes do hold general policy implications for CBNRM.

3. Conceptual and theoretical framework

The analytical framework of this study is provided by the ‘policy process’ framework developed by Keeley and Scoones (2003). Policy development is viewed as the product of ongoing negotiations and bargaining between multiple actors over time. It is a dynamic process, constantly being informed by implementation experience, evolving in response to it and responding to political pressures. The relevance of the ‘policy process’ framework lies in its ability to integrate politics with an analysis of the policy environment, therefore providing important conceptual and analytical tools for the examination of CBNRM as a contested social and political process. Our selection of approach was motivated by the desire to analyse and understand the genesis, inception and programmatic development of CBNRM policies, to understand how they differ and how such differences are contextually mediated. This is of central importance in understanding the nature of political support for CBNRM and its relationship with the broader social, political and devolutionary processes.

Given global concern about ‘getting things right’ within policy frameworks in development and environmental management, particular focus in natural resource management has been directed at a whole range of policies that are relevant to it, for example, agricultural services, environmental protection, land tenure, input supply and so on (Keeley & Scoones 2003). As demonstrated in this study, the complexity introduced by the wide range of social and political processes and policy frameworks relevant to CBNRM goes beyond even the already complex situation of concern with policies directly relevant to environmental

management. For example, decentralisation and local government reform, land reform, affirmative action, economic structural adjustment and constitutional reform all influence CBNRM policy. Such a broad context brings in a wide range of different actors with differing agendas from within and outside government – from local-level authorities and bureaucrats to international environmentalists, all of whom have some involvement and interest in the formulation and implementation of policy. Keeley and Scoones (2003:1) note that, in order to understand such policy processes, ‘we must ask how policies are framed, who is included and who is excluded in the process, which actors and which interests are dominant, and how policy changed over time’. Following Keeley and Scoones (2003), this study explores the above-mentioned questions using three overlapping approaches to understand policy change as:

- a reflection of structured political interests
- a product of the agency of actors engaged in the policy arena
- part of overarching power-knowledge relations that discursively frame practice in particular ways.

This framework allows for an analysis that embodies a variety of ‘conceptual lenses’ to highlight the continuous interactions between discourse, political interests and multiple actors, and illustrates the complex dynamics and structural constraints affecting devolution of natural resource management. It also sheds light on political dynamics and opportunities for action and change in natural resource management.

4. Background literature

Historically, southern Africa witnessed alien and racially discriminatory environmental and natural resource management policies that undermined local environmental management and livelihood strategies and entrenched state dominance in natural resource management (Anderson & Grove 1987; Fabricius et al. 2004). With the transition to democracy, political pressure begun to mount on national governments to de-racialise resource management (Child 2004; Mandondo 2000) and develop natural resource management policies that contributed to rural development objectives (Jones & Murphree 2001; Adams & Mulligan 2003). The de-racialisation of natural resource management entailed revisiting resource governance and ownership with the intention of enabling local communities to participate in resource management. The imperative for more equitable resource management was given added impetus by the critical need for socio-economic development.

This new approach, commonly known as CBNRM, focused on decentralisation of environmental management responsibilities, with the objective of increasing public participation and benefits. It was concerned with legitimising conservation-cum-development interventions and enhancing prospects for sustainability. However, this alternative approach now faces sustained criticism on the grounds that it has failed to live up to its earlier promise of delivering economically enhanced livelihoods and biodiversity conservation (Turner 2004; IIED 2004; Adams & Mulligan 2003; Hutton et al. 2006). Its proponents acknowledge that CBNRM has had problems in achieving these goals but draw attention to its successes in terms of community empowerment, governance and democratisation (Turner 2004; Ribot 2002; Murphree 2000).

The last decade has seen growing consensus among CBNRM advocates and implementers that the success of CBNRM strategies hinges upon the transfer of power not to local government authorities (decentralisation) but to local community institutions (devolution). This consensus is led by those such as Katerere (2002), Jones and Murphree (2001), Murombedzi (2003)

and Shackleton and Campbell (2001), all of whom lament the lack of progress in devolving 'real' power to communities despite the rhetoric of devolution and point at this as lying at the heart of problems. These same commentators acknowledge that a shift from decentralisation to devolution is politically and economically controversial and hinders progress.

However, this idealistic embracing of devolution as the 'final solution' to the problems besetting CBNRM fails to take into account the wealth of experience from elsewhere that demonstrates that devolution does not necessarily result in poverty reduction, improved governance, natural resource management or democratisation (Johnson, 2001; Cook & Manor 1998; Agrawal & Gibson, 2001), as do the findings presented here. At the forefront of problems associated with devolution is the possibility of local elite capture and thus the perpetuation of poverty and inequality. Luckham et al (2001) note that it is doubtful that the introduction of democratic principles on their own (as embodied in devolution) will enable the overcoming of historical and cultural factors perpetuating political inequality. This highlights the challenge of encouraging democracy in rural areas where large numbers of people are dependent upon small numbers of local, powerful elites, as in the case of Botswana and Zimbabwe. Acknowledging these problems is not, however, to deny that devolution can enhance rural livelihoods in many ways.

Conversely, there is considerable evidence globally that local councils have a vital role to play in ensuring democratic outcomes (Cohen 1974; Crook & Sverrisson 2001; Harbeson 2001; Ribot 2004; Sundar 2001). Mamdani (1996:299) argues that 'participatory forms (empowerment) that stress the autonomy of a bounded group – only to undermine any possibility of an alliance-building majority-based representation – can justify and uphold the most undemocratic forms of central power', and draws upon various cases studies to illustrate what 'began with an emphasis on participation [and] ended up with a warlord'. Mamdani (1996:296) concludes that 'to create a democratic solidarity requires joining the emphasis on autonomy with the

one on alliance, that on participatory self-rule with one on representational politics'. Many of these commentators maintain that what matters is not the degree of state intervention, that is, more or less devolution, but the level of state accountability. Finding the right balance is key and variable, depending on the particular context of each country. Woodhouse (2003:17–18) argues that:

the important element of 're-centralisation' is that the politics of the (central) government will have a key role in setting the terms on which local institutions... operate. Generally, if political goals such as improving the position of the disadvantaged are not identified and pursued by the central state, it is unlikely they will arise spontaneously at the 'local' level.

In view of these commentaries, the challenge facing CBNRM then is one of striking a delicate balance in serving the interests of marginalised communities through state intervention and allowing decentralisation to empower local communities to direct their destiny. Put simply, a properly democratic system requires the effective linking of the local and the national. Achieving the necessary linkages has as yet largely eluded CBNRM.

In view of these commentaries and our own research, we believe that decentralisation has its place, and, when applied appropriately, it creates space for devolution. While decentralising natural resource management to arms of local government may be politically and economically expedient in newly independent countries, devolving 'real' power and authority remains outside the interests of states as it goes against their own appropriative interests (Murphree 2000). Therefore, devolution will depend largely on the willingness of central government to share power. This, in turn, depends on whether CBNRM can catalyse the support of national and local political economic elites and bureaucratic interests so that they provide momentum to

carry forward devolution. This implies there is a need to understand the interests of the political economic elites in shaping policy and political contexts.

Our research provides compelling evidence from Botswana and Zimbabwe that supports the arguments of those commentators who call for caution in advocating devolution at the expense of decentralisation. Local government plays a crucial role in catalysing this political support and thus in creating an environment that enables devolution and democratisation of natural resource management, and this requires closer scrutiny. Firstly, local government provides the institutional mechanism through which to ensure that CBNRM is mainstreamed within national development priorities, an essential process if CBNRM is to gain the necessary political support to push through the appropriate policy reforms. Secondly, local government provides the essential link between the local and the national, which represents a key requirement for a properly democratic system. Thirdly, local government institutions are a vital repository of the skills and capacity that are required for effective implementation at the local level. Fourthly, as democratically elected institutions, they have a role to play in providing checks and balances at the local level to prevent capture of CBNRM by local elites, and in allowing democratic practice and local governance to flourish.

Understanding and resolving the problems that currently beset CBNRM requires an appreciation and investigation that goes beyond viewing it as simply a technically feasible conservation strategy. Serious interrogation of the social, legal and legislative, and political factors that influence devolutionary dynamics is required. In essence, attention has to be paid to the political landscape of CBNRM, and innovative and strategic political manoeuvring, dialogue and engagement with government bureaucrats, politicians and other relevant stakeholders – particularly local communities, local political economic elites and traditional authorities – have to be emphasised.

5. Case study 1: Botswana

Background

This section explores the process of policy development and implementation in Botswana. It reveals how the process and outcomes reflect social and political complexities in decision making dominated by political economic interests at both national and local levels. The policy environment in which CBNRM was introduced and implemented is reviewed to identify macro-level policy trends and structured political interests contextualising CBNRM and to examine how these have constrained and influenced policy. An analysis of the actor networks involved in policy making and implementation is undertaken to determine the impact of these networks on CBNRM processes and outcomes. The paper also highlights the dynamic relationship between processes at the local level and the national level. This analysis indicates that the current problems facing CBNRM result from myriad social, political and economic processes at local and national scales. These include the manner in which programmes were implemented in the context of socio-political and economic challenges. Many problems relate directly to the origins of the CBNRM programme, the Natural Resources Management Project (NRMP) and its successors, and the manner in which they were and are being implemented. The problems range, for example, from the historical dominance of the NRMP by expatriate staff, which has led to a striking absence of a supportive national ‘actor network’, and the failure of key individuals to emerge as CBNRM advocates and ‘policy entrepreneurs’ to the nature of the strategies adopted by the NRMP for the enhancement of local community-based organisation (CBO) governance capacities. These strategies have served to enhance the powers of local elites at the expense of marginalised members in a community.

A problematic factor shaping the implementation process is the broader national policy and political environment that often tends to contradict and undermine CBNRM. For example, the overall trend towards privatisation, the dominance of cattle-focused policies in rural development strategies and Botswana culture,

and the weak state of civil society present major problems. Whilst there often appears to be an uncritical acceptance of the ‘progressive’ state of democracy in Botswana, a serious re-examination of its current political system and climate reveals an increasingly autocratic political atmosphere dominated by a few senior political figures (Molutsi, 2005; Swatuk 2005). Several of these have become personally involved in CBNRM policy development and play a critical role in shaping its outcomes.⁴

When CBNRM was first introduced into Botswana in 1989, it was greeted with optimism within the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP), other relevant ministries and NGOs. Its formal introduction was under the auspices of the well-funded and competently staffed USAID-supported NRMP. Underpinning the programme was the scientific rationale of sustainable use and the perception that socio-political and environmental conditions in Botswana were ideal for the successful implementation of CBNRM. It was accepted as an ecologically and economically viable land use option in significant portions of the country.

Very low and sparse population densities of approximately 1.5 million people with an average density of 2.4 per square kilometre, high-value resources, a limited range of alternative land use options,⁵ with only 5% of the land suitable for productive agriculture (UNDP 2005; Whiteside et al. 1995), and relatively small and ‘homogenous’ communities were considered ideal conditions for CBNRM. The national policy and political priorities, emphasis on ‘citizen participation and citizen empowerment’, sustainable development and sustainable use of natural resources, economic diversification and commitment to decentralisation (Picard 1987) all appeared to provide a hospitable policy framework. The nation enjoyed an apparent commitment to open democratic government⁶ which, coupled with strong economic performance, led to the dubbing of Botswana by some observers as ‘the African Miracle’ (Thumberg-Hartland 1978; Samatar 1999). These conditions presented an ideal context in which to implement CBNRM.

However, our research in Botswana in 2005 revealed a very different and disturbing picture

about the devolutionary dynamics and democratic promise of CBNRM. Today its prospects look bleak. There is a general concern about the broadly perceived failure of CBNRM to live up to its expectations, and it has become mired in political controversy that threatens the future of the programme. It is increasingly viewed with scepticism and, at worst, outright antagonism, having attracted opposition from powerful political economic elites. Support within DWNP is limited to a few dedicated but relatively junior individuals while senior managers are either overtly hostile or indifferent. Interest and support from NGOs and donors have waned, whilst many in the private sector are vocal in their opposition to community involvement in wildlife management. Even within participating villages, there is little evidence of what Murphree (1995) describes as a 'politically salient constituency' supportive of CBNRM. Without the growth of this grassroots constituency, it is proving difficult to build and sustain the political momentum and necessary support for CBNRM at the local or national level. Despite the rhetoric of empowerment at the local level still being popular in Botswana, there appears to have been little real empowerment of local communities as the benefits have largely been captured by local-level elites. Given the weak influence of current CBNRM implementers in broader policy making and in directing strategic political dialogue with policy makers and politicians, it seems now to be at the mercy of the whims of political economic elites.

National context

Economic status

Since independence in 1965, the Botswana economy has undergone a transformation from poverty to relative affluence.⁷ Despite this, there are huge disparities in wealth, and 47% of the population continue to live below the poverty line. Whilst Botswana's growth in gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was the highest in the world for the period 1970–97, the country actually experienced a drop in its Human Development Index ranking, from 95th to 131st place, between 1991 and 2004 (UNDP 2005), which, as Good and Taylor (2005) point out, makes it the only country in the world to suffer a fall during a period of rapid economic growth. Diamond mining has fuelled much of the growth and currently accounts for more than one-third

of GDP and for nine-tenths of export earnings. Tourism and cattle are other key sectors and it is on the promotion of these three sectors that government policy focuses.

Political characteristics

The imminent ascendancy of Vice-President Ian Khama to high political office has, because of his autocratic tendencies, raised questions about possibilities of classic 'big man' rule and political dominance (Good & Taylor 2005, Swatuk 2005) characteristic of many African countries (Chabal & Daloz 1999). This is accompanied by growing concern that 'Botswana is governed by a small elite whose political and business interests are mutually reinforcing' (Swatuk 2005:1). The political and economic interests of these elites are interconnected, historically rooted in the 'cattle culture' (Peters 1994) and in mineral exploitation, particularly diamonds (Good & Taylor 2005). More recently, there are indications that senior politicians are becoming increasingly involved in the tourism industry⁸ (Swatuk 2005), which has profound implications for CBNRM policy development. In order to understand how and why CBNRM policy is developing in a pro-elite manner, it is necessary to understand its implications for these governing elites.

Whilst all the trappings and institutions of a liberal democracy are in place (Obeng 2001), Good and Taylor (2005) demonstrate how these are manipulated by the ruling elites, both through the constitution and through contemporary practice of the ruling party, based on the inherited political culture.⁹ Such political characteristics do not lend themselves to increasing public participation in the policy-making process and public debate. As this paper demonstrates in its discussion of the current process surrounding the revisions to the draft CBNRM policy, this political climate has led to an environment that enables the policy-making process to be undertaken without consultation, transparency or accountability. The situation constrains political and policy spaces by negatively affecting dialogue, public participation and engagement in policy-making debates.

Civil society¹⁰

Civil society in Botswana is relatively weak and disorganised. Even prior to the withdrawal of donors from the country in 2003,¹¹ capacity was already limited in comparison to other countries in the region in terms of numbers,

financial and human resources, skills and specialisation (Molutsi & Holm 1990). Civil society is/was dependent upon donor funding and the withdrawal of financing weakened civil society further. Compounding these problems is the tendency of civic groups to court government favour by actively seeking representation of senior political figures within their governance structures, thus weakening their ability to independently represent alternative perspectives to government. The weakness of civil society has direct and significant implications for CBNRM, as discussed below.

Policy and legislative context

In order to understand CBNRM in Botswana, an examination of the policy context within which it operates is essential. Local-level implementation over the last 15 years has outpaced policy making and legislation. Whilst attempts to draft a comprehensive policy have been ongoing since 1996, these have now become mired in controversy, with ongoing efforts by the most powerful political figures in the country to overturn the draft policy document. This draft promotes a devolutionary approach to natural resource management and was agreed upon by all stakeholders in 2004 (IUCN 2004). Current efforts by senior government figures aim to replace it with a policy that will recentralise control over natural resources. Without a clearly defined and comprehensive CBNRM policy, the operation and implementation of CBNRM remains largely influenced by fragmented pieces of policy associated with wildlife conservation (1986 Wildlife Conservation Policy), tourism policy (1990 Tourism Policy), rural development policy (revised 2002 Rural Development Policy), and the 2004 draft CBNRM policy. It is this policy vacuum which has laid bare the implementation and operation of CBNRM to socio-economic and political manipulation and abuse, inconsistencies and accountability challenges.

Wildlife, conservation and tourism policies

A number of policies and laws were developed in the 1980s and 1990s that created an enabling environment by making general provision for community involvement in wildlife use and management.¹² Despite these, at the moment it is still an administrative arrangement in the form of the 'Community Natural Resources Management Lease' or 'head lease' that provides the legal

basis for CBNRM. This lack of an over-arching policy document has significantly hampered implementation over the last decade, creating competition and conflicts between ministries and departments whose own mandates may contradict the spirit and method of CBNRM. The absence of integrated legislation has meant that it has continued to be implemented primarily by DWNP, with limited co-operation from the Agricultural Resources Board (ARB), relevant land boards and district councils (DCs). As events relating to a 2001 SAVINGRAM¹³ illustrate, this arrangement has significantly undermined the ability of CBNRM to achieve its goals. As rights are not entrenched in legislation, they can easily be removed by administrative actions because of policy changes or, as is the case at the moment, at the behest of senior politicians.

Rural development strategies and their impact

CBNRM operates within a rural context, and therefore synergy between it and other rural development policy has to be created. Without this critical integration, CBNRM fails to buttress rural development strategies and vice versa. The mutual objectives of rural development and CBNRM would be strengthened by stimulating both community focus and development interests in CBNRM policy and weeding off inconsistencies, gaps and conflicts. This study does not review these policies in any detail, but highlights the importance of creating synergies between CBNRM and other sectors that have a bearing on its success, direction and impact on democratic resource governance.

Twyman (2001) argues that, as recently as 1995, Botswana did not have a clear and coherent rural development policy, and that rural development was characterised by a set of overlapping and disparate programmes that hindered effective development in rural areas. Perhaps not surprisingly then, the history of rural development efforts and policies in Botswana is strewn with a lengthy list of – often externally-driven – development 'failures' whose overall impact is generally considered to have increased rural poverty and inequality and created a culture of dependency and 'clientification' within rural areas, most notably among the Basarwa (Hitchcock 2003; Hitchcock & Holm 1993; Taylor 2000; Saugestad 1998; Twyman 1998).

In response to these shortcomings in earlier approaches, and informed by the international

shift in development discourse, the Government of Botswana introduced the Community Based Strategy for Rural Development in 1997. This seemed to mark the beginning of a shift in strategy away from an imposed top-down approach to one that is grounded in the rhetoric of 'empowerment' and 'community-led' development.¹⁴ Whilst the launch of this policy was greeted by many within the CBNRM community as a significant success on their behalf and as a significant opportunity (Arntzen et al. 2003; National CBNRM Forum 2004), there appears to date to have been little effort made to capitalise on these opportunities.¹⁵ Other recently introduced strategies and policies mirror this shift in approach. These include the 2002 Revised National Policy for Rural Development (Government of Botswana 2002) and the 2003 Poverty Reduction Strategy (Government of Botswana 2003a). Consequently, the policy framework provided by both the environmental and rural development sectors appears strong and conducive to CBNRM.

Yet there appears to be a chasm between the rhetoric of these policy documents and practice, a chasm that the current controversy surrounding the CBNRM policy is bringing into sharp relief. Despite the apparently progressive policy framework, Arntzen (2004), Taylor (2000) and other observers note that there has been a notable lack of progress in implementation of these strategies. Implementation is constrained by the inherent contradictions of these policies with others affecting the rural sector, such as land/resource tenure, decentralisation and grazing. As the following discussion indicates, these policies are influenced by and continue to support the economic and political aspirations and domination of the Tswana governing elite and bring into question the government's genuine commitment to community-based approaches.

Contradictions in privatising the commons

Due to the prominence of tribal communal lands (covering 71% of the land area),¹⁶ their use, productivity and management remain of central importance to the country and lie at the heart of rural development policy. The dominant form of land use in these areas is livestock farming, which has been at the centre of the Botswana economy for many centuries. Today the livelihoods of 80% of the rural population are dependent on this sector, and it is the third largest foreign exchange earner (White 1998). Livestock also

continues to play a central cultural role in that it is symbolic of the health of the agro-pastoral community and of the power of its dominant members (IIED 2004).

The dominant policy approach today is that of privatising grazing lands,¹⁷ resulting in shrinking communal lands as fenced ranches (*de jure* private) and exclusive use of boreholes on rangelands (*de facto* private) expand.¹⁸ This is driven in part by the belief within the Ministry of Agriculture that communal rangelands were degraded, that degradation was caused by overgrazing, that overgrazing was caused by communal land ownership leading to open access, and that the solution was privatisation (IIED 2004). This belief in a 'Tragedy of the Commons' scenario engulfing the communal areas still dominates within the Ministry of Agriculture, providing the scientific rationale for the ongoing push for privatisation within communal areas (Alden-Wily 2003).

A further force for privatisation is overtly political. The ruling Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has the support of and membership of many wealthy cattle owners and the links between government policy and benefits to this group appear clear (IIED 2004). Peters (1994:218) noted that 'there is no doubt that some of the highly placed members of the government and party who promote the policy benefit directly as wealthy cattle and borehole owners'. This provides a strong incentive for driving government subsidy to the livestock sector and provides further incentives for national elites to expand their land accumulation for cattle pasturage. Whilst there is debate about the level of these subsidies (Alden-Wily 2003), there is general agreement that 'government policies have made the livestock sector artificially attractive at the expense of other forms of land use' (IIED 2004:24).

Notwithstanding commitments in the National Development Plans (NDPs)¹⁹ to the contrary, government efforts to boost economic growth and diversify the economy have to date focused on the livestock sector at the expense of the wildlife and tourism sectors.

Decentralisation and governance

Whilst decentralisation does have a long history in Botswana,²⁰ local government remains largely financially dependent upon central government and in most respects is subject to decisions made at the central level.²¹ Thus, local

government remains upwardly accountable to central government and not to its local electorate.²² There is debate concerning the political commitment of central government to decentralisation of authority to DCs rather than to local line ministries and yet, by regional standards, Botswana seems to have made significant progress. There is general agreement that local government has an excellent record in delivering key services such as water, education and health, and that local political processes are relatively well developed and democratic (Tordoff 1988; Wunsch 2003; Hitchcock 2003; Maundeni 2005).²³ And yet, despite the relative strengths of DCs, the implementation approach adopted by the NRMP effectively marginalised them from CBNRM implementation.

Implementation approach and challenges

An important dimension in understanding the implementation of CBNRM is an examination of the philosophy, science and data underlying such an approach. There is growing recognition that decisions around natural resource management policy ultimately depend on the relative political influence of different interest groups (Keeley & Scoones 2003). CBNRM entails social and political commitments, and relies on particular audiences and practices to support it. The policy processes that shaped CBNRM are influenced by the existence of networks that seek to promote effective, participatory policy development. The history of CBNRM in southern Africa reveals that effective and influential actor networks, incorporating bureaucrats, local and national politicians, national and international civil society organisations, private sector actors in the tourism industry, and, to varying degrees, grassroots constituencies are critical factors in influencing the direction of CBNRM²⁴ (Jones & Murphree 2001; Duffy 2000). These networks have to transcend disciplinary, ideological, racial, ethnic and political boundaries, and represent the uniting of diverse interest groups to derive benefits from the policy.

Keeley and Scoones (2003) note that the relative influence each group is able to bring to bear on policy development will depend on a range of factors such as their economic power, political influence, the political climate and the issues being debated. In the context of Botswana, several factors have prevented the development of a strong, united and cohesive policy network

supportive of CBNRM. One of these is that the economic interests of the political elite are not served by CBNRM, either because they prefer alternative land use options – cattle ranching – or because they have their own economic objectives for wildlife management. Related to this is the widely recognised hostility of Vice-President Khama²⁵ to the concept of sustainable use which underpins CBNRM, which has led to the development of a network actively hostile to it. Compounding this is that the foreign origins of CBNRM have affected the level of political support that can be mobilised in its support. Meanwhile, sidelining local government from the process has ensured that they too are not CBNRM advocates. Given this context, it is perhaps not surprising that CBNRM and the underlying principles on which it is based, such as sustainable use, are highly politicised and remain susceptible to arbitrary decisions of powerful politicians.

Foreign origins of CBNRM and national dynamics

The origins of CBNRM in Botswana are foreign. This has significantly affected the nature of the network supporting the policy development process and played a determining role in how it has been integrated and received nationally. CBNRM was first introduced in Botswana by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in the form of the Botswana Natural Resource Management Programme (BNRMP), implemented from 1989 through 1999. After the end of the BNRMP, The World Conservation Union/Netherlands Development Organisation (IUCN/SNV) CBNRM Support Programme assumed centre stage, followed by the European Union-funded Wildlife Conservation and Management Programme in 2002.²⁶ Whilst each of these programmes was/is embedded within and/or worked hand in hand with DWNP, the lead implementing government institution, CBNRM remains identified with donor agencies and the expatriate personnel who managed the programme.²⁷ It is then perceived to be an imported environmental paradigm²⁸ which has compromised its relevance and legitimacy locally. Consequently, the philosophy, science and data underlying CBNRM approaches lack 'indigenous' conceptualisation and development. Evidence from other southern African countries demonstrates that it has taken years, and the involvement of many diverse individuals and

institutions, for CBNRM approaches to develop and reflect unique social and political realities and commitments (see Jones & Murphree 2001 for a comprehensive discussion). The result is a lack of cultural understanding, relationships, identities and connection to social and political networks, arising from the difficulty of embedding foreigners in the local institutional landscape. This has presented CBNRM with immense implementation and operational challenges. Foreign dominance is reflected in the term informally used to describe CBNRM within DWNP, *Dilo tsa Makgoa*, which translates to 'Something for the white people'. As one DWNP official (name withheld on request) commented:

CBNRM is just one more approach introduced by well-meaning donors who are following fashions. The history of development here is full of them and, like those, it will fade away when all the donors and foreign experts have gone (Anonymous 1, pers. comm.).

This lack of 'indigenous' roots, compounded by the lack of continuity in its implementation, has translated into limited legitimacy locally and nationally and has compromised the development of a strong CBNRM network.²⁹ This manifests itself in the remarkable absence of a politically salient constituency at any level, and there is a notable lack of community representatives, politicians, local NGO 'personalities', leading academics and senior managers and conservation practitioners in DWNP among its supporters. CBNRM here is therefore largely bereft of effective 'champions' who can influence policy making. This failure to develop an influential network makes it relatively easy to discard once donors withdraw their support.

The perception of CBNRM as an externally imposed approach at the national level is mirrored also at the local level, where the 'imposer' is perceived to be the DWNP and NGOs. As expressed by one Member of Parliament (MP):

In theory, CBNRM is a great idea and just what we need. It promotes self-reliance and self-sufficiency and makes people value and conserve resources. But it is being imposed on people. The participatory elements are being ignored as they're too difficult to implement. And this destroys the whole purpose (Buteti, pers. comm.).

Institutional landscape

Throughout the 1990s and to date, DWNP has been the lead agency in terms of policy development and technical support for CBNRM. Other government departments and ministries, the ARB, land boards and DCs play a limited role. There is consensus that CBNRM implementers largely failed to engage and be integrated with sectoral initiatives in other ministries or departments (Taylor 2000; Arntzen et al. 2003; Jones 2004). The role played by other government agencies, notably the DCs, was determined by the BNRMP to be that of 'facilitators of a process and guarantors of a fair and honest process' (N. Winer, pers. comm.). It was a well-meaning attempt to avoid what was perceived to be the primary pitfall of the CAMPFIRE programme:

[D]ecentralising to councils, as in Zimbabwe, was seen by us as using wildlife to provide a subsidy to local government which then passed on a percentage, under imposed terms and conditions, to communities (N. Winer, pers. comm.).

However, from 2003 this tactical response to the experience and problems of CBNRM in Zimbabwe has been viewed as a tactical error by implementers in Botswana. Proscribing the role of DCs has effectively marginalised them from the programme, which has proved a handicap in promoting local governance and accountability (National CBNRM Forum 2004).

The failure of the BNRMP to develop a strong and diverse implementation base among local institutions early on seems to have compounded the problems of marginalisation from mainstream policy-making processes. It was not until the late 1990s that Botswana began to witness the diversification and strengthening of the CBNRM institutional landscape. Only when the BNRMP was terminated in 1999, was it recognised that there was need to ensure continuity and to create national-level institutions that would represent the interests of the growing number of CBOs. At this point, USAID was instrumental in the creation of a national umbrella and networking organisation for CBOs, the Botswana Community-based Organisation Network (BOCOBONET) (O. Chapayama, pers. comm.).

During the period 1999–2003, implementers made concerted efforts to develop an influential constituency that would overcome the political isolation of CBNRM as well as create a well-organised, cohesive stakeholder group. The IUCN/SNV CBNRM Support Programme³⁰

was primarily responsible for and oversaw the development which led to the creation of a cohesive local interest group representing all stakeholders, including local communities.³¹ In 1999, this network consisted of a total of 35 institutions (IUCN/SNV 2000), and by 2003, it had grown to 83 CBOs, 8 government departments (local and national); 10 local and international NGOs; 58 private sector and NGO 'service providers'; 12 private sector companies and their associations; and various international donors (National CBNRM Forum 2004). From 2000 to 2003, regular national CBNRM conferences involving all stakeholders were held, as well as bi-annual forum and steering committee meetings.

The CBNRM Review (Arntzen et al 2003:12) was able to conclude that:

through the efforts of BOCOBONET and the CBNRM Forum Structures, a significant proportion of wildlife-based CBOs have participated in the policy dialogue and have played an active role in lobbying and advocacy on issues of importance to CBNRM. Stakeholders have become a movement with different interests but a common goal.

The extent of the political influence of this network was clearly demonstrated by the effective manner in which it was able to block the Ministry of Local Government's SAVINGRAM of 2001. This SAVINGRAM represented the first overt signs of opposition by government to the devolutionary processes inherent within CBNRM. Its aim was to overturn the devolution of financial control of resources to CBOs and create an alternative process of decentralisation by vesting this authority with DCs (Molale 2001). The swift and well-choreographed response from the National CBNRM Forum, steering committee and individual institutions, notably BOCOBONET, led to the eventual withdrawal of the SAVINGRAM.

However, following these initial successes, a series of events began to undermine the ability of the stakeholder group to function as a lobby/advocacy group. The result is that today, the strong CBNRM constituency that seemed apparent in the early 2000s is no longer fully functional or supportive of CBNRM, significantly undermining the political strength of its constituency. A comparison of the reaction of the government to the demands from the CBNRM Forum in 2001 and 2005 reflects a dramatic shift in political influence. In 2001, the

government agreed to the Forum providing input into the finalisation of the policy, and the outcome that was adopted wholeheartedly reflected the Forum's recommendations, with the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism, noting that the policy framework must explicitly address the management of the proceeds from the programme as lobbied for by the forum.

The response from the Permanent Secretary on what is essentially the same issue to a May 2005 submission from the Forum was:

It must be understood that policy is developed by government, taking the views of all stakeholders into consideration not just those of a special interest group such as the National CBNRM Forum might represent (L. Gakale, pers. comm.).

The process that unfolded post-2001 reflects shifts in the balance of power between the various actors. Shifts in the interests, intentions and resources of actors, and their influence on power, stimulated changes in the policy environment and outcomes. Growth of a 'backlash' to CBNRM became apparent and was accentuated by other external forces that weakened it still further.

Alienation of donors and the private sector

Donor withdrawal in 2003 had a significant impact by undermining the donor-dependent NGOs supporting CBNRM. For example, the CBNRM Support Programme itself was no longer supported by SNV. BOCOBONET has had to refocus its activities on 'rural development' in general and since 2003 has played a marginal role in CBNRM (A. Mabei, pers. comm.). Several formerly active NGOs, such as the Forestry Association of Botswana, collapsed. Others withdrew, including the Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development (ACORD). The net result is a weakened stakeholder group and increasing problems of accountability within CBOs.³²

Meanwhile, the private sector continues to alienate itself from CBNRM, and has become a vocal and influential critic on the grounds that there is a prevalence of incidents of misuse and abuse of funds by CBOs and lack of reinvestment in the resource base by communities. Narratives of mismanagement by communities abound among the private sector. These perceptions have recently culminated in the withdrawal of the influential private sector representative

association, the Hotel and Tourism Association of Botswana (HATAB), from the CBNRM Forum.

The 'diamonds debate'

The high-profile, national political and economic controversy concerning use of revenue from natural resources and minerals (particularly diamonds) has also influenced perspectives. The Constitution of Botswana states that all natural resources are national assets and that all proceeds must go to national coffers to ensure transparent and equitable distribution. MPs from diamond-rich areas have drawn attention to CBNRM, arguing that if exceptions are made for wildlife, by allowing direct return of financial benefits to producer communities, then the principle must apply to diamonds. This argument has significant national political and economic ramifications and has drawn attention from the President down, expressing concern that the wildlife sector is setting a precedent for the whole economy and that the exception made for it is anti-constitutional. In view of this controversy, political expediency requires that both diamonds and wildlife be declared 'national resources', undermining the rationale for CBNRM and the basis upon which it operates.

San controversies

The controversy over the relocation of the San from the Central Kalahari Game Reserve (CKGR) has alienated this already marginalised ethnic group even further from mainstream political and social discourse and public sympathies.³³ Whilst it is not officially acknowledged, it is widely known that the majority of the beneficiaries of CBNRM in Ngamiland are San. This lack of public sympathy for the San is reflected in a lack of public outcry over the prospective loss of benefits that they receive from wildlife management under CBNRM.

These findings indicate that the CBNRM stakeholder group in Botswana played a key role in the short term as a political counterweight to demands from the political economic elite for recentralisation. However, shifts in the balance of power ensured that this group was largely marginalised from national political processes, whilst CBNRM was becoming increasingly embattled in controversy due to problems of mismanagement, abuse of funds, implementation problems, and other factors outside its control, such as the 'diamonds debate' and the political

alienation of San communities. This demonstrates that the lack of a strong, politically salient constituency at all levels compromises the social and political sustainability of CBNRM. Further light is shed on the lack of a political constituency in rural Botswana by a review of local-level devolutionary dynamics.

Problems of accountability

Devolution of powers to local-level institutions is a critical element in CBNRM and requires that local-level institutions are genuinely accountable to and representative of the interests of their members (Ribot 2002; Murphree 2000; WRI 2005). In Botswana, there is consensus that CBOs are marked by low levels of accountability and poorly represent their local constituents (Arntzen et al. 2003; Habarard 2003; Zuze 2004; Mbaiwa, 2004a; Thakadu 2005).

Murphree (2004:5) identifies conditions for the development of constituent accountability. These include:

Firstly, local jurisdictions need to be able to organize and act collectively.

Secondly, they need to embody, in principle and practice, an ideal that corresponds to a general public ethos that confers political legitimacy.

The following section explores whether these conditions have developed at the local level, if not, why not, and what has been the impact on the policy process. Habarad (2003) and Thakadu (2005) note lack of accountability as particularly evident in CBOs with concession-based joint venture partnerships (JVPs). Given the huge amount of money and influence generated by these ventures, the stakes are high for those who would control them, particularly so when mechanisms for ensuring accountability are flawed or absent. Consequently, the high-value resources involved in those CBOs with JVPs create unique problems not prevalent in other CBOs focusing on veld resources with relatively little economic value.³⁴ Wildlife-related CBOs are the high-profile 'flagships' of CBNRM, and are those affecting policy debates. Based on findings from CBOs engaged in wildlife-related JVPs, specifically the six CBOs located in Ngamiland, this section offers insights about devolution, with the objective of illuminating shifts in the policy process.

Community control and benefits

Community control over the material benefits of CBNRM is a contentious issue, as the degree

to which financial powers have been genuinely transferred to communities is questionable, given the lack of accountability and representation by CBOs. As Arntzen et al. (2003:19) in a national review conclude:

real empowerment is yet to be achieved.

The transfer of power has by and large been to the Boards or governance structures of organizations.

In other words, devolution has frequently delivered financial decision-making powers and benefits into the hands of small village elites, rather than into the hands of community members

in general. This has resulted in relatively high levels of mismanagement, and misuse and abuse of the finances and financial powers devolved to CBOs. For example, in Ngamiland, the heartland of CBNRM in Botswana, as of 2004, there were 17 CBOs, 6 of which had JVPs (Mbaiwa 2004b). Allegations relating to mismanagement or abuse of funds have been made against each of these since they were first established, although there is considerable variation in the degrees of abuse. Independent auditors have substantiated most of these allegations, although no prosecutions have been embarked on to date. Table 1 provides a

Table 1: CBOs with JVPs in Ngamiland

Name of the trust	Population	Total income (P)	Accountability of CBO	Comments
Cgaecgae Tlhabololo Trust	372	1 497 281	Yes	Accountable trust ensures participation; no reports of financial irregularities. However, CBO unable to work with private sector, leading to alienation and it no longer being able to market its quota, resulting in no income.
Khwai Development Trust	395	5 500 728	No	Mismanagement of funds (over P2 000 000 unaccounted for); no community benefit; lack of planning and priority setting.
Okavango Community Trust	6 431	8 589 766	No	Co-option by elites; unconfirmed misappropriation of P430 000; no community involvement or benefit; high administrative overheads; lack of planning and priority setting.
Okavango Kopano Mokoro Community Trust	2 000 (est.)	6 486 568	No	Misappropriation of P12 500 in 2002; limited community participation and benefit; high administrative overheads; lack of planning and priority setting.
Sankuyo Tshwaragano Management Trust	372	4 966 666	No 1995–2003 Yes 2003–2005	Misappropriation of P20 000 in 2002; limited community participation or benefit prior to this. Since 2002 the new leadership has improved the situation. Ongoing controversy with JVP.
Mababe Zokotsama Community Trust	157	3 305 263	No 1998–2003 Yes 2003–2005	P99 461 misappropriated in 2002; limited community benefit or participation prior to this. Since 2002 the new leadership has improved the situation.

brief overview of the situation in all six CBOs. A more detailed look at the history and implementation of CBNRM initiatives in two of the participating communities highlights the nature of the problems that are being encountered.

Okavango Community Trust (OCT)

OCT, the first CBO in Ngamiland, was registered in March 1995, with the objective of representing the interests of the five villages of Seronga, Gunotsoga, Eretsha, Beetsha and Gudigwa on issues relating to the concession areas NG 22 and NG 23 (ACORD 2002). Its establishment was politically motivated, resulting in a hasty process that prohibited community participation from the start (ACORD 2002). Following the establishment of the first CBNRM initiative in Chobe in 1994, the MP for Okavango North, in collaboration with a local safari operator, approached DWNP with a demand that CBNRM projects be established in his area, following which the NRMP staff were directed to proceed immediately and undertake community briefing and mobilisation meetings (O. Thakadu & N. Winer, pers. comm.). The MP and representatives of the safari operator then accompanied the NRMP team through the initial awareness-raising stages of the mobilisation process. On returning to the area one month later to complete the process and prior to the registration of any CBOs, OCT had already signed a contract entering into a joint venture with the safari operator, Michelleti Bates, (Hartly 1995) and a constitution had been drawn up for the trust by a lawyer in consultation with the MP, but with no consultation with community members. ACORD and other observers point out that this represents a weak foundation upon which to build a community-driven initiative (ACORD 2002). ACORD (2002:9) concludes that:

it was, as it were, driven to them...locals did not readily accept the trust as theirs, neither were they fully aware of its functions, nor did they participate in its activities.

Other interpretations of the process are less circumspect. As one of those involved in the implementation process at the time (name withheld on request) noted:

the establishment of the OCT was for two purposes and driven by two individuals. The purposes were to gain votes for the MP whilst lining his pocket because of the favourable terms of the agreement with the operator – it never even went out to tender

– and not surprisingly the individuals pushing it were the MP and the operator, who got on board a few powerful local residents. Local participation and needs had nothing to do with it (Anonymous 2, pers. comm.).

Established in essence by the local MP, the safari operator and a lawyer, and guided by their constitution, the OCT became the *de facto* owner of the wildlife resources in its area. The only natural resource management activity in which the trust is currently involved in is that of subleasing its CHA and selling its wildlife quotas to the same operator. DWNP (2000:3), aware of the problems within OCT, noted that:

there is apparently strong private sector and political influences over the board activities and decisions and in the process of establishing this, members have been excluded from any meaningful participation in the trust's activities.

In an attempt to address these problems, ACORD, in partnership with DWNP and Tawana Land Board, began a programme of institutional strengthening and general awareness in 2001. This process led to increased awareness of their rights by general community members, who began to question the decisions of the OCT board members. This culminated in a delegation of disaffected community representatives to the district commissioner to express their dissatisfaction with the way things were run (ACORD 2002). Prompting this delegation was the trust's decision to renew the JVP with the existing safari operator, ignoring the wishes of the broader community for an open tender process. At this point, the commissioner sought the support of the Minister of Commerce and Industry, who wrote a directive instructing OCT to opt for an open tender. The response from OCT, advised by its lawyer, was to invoke its legal rights as stipulated in its constitution to make decisions on behalf of the community (ACORD 2002).

In the face of this legal interpretation of the constitution and status of the CBO, the minister withdrew her directive. Soon after, in 2003, ACORD withdrew from the country, leaving the OCT board intact and once again in control of the local process. The response from the local government authorities was one of resignation. Representatives of the local villages had approached the local authorities – as their legitimate, democratic representatives – in an attempt to elicit their support in resolving

issues of non-accountability (DC personnel [names withheld on request], pers. comm.). The DC, in collaboration with local DWNP staff, had responded appropriately, undertaking a comprehensive consultative process and negotiations in all five villages lasting several months (ACORD 2002). Armed with considerable insights and knowledge, they then invoked the support of the minister in addressing the problem, only to be rebuffed on legal grounds and to be told that they had no right to intervene.

Meanwhile, the OCT trustees continue to award themselves sitting allowances of P640 each for each of the four scheduled meetings a year and a further P100 for unscheduled meetings. A large portion of the trust's funds is spent on project administration and personnel costs or invested in business ventures that have no community involvement (Mvimi et al. 2003; Zuze 2004; Mbaiwa 2004a). Local discontent with the selection of the safari operator and the lack of community participation in decisions in general continues. Reports to DWNP indicate that an amount of P430 000 is unaccounted for from the financial year 2002 (Anonymous 1 [name withheld on request], pers. comm.). This situation is summed up as follows by one DC officer (name withheld on request):

Members of the OCT trust are in alliance with national politicians and local councillors and have formed a power block. They're in control and able to circumvent any procedures. They've shown they can beat the minister and tell her to stay out of their affairs, so all government personnel now stay away. The same operator has recently renewed the contract, although now there are new problems. We just had another delegation from the community, but we can't do anything. We are only allowed to advise through our role on the TAC [Technical Advisory Committee]. If the trust chooses to ignore our advice they can and do (Anonymous 3, pers. comm.).

The profound impact of this situation is borne out in research conducted by Mvimi et al. (2003) in two OCT villages, the objective of which was to identify the communities' perceptions and understanding of their CBNRM initiatives. By the time this research was undertaken, the five villages of OCT, with a total population of 6 431, had received almost P7 000 000³⁵ from their CBNRM initiatives. This research showed that whilst 86% of respondents indicated that they had heard about CBNRM during the consultation

process, they had lost track of it as the clash between the DC, MP and lawyer progressed. Only 14% had any relationship with the project since its initiation. The study further revealed that only 32% of people perceived that the community in general had benefited from the project; this dropped to 2% in terms of benefits from social services or infrastructural developments. Eighty per cent of respondents indicated that their expectations of the project had not been met and that this was due 'to poor leadership... mismanagement and misappropriation of funds' (Mvimi et al. 2003:92).

Khwai Development Trust (KDT)

Khwai³⁶ is a small village of 395 people from the Babukakhwae or 'River Bushmen' ethnic group. It is situated next to Moremi Game Reserve in the Okavango. Despite Khwai being one of the first villages encouraged to participate in CBNRM, it was among the last villages to implement it. Delays arose as the village wanted a concession for Basarwa only, an approach that was unacceptable to the government as it was discriminatory. This delayed the registration of the trust until 2000.

Natural resource management activities include marketing of hunts, subsistence hunting for part of their quota, grass and crafts marketing, and community campsites. From 2000 to 2003, Khwai realised over P3 000 000 from land rentals to its JVP. Throughout this period, the CBO, Khwai Development Trust (KDT), had an extremely poor track record in managing, using and accounting for these funds (National CBNRM Forum 2004). According to the trust's accountant – appointed only after 2003 – over P2 000 000 remain unaccounted for from this period, and the trustees, who were voted out of office at the end of 2003, were being investigated by the police (I. Hancock, pers. comm.). Mismanagement of those funds that are accounted for have also characterised the workings of the trust. In 2003, the KDT trust members, in consultation with the community, decided to maximise financial returns and maintain independence by marketing their own quota. To achieve this, four KDT trust members visited New York. No prior arrangements had been made and no marketing strategy developed. Encountering problems of cultural and geographical disorientation, as well as having no networks or knowledge of the safari industry, the group was unsuccessful in its marketing endeavours. Whilst no firm figures are available, a conservative estimate of the

cost of this failed marketing strategy is between P200 000 and P300 000. More significantly, the value of the quota for that year, potentially several million pula, went unrealised (I. Hancock, pers. comm.).

In 2003, as a result of the failure of KDT to present audited accounts to DWNP for the third year in a row, and in the face of clear evidence of abuse and mismanagement, DWNP withheld the quota for 2004 pending an investigation (National CBNRM Forum 2004). Following this decision, representatives from KDT travelled to Gaborone and met powerful senior members of the ruling party to appeal for the return of their quota. Initially this appeal was denied but in July 2004, just prior to the national elections in August, the Minister of Environment and Tourism and the new BDP candidate MP for Kasane District (in which Khwai is situated) undertook a political rally in Khwai. During his stump speech, the BDP candidate produced the quota and returned it to the people. The following month, the BDP candidate was successful in his bid to win the Kasane seat. There is clear evidence that the Khwai community, which for the previous 15 years had supported the opposition Botswana Alliance Movement, switched its support to the BDP in these elections.

This incident is openly discussed and widely interpreted within DWNP, the DC and NGOs to have been an overt case of politicians manipulating CBNRM procedures for political gain. Wildlife quotas become a means by which politicians can dispense patronage and develop their client base both at the local level (Khwai and the MPs are beholden to each other) and at the national level (the MP is beholden to individuals at the most senior levels of his party). Neither is it an isolated incident; several similar examples are commonly recounted.

Whilst the gross abuse and mismanagement of funds of the earlier years have now been brought under control with the introduction of an external accountant and the election of new trust members, there is still clear evidence of limited abuses of funds and mismanagement of projects (I. Hancock, pers. comm.). Hancock (pers. comm.) notes that the impact within the village of this process has been profound:

I can't speak for the people of Khwai, but I spend a lot of time there and in my experience the majority of those within Khwai who aren't on the board of trustees would tell you that CBNRM should be scrapped. It's brought them nothing

but trouble, fighting and arguments within what was previously a cohesive community, now their sons and daughters face jail and public disgrace, and in return for all this they have nothing.

To put this into perspective, Khwai is a village of 395 people whose income from CBNRM activities, despite management shortcomings, exceeded P4 000 000 for the period 2000 to 2004, representing a potential per capita income of P10 126.

Cgaecgae Tlhabololo Trust (CTT)

Whilst OCT and Khwai are generally recognised as the CBOs with the worst track record in Ngamiland, the situation in three of the other four is not dissimilar and all encounter significant problems relating to financial accountability or mismanagement of funds, as Table 1 illustrates. The only CBO that appears to have largely evaded problems of accountability is that of Cgaecgae Tlhabololo Trust (CTT). Mvimi et al. (2003) indicate that it is the only one of the four CBOs they studied in which the majority of residents indicated that they benefited from the project and were involved in decision making. Interestingly, CTT has two features that distinguish it from the other CBOs. Firstly, they chose to avoid the use of the Khotla as the main forum for consultation because it would not ensure democratic and effective decision making (Mvimi et al. 2003), the implications of which are returned to below. Secondly, its average annual income was considerably less than those of others, with a maximum annual income of P342 262. This compares with OCT, on the other end of the scale, which earned P1 500 000. However, CTT has experienced significant problems managing its business initiatives and in relating to the private sector. The outcome – due in part to the paucity of its resource base but mainly to the perception of safari operators that it is not possible to work constructively with CTT – is that the trust is no longer able to find any operator prepared to enter into a JVP with it. The value of its quota is now going unrealised. From having earned P342 262 in 2000, CTT has had no income since 2003.

Emergence of positive examples

Despite the hype and rhetoric around these cases in Botswana, the problems of accountability cannot be construed to mean that CBNRM has failed to contribute to the improvement of rural livelihoods. Mbaiwa (2004b) notes that almost all

CBOs have used funds to operate grocery stores in their villages, have vehicles for transportation, and provide financial and transport assistance to community members in case of death, and therefore offer important services for remote areas that would not otherwise be available. CBOs and their private sector partners have also generated significant local employment. According to Zuze (2004), approximately 175 locals are employed directly by the six CBOs, whilst several hundred more are employed by the JVP. A further positive sign is that surveys carried out by Mbaiwa (2005) on community perceptions of wildlife indicate that throughout Ngamiland attitudes towards wildlife have been improving since the introduction of CBNRM.

Perhaps most significantly, there are now several examples of CBOs that, after a few difficult years, are responding to the needs of their members and demonstrating both accountability and representation. These CBOs include the Sankuyo Tshwaragano Management Trust and the Mababe Zokotsama Community Development Trust (MZCDT), both of which have early years that resemble those of Khwai and OCT. Sankuyo provided cash handouts of P500 in 2004 to each of its 49 member households, and has constructed 'enviro-loos' for each household and a community hall. It is planning to build houses for its destitute community members, provides a burial fund of P3 000 per adult and P1 000 per child and sponsors nine children to attend commercial school (Mbaiwa 2004b). Meanwhile MZCDT is undertaking similar projects and demonstrating that it is accountable to its constituency.³⁷

Policy implications of lack of accountability

Given the significant amounts generated within villages with total populations numbering only a few hundred, CBNRM is frequently critiqued for having too little to show for itself. Those CBOs that have been subject to serious allegations of misuse, fraud and mismanagement, such as OCT, KDT and CTT, have entered into CBNRM 'folklore' and arm critics with evidence of the 'failure' of CBNRM. These cases are advanced as the reason why communities should not be entrusted to manage CBNRM projects. This evidence of 'failed' CBNRM has had a profound impact at the policy level, and such 'stories' feed into the ongoing CBNRM policy process, resulting in the perception of CBNRM as inevitably

entrenching corruption and leading to elite capture of benefits at the expense of the majority rural people. Problems of mismanagement and the capture of and manipulation of CBOs by elites have undermined the legitimacy of CBNRM among communities themselves.³⁸ Such problems reflect the shortcomings of transferring financial powers without mechanisms to ensure accountability and representation are in place. To paraphrase Ribot (2002:3), 'transferring power without accountable representation has proven dangerous'. Despite these problems, limited positive examples of CBNRM are emerging, but these are receiving little attention. Positive 'stories' do not contribute to the interests of the political elite for whom it is more valuable to exploit failures. As the following section discusses, problems have largely resulted from an inappropriate and politicised implementation process, rather than from inherent flaws with the approach or the ability of communities to manage the process.

Inattention to socio-political processes of empowerment

From the beginning, the driving force for CBNRM was primarily conservation and environmental management, rather than social-political-economic empowerment of rural communities. Mbaiwa (2004a, 2004b) and Cassidy (2000) note that economic benefits have been seen as a means to achieving conservation, not as an end in themselves, whilst social empowerment and community development issues were, until very recently, largely ignored. This bias towards conservation is understandable given the DWNP-related genesis of CBNRM, whose primary mandate is managing wildlife resources. However, whilst expectations today have outgrown the original conservation role and encompass social, economic and equity objectives, the implementing agency's architecture and mandate essentially remain the same. The lack of capacity in DWNP compromises its ability to deliver the empowering thrust of CBNRM in terms of local-level governance and democracy.

The first CBNRM project was started in 1993 in the Chobe Enclave with the establishment of the Chobe Enclave Conservation Trust (CECT). Over the next few years five more were established in Ngamiland, and by 1997 there was a total of six CBOs. Since then, there has been huge, unanticipated growth in the number and distribution of CBOs. As of 2003, there

were 83 CBOs active in CBNRM, 67 of which were officially registered. These CBOs covered 120 villages in 9 (out of 10) rural districts with an estimated population of 103 000, or approximately 6% of the national population. However, DWNP staff and resource commitments to enhance the capacity and monitoring of CBOs have not increased. As of 2005, a few dozen junior DWNP officials have responsibility for over a hundred CBOs.³⁹ Of particular concern is that the mandate of DWNP has inadvertently resulted in implementation being largely focused on mobilising local communities to form trusts so that they gain quotas from DWNP and enter into JVAs with the private sector for trophy hunting or photographic tourism. Once the trust has been formed, most external support tends to focus on assisting the trust to secure a JVA without committing resources for building the capacity of CBOs to function independently in the long term. Rozemeijer and Van der Jagt (2000:6) argue that:

DWNP does not have the resources for long-term facilitation and at times endorses the establishment of a trust with a quota knowing that it will not be able to provide the necessary follow-up, leaving behind a resource rich but institutionally puzzled community.

Despite these shortcomings in capacity within the DWNP, it was not until the mid-1990s that the BNRMP made any effort to involve local NGOs. The role of DCs has been largely confined to that of advisors⁴⁰ and the lack of a well-defined policy has prevented other government departments from committing scarce resources to what is broadly perceived to be the responsibility of DWNP.

Perhaps the most significant source of long-term accountability problems has been the method of community mobilisation adopted by DWNP as a result of their lack of experience with community mobilisation. Thakadu (2005), Habarad (2003) and others involved in the community mobilisation process in the 1990s question whether the mechanisms and strategies that were adopted for participation facilitate a community-driven process. Kgotla meetings exclude women and minority ethnic groups, youth and other marginalised groups (Magole 2003) and are often very poorly attended, and cannot be characterised as democratic decision-making institutions (Taylor 2000, Habarad 2003). Yet within the DWNP implementation strategy, 'The representative-ness and accountability of

these structures [CBOs] was equated to elections conducted in a Kgotla meeting, which is deemed transparent and democratic' (Thakadu 2005:203). By ensuring that the Kgotla plays the central role in mobilising communities, democratically representative processes were sidelined as mobilisation activities reinforced opportunities for elite capture of benefits and marginalisation of segments of the community.

The Kgotla example illustrates the problems and distortions of mobilisation and policy processes arising when the main implementing agency is under-resourced, inappropriately skilled, uncommitted and ill-equipped to handle complex, multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary interventions like CBNRM. By failing to facilitate the development of accountable CBOs, mismanagement and misuse of funds becomes a common feature, bringing into disrepute the concept of communities managing resources.

Conclusion

Scrutiny of events relating to the development of the draft policy document in 2001, compared with the events of 2005/06, clearly reveals that 'policy spaces'⁴¹ for both rural communities and civil society to influence policy have effectively closed in Botswana. Efforts to draft the policy have been ongoing for almost a decade. Initially the process was viewed as relatively inclusive, participatory and transparent (Cassidy 2003; IUCN 2004). Our research revealed that this process has now changed to one characterised by suppression of information and secrecy, clearly influenced by the political elite. Civil society's ability to influence the policy process has diminished and it lacks the power it briefly demonstrated to reassert inclusive and transparent policy making. This diminishing of policy space can be attributed to the complex interplay of events. The outcome is that currently policy seems to be responding to the imperatives of politico-economic elites. The policy response of the central government to challenges has entailed projecting CBNRM as a 'failure', and using this as a justification to recentralise resource management. The call for recentralisation of resource management on the basis of 'failure' can be viewed in part as a smokescreen to cover up the political economic interests of these elites.

The shortcomings of CBNRM in Botswana are largely associated with how it was introduced and implemented. The nature of rights granted to communities, institutional arrangements and

implementation mechanisms that were applied failed to ensure constituent accountability. At the same time, the implementation approach inhibited the involvement of other institutions that could have provided checks and balances leading to more equitable outcomes. DCs could have been important vehicles for empowering local communities to influence local governance and democratise resource management. The marginalisation of DCs as recognised legal governance structures threatened democratisation, local governance and empowerment of local communities. Where limitations in devolving power and authority to the lowest community level exist, creative opportunities for empowerment of local communities have to be explored within the legally recognised structures of local governance.

The failure of CBNRM institutions to be accountable and representative downwards is due in part to pressure for upward accountability and the reluctance of central government to devolve authority and proprietorship to local communities. But the implementation process in Botswana, by enabling elite capture of local-level benefits and processes, has also been in large part responsible for inhibiting the development of those conditions that Murphree (2004) identifies as necessary for the development of constituent accountability. On this basis, the devolution strategies that were adopted failed to cultivate incentives and a vibrant local political context which could ensure positive CBNRM outcomes.

The result has been the development of CBOs that are accountable to no one, neither local constituency nor state. Problems at a local

level have provided the conditions to allow the process of policy development to be captured by the political economic elites whose interests are now dominant in the policy-making process. This situation was compounded by the demise of support for CBNRM from civil society, the political elite and local communities as a result of factors outside the control of implementers.

The Botswana experience demonstrates that the lack of a strong, politically salient constituency compromises the social and political sustainability of CBNRM. Sustainability requires having appropriate actor networks in place at a national level, which function as constituencies that champion the interests of rural communities, thus shaping and – crucially – maintaining appropriate policy outcomes in the face of fluctuating political circumstances. A critical component of these networks will be communities themselves. A community-level constituency has not mobilised behind CBNRM as elite co-option has affected the flow of benefits to the broader community. Ironically, the marginalisation of rural people from the policy process seems to be occurring largely unopposed by communities. Never having significantly benefited, most rural dwellers seem disinterested when financial autonomy and the authority of CBOs are taken away. Thus, the process is a cyclical self-perpetuating one. Lack of political will to ensure appropriate policies should be anticipated when there is little if any constituency calling for such policies, a situation which will inevitably arise when CBNRM fails to deliver its anticipated outcomes due to implementation shortcomings.

6. Case study 2: Zimbabwe

Background

CBNRM was first introduced into Zimbabwe in the mid-1980s through the CAMPFIRE programme which was designed and introduced by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management (DNPWLM) in collaboration with other local institutions. CAMPFIRE provided much of the impetus for the replication of CBNRM approaches throughout the region. It also offered an arena through which the basic principles and concepts of CBNRM were established (Fabricius & Kock 2004; Child 2004). Compromised versions of these concepts and principles have since been adopted in other countries in the region in the wildlife sector, and within Zimbabwe itself throughout the natural resource management sector.⁴²

Today CAMPFIRE, whilst no longer maintaining the high national and international profile it attracted throughout the 1990s, is an entrenched component of Zimbabwe's conservation and local government strategies, retaining political support at all levels. In order to entrench this support, CAMPFIRE implementers had to be pragmatic in their implementation and in policy development, by accommodating the concerns and perspectives of various different competing interest groups. This led to what Murphree (1997) terms 'strategic compromises', the result of which was that several of the basic principles upon which CAMPFIRE was originally developed have had to be compromised. The outcome was a process and programme that created decentralised rather than devolved resource management structures. This has led many implementers and analysts to conclude that CAMPFIRE has been 'co-opted' by the rural district councils (RDCs) (Hammar 2003; Bond 2001; Murombedzi 2003; Katerere 2002; Shackleton & Campbell 2001; Dzingirai & Breen 2005). This case study traces the process of policy development, examining why this has led to political support and acceptance of CAMPFIRE and exploring whether the decentralised programme that has resulted does in fact undermine CAMPFIRE objectives, as conventional wisdom maintains.

We examine CBNRM within the current context of Zimbabwe, a country which has

undergone significant and far-reaching political, economic and social upheavals since the mid-1980s, when CAMPFIRE was first introduced, and which has descended into 'crisis' since 2000. Its relatively strong economy has been reduced to one of the weakest globally, its once stable political conditions are now characterised by civil unrest and political repression, a previously well-functioning bureaucracy is in tatters, and respect for basic democratic principles and human rights is no longer evident (Harold-Barry 2004; Hammar & Raftopoulos 2003). Zimbabwe, once a 'darling' of the international donor community, has become a pariah, no longer exhibiting the attributes of an ordered political polity (Chabal & Daloz 1999) in which political opportunities and resources are defined and codified by legislation or precedent. This decline had significant impacts on many different elements of CAMPFIRE, including the process of policy making, the economic benefits generated, donor or private investment, governance arrangements, and the implementation capacities of both NGOs and government agencies. And yet, despite an extremely difficult operating environment, some CAMPFIRE communities continue to show remarkable resilience.

National context

Economic status

The realisation of CAMPFIRE-related financial revenue and economic incentives is linked to macroeconomic dynamics, and whether these allow for continuation or improvements in revenue generation, encourage revenue 'capture' by RDCs and political economic elites, or constrain opportunities for growth. The economic climate is equally important for the generation of revenue through private sector participation, concession leases and investments in tourism. The negative macroeconomic and political environment in the post-2000 period presents major challenges for CAMPFIRE revenue generation. Zimbabwe's GDP plummeted 30% between 2000 and 2003, and the trend has accelerated (Dell 2005). With an inflation rate exceeding 4 500%, Zimbabwe has the highest rate of any country in the world.

Dell (2005) estimated that the proportion of the population living below the official poverty line had more than doubled since the mid-1990s, standing then at about 80%.

The political and economic turmoil has led to the collapse of the tourism sector. Nemarundwe (2005) highlights the negative impacts of this economic climate whereby CAMPFIRE's income-generating potential through tourism is compromised and community investment projects are undermined as the fluctuation of prices makes a mockery of budgeting. Hyperinflation compromises the financial activities and economic viability of CAMPFIRE projects, erodes financial benefits and value, and, given that payments of household cash dividends from CAMPFIRE revenue activities take place six months to a year after activities have occurred, the losses to inflation of cash benefits are massive. Finally, in the absence of many other income or taxable options, the current situation is further increasing the dependence of RDCs on CAMPFIRE wildlife revenue for survival – a disincentive for fiscal or other devolution.

Thus, the current hyper-inflationary macroeconomic environment is extremely disruptive. This is compounded further as the difficulties experienced by urban dwellers in securing employment contribute to urban-rural migration, which increases pressure on the resource base, places further demands on revenues and applies new pressures to established local-level governance systems.

Political characteristics

The extreme social and political problems of Zimbabwe can best be analysed and understood in the context of its history (Raftopoulos 2004). Zimbabwe emerged from almost a century of white rule, following a long and violent liberation war that ended in 1980, fought largely over land. Since 1980, the political priorities of the government have been dominated by reversing decades of racially biased inequalities in land, resource and asset distribution (Hammar & Raftopoulos 2003; Jones & Murphree 2001). As the ruling party slogan 'The land is the economy, the economy is the land' implies, struggles over land have been at centre stage throughout the colonial and post-colonial period. Since 2000, the mix of land and race has formed a volatile political cocktail dominating all aspects of economic, political and social life (Murombedzi & Gomera 2005). This struggle over land and its

resources is central to understanding the political dimensions of natural resource management in Zimbabwe, explaining why it receives such a high degree of political prominence. The politically charged environment in which natural resource management finds itself has significant implications for CAMPFIRE. Wolmer et al. (2003:8) point out that wildlife management in general is viewed with suspicion, as it was considered to be 'a ploy of whites to forestall land acquisition and justifying multiple and extensive land holdings'.

By the 1990s, it had become clear that the grand aims articulated by the state following independence had yet to be realised, poverty levels were increasing and new local governance arrangements were coming in for increasing criticism (Makumbe 1998). This brought into question the political legitimacy of ZANU-PF, which came under increasing scrutiny, culminating in significant and escalating electoral challenges and civil unrest. The response on the part of the party-state was increased authoritarianism, violence and repression of political opposition, leading to the creation of a climate of fear and intolerance and a breakdown in the rule of law (Raftopoulos & Savage 2005). Concerted efforts by the ruling party to consolidate rural support were undertaken. The most significant of these were the 'Fast Track' Land Reform Process and the 2001 Traditional Leaders Act. A further national feature since this time has been one of persistent political stalemate, whether internally between parties in Zimbabwe or in relation to regional or international efforts to facilitate political compromise or consensus to address the economic and humanitarian crisis.

Civil society

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Zimbabwe witnessed the growth of a plethora of NGOs and a strong and vibrant civil society. NGOs received generous support from donors and worked to support government programmes, notably CAMPFIRE (Duffy 2000). The shift in the political landscape immediately prior to 2000 resulted in opposition by civil society organisations to government-led constitutional amendments. From 1999, some segments of civil society began to challenge the government on land, electoral and human rights issues. This began challenge was treated by the ruling party as a sign of political defiance, thereby warranting the repression of NGOs. In the process, the ruling

party and government spearheaded the NGO Bill, which aimed to suppress pressures seeking improved governance and democracy. The result was open conflict between the government and civil society. This volatile political climate translated into a difficult operational environment for civil society as it sought to challenge the status quo and push the government towards accountability and better governance. Notably, those components of civil society and associated social movements (such as the War Veterans) that are ideologically/politically aligned to the ruling party were given, and continue to receive, ad hoc audience and platforms to express their views and deliberate on issues within the public arena (Raftopoulos & Savage 2005).

The impact of this marginalisation of civil society on CAMPFIRE has been profound. Throughout the 1990s, members of the CAMPFIRE Collaborative Group (CCG) had played a key role in capacity building at grassroots level (Child et al. 2003) and fulfilled a critical role as 'honest-brokers', providing neutral arbitration in instances where community-level polarisation stalled progress in programme implementation. As of 2003, NGOs and research institutions had effectively been marginalised from CAMPFIRE implementation, as their mandate from government to do so has been removed. Compounding this implementation marginalisation has been the loss of access to donor funding experienced by civil society throughout Zimbabwe as a result of donor withdrawal arising from the political situation.

Policy context

Much of the colonial legislation and bureaucratic structures were inherited unaltered by the post-colonial state (Mandondo 2000) and were highly centralised and ill-suited to accommodating popular demands. This general situation was mirrored in the field of environmental policy making, which remained largely unchanged from colonial times through the 1980s and 1990s. Mandondo (2000:1) describes the continuation in policy-making practices as 'amendments to date that have largely de-racialised the colonial acts and policies without democratising them'.

Despite concerns with the nature of the bureaucracy in Zimbabwe, the country nevertheless had a relatively well-functioning and effective bureaucracy until 2000. After this period the situation changed dramatically, as described by one former senior government

official (name withheld on request):

Since the turmoil started in about 2000, Zimbabwe's bureaucracy hasn't functioned because it wasn't clear who was in charge, where power or authority lay. Bureaucrats were unable to function because we were unsure who we would have to answer to or who we would offend in the process. The result was that no one made any decisions or took any actions (Anonymous 4, pers. comm.).

Once again this has had a profound effect on CAMPFIRE. CAMPFIRE is based on principles of sustainable use (SASUSG 1995). The discourse that underlies sustainable use has solid scientific and rational underpinnings. It is primarily a technical exercise, with the primary goal of economic productivity and maintenance of the resource base. The resulting implementation approach assigned key regulatory and monitoring functions to technical arms of the state, in the form of the DNPWLM – now the Wildlife Management Authority (WMA) – to ensure environmental sustainability. However, the scientific approach that drove policy making has now been replaced by a racially charged and politically biased populist moral discourse about the return of 'African soil to Africans' adopted by the ruling party.⁴³

The result of this radical shift in how policy is developed and implemented in the wildlife management context is that the WMA's ability to regulate and monitor resource use and provide programme oversight has largely been undermined – as to do so could lead to retribution from powerful political forces. The leading role that powerful ruling party politicians have assumed within the wildlife management industry in Zimbabwe (a major source of rare foreign exchange) has been the subject of national and international media coverage (see Hammer 2006).

For the last five years, then, issues of land reform and redistribution have dominated the policy and political context in rural areas. This presents a very different context, dominated by political discourses that are rooted in different models of development, than that evident in the traditional wildlife management discourse which provided the background for CBNRM policy development in Zimbabwe. As Wolmer et al. (2003:1) note, 'the land reform exercise emphasises direct redistribution, equity and land for crops; whilst the wildlife management discourse tends to stress the neo-liberal goals

of maximising foreign exchange earnings, encouraging public-private partnerships and 'trickle down' as well as private sector involvement in the wildlife sector. The shift in the policy-making environment, rationale and priorities, from one dominated by linear and science-based technical arguments to one driven by political expediency, racial bias and a host of competing political interests, represents a fundamental shift in the context in which CAMPFIRE is being played out. Any current analysis of CAMPFIRE and the policy environment in which it operates should be cognisant of this.

Wildlife and conservation policies

CAMPFIRE is philosophically premised on sustainable use of natural resources, which was formally endorsed in Zimbabwe by the 1975 Parks and Wildlife Act for private landholders, with an amendment in 1986 which designated RDCs as 'appropriate authorities' (AA) over wildlife on communal land.

The institutional framework for CAMPFIRE and for rural development in general was provided by the prime minister's directive of 1984, which established structures for development at provincial, district, ward and village levels. At a sub-district level, the Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) and Ward Development Committees (WADCOs) were created, neither of which can be constituted into legal entities. The RDC itself is the only elected body at district level that has a legal identity and was/is therefore the only institution within which AA can be legally vested.

Rural-related policies

Rural development has been one of the priorities of the Zimbabwean government since independence, and decentralisation was seen as a key means to achieve this (Hammar 2003; Makumbe 1998; Conyers 2001). Consequently, natural resource legislation in Zimbabwe concentrated considerable power in the hands of RDCs. In addition to the Parks and Wildlife Act, a number of other laws give the RDCs control over natural resources, such as the Natural Resources Act, the Communal Land Act and the Rural District Council Act.⁴⁴ The Traditional Leaders Act (TLA) of 2001 has significant, if unclear, implications for both RDCs and CAMPFIRE. Until this date, policy had strengthened the role and legal legitimacy of the democratically elected

structures at village, ward and district levels at the expense of traditional authorities. The TLA is a significant shift in direction, restoring powers to chiefs, headmen and *sabhukus* in terms of natural resource management. The Act, while seeking to empower traditional authorities, can potentially have problematic consequences for rural communities, especially where traditional leadership views values of democracy and governance as western ideals. Given this context, the ability of CBNRM to open up political space for democratisation, accountability and representation will be limited. The TLA is essentially a replica of colonial strategies pertaining to traditional leadership, the aim of which was (is) to co-opt traditional leadership to ensure political penetration of the state and ruling party into rural landscapes. The profound influence that this newly formed alliance of party and traditional institutions can have on local power dynamics and how this reverberates within local CAMPFIRE institutions is illustrated by the Mahenye case study below.

Decentralisation

CAMPFIRE was one of the first practical attempts at a decentralisation strategy in Zimbabwe, although Conyers (2001) notes that it developed relatively independently of the wider decentralisation debates and processes. Whilst it was not the original intent of CAMPFIRE policy makers, its effect has been to decentralise authority to manage wildlife resources to RDCs, not, as originally intended, to devolve authority to sub-district institutions. Consequently, the situation of the RDCs is of fundamental importance in determining CAMPFIRE outcomes. As of 2000, responsibility for the provision of many services had been decentralised to RDCs, but the financial resources to execute these responsibilities had not been decentralised. Bond (2001) demonstrates that in RDCs with AA, central government grants accounted for 35% of total revenue with 65% being generated locally. Of these, in ten cases, income to the RDCs from wildlife management exceeded all other locally generated revenue. Given the deteriorating financial situation of the RDCs and the increasing demands upon them, the dependence on CAMPFIRE revenues has become ever more pronounced in the intervening years.

From 1999 the government has been trying to 'pass the buck of its financial and political problems' (Conyers 2001:4) to RDCs as a result of the growing inability of ministries to deliver services. Decentralisation was seized

upon as a means to save the ruling party from the embarrassment of being unable to deliver basic services. This decentralisation of functions without financial resources to execute them, combined with a withdrawal of donor support in the early 2000s and the declining national economic situation, is detracting from the role of RDCs and reducing the quality of services provided. The unintended result has been further dependence of RDCs on wildlife revenue.

Compounding this dire situation since 2000 is that many RDCs have been subjected to sustained, politically-motivated violence and intimidation. Hammar (2003) describes how there has been a 'vast array of attacks' either by 'war veterans' or by Zanu-PF 'youth militia' – often with the complicity or participation of senior politicians and bureaucratic arms of the state – on RDCs and their associated institutions. This has served to radically alter the landscape of governance in Zimbabwe. These attacks are essentially attempts on behalf of Zanu-PF to 'recapture the frontiers of rule' that the space of local government represents. This violence, coupled with the overall impacts of 'political disorder', has served to make the current position of RDCs precarious, creating confusion with regard to authority at district levels. Thus decentralisation – the 'context' within which CAMPFIRE is set – is a highly politicised and complicated arena. Understanding this arena is essential to understanding the political and policy pressures facing CAMPFIRE.

Implementation approach and challenges

The process of policy development in CAMPFIRE has been a gradual one, spanning many years, involving thousands of people from local level to the international arena, and drawing upon concepts from a range of different disciplines. This process has proven essential in shaping the robust programme that CAMPFIRE remains today. The process ensured the development of a strong policy network which proved influential in determining the outcome of policy decisions, both nationally and internationally, and flexible enough to adapt to the changing political context. Duffy (2000:1) describes how the effect of this process 'depoliticised internal environmental politics' by ensuring that all stakeholders brought into and supported CAMPFIRE and the economic and conservation goals that it represented.

There is consensus among observers that one

of the distinguishing features contributing to what has proven to be the robustness of CAMPFIRE is that of its local origins. Its conceptual origins date back to the early 1960s when influential studies on game meat production were conducted in the south-east lowveld. This led to development of the hypothesis that, in certain ecological conditions, wildlife ranching could economically outperform cattle ranching. Policy makers concluded from this that the future of wildlife could only be ensured in a policy context where wildlife could be made an economically competitive form of land use (Child 1995). The outcome was a radical shift in conservation paradigms – away from protectionism to sustainable use. The following years saw a remarkable expansion of wildlife on commercial farms (Child 2004), which established an important precedent and influenced future policy development.

As an interim measure, Project WINDFALL was initiated in 1978 (Derman 1997). Whilst WINDFALL was largely unsuccessful in meeting its goals, it represented a critical step in the development of the conceptual basis of CAMPFIRE because of the instructive lessons that came out of it. These included that conservation is as much a socio-economic as an ecological issue, and that successful rural resource management approaches must be designed and implemented with local participation (Moore 1997). DNPWLM policy makers sought advice from economists and social scientists, as they recognised the need to integrate institutional and economic issues with ecological concerns. This initial dialogue eventually led to the formation of the CCG, which in these early years served as an informal 'incubator', generating the conceptual underpinnings of CBNRM and providing the means through which a diverse network of actors and policy entrepreneurs was established.

Encompassing leading social scientists from the Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS), rural development experts from Zimbabwe Trust, ecologists from the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and economists from the Ministry of Finance, this group had comprehensive regional and global networks and knowledge which they were able to draw upon to incorporate experiences and concepts from around the world. Consequently, the underlying conceptual basis of CAMPFIRE, whilst being informed by global experience, was critically grounded in the realities and experiences of communal land resource management in Zimbabwe. This group developed the second conceptual root of

CAMPFIRE, the identification of communal property regimes with strong tenurial rights as the appropriate management unit in communal land contexts (Murphree 1997). This was to lead to the elaboration by Murphree (1991) of the five 'principles' for policy. These principles have since informed policy development and guided implementation of CBNRM initiatives throughout the region (Steiner & Rihoy 1995; SASUSG 1995; Jones 2004). This gradual, locally-led process of trial and error – which led to the development of a strong and effective policy network able to influence the policy process from the start and adapt to the changing context – is in stark contrast to the introduction of CBNRM in Botswana.

Institutional landscape

A further feature which contrasts strongly with Botswana is that of the institutional landscape. The local roots of CAMPFIRE and the long process of conceptual development ensured that there was a great diversity of institutions involved in implementation of the programme from the outset. The last seven to eight years have witnessed a marked shift in the nature of the institutions playing such roles, a change brought about largely, if inadvertently, by donors. This shift has witnessed the transformation of CAMPFIRE from a programme led by technical agencies of government but supported by a strong group of civil society organisations – manifested as the CCG – to one in which civil society organisations and even the technical government agencies have largely been sidelined. Over the last five years the programme has become dominated by the CAMPFIRE Association (CA) and through it, the RDCs. Whilst this shift has had some negative impacts, such as a loss of implementation expertise, innovation and capacity (Child et al. 2003), given the accompanying shifts in the political, economic and social climate of Zimbabwe, and the implications that this has had for policy-making processes, it has been a significant factor in ensuring the survival of CAMPFIRE during this volatile period. The sense of ownership by RDCs through the CA and the income that it generates for RDCs have ensured their continued involvement and political support of CAMPFIRE.

From the beginning, CAMPFIRE – through the CCG – brought together a coalition of agencies that had different but complementary objectives and areas of expertise. Based on recognition of

the need for an institution that would represent the interests of the producer communities, the CCG then created the CA. In 1991, the CCG passed the leadership of the programme to the CA, with the intention of building its capacity as the legitimate representative of its rural constituency.⁴⁵ A distinctive feature of most implementing organisations was that they were dominated by highly committed and technically expert individuals, who, whilst having comprehensive networks and contacts which cross-cut sectoral, scale, racial and ethnic boundaries, were nevertheless predominantly white and from NGOs. A further distinctive feature of this actor-network is the degree to which certain key individuals played crucial roles. Acting as 'policy entrepreneurs', individuals such as Murphree, Martin, Nduku and Maveneke played pivotal and critical roles in creating and driving policy throughout the 1980s and 1990s, a period when the positive relationship between government and civil society created space for civil society influence on policy making.

As of 1989, CAMPFIRE began to attract financial support from donors, most notably from USAID through the NRMP. From 1995, USAID targeted the bulk of funding directly at the CA, which proceeded to marginalise other members of the CCG (Child et al. 2003). Following the withdrawal of funding for CAMPFIRE from USAID and most other donors, in 2003, the CCG disbanded as a functional group.⁴⁶

The CCG and the institutions of which it was comprised, which originally played such a catalytic and central role, have become largely irrelevant within the context of CAMPFIRE as of 2005. But given the shifting political dynamics, priorities and affiliations within the country, the CCG by its very nature may have become a political liability. As the above discussion has indicated, the racially biased and party-oriented political and policy environment no longer favours, or even tolerates, interventions from whites or NGOs, and discourages rational, technical, science-based policy solutions such as those advanced by the CCG. The replacement of the CCG by the CA alone as the primary advocacy group for CAMPFIRE represents the replacement of what has become a politically impotent group by one that has a significant political voice with significant incentives to use it. Reinforcing the political voice of the CA are the many individuals who are, or were, at the forefront of the CA. These individuals are influential political figures themselves,

often with strong links to the ruling party. For example, the now deceased Border Gezi made his political reputation with CAMPFIRE, going on to become the minister of the powerful Ministry of Youth, Gender and Employment Creation. Several other leading CA board members have used CAMPFIRE as a stepping stone in their political careers and remain associated with it, including former MPs Chauke and Chafesuka and sitting MP Mackenzie. Others, such as the former chairperson of the CA Board, Gotura, have moved on to other significant political roles, in this case as chairperson of the influential Association of RDCs.

Factors affecting CBNRM

Whilst the discourse upon which CAMPFIRE and sustainable use were based had solid scientific and rational underpinnings and appealed to the technical policy-making process of the 1990s, there were also other important elements to the CAMPFIRE discourse that appealed to a range of other agendas. These elements included empowerment, participation, racial equity, promotion of African traditional practices and national sovereignty, all of which government and CAMPFIRE advocates were able to use to good effect to bolster their image and political popularity.

Whilst sustainable use may have been an accepted approach nationally, it was still controversial internationally. CAMPFIRE played an important strategic role in regional and international debates about sustainable use, most notably in those related to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) and the Convention on Biological Diversity, putting Zimbabwe at the forefront of conservation initiatives globally. During the 1990s, it achieved what Wolmer et al. (2003:5) refer to as 'iconic status...rapidly becoming the most famous exemplar of CBNRM'. It was the recipient of many international conservation awards and accolades. Media attention, both nationally and internationally, was devoted to it; it attracted generous donor support to the country; researchers from all over the world converged on Zimbabwe; and thousands of workshops, conferences and publications were generated. The critical acclaim and recognition generated by it for Zimbabwe cemented its popularity at home both politically and socially.

The international profile that CAMPFIRE

achieved also made it possible for the government to play to other populist political agendas, enabling it to adopt populist stances at high-profile international events that resonated with the electorate at home. For example, arguments concerning sovereignty over national resources, 'African solutions to African problems', and anti-eco-imperialism (the new form of colonialism) were all commonly put forward as arguments in support of sustainable use and CAMPFIRE at international meetings by the government and CCG. All of this received significant media attention, in which CAMPFIRE was seen as a vehicle through which the government was upholding the sovereign rights of Zimbabweans internationally. Thus CAMPFIRE met a wide range of political agendas throughout the 1990s; one of the fundamental keys to its success in this regard was the comprehensive and cross-sectoral actor-network it was able to mobilise.

Strategic compromises on devolution

Murphree (1997:11) notes that 'a strategic compromise between concept and policy' characterised the process of policy development for CAMPFIRE. These compromises have led to what are generally perceived to be the major weaknesses of CAMPFIRE, but they also created a level of political acceptance that allowed it to emerge in the first place and to survive the political upheavals of the last five years. Murphree (2001) describes the three main accommodations as firstly, the rejection of *de jure* devolution of wildlife management and revenue rights to *de facto* rights; secondly, the rejection of self-defined local institutions in favour of existing sub-structures of the RDC, WADCOs and VIDCOs; and thirdly, the introduction of tactics based on conditionality to ensure revenue distribution to sub-district levels through the CAMPFIRE guidelines.

Centre to local level

This pragmatic approach ensured that the legal status and rights of self-definition of communities were compromised from the first. Distribution of revenues depended on the RDCs' adherence to CAMPFIRE policy guidelines, which stated that RDCs were expected to distribute a percentage of income (as of 2002 this was increased from 50% to 55%) derived from wildlife use to producer communities⁴⁷ and to allow these communities to be responsible for a number of wildlife management activities. Because of the existing

administrative system of local government, producer communities had to be represented by WADCOs and VIDCOs, which had no legal personality but were advisory bodies to RDCs. In practice then, AA decentralises authority and control over wildlife to RDCs, and CAMPFIRE confers on communities the right to share in the benefits from the use of wildlife by others but not to use it themselves. Despite the various mechanisms that have been developed to enable greater community control, such as community trusts, such mechanisms remain dependent upon the willingness of RDCs to comply.

As already discussed, RDCs are facing increasing pressure to retain financial benefits for general district development purposes.⁴⁸ There is consensus that poor fiscal devolution leads to a diminishing interest in the programme by communities co-existing with wildlife (Zimbabwe Trust 2001; Child et al 2003; Bond 2001). If this process remains unchecked, then the future of CAMPFIRE is uncertain. Attempts over the years by technical advisors and bureaucrats, from the government and from NGOs, to persuade RDCs to devolve greater revenues have proven largely futile in the face of the fiscal pressures placed upon RDCs. The following sections explore whether there is evidence that locally emerging political and social pressures can prove more successful in encouraging further devolution of fiscal responsibilities and the implications if this is the case.

Community control and benefits

Given that rights and responsibilities are legally vested with RDCs, the level to which individual communities are able to control and benefit from CAMPFIRE becomes an arbitrary process that rests largely on the inclinations of individual RDCs. As in the case of Botswana, CBNRM activities in Zimbabwe generate substantial benefits, even though the extent to which these benefits actually reach broader community members and improve individual household incomes remains questionable (Child et al. 2003; Bond 2001; Campfire Association 2005). The question that is relevant to pursue for Zimbabwe, as it is for Botswana, is whether the nature and extent of these benefits are enough to generate appreciation of CBNRM by rural constituents and stimulate demands from them for greater devolution. Further, if such demand does appear to be forthcoming, is there evidence that RDCs are responding to it? The general conclusion in

the case of Botswana was negative; the situation in Zimbabwe, as illustrated by the two case studies presented here, appears more complex.

Throughout Zimbabwe, there are hundreds of CAMPFIRE-related institutions at a sub-district level. Out of a total of 57 RDCs, 52 are involved. This makes it extremely difficult to make generalisations about the programme based on events in only two villages. Nevertheless, we do attempt to do so, whilst also recognising that, for different reasons, our two field sites, Mahenye and Chizvirizvi, are 'special cases' within the country. It is also essential to bear in mind that CAMPFIRE has been operational for some 15 years. Throughout this period, incidences of elite capture of benefits at a local level have been extremely common. Evidence from the case studies presented below implies that the primary reason for this occurring now is the chaotic and destabilising influence of the national context.

Mahenye case study

Mahenye Ward in the south-eastern periphery of Zimbabwe covers only 210 square kilometres and has a population of less than 1 000 households. However, its impact and reach over the past two decades in the history, discourse and practice of CBNRM nationally, regionally and internationally belie its size and remoteness. Throughout the 1990s it was one of the prime exemplars of CAMPFIRE as a successful sustainable development model, was well known for its demonstration of innovative growth and adaptation and was a major recipient of capacity-building efforts. Murphree (2001) provided a detailed history of the 'success' of Mahenye, illustrating its entrepreneurial flair in diversifying from sport-hunting into ecotourism and its resilience in the face of legal and bureaucratic constraints. He went on persuasively to argue the need for further devolution of authority to ward level. Because of the high profile and influence of Mahenye, what happens here 'matters' not just to the people and stakeholders of Mahenye, but to the process of policy development in general.

The key factors Murphree (2001) identified as contributing to this 'success story' were the insights, ingenuity and commitment of socially dedicated individuals in positions of influence or leadership, balancing sources of traditional and popular legitimacy, an 'enlightened private sector', a rich resource base, capacity for flexibility and acceptance of innovation and risk, and intra-communal cohesiveness. He comments

that:

in-group solidarity rooted in history and reinforced by perceptions of external differences....Like any community Mahenye has its internal differentiations but these have been contained by a sense of collective communal interest. The importance of this cannot be overstressed... (Murphree 2001:192).

Whilst individuals played a key role, Murphree (2001) also demonstrates that economic incentives were a key motivator in ensuring positive outcomes. Natural resource management activities, primarily safari hunting and ecotourism, brought with them improved infrastructure, but, most significantly, they contributed to household incomes through the regular annual distribution of household dividends in an equitable and transparent manner. Whilst the amount distributed varied from year to year, depending on the size of budget and number of households, and increased considerably after the introduction of high-end tourism lodges in 1997, allocations remained consistently at about 50% of the total budget for the period 1992 to 1997 (Murphree 2001).

Our research indicates that the situation in Mahenye has altered dramatically over the last five years. Of the 36 people interviewed, all but 2 – the current Mahenye CAMPFIRE Committee (MCC) chairperson and the chief – noted that until approximately 2000 CAMPFIRE was a representative process; that ward residents had considerable information on their rights and technical information (for example, the value of individual species and the income from revenue-generating ventures in their area); and that residents were able to participate through collectively designed and commonly understood democratic procedures. They further indicated that, since 2000, ward inhabitants had ceased to benefit from or participate in any decision-making processes related to CAMPFIRE, concurring that the only beneficiaries were now the chief and his immediate family. How could such a dramatic change occur in such a short period of time?

The MCC was established in the late 1980s. In order to ensure effective management of the resource base and an accountable and representative local-level management structure, it was established at the ward level. Whilst it has no legal basis, the MCC is, according to its constitution, responsible for carrying out management functions and employing local staff to monitor wildlife, poaching and the hunting activities of professional hunters. It sets budgets

and reports to general community meetings on its activities and planning. Prior to 2000, MCC board members were democratically elected at open annual general meetings (AGMs), and all decisions regarding use of revenues were collectively taken at these AGMs.

The demise of CAMPFIRE coincides with four related local events: firstly, the death of the highly respected old Chief Mahenye in 2001; secondly, on the instructions of the new chief, the complete change in MCC office-bearers as a result of the MCC elections of 2001, including the election of the chief's younger brother as chairperson (as of 2005, every office-bearer was a relation of the chief); thirdly, the election of a new ward councillor; and fourthly, the re-tendering of the hunting concession, which has led to ongoing conflict and the widespread belief among all stakeholders that the three different safari operators currently bidding for the concession are competing among each other in their attempts to illicitly 'buy off' the chief and the MCC in order to get preferential treatment. These changes have resulted in the removal of the strong local leadership which Murphree (2001) identified as a distinctive feature of Mahenye. Local power and authority have shifted away from the delicate balance established between traditional and popular structures, exclusively into the hands of the traditional leadership.

Events at a national level compounded those at the local level. The year 2000 saw a dramatic and public shift in the political dynamics in Zimbabwe, culminating in an increase in politically motivated violence and in the collapse of the 'rule of law' (Raftopoulos 2004). Underlying this situation was a racially and politically biased populist discourse about the return of 'African soil to Africans' adopted by the ruling party. This served to marginalise and vilify whites and, by inference, political opponents to the ruling party. At local levels this often translated into the violent persecution and marginalisation of opposition supporters and a suspicion of wildlife management as a means by which whites were attempting to retain control of land (Wolmer et al. 2003). Rihoy et al. (2007) provide evidence that covert intimidation by party and traditional leadership structures has been commonplace in Mahenye, the impact of which has been the marginalisation of key figures who formerly dominated the MCC (and who were known to be opposition supporters) from decision-making roles and a further reinforcement of the powers of the chief, an openly avowed

ZANU-PF supporter, whose power and legal status have been enhanced still further by the TLA. Meanwhile, those former members of the CCG who had been active in providing capacity-building and conflict resolution inputs within Mahenye throughout the 1990s – who in former times would have functioned as neutral arbitrators in local power struggles – were no longer able to do so due to a lack of funds or the lack of a mandate to do so arising from their marginalisation from CAMPFIRE as result of the national political context as discussed above.

The effect on CAMPFIRE of this co-option by the local elite has been dramatic. For example, since 2000 only two AGMs have been held, both of which were poorly attended in comparison to former AGMs. Elections for committee members have not been held at an AGM since 2001. When AGMs are held, their function is now very different. According to the chairperson of the MCC:

We use AGMs as a way to tell our community how the committee and traditional leaders have budgeted and spent CAMPFIRE money and other decisions. It's where we let them know what their leaders are doing for them (C. Chauke, pers. comm.).

There have also been significant shifts in economic incentives, which are only partly explained by the weakening of the economy. The high inflation rates and the collapse of the tourist industry have reduced the amount of revenues generated by the lodges, whilst income from the safari operations has stayed roughly comparable in real terms to that generated prior to 2000. However, since 2000, there has only been one payment of household dividends, in 2004, when a total of Z\$6 100 was distributed per household. Of this, each household immediately had to return Z\$6 000 to fund a 'district development levy', the purpose of which has never been clarified. This resulted in a take-home of just Z\$100, an amount which, as one interviewee put it, 'was not enough to buy one match'.

Meanwhile, those who attend the monthly MCC meetings get a sitting allowance of \$15 000 per session, refreshments and transport, theoretically amounting to a cost exceeding \$13 200 000 per meeting. This is in stark contrast with the total dividend payout in 2004 of \$6 100 000 from a total income that exceeded \$113 000 000. In summary, in the last five years, only one household dividend payment has been made. This amounted to 5% of the income for 2004, compared with an average dividend

payment of around 50% annually throughout the 1990s.

The widely-held belief in Mahenye of corruption, misuse and abuse of funds and power by the MCC and the chief resulted in an internal audit of the MCC by the RDC in April 2004, which confirmed such abuse.

Despite these problems, the people of Mahenye continue to demonstrate the remarkable level of intra-communal cohesiveness identified by Murphree (2001), agreeing that the root cause of problems lies with the co-option by the traditional leadership. Despite large-scale disillusionment with the current situation, positive participation in CAMPFIRE for over ten years prior to these events has ensured that people are aware of their rights and the nature of the current problems and have a common strategy to solve these.

People are collectively indicating that the RDC has a central role to play in fostering the conditions that will ensure empowerment by providing a neutral arbitration role in a situation that for cultural reasons cannot be addressed locally. Co-option and corruption of power at a local level can be directly linked to the broader political and economic crisis facing Zimbabwe today. However, CAMPFIRE, through the provision of benefits and information, has effectively empowered this community and provided its members with the confidence to express demands, including accountability, to the RDC.

Chizvirizvi case study

Research of a similar nature in Chizvirizvi Resettlement Area in Chiredzi District indicates that the co-option of local CAMPFIRE benefits by local elites that Mahenye has experienced is not an isolated case. However, the parallels between the two cases do not go much further than this. Chizvirizvi represents an exceptional situation, it being the only case in which AA has been granted directly to a sub-district institution – formerly the Chizvirizvi Development Committee (CDC), now the Wildlife Development Committee (WDC). This situation has occurred due to Chizvirizvi's status as a small-scale farming area, not as communal land (Mandondo & Kozanayi 2003).

Mandondo and Kozanayi (2003) have documented the history of Chizvirizvi in relation to land settlement and tenure patterns, paying particular attention to the 'waxing and waning' of the influence of institutions and the impact that these have had on development. They detail

how key local individuals were able to mobilise collective local action through strong and effective local institutions and personal networks at a regional and national level, ensuring that community demands to affect a change from nucleated settlement patterns to individual plots were met through the collective and co-ordinated action of the traditional leadership and CDC. However, this process was fraught with conflict at various levels and the configuration of institutions that were able to deliver the demands of the community did not last long in the face of the shifting national political context. The emergence of war veterans as a significant political force in the years 2000 to 2002, and their role in spearheading the seizure of the commercial farms that surrounded Chizvirizvi, ensured that they soon came to the fore in local political processes. Mandondo and Kozanayi (2003:10) note that 'the coercive and often violent activities of these groups significantly eroded the power and influence of both the developmental resettlement committee and traditional leadership.' It is against this background that wildlife management activities within Chizvirizvi take place.

The event that inspired individuals within Chizvirizvi to secure their own quota was a 'look and learn' visit by the councillor and others to Mahenye in 2002. AA was granted to CDC in 2003 following approaches by the councillor and the then chairperson of the CDC to relevant external authorities, despite opposition from the district administrator, RDC, CA and senior personnel within the WMA. The former chairperson of the CDC notes that the arguments they advanced were based on an appeal to the racially dominated land discourse that was pushing the fast-track resettlement process. Chizvirizvi was surrounded on three sides by white-owned commercial farming areas or conservancies, all of which had rights over their wildlife. Why should this then not apply to the black landowners of Chizvirizvi too? The unorthodox process they followed consisted of exclusive discussions between these two individuals and various political authorities, as opposed to the more 'usual' technical authorities, firstly at a provincial level and then at the national level. These culminated in discussions with the Minister of Local Government and the Minister of Environment and Tourism. Throughout this process the director of Lowveld Hunters provided logistical and financial support and advice to these individuals, upon the prior understanding that

Lowveld Hunters would receive the concession when granted. The outcome was the issuing of a quota for the CDC in 2003, which was subsequently renewed in 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Whilst negotiations were ongoing, the ward councillor unilaterally decided to dissolve the CDC, replacing it with a WDC and appointing himself as chairperson. No elections were held.⁴⁹

Once the quota was issued, the councillor called a community meeting in April 2003 at which people were informed that AA had been secured and that Lowveld Hunters was appointed as the safari operator. Lowveld Hunters made various promises of infrastructural developments for Chizvirizvi, including radio links and electrification. As of mid-2005, none had been met and no contract existed between the operator and WDC. To date, this remains the only community meeting held to discuss wildlife management. None of the procedures or functions 'normally' associated with ward-level CAMPFIRE institutions have been undertaken, including the maintenance of financial records, although there is a bank account, and no constitution exists.

As of end 2005, total benefits distributed were from the shooting of one lion, which resulted in the cash distribution of Z\$5 000 000 to households bordering Gonarezhou in late 2004.⁵⁰ There is a general belief that at least two elephants had been shot, but it is not clear whether these were shot on PAC (Problem Animal Control) or hunted, what the value of an elephant may be or where any funds arising may have gone. The councillor maintains that he unilaterally decided to invest the income from these elephants – which he claims to have been Z\$60 000 000 – in a tractor for the resettlement area and that this had been done. However, the only tractor purchased at that time in the area had been one he purchased privately. As no financial records are kept, total income is impossible to determine, and as only the councillor and the former chairperson of the CDC have access to the quota in Chizvirizvi, they are the only individuals who have any knowledge of the real or potential value of the wildlife resource.

Table 2 provides details of the quotas allocated by the WMA to Chizvirizvi from 2004 to 2006. As neither the WMA nor the RDC undertakes any monitoring of hunting activities and as no local records are kept, it is not possible to determine what the actual off-take was. What is clear, is that the potential value of this quota to Chizvirizvi

Table 2: WMA-issued hunting quotas for Chizvirizvi resettlement area, 2004–06

	Population Estimate/ indices	2004	2005	2006
Buffalo	70	1	1	2
Bush pig	50		1	1
Elephant	120	1	1	2
Hyaena	45		1	1
Kudu	40		1	1
Leopard	30	1	1	1
Porcupine	35		1	1
Steenbok	65		1	1
Warthog	70		1	1

Sources: WMA (Wildlife Management Authority) 2004; WMA (Wildlife Management Authority) 2005; WMA (Wildlife Management Authority) 2006.

vastly exceeds the Z\$65 000 000 which the councillor maintains has been raised.

Research in Chizvirizvi revealed that the majority of respondents are completely unaware of the wildlife management programme. Of those who were, all said they received no benefits, had no involvement in any management activities or any decisions regarding the use of benefits, had no knowledge of funds generated or how these funds had been used, and had no knowledge of any procedures that should be followed or of the value or nature of the resources being utilised. Those interviewed who did have knowledge of the programme were of the opinion that their most significant problem was lack of information relating to any aspect of it. Over 50% of those interviewed also indicated that fear of the councillor, who has a long and well-known track record of violence in the area, was preventing anyone from taking any action to address the situation. The majority of respondents indicated that the traditional leadership should take the lead in addressing the situation, whilst no one identified this as a role for the RDC. Whilst the chief and other traditional leaders interviewed were outspoken in their condemnation of the existing situation, they, too, indicated that without any information and given the powerful political patronage that the councillor enjoys, there was little they could do to address the situation. The solution to the problem identified by the majority of interviewees was to ensure that the councillor is not re-elected. Chiredzi RDC, whose members are well aware of the situation in Chizvirizvi, is unwilling to assist in addressing the problem,

as it does not have the mandate provided by AA, because of the highly politicised nature of the situation and because of the long history of conflict and controversy between the RDC and Chizvirizvi.

Whilst it is extremely difficult to make generalisations based on just these two examples of CAMPFIRE, it is clear that, given the chaotic national context within which CAMPFIRE is now operating, the RDCs have an important potential role to play as intermediary institutions that can ensure that relatively inexperienced and unskilled local community institutions are not at the mercy of corrupt external and local forces, for example, unscrupulous private operators or overtly self-serving political or traditional interests.

Conclusion

Since its inception, CAMPFIRE has been implemented by a variety of different organisations with different areas of expertise and implementation capacities. This has ensured an appropriate blend of skills and approaches and significant human and financial resources have been brought to bear. Whilst this does not imply that implementation has been faultless or that efforts to establish representative institutions have always been successful, it did ensure that prior to 2000 basic oversights in implementation did not undermine community efforts to establish representative local governance structures. This is best appreciated when contrasted with the situation in Botswana, where efforts to establish local governance institutions were tied to the undemocratic institution of the Kgotla by the

implementing agencies, resulting in the creation of unaccountable institutions.

A further significant contrast with Botswana is the central role that RDCs have fulfilled in implementing CAMPFIRE at the local level. Each RDC has its own CAMPFIRE management unit which – originally in collaboration with supporting NGOs and DWNPLM, but since the mid-1990s increasingly independently – is primarily responsible for CAMPFIRE management activities locally, including the provision of institutional strengthening and capacity-building services. This has ensured that within the technical advisory arms of most RDCs there is real knowledge of and commitment to the central importance of further devolution of responsibilities and authority in order to achieve the goals of resource management and community development. This knowledge and commitment could prove vital to further decision making by RDCs on devolution. However, as we have maintained throughout this paper, having the technical knowledge to achieve the objectives of CBNRM will not alone ensure positive outcomes. Decisions will be influenced by economic and political pressures from national and local levels. The example of Mahenye appears to give credence to the notion that RDCs can and will respond to the needs of their local constituents should these be clearly articulated.

Any discussion on CAMPFIRE has to be rooted in the current political, social and economic context and should take cognisance of the historical context and its implications. At the macro level, the political climate is not conducive to devolutionary approaches that place more power in the hands of local communities. Since the early 1990s, the tendency of government has been to centralise authority and control. For example, proposals to provide local communities with proprietorship over land and natural resources by the Rukuni Land Commission Report (Government of Zimbabwe 1994) were either ignored or severely watered down. Since 2000, this tendency has been enhanced, with authoritarianism becoming normal political practice in what is now a deeply polarised state (Raftopoulos 2004). At the district level, RDCs have been assigned authority over a variety of resources that they have been reluctant to pass on to sub-district levels, and which they are equally as reluctant to return to the national level. This situation is compounded by the economic crisis that has resulted in CAMPFIRE revenues

becoming increasingly significant to the budgets of RDCs.

But despite this context of crisis, CAMPFIRE has shown remarkable resilience. Our research indicates that this resilience is primarily a function of the decentralisation strategies that characterised CAMPFIRE, as opposed to devolution. Given the very specific situation now facing Zimbabwe, decentralisation, by ensuring that the relatively politically powerful RDCs are outspoken supporters of CAMPFIRE, has led to a situation whereby the government's recentralising tendencies have been unable to come into force. Moreover, based on field evidence from two sites, Mahenye and Chizvirizvi, we maintain that the RDCs are playing (in the case of Mahenye) or could play (Chizvirizvi), a vital role in ensuring that local elites do not monopolise and capture the process at a local level. RDCs are providing a system of checks and balances to ensure that the process is not abused by powerful local elites working in collaboration with unscrupulous private sector interests and national politicians. We regard, under certain circumstances, one of the most significant impacts of CAMPFIRE over the last 15 years to have been the empowerment of local communities – by making them aware of the value of the natural resources in their areas and their (albeit limited) rights to these, and by raising awareness of mechanisms through which they can exercise these rights. Mahenye illustrates that community members now have the knowledge, confidence and means through which they are able to clearly and collectively express 'demands' to the RDCs and that RDCs will respond to these.

Having created this situation, CAMPFIRE could ultimately lead to greater accountability of the RDCs to their local constituents, thus contributing to processes of democratisation. To date, the evidence that it may do so is too limited to determine outcomes. The key factor is the nature of the relationship and distribution of rights between RDCs and local institutions. Negotiating these is a vital step in processes of empowerment and democratisation. Understanding power-knowledge relations is important for local communities in their quest for empowerment. Once local communities recognise their collective power and political muscle, they are able to assert themselves at the local level. Assertiveness at the local level is a prerequisite for stimulating negotiation and political dialogue in CBNRM, even in a seemingly hostile political climate. Mahenye provides evidence that local

communities can stimulate negotiation when they assert and articulate their interests and recognise their collective power through non-compliance and 'playing their political cards' shrewdly.

7. Lessons learned

Looking at the contemporary problems faced by CBNRM, some observers (Murphree 2004; CASS/PLAAS 2004) argue that the way forward lies with communities 'demanding' further rights from government. This call for 'demand-driven CBNRM' takes into account only half of the equation. Equally important is that the state has the capacity and willingness to provide access, justice and legal redress based on a respect for human rights (Jones & Gaventa 2002). Thus, in non-democratic polities, such as Zimbabwe and increasingly Botswana, demand on its own is insufficient; it must be accompanied by the creation of political and policy spaces to enable local communities to participate in CBNRM decision making and politics.

CBNRM is a political process, involving political risks. Implementers and policy advocates need to understand the power relations associated with CBNRM and the political landscape in their quest for better governance and socio-economic and political empowerment. Evidence from both Botswana and Zimbabwe bears out that national political and economic contexts are defining factors in determining outcomes. The two cases provide interesting insights into the governance and politics of natural resource management. It is clear that alliances and boundaries form and that, when situations change, these alliances and boundaries shift and reconfigure the landscape of natural resource management governance and politics. In the case of Zimbabwe, a strong actor-network with an ability to mobilise political support has played a central role in the development of an appropriate policy environment, although this has involved pragmatic compromises along the way. In the case of Botswana, the weakness of the actor-network and the resultant lack of political influence have exposed CBNRM to the arbitrary whims of individuals among the political and economic elite, culminating in the current threat of recentralisation. What is evident in both cases is that the role of local government in actor-networks can be crucial in sustaining CBNRM in the face of recentralisation threats which serve the interests of some elites. While in Zimbabwe RDCs are notoriously associated with 'capturing'

CAMPFIRE benefits, we argue that, in the current context of Zimbabwe, RDCs play a critical role in maintaining political support for CAMPFIRE at the national level and provide essential checks and balances at the local level which can prevent capture of the process by local elites. In contrast, the absence of involvement of RDCs in Botswana has led to a lack of implementation capacity, an absence of local checks and balances to prevent local elite capture, and a lack of political allies to ensure that recentralisation does not occur.

Our findings confirm that a greater degree of decentralisation and devolution of authority over resources to local institutions does not necessarily ensure greater community development and CBNRM benefits. As Ribot (2004) and Murphree (2000) point out, it is the degree to which local-level institutions are representative and accountable to their communities that will determine their impact on development and conservation. It is on this basis that local government and CBNRM need to be better integrated, with a focus on local governance and democracy. Bypassing local government authorities runs many risks. There is a need for alliances and integration. The role of local government can be understood in terms of two perspectives of local councils: firstly, they can be viewed as controlling arms of state in rural communities and secondly, they can be seen as representative institutions looking after local interests (Duffy 2000; Hill 1994). The reality of the matter is that most local governments are substantially accountable to central government, even though their constituencies democratically elect councillors. It is this structuring of accountability and representation that concerns us as advocates of democratic CBNRM. We believe that CBNRM can contribute to democratisation as long as it ensures greater downward accountability and representation of RDCs to local constituents.

This paper highlights the important role played by local government institutions, such as RDCs, in promoting decentralisation of resource management in Zimbabwe. RDCs are the legal appropriate structures for decentralising resource management and, when accountable downwards,

can create democratic space for policy making and political participation of rural communities. Contrary to the common belief that the RDC is where effective decentralisation ends, we consider that downwardly accountable RDCs offer counterbalancing forces to recentralisation and elite capture of CBNRM. The RDC is the legal personality with AA status in Zimbabwe. Thus, when exposed to democratic processes, local communities (the electorate and political constituency) can exert demands and pressure on RDCs to be downwardly accountable and representative. Therefore, the perceived unresponsiveness of RDCs to local-level demands and needs of local people reflects the political weaknesses of civil society and the lack of a politically aggressive (politically-salient) constituency that can challenge poor local government–local community relations. Given political and legal realities, the CAMPFIRE model of decentralised resource management and governance, which assigns RDCs AA status, is contextually relevant for Zimbabwe and can be improved by promoting local governance and democratisation of RDC decision making. Strengthening local decision making on CAMPFIRE issues requires sharing of power and decision making between RDCs and wildlife-producer communities. When approached from this standpoint, it is possible to create synergies between the CBNRM objective of devolving managerial authority and decision making to producer communities and the legal requirements that assign appropriate authority over resource management to the RDCs.

It is essential that CBNRM programmes be linked to issues of local governance and democracy and that local government institutions offer opportunities for mobilising local communities to participate in governance and development. The emphasis on devolution that has dominated the CBNRM debate has clouded the issue of governance and the potential positive aspects between first- and second-level tiers of governance, that is, the relationship between producer wards and RDCs (in Zimbabwe)

and CBOs and land boards/local councils (in Botswana). Rather, focus should be directed at understanding and developing viable local governance regimes that enable rural constituents to demand accountability from local government structures.

In a nutshell, this paper revisits the nature of devolution and democratisation of natural resource management in southern Africa through a comparative analysis of CBNRM policy processes in Botswana and Zimbabwe. It calls into question the rhetoric of democracy in Botswana by exposing how political economic elites directing CBNRM policy processes have constrained political and policy space for local communities, thus limiting the participation of rural communities in shaping policy. Case evidence in Zimbabwe has shown how, in the context of the current political chaos in the country, local elites have captured CBNRM processes. The net result in both countries is that local communities suffer as elites prosper through their monopoly of decision-making authority over CBNRM benefits. On the basis of this concern, how do we build and sustain democratic CBNRM processes in undemocratic political systems? What needs to be done to build capacity for democracy and governance at the local level? As this study demonstrates, there is a need to articulate the political intentions of CBNRM and its democratising objectives. The political goal of transforming the state of power relations in CBNRM should be matched by real devolution of authority over natural resources to local communities. This will require meaningful participation of rural people in policy formulation and implementation. This can only be achieved if second-tier levels of local governance become accountable to their constituents as well as the state, that is, downwardly and upwardly accountable. If implemented appropriately, CBNRM has the potential to contribute towards the creation of downwardly as well as upwardly accountable institutions, thereby enhancing democratic space for marginalised rural communities.

8. Endnotes

- ¹ The authors wish to acknowledge with thanks the assistance of The World Conservation Union (IUCN) in facilitating our research. However, the analysis and conclusions presented here are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IUCN.
- ² The distinction between devolution and decentralisation is central to this paper. Following Murphree (2000), we define devolution as ‘the creation of relatively autonomous realms of authority, responsibility and entitlement, *with a primary accountability to their own constituencies*’ (emphasis added) (Murphree 2000:6). In contrast, decentralisation is ‘the delegation of authority and responsibility to subordinate and dispersed units of hierarchical jurisdiction, *which retain a primary accountability upward to their superiors in the hierarchy*’ (emphasis added) (Murphree 2000:6). We draw upon this same distinction when referring to local government (state-related) as opposed to local-level governance institutions (communal, non-state government). Murombedzi argues that devolution is a variant of decentralisation. For it to occur, it starts with central government’s willingness to share power and decision-making authority with local-level institutions and NGOs. Consequently, there is an element of decentralisation in devolution, despite definitional and conceptual differences in the two terminologies (J. Murombedzi, CASS/PLAAS CBNRM discussion forum, 2005).
- ³ A detailed description of the methodology is available upon request as this forms part of the lead author’s doctoral dissertation.
- ⁴ The influence of powerful political individuals, most notably the vice-president, Ian Khama, in CBNRM reflects the dominance of the traditional/modernised political economic elites in wildlife conservation. This reinforces Gibson’s (1999) assertion that wildlife in Africa is a political tool.
- ⁵ Approximately 45% of land is cattle pasture, 17% national parks and game reserves, and 22% wildlife management areas (WMAs). WMAs are meant to benefit communities that live on or near them, and wildlife utilisation is the primary form of land use. Other forms of development and agricultural or pastoral land uses are restricted. There are approximately 163 controlled hunting areas (CHAs) that overlie other forms of land use in Botswana. The Government of Botswana has zoned 42 CHAs for community management, of which 14 leases have so far been issued (Rozemeijer 2003:28).
- ⁶ In 1994, Botswana celebrated its sixth open, democratic election, a record unmatched in Africa (Danevad 1993). To date, eight democratic elections have taken place.
- ⁷ Botswana has graduated from one of the poorest countries in the world at independence in 1966 to being classified by the World Bank as a middle-income country with a per capita GDP of US\$9 200 in 2004 (UNDP 2005).
- ⁸ This is usually as members of the boards of directors of the larger international tour companies, such as the Okavango Wilderness Safaris, the Botswana affiliate of Wilderness Safaris, the largest tourism operator in Africa.
- ⁹ They identify the shortcomings of the state of democracy in Botswana as the centralisation of constitutional and political power in the unelected office of the President; the lack of free speech and curtailment of the freedom of the media; the pervasiveness of secrecy and non-accountability in government decision making; and the inability of government to accept or engage with criticism.
- ¹⁰ Civil society refers to the arena where public debate on issues is conducted, and this is known as the ‘deliberative’ or ‘public sphere’ perspective on civil society; and/or existence of non-market organisations between the household and the state, commonly known as the ‘associationalist’ view of civil society. The non-market organisations may include NGOs, social movements, informal organisations and other associational organisations (membership organisations, etc.) (Borrini-Feyerabend et al. 2004:385). In this paper, we use both interpretations of civil society to avoid ‘splitting hairs’ given the cross-cutting nature and dynamism of non-market organisations’ engagement in public debate.

- ¹¹ In 2003, Botswana was reclassified as a 'middle-income' country, resulting in the withdrawal of many donors from the country.
- ¹² Foremost of these are the Wildlife Conservation Policy (Government of Botswana 1986) and the Tourism Policy (Government of Botswana 1990), which call for citizen involvement and participation in tourism and wildlife-related industries and provide for the acquisition of exclusive tourism concessions for communities and private enterprises for 15 years; whilst the Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act (Government of Botswana 1992) facilitated community-based wildlife management through the creation of WMAs. These instruments relate specifically to wildlife and do not cover other natural resources, nor do they contain specific provisions on how community involvement is to be achieved (Rozemeijer & Van der Jagt 2000).
- ¹³ A SAVINGRAM is a directive issued by the Government of Botswana. In January 2001, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government, Mr E. Molale, raised government concerns relating to financial management in a SAVINGRAM, identifying the poor handling and use of funds earned from CBNRM projects, the lack of audited reports and the misappropriation of CBNRM funds by some trusts. As a result, the Permanent Secretary instructed that district councils – instead of safari operators dealing directly with participating communities – should manage all funds earned from community-based projects in trust. The CBNRM stakeholder group effectively blocked this SAVINGRAM at the time.
- ¹⁴ This strategy explicitly recognises the need to increase community involvement in initiating, developing and implementing rural development projects, calling for the devolution of development responsibilities and control to local communities. Whilst the launch of this policy was greeted by many within the CBNRM community as a significant success on their behalf and as a great opportunity (Arntzen et al. 2003; National CBNRM Forum 2004), there appears to date to have been little effort made to capitalise on these opportunities.
- ¹⁵ The degree to which the wildlife-focused CBNRM programme actually influenced these events, as claimed, rather than the broader shift in global discourses and the resulting impact on national development policies, is questionable given the lack of outreach from DWNP to other government departments and the limited involvement of sections of civil society (including NGOs and the private sector) in the programme prior to 1999.
- ¹⁶ Botswana's history as a protectorate of the British Crown, rather than a colony, ensured that it was less affected by colonial rule than any other country in southern Africa. This has led to various distinctions between Botswana and its neighbouring states, nowhere more so than in terms of its land tenure systems. Settlement by white farmers was never a dominant feature and consequently no more than 5.5% of the land was ever alienated for white-owned farms, compared to nearly 60% in Zimbabwe (Tshuma 1997).
- ¹⁷ Leasehold farms were first established under the 1975 Tribal Grazing Land Policy (TGLP) and were reinforced under the fencing component of the 1991 National Policy on Agricultural Development (NAPD). Leasehold farms are individually owned and are inaccessible to non-owners (Peters 1994).
- ¹⁸ Whilst there have been efforts during the 1990s to promote tourism as an alternative land use in wildlife-rich areas, Mbaiwa (2004b) and Hitchcock (2003) demonstrate that the bulk of these efforts have benefited the private sector rather than the communal sector. If the mounting evidence that senior political figures are becoming increasingly involved in the tourism sector is valid, it is perhaps not surprising to see increased political pressure to roll back the CBNRM policy and ensure greater privatisation.
- ¹⁹ Within the 7th, 8th and current (9th) NDPs, wildlife is recognised as one of the country's three main valuable natural resources, along with minerals and rangelands, and emphasis is placed on the opportunities it provides to the diversification of the economy, and its importance for rural development (Government of Botswana 2003b:71).
- ²⁰ This dates back to the Tordoff Commission of 1970 whose recommendations that DC staff and finance be substantially improved, were adopted (Tordoff 1988).
- ²¹ For example, it depends upon the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning (MFDP) to cover recurrent and capital costs and

- authorise expenditures, whilst the Ministry of Local Government, Lands and Housing (MLGLH) controls all decisions relating to personnel.
- ²² There has been progress over the years. Picard (1987) characterised Botswana as an administrative state in which bureaucratic elites had control over processes of decision making. By 2003, Wuncsh (2003) claimed that the last two decades had seen a considerable increase in the influence of local government as a result of expanded budgets, technical capability and responsibilities ranging from social service provision to land use planning.
- ²³ Indeed Wunsch (2003), in a comprehensive comparative study of local government in South Africa, Swaziland and Botswana, concludes that whilst local autonomy is limited and there are personnel and operational weaknesses in local government, Botswana has nevertheless made great progress in the last 20 years and is the best of the three countries in providing quality local governance which responds to local needs.
- ²⁴ Duffy (2000:1) clearly demonstrates how appeals to the concept of sustainable use in the 1980s and 1990s in Zimbabwe served to 'depoliticize internal environmental politics', allowing the local conservation movement and allies to present a united front, actively engaging in processes of co-construction and recursively shaping the way in which policy and science supported CBNRM policy development in Zimbabwe.
- ²⁵ Khama's influence extends into many socio-political and economic spheres. Not only is he the Vice-President, he is also Paramount Chief of the Bamangwato and the eldest son of the nationally revered Sir Seretse Khama. Thus, to paraphrase Mamdani (1996:289), Khama is simultaneously the representative of civil society whilst also the despotic power over native authorities. Khama's open adoption of coercive conservation tactics – using the army to engage in anti-poaching activities – and his public anti-hunting stance leave no doubt about his belief in a protectionist conservation paradigm.
- ²⁶ One of the most striking elements characterising these programmes is the lack of continuity between them. For example, NRMP developed comprehensive training tools, none of which are currently in use. Both SNV and the European Union (EU) each developed alternative approaches. The valuable documentary records of the NRMP (amounting to hundreds of documents) are no longer available in the DWNP library.
- ²⁷ Bolstering this perception still further is the fact that the primary architects of the enabling policy framework that facilitated the introduction of the NRMP, the director of DWNP and several of his key staff, were also expatriates.
- ²⁸ This is in sharp contrast to the CBNRM programmes in Zimbabwe, Namibia and elsewhere, which have strong, locally conceived conceptual roots (Jones & Murphree 2001), the development of which created a dedicated, cohesive and influential network at national and local levels. In Botswana these networks are largely absent.
- ²⁹ This stands in sharp contrast to the situation in Zimbabwe where CAMPFIRE has developed a strong social and political constituency. Despite its apparently volatile political, social and economic environment, CAMPFIRE is embedded in the political landscape, policy environment and rural politics largely as a result of the influence of the actor-network involved in the implementation of CAMPFIRE.
- ³⁰ This programme's activities included support to and nurturing of BOCOBONET, the National CBNRM Forum, the North West CBNRM Forum and the CBNRM Steering Committee, coupled with efforts to document and communicate information on CBNRM.
- ³¹ The objective was to provide a platform for broad stakeholder dialogue on issues of common interest, identify constraints and ways forward, and enable members to share experiences and exchange information.
- ³² CBOs traditionally relied on external capacity-building inputs, which, when withdrawn, weakened their institutional support base.
- ³³ One result of the CKGR controversy is a growing national tendency to 'blame' the San for the international condemnation of Botswana's human rights record as they draw international attention to their plight in a country used to being fêted as the standard-bearer for democracy in Africa. Confronted with increasingly hostile international attention, politicians, government officials and the media have unwarrantedly instituted a social and political backlash against the San.

- ³⁴ CBOs established under the auspices of CBNRM in Botswana are involved in activities encompassing a broad range of different natural resources, including veld products such as thatching grass, herbal teas, medicinal plants collection and marketing, handicraft production and tourism-focused ventures such as the management of community campsites and photographic and hunting safaris in partnership with the private sector. Whilst CBOs are fairly evenly spread throughout the country, direct financial benefits for communities from joint venture agreements (JVAs) are concentrated in Ngamiland and Chobe. The total income from 12 JVAs in 2002 was estimated at P8.45 million, or P735 772 per CBO, a substantial increase in revenues from the mid-1990s, which were on average below P200 000 per CBO .
- ³⁵ Approximately P5.6 is equivalent to US\$1.
- ³⁶ The establishment of the village of Khwai has never been gazetted and is not recognised as a settlement. The government is therefore not obliged to provide any of the standard social and welfare services, such as schools, water or health facilities. The result is that Khwai is generally considered to be one of the most marginalised villages, with some of the most disadvantaged people in Botswana (Taylor 2000; Potts 2003).
- ³⁷ The important factor in turning around both of these CBOs appears to be quality local leadership and external facilitation and capacity building.
- ³⁸ Habarad (2003) argues that financial devolution has inadvertently distorted local political processes, creating and strengthening local political and economic elites at the expense of poor, marginalised members of the rural community.
- ³⁹ In 2003, in Ngamiland, three DWNP extension staff had responsibility for providing capacity-building inputs for twelve CBOs with a total aggregate annual income exceeding P7 000 000.
- ⁴⁰ The efforts to involve NGOs by the BNRMP were hampered by lack of capacity, interest and geographical reach of existing NGOs, and, most notably, by the administrative requirements of the donor which only allowed for the funding of registered private voluntary organisations (PVOs). This greatly restricted the choice of implementation partners and hindered the process (N. Winer, pers. comm.).
- ⁴¹ Policy spaces refer to the arenas where various actors engage each other to influence policy.
- It essentially entails the public domain and political processes of policy making where different interest groups (actors) seek to shape policy depending on their relative political economic power and influence.
- ⁴² The policy implications of the origins of CAMPFIRE have been exhaustively documented by Murphree (1997), Jones and Murphree (2001) and Murombedzi (2003), and therefore will not be discussed at length here, as we have done above for Botswana, where this analysis has not been presented prior to this.
- ⁴³ The clearest example of this is in the government's revitalisation of the land reform process under the fast-track approach. During this process, many of the standard planning approaches were pushed aside in favour of the populist mobilisation of 'land invaders', with the aim of boosting the ruling party's waning popularity (Keeley & Scoones 2003).
- ⁴⁴ The Natural Resources Act provides for RDCs to establish conservation committees that are able to make highly interventionist bylaws on the use of natural resources, including wildlife. The Communal Land Act vests ownership of communal land in the state and the administration of communal land in the hands of the RDCs. The Rural District Council Act gives RDCs power to take measures to conserve natural resources, permit grazing and cultivation, develop land use plans and make bylaws for the protection of natural resources. The RDCs may issue permits for catching fish, hunting, cutting firewood, cutting grass and collecting honey.
- ⁴⁵ Throughout the early 1990s, the CCG continued to expand to include Africa Resources Trust, Action Magazine, SAFIRE and, belatedly, the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (MILGRUD).
- ⁴⁶ As of 2005, WWF was making efforts through its Southern African Regional Programme Office (SARPO) to re-establish some form of support network.
- ⁴⁷ Producer communities are the social groups or local communities who bear the cost of conservation, and therefore should be the direct beneficiaries and managers of wildlife.
- ⁴⁸ By 2001, only 38% of revenue was returned to producer communities, some 20% was used for CAMPFIRE management, and over 40%, compared with an agreed upper limit of 15%, was retained by RDCs for general

administration purposes (Child et al. 2003).
⁴⁹ Ninety-five percent of interviewees in Chizvirizvi were unable to identify any of the office-bearers other than the councillor, were unaware of any meetings taking place, were unaware of what WDC's functions should be and had never received any benefit nor anticipated doing so.

⁵⁰ It is interesting to note, as demonstrated in Table 2, lions were not included on the WMA-

issued quota for 2004. The quota for 2003 was awarded at the provincial level and records of what it contained are not publicly available. The shooting of this lion caused controversy locally as it was considered to be a breach of procedures, with Malilangwe Trust noting that it was an incidence of 'unethical hunting practices' (Malilangwe Trust 2004:7).

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- Anonymous 3, District Council Officer, District Council Office, Maun, March 2005.
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