

A Capability Theory of CBNRM: the case of Namibia's Communal Conservancy Program

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One of the most successful institutional models of community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) in Africa is found in Namibia. The second youngest country in Africa has successfully married conservation with poverty reduction through its well-established community development program, the communal conservancy program (CCP), which grants communities exclusive rights to wildlife. Using Namibia's communal conservancy as a case study, this paper attempts to address the scarcity of capability theory in the study of community-based development and conservation in Africa. The paper proposes three dimensions of a capability theory of CBNRM as applied to Namibia: 1) capability as the ability of communities to reduce poverty and diversify economic opportunity for their members, 2) capability as a capacity to manage wildlife sustainably through a community-driven resource management, 3) capability as improving local capacity for self-governance. The paper concludes that Namibia's conservancy program, though facing some long-term challenges, appears to be sustainable.

Key words: conservation, conservancy, community, development, capability, governance, access.

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“In the affairs of the nation there was no owner, the laws of the village became powerless”

(Achebe 1998: cited in Englebert 1997: p. 768.)

I. Introduction

The pressing challenges of Sub-Saharan Africa (hereafter SSA)—poverty reduction, human development and resource conservation, democratization, and post-conflict peace-building—can be attributed to systemic “institutional decay” at the most local level of governance, the village. Granted, there are numerous explanations for lack of sustained development and effective governance in SSA, and the underpinnings of the continent’s challenges are arguably idiosyncratic. But, according to an increasingly popular paradigm of community-based development, the so-called Community-based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM¹), Africa’s complex predicament stems to a large extent from the gradual erosion of the ‘laws of the village’ and the attendant institutional and administrative void, resulting from decades of top-down governance and state monopoly of the development process (Dia 1996; Owusu 2000; Olowu 2003; Crook 2003).

At the heart of the long-standing institutional discord between the administrative contours of the post-colonial African state² and the pre-colonial social institutions of local communities is a ‘disconnected state’ that is neither deeply rooted in, nor properly aligned with, the customary institutions of the village (Dia 1996). The post-colonial African state, being a colonial (read European) artifact and therefore, a generally illegitimate institution superimposed on traditional/pre-colonial institutions, has succumbed to “patronage politics” to make up for its

¹ For a critical summary of the development of CNRM theory, see Kellert et al. (2000).

² Young (2004) argues that the concept of a post-colonial African state is “increasingly redundant” since many African states no longer qualify as “post-colonial states”—defined as states that have inherited the institutions and structures of colonialism. However, in as far as traditional institutions remain “uncaptured,” this author believes the term is useful and applies to almost all African states, even though one could argue that Ethiopia and Liberia were never colonized by Europeans, and therefore do not qualify as post-colonial states.

defective political authority. The deficit of legitimacy has in turn limited its capability for pro-development policies and programs. Building on this recurring diagnosis of the underdevelopment of Africa's state-society relations in general, and the pitfalls of colonial and post-colonial governments' handling of natural resources in particular, proponents of CBNRM call for a new development approach that stresses reconciling the truncated institutions of the post-colonial state with its socio-logical foundations: pre-colonial institutions of political governance, resources management, and conflict resolution (Englebert 1997).

The construction of Africa's "sad state of affairs" as "institutional crisis", however, is not just an ivory tower intellectualism by proponents of CBNRM. It has important policy implications for poverty reduction, resource conservation, conflict resolution, and grassroots democracy. Furthermore, international development institutions such as the World Bank have belatedly come to the realization that poverty reduction and "good governance" in SSA cannot be accomplished without first tackling "the institutional crisis affecting economic management" and bridging the "structural disconnect between formal institutions transplanted from outside and indigenous institutions born of traditional African culture" (Dia 1996:vii).

As a holistic development strategy that ties economic incentives to resource conservation and local institutional development, CBNRM provides a fertile ground for testing the viability of this neo-institutionalist development paradigm that stresses bridging the gap between formal structures of the state and informal social institutions. This is because CBNRM promises to 1) decentralize resources management to unleash the full economic potential of common property resources (hereafter CPRs) by liberating them from the monopoly of the state and the private sector; 2) improve the capabilities of rural communities to earn a sustainable livelihood by according them secure and exclusive access to and control of CPRs; 3) empower traditional

authorities to manage CPRs by recognizing them as legal entities with secure management powers and capacities (Skyer & Munyaradzi 2004).

Despite its appealing attributes as new vision of sustainable development and governance, however, CBNRM has encountered a range of administrative, political, and economic constraints in many African countries (Turner 2004). Many CBNRM programs in SSA have not been successful mainly because they lack the full support of the governing elites who are reluctant to transfer power to local communities (Jones 1998; 1999). Even when backed by a strong political will and clear policy endorsement at the national level, the execution of CBNRM programs at the local level has proved difficult as bureaucrats and local government structures resist relinquishing their powers by transferring tangible rights to local communities (Cleaver 2000). Namibia's³ Communal Conservancy Program (CCP), which was formally introduced in 1998, seems to have overcome some of these common problems that afflict similar CBNRM programs in other parts of Africa.

While the absence of effective political will and uncooperative bureaucrats obstruct the institutionalization of CBNRM in many CBNRM cases in Africa, where the transfer to local communities of responsibilities for managing dwindling natural resources has yet to be accompanied by real devolution of discretionary powers and tangible rights, Namibia's experience offers an exemplary CBNRM model with the right mix of national political will and innovative institutional design (Songorwa 2000). Building on earlier models⁴ from Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, and South Africa, Namibia has developed "one of the largest demonstrations of CBNRM and the state-sanctioned empowerment of local communities," which

³ About half the size of Alaska, Namibia is located in southwestern Africa. Its neighborhood includes Angola and Zambia to the north, Botswana to the east, South Africa to the south, and the Atlantic Ocean in the west. The population of Namibia is estimated to be about 2,044,147, most of which reside in rural areas.

⁴ These are mainly Zimbabwe's Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources (Campfire), Zambia's Administrative Management Design (ADMAD), and Mozambique's Tchuma Tchato project.

has brought remarkable economic, environmental and institutional transformation to rural communities.⁵ The relative success of Namibia's CBNRM programs stems from an innovative institutional model known as community conservancy. A community conservancy is a legally circumscribed and officially registered communal area with exclusive but partial rights to utilize and manage wildlife. Registered conservancies may not fully own wildlife but they can possess significant usufruct rights that entitle them to benefit from wildlife-related enterprises such as tourism and game hunting (Jones 1998).

The legal provision for communal conservancies is found in the 1996 legislation on “Wildlife Management, Utilization and Tourism in Communal Lands,” which the post-independence government of Namibia enacted to reform the inherited colonial land tenure. Under the colonial resource policy, white commercial farmers and ranchers were able to own and operate private conservancies, but communal areas predominantly inhabited by black Namibians were placed in state management, thereby denying residents of communal areas vital sources of economic advancement and political empowerment (Jones 2000; 2001; 2003).

The CCP is a vital policy instrument in reversing the colonial discrepancy in land tenure, and empowering communities by entitling them to greater access and control of local environmental resources and utilities—what Leach et al (1999) have called ‘environmental entitlements’. The primary goals of the CCP—rural development and protecting wildlife—reflect the twin principles of CBNRM in general: poverty reduction and conservation. Conservancies are simultaneously “pro-poor” and “pro-wildlife” in that they seek to improve the lives of poor rural households, while at the same time contributing to conservation through real economic incentives that encourage wise management of wildlife (Bandyopadhyay et al. 2004).

⁵ Namibia Community Hunting Conservancies: A Great Success: <http://bigfivehq.com/asg/namconservancies.doc>

The CCP not only enables communal areas to establish and govern community-owned conservancies, but also assigns crucial roles to traditional authorities who are entrusted with crucial tasks such as defining the boundaries of potential conservancies; determining community membership, and ensuring equitable distribution of revenues from wildlife-related ventures. To establish registered conservancies, eligible communities have to elect Local Committees (LCs) who determine conservancy boundaries and negotiate with neighboring communities in doing so, possess a well-defined membership and develop a legitimate constitution (Jones 2001; 2003).

This paper uses a capability theory to examine whether the CCP has improved the capabilities of registered conservancies for poverty reduction through increased household income from wildlife-related ventures, resource conservation, and local self-governance. The discussion is organized into four sections. Section I is the introduction. Section II discusses the salient elements of CBNRM as capability theory. After a brief introduction into the history of colonialism in Namibia and its legacy of unjust land tenure laws, Section III traces the legislative and policy basis for Namibia's CBNRM program. Section IV presents the economic, environmental, and governance capabilities that the CCP has enabled. Section V sheds some light on the future challenges facing conservancies.

II. CBNRM as a Capability Approach

Following Sen, Nussbaum and others, the capability approach is defined here as normative development vision that seeks to enhance social welfare by expanding the actual freedoms and capabilities of individuals and groups to voluntarily engage in sustainable development. It is a philosophical and political approach to human development, which transcends traditional macro-economic economic growth indicators as benchmarks for development. The capability approach as a development paradigm departs from traditional development economics in a significant way because it does not equate human freedom and development to national economic growth

measured in GDP per capita. Instead, the capability approach focuses on social arrangements—policies, institutions, and programs—that remove restrictions on human freedom and seek to expand human capabilities—“what people are actually able to do and to be” (Alkire 2002; Fukuda-Parr 2003; Robeyns 2005).

CBNRM can be treated as a capabilities approach since its underlying tenets discussed above focus on expanding the capabilities of local groups and communities by reviving, strengthening, and recognizing the role of CPRs in poverty reduction and socio-economic development, environmental sustainability, accessible conflict resolution, and local governance in general. By extricating CPRs from decades of top-down development hindrances, CBNRM creates an enabling political, policy and institutional environment in which communities could assume meaningful roles in poverty reduction, resources conservation, and local governance. Furthermore, CBNRM, like the capabilities approach, is rights-based rather than a resource-based approach to communal welfare. It stresses the transfer of partial or full rights to resources from central governments to local communities; it is an enabling and empowering strategy that increases the ‘resource use and access’ entitlements’ of local communities through exclusive and secure rights and responsibilities.

On the other hand, CBNRM is the antithesis of the state-centric development models of 60s and 70s, which conceived development as a large-scale, top-down process of resource mobilization. Statist approaches focused on oversized modernization projects, paying little attention to the central goal of community-driven development: improving the capabilities of communities to manage communal land and associated resources. Expert-driven and state-based modernization projects, therefore, failed to capitalize on the time-honored institutional attributes of CPRs, which were sidelined because they were presumed to be backward, prone to “open-

access” and overexploitation, and devoid of any meaningful institutional capability. The overall result of state management of resources has been the marginalization and dissolution of communal tenure institutions (Dore 2001).

To the extent that CBNRM promises to reverse the disintegration of local institutions due to top-down development by reviving and empowering CPRs, it offers as an alternative strategy of development, governance and state-building particularly in post-conflict societies. By enabling and expanding the capacities and capabilities of local actors to manage resources, participate in democratic governance, resolve conflicts, CBNRM plays an important role in human development. Because it stresses a kind of partnership between states, local government structures, and local committees and their legitimate representatives, CBNRM has a potential to reverse the deficit of political legitimacy that many African states face. To summarize, the salient attributes of CBNRM as a capability approach are: poverty reduction, resources conservation through sustainable and adaptive resources management, local capacity building, and accessible conflict resolution. Section IV discusses the various attributes of Namibia’s CBNRM program in terms of three capabilities: poverty reduction and community development, wildlife conservation and local capacity for community-driven ecological management and local self-governance. But before that, the following section traces the legislative and policy origins of Namibia’s CBNRM program.

III. Removing Colonial “Unfreedoms”: The Legislative and Policy Origins of the CCP

As noted earlier, the capability approach concerns policies and institutional arrangements that impose or remove restrictions on “what people are able to do and be” (Robeyns 2005: 94). This section discusses the efforts of the democratically elected post-colonial Government of Namibia to rectify the unjust colonial laws and policies of land tenure, which dampened the opportunities

and aspirations of majority of Namibians, and improve the capabilities of rural communities to benefit from natural resources.

As a country born out of national resistance to German Colonialism (1884-1915) and the unjust Bantustan practices of South Africa's Apartheid rule (1915-1990), Namibia struggles to reform oppressive and discriminatory natural resource laws and policies that protect the privileges of a small white minority, while excluding the majority of indigenous Namibians from the country's most fertile land. Most Namibians (65%) live on communal land, which totals 42 % of total arable land of Namibia. Approximately 6,100 privately (and mostly white) owned commercial farms constitute 44% of land, an unjust institutional legacy of brutal colonial rule. The remaining 14% of the land is designated as protected area (Chris & Skyer 2003).

Namibia is mostly an arid country of desert landscape, and therefore, generally unsuitable for crop cultivation. The country is however endowed with rare species of wildlife⁶, which constitutes a valuable economic sector and an alternative source of living for rural residents (Skyer & S.Munyaradzi 2004). Indigenous Namibians could not benefit from wildlife because of Apartheid and its discriminatory resource use policies; while the same institutions enabled white farmers to pool together individual farm plots to form contiguous private conservancies that generated multimillion dollar commercial hunting and tourism enclaves (Jones 1998).

The main colonial law that granted white farmers the rights to establish private conservancies was, among others, the Nature Conservation Ordinance of 1975. The law reinforced the conditional rights to wildlife, which the white commercial farmers had already obtained under the 1968 law (Jones & Murphree 2001; Barnes & De Jager 1996). While these laws enabled white farmers to benefit immensely from private conservancies, wildlife in rural

⁶ Namibia's diverse and rare wildlife species among others includes kudu, oryx, springbok, mountain zebra, leopard, cheetah, lion, ostrich, giraffe, rhinoceros, and the unique desert elephant.

areas inhabited by entirely black Namibians were rendered state property (Skyer & Munyaradzi 2004). Since communal residents were legally excluded from wildlife use, they resorted to illicit hunting and cooperated with poachers. Consequently, unlike private commercial conservancies where wildlife prospered, communal areas suffered an acute loss of wildlife (Skyer 2003; Skyer & Munyaradzi 2004).

These fundamental inequalities and imbalances in access, use and ownership of natural resources presented a formidable challenge to the post-colonial government. Namibia achieved its statehood in 1990. After independence, the Southwest Africa People's Liberation Organization (SWAPO), which led Namibia's war of independence against South Africa, turned itself into a political party and has decisively won two of the country's post-liberation multiparty elections (Van Cranenburgh 2006). Namibia's founding fathers⁷, after having established a functioning state that accommodates political pluralism and encourages real community participation, had to move quickly to undo the colonial legacy of unjust land tenure and improve the economic and political position of black Namibians (Skyer 2005).

In addition to land reform and other policy priorities, the post-colonial government has been committed to establishing and expanding communal conservancies as one of its main programs of political and economic advancement for black Namibians. In 1996, based on a 1995 conservancy policy and a pilot program already implemented by Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), the government enacted a law that effectively launched Namibia's CBNRM. The law gave communal areas the right to establish communal conservancies (Stuart-Hill et al., 2005). The communal conservancy program compliments another important area of government priority: a land redistribution program based on a policy of "willing buyer, willing seller."

⁷ The founding President of Namibia, Sam Nujoma, who led the independence movement, left office in 2005. He continues to chair SWAPO, and is actively engaged in public policy discourse on land reform and other issues. He was succeeded by Hifikepunye Pohamba who won the presidential elections in November 2005.

(Philander, 2006). Under this program, government buys land from white farmers and resettles Black Namibians on reclaimed land. Though this policy has been praised by Western donors, it has been rather a slow process since many white farmers have challenged the amount of compensation that government is able to offer. In the mean time, the conservancy program has enabled rural communities to earn some income from tourism and other wildlife-related ventures.

IV. The Welfare Benefits of Conservancies

a. Poverty Reduction and Community Development

Namibia has in recent years witnessed a ‘conservancy rush,’ so to speak.⁸ Since the first four conservancies⁹ were registered in 1998 (Chris & Skyer 2003), the number of communities with pending conservancy applications with the MET is on the rise.¹⁰ Out of the 50 applications currently being processed, 15 have been finalized, and 35 are close to being fully established, which will eventually bring the total number of conservancies to 81 (Stefanova 2005).

The rush to establish communal conservancies attests to the attractive economic opportunities that conservancies bring to rural communities. Currently, there are 31 communal nature conservancies with improving record of revenues, job creation, and rising game numbers.¹¹ Conservancies not only make communal areas viable economic units, but also improve their environmental value by protecting wildlife and expanding the size of contiguous protected area (Stefanova 2005).

⁸ According to Weaver & Skyer, the proliferation of communal conservancies after the 1998 ‘communal conservancy legislation’ is “unprecedented in Namibia or perhaps, elsewhere in Africa” (Chris & Skyer 2003: 5).

⁹ The first communal conservancy was registered in 1998. By 2004, the number of registered conservancies reached 29, which covered a total 74,000 square kilometers of wildlife habitat. By 2010, about 18 percent of Namibia’s land mass will be covered by conservancies. Namibia’s conservancies compliment the extensive 110, 000 square kilometers of Namibia’s protected areas.

¹⁰ The newly registered conservancies are found in the Kavango region (Shigwedha 2006).

¹¹ Namibia Community Hunting Conservancies: A Great Success. Retrieved April 7, 2006, from <http://bigfivehq.com/asg/namconservancies.doc>

As of March 2006, there were 44¹² conservancies covering 7.8 million hectares of desert, savannah, and woodlands.¹³ Their combined earnings in 2004 totaled \$2.35 million, a dramatic increase from \$100,000 in 1995. About 100,000 Namibians live within communal conservancies, and some 3800 are employed as game guards, hunters, artisans, and customer service personnel at lodges and campsites.¹⁴ According to Vitalis Florry, the manager of the Torra conservancy, the first conservancy to become financially self-supporting¹⁵, “before the conservancy, there was absolutely nothing, nothing, nothing for jobs.”¹⁶

Job creation is just one aspect of the economic benefits that conservancies generate. Communities also benefit from a variety of wildlife-related enterprises such as tourism, tourist facilities such as lodges and campsites, trophy hunting, and in-kind benefits such as meat donated by hunters (Bandyopadhyay et al. 2004). Conservancies usually contract out these enterprises to private investors, which manage safari lodges (USAID). Conservancies have obtained valuable legal services from public interest groups in preparing contracts with private agencies. While revenues from these ventures are collected by conservancies, individual members could earn cash from the sale of local crafts to tourists (Stefanova 2005).

Members of conservancies also gain from direct cash rewards and public goods financed by conservancies. Direct cash benefits to households come from conservancy revenues from

¹² The number of Covering 13% of the total land mass (Shigwedha 2006.)

¹³ This includes 23% of communal land and about 9.5% of the total arable land of Namibia. The area covered by conservancies will be twice as large as the total protected area, which currently amounts to 14% (Skyer 2005).

¹⁴ Another estimate puts the number of conservancy jobs created at 700. Namibia Community Hunting Conservancies: A Great Success, June 11, 2005, Retrieved April 7, 2006, from <http://bigfivehq.com/asg/namconservancies.doc>. Another estimate put the number at 500 (Shigwedha 2006)

¹⁵ Five of the 44 conservancies can now fully cover their operating costs, and six more are on their way to financial independence.

¹⁶ WWF:

http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/where_we_work/africa/where/namibia/life/project/community_conservancies/index.cfm

wildlife, guide services, tourist facilities or hunting.¹⁷ After conservancies hand out equitable shares to their members, they invest the remaining funds into community development projects.¹⁸ Many conservancies also choose to spend their money on compensation to farmers who lose livestock to predators, to open soup kitchens for the community's elderly, donations to local schools and to create income-generation projects to employ community members. For instance, the Torra Conservancy¹⁹, after distributing \$75 (which constitutes half of the average annual household income within the conservancy), to every conservancy household in 2003 and paying about \$16000 in compensation to farmers who lost cattle to wildlife, invested more than \$3,000 in rejuvenating and modernizing a local school and constructing a day nursery. In the following year, the Torra Conservancy purchased two vehicles; one of the vehicles has been operating as an ambulance transporting patients to a referral hospital that is located 300 kilometers from the Conservancy. Similarly, in the year 2005, the Conservancy financed the construction of campsite (\$50,000) and another crèche (\$6500), and community gardens (\$20000) that will produce fruits and vegetables for local consumption and sale. Other conservancies have also invested in similar community development projects. In 2004, the Khoadi Hoas Conservancy, for instance, spent more than \$3,000 in improving local schools, and supplying fuel to local farmers, and the Nyae Nyae Conservancy funded maintenance and protection of water wells.

Current research on household benefits from conservancies suggests that there is not real income disparity between those who are actively involved in the overall management of conservancies and relatively less active members. If this is true, it implies that Namibia's

¹⁷ Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM): Conservancies - A Simple Guide. Retrieved April 7, 2006, from http://www.met.gov.na/programmes/cbnrm/cons_guide.htm.

¹⁸ "Namibia Community Hunting Conservancies: A Great Success," _____, June 11, 2005. <http://bigfivehq.com/asg/namconservancies.doc>.

¹⁹ In 2004, the Torra Conservancy was one of six winners of an international prize awarded by the United Nations Development Program. This year, the Damaraland Camp, a safari lodge located within the conservancy, won the 2005 Tourism for Tomorrow Conservation Award at a Global Tourism summit—an award that recognizes the world's best practices in responsible tourism.

conservancies passes the important test of community-projects: equitable distribution of revenues among households. But whether elected committees are distributing benefits equitably remains to be ascertained through further research.

b. Recovering wildlife and Building local capacity for community-driven adaptive ecological management

Communal conservancies help bring about change in the environmental attitudes of local communities, particularly toward wildlife (Richardson 1998; Watts 2003). While in the past wildlife was seen as liability to the community (mainly because of the resource policy of the colonial government that denied communal areas access to wildlife revenues), wildlife is increasingly seen as a source of income and livelihood, a communal resource that needs to be conserved, protected and managed for current and future benefits of conservancy members.²⁰

This crucial altitudinal shift from seeing wildlife as a liability to an economic asset that has to be protected led to establishment of community game guards, which in turn appears to have produced remarkable gains in wildlife numbers (Verteferuille & Benn 2005). Many conservancies in northwestern regions of Namibia, which in the past had experienced dwindling wildlife due to poaching, have witnessed a dramatic increase in a range of valuable wildlife such as kudu, oryx, springbok, mountain zebra, leopard, cheetah, lion, ostrich, giraffe, rhinoceros, and the rare desert elephant.²¹ As one conservancy leader has eloquently observed, the impressive gain in wildlife in communal area is to the large extent possible because of the economic incentives that the CCP offers: “People won't conserve or sustainably use natural resources unless they can see the benefit of conservation.”²²

²⁰ WWF on the ground in Namibia. Retrieved April 7, 2006, from http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/where_we_work/africa/where/namibia/life/index.cfm

²¹ WWF on the ground in Namibia. Retrieved April 7, 2006, from http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/where_we_work/africa/where/namibia/life/index.cfm; “Namibia Community Hunting Conservancies: A Great Success,” _____, June 11, 2005. <http://bigfivehq.com/asg/namconservancies.doc>.

²² Ibid.

Conservancies contribute to local capacity building in the area of community-driven resource management (Skyer 2003). For example, some conservancies have developed an innovative resource monitoring institution known as the Event Book System (EBS). The EBS is an adaptive management tool that allows conservancies to monitor a complex set of natural resources such as wildlife, livestock, rangelands, fire, rainfall, etc. The EBS enables conservancies to compile a systematic and current profile of local resources, and use the information to formulate resource-specific management goals such as game hunting, tourism, crop farming, livestock, or some combination of these important economic activities. A unique feature of an adaptive resource monitoring scheme such as the EBS is that it is community rather than expert-driven. Even though resource management experts are available to provide the necessary knowledge and expertise, ultimately resource management goals are set and monitored by communal conservancies (Stuart-Hill 2003).

Unlike conventional, expert-driven resource monitoring approaches, EBS puts communities in charge of important decisions concerning the utilization of natural resources. The EBS system evolved in response to the failure of conventional monitoring systems that were commonly used at the early stages of the communal conservancy program. When the first few conservancies came into existence, non-community members or consultants hired by government or NGOs undertook surveys and designed the monitoring systems. In some cases, field staff from the conservancies collected the data, but the designing of monitoring systems were left up to the experts. Communities rarely received feedbacks on survey results, and when they did, survey reports were too delayed for conservancy input to have any real impact on the monitoring process. Furthermore, since the baseline reports and designs were written and presented in expert

language, community members could not make use of them. Consequently, communities did not own the resource monitoring process (Knott 2002).

The EBS, on the other hand, relies on constant review of resource monitoring in light of carefully assessed community inputs, and aims to make monitoring a community-controlled process (Martin 2003). EBS is also responsive to the specific needs of the local community, which arise from challenges of monitoring fire, poaching, problem animal incidents, wildlife mortalities, etc. It is a “management-orientated monitoring system” in that it seeks to provide systematic and planned monitoring. Under the EBS system, therefore, it is that community that determines what resource to monitor. After the conservancy has made a determination regarding which resource to monitor, experts provide technical know-how on long-term resource analysis and monitoring design. Data collection and needs analysis is conducted by conservancy members (Stuart-Hill et al. 2005). The EBS, therefore, is an exemplary partnership between local communities and local government experts in locally adaptive and responsive resources conservation.

c. Conservancy Committees and Local Self-Governance

In so far as conservancies are run by locally elected committees, it is conceivable that they potentially promote grassroots participation and accountability, thereby improving the true meaning of democracy and nurturing the rights conditions for refounding the state on a legitimate power base (Schiffer 2004). Elected committees govern conservancies based on customary law, a legitimate constitution, and an amalgam of locally conceived policies, procedures, and management plans (Stefanova 2005). Local Committees are responsible for determining the boundaries of their conservancies and qualifications for membership. LCs have both male and female representatives. LCs serve as an important institutional linkage between local government and communal conservancies. LC members play an important accountability

function since they conduct periodic meetings whereby they report to and consult with their communal constituents. In this intermediary role, LCs also facilitate direct meetings between local government representative and communities.

V. Conclusion: Future Challenges

The CCP has created an enabling institutional and policy environment for communal areas in Namibia to benefit from wildlife in numerous ways. First, as current research suggests, households within registered have earned meaningful cash rewards and are benefiting from employment and community projects financed by revenues from trophy hunting and tourism. Second, communal conservancies have brought about significant attitudinal shift whereby communities now treat wildlife as assets that must be conserved rather than threats to livestock and other domestic animal. Similarly, the CCP has allowed the development of community-driven resource assessment and monitoring. As a result, local communities are now more empowered in the design and execution of resource management plans. Third, communities are developing local governance institutions because of the requirement for registering as a conservancy—electing a representative local committee. Through Local Committee (LCs), conservancy communities are able to meaningfully interact with local government structures and hold their government accountable. Therefore, it can be safely argued that the CCP as a CBNRM approach has expanded the capabilities of conservancy communities to reduce poverty and develop economically, conserve wildlife, build local institutions, and interact with local government structures more proactively.

However, communal conservancies in Namibia face a number of challenges. For example, most conservancies are having difficulty attracting tourists because of their proximity to areas that are vulnerable to various diseases such as the Foot and Mouth Disease, Foot and Mouth Disease, bovine pleural pneumonia, corridors disease, tuberculosis, and bovine malignant

catarrhal fever (Skyer 2003),. Another area of long-term challenge lies in how conservancies can be used to develop CBNRM programs in other resource sectors (Jones 1998). Given its achievements so far and the steady increase in the number of communities applying for registration as a conservancy, Namibia's CBNRM appears to be sustainable (Bandyopadhyay et al. 2004).

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