PART TWO

Conservation Policies & Institutions

4

The Evolution of Policy on Community Conservation in Namibia & Zimbabwe

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Introduction

The histories of community conservation in Namibia and Zimbabwe provide an instructive comparative case study on the origins and development of community conservation policy over time.[1] In their similarities both histories represent a 'polar type' in the spectrum of policies examined in this book, emphasizing extensive devolution through strong local proprietorship and conceptualized primarily in terms of rural development rather than conservation objectives. They are a 'community-based conservation' approach (see Barrow and Murphree, Chapter 3, this volume). In their differences the two histories show that this 'polar type' can mask significant policy divergence in important dimensions, providing a warning that the aggregations of typology may obscure specifics that are operationally determinative.

This reference to operational specifics underlines an analytic stance which informs this chapter. We see policy as dynamic, in constant and evolving interaction with implementation. Operational specifics continually feed back into policy, which in turn responds to implementation experience. This insight has been implicit in conservation and wildlife policy evolution in Namibia and Zimbabwe, often expressed as 'adaptive management'. At any point in time policy represents the attempt to reconcile diverse interests; the experience of implementation constantly changes the nature of this arena of conflicting interest. Our analysis of the two histories thus gives attention to issues of resource competition and the processes of policy formulation.

Particular attention is given to certain key issues. We examine the degree and context of devolution in rights, authority and responsibility implied by policy. We look at the reach of this devolution and the level to which policy suggests it should extend. Put another way, we ask the questions, 'devolution to whom?' and 'what is the primary unit of proprietorship?' We examine the incentives for participation built into policy.

Finally, we look at the degree to which international perspectives and interests have influenced national policy through donor involvement in implementation.

Land, Ecology and Politico-economic Background

Namibia and Zimbabwe share a number of common characteristics. Zimbabwe is classified as mainly semi-arid, while Namibia is semi-arid to arid and both are prone to regular droughts. Zimbabwe is predominantly broad-leaved woodland savanna, while Namibia is predominantly thorn savanna with dwarf shrub savanna in the south. The frequency of drought conditions leads to considerable uncertainty for rural people in both countries who have devised a number of risk aversion strategies, often based on diversification or transhumance. Both countries have relatively recently emerged from long periods of white rule, Zimbabwe in 1980 and Namibia in 1990. Politics in both countries are still dominated by racial issues. Government agendas still focus on removing past discrimination and on the indigenization of the civil service and the business sector. There is also a tendency to use the racial legacy to legitimize the concentration of political and economic power in the hands of the new post-independence elite. These ecological and politico-ideological contexts have influenced the evolution of policy in Namibia and Zimbabwe aimed at enabling the development of collective resource management regimes. The struggle over land between existing landholders, whether white commercial farmers or black peasants, and the landless, whether the rural poor or aspiring new black elite, is crucial to understanding the politics of natural resource management in much of southern Africa.

Namibia

Namibia has a total land area of approximately 825 000 km^2 and a population estimated at 1.6 million, with an annual growth rate of 3 per cent. It is the driest country south of the Sahara, with average rainfall varying from above 600 mm in the north-east to less than 25 mm in the Namibia desert to the west. Rainfall is highly erratic both temporally and spatially. Drought is a regular occurrence.[2] The shortage of water is the main limiting factor on Namibia's economy, which is almost entirely reliant on natural resources. Two-thirds of the population live in rural areas and are directly dependent upon the soil and living natural resources for their livelihoods.

Land distribution in Namibia has been skewed by the country's colonial history. Under German rule from 1888 to 1917, white settlers appropriated much of the central part of the country, and began the process of developing 'reserves' for black tribal groups. The South African administration, which replaced the German colonial government, continued this process and consolidated the reserves into a system of black homelands based on apartheid policy. In many instances the land allocated to black tribal groups was among the least suitable for crop growing and livestock rearing, constituting large parts of the arid north-west and of the Kalahari sandveld in the north-east.

Commercial farmland is held under freehold title, while the state owns communal land. Residents of communal land have usufruct rights over the land and its resources, such as grazing. Under the South African colonial administration land allocation was the function of government officials. In practice, traditional leaders believed that

communal land was owned by the chief or the king, and have always allocated land in terms of customary law (Corbett and Daniels 1996). However this *de facto* allocation of land by traditional leaders has been eroded by post-independence government policy. The erosion of the powers and status of traditional leaders has combined with other factors to create an open access situation on much communal land. Without secure and exclusive group tenure over communal land, many residents are unable to guard their land against appropriation by wealthy individuals and settlers from other areas.

The SWAPO Government, which came to power in democratic elections in 1990, and which gained a two-thirds parliamentary majority in 1994, has publicly committed itself to multi-party democracy, a mixed economy and to decentralization of decision-making. A decentralization policy sets out government functions which should be shifted to the regional councils created after independence. There is no administrative unit below the regional council except for municipalities. The regional councils currently have little power, no authority to raise revenue and virtually no officials of their own. Within the ruling party and within the higher echelons of the civil service there are competing ideological tendencies representing on the one hand democracy and decentralization and, on the other, command and control through centralization.

Zimbabwe

Although receiving on average higher rainfall than Namibia, much of Zimbabwe is classified as semi-arid. Rainfall has a considerable correlation with altitude and the 'lowveld' of the south-west and south-east is the driest region, suitable only for extensive livestock production. The most viable arable land lies in an arc from the centre to the eastern borders on the 'highveld'.[3]

During the British colonial period white settlers appropriated much of the best agricultural land removing resident people to 'native reserves', now known as communal land. In 1931 nearly 60 per cent of land was under white commercial freehold ownership with black farmers being confined to just over 20 per cent. Subsequent shifts in land allocation have led to a reduction in the area of commercial freehold land, which stood at 37 per cent in 1996. In late 1996 the Zimbabwean government announced plans to reduce this area further. With an annual population growth of just over 3 per cent per annum, pressure on viable arable land is growing and migration to lower rainfall areas has increased, putting ecological and social systems in these regions under stress.

As in Namibia, communal land users in Zimbabwe enjoy only usufruct rights to the natural resources on the land, and neither individually nor as groups have ownership over the land or its resources. The post-independence government has perpetuated the tenure situation of the colonial period with some modifications. Rural district councils (RDCs) may under certain circumstances lease land and exploit natural resources on behalf of communal residents. Below the district is an administrative sub-unit called the Ward, run by a Ward Development Committee (WADCO), and below that is the Village, with its own Development Committee (VIDCO). The delineation of WADCOs and VIDCOs does not necessarily follow traditional boundaries, while between and within rural districts there is considerable variation of human population density and natural resource availability. The administrative system introduced by the post-independence government has further marginalized the role of traditional leaders in land allocation and resource management.

Wildlife and Conservation Policy

There are important parallels in the development of wildlife and conservation policy in Namibia and Zimbabwe. In both countries prior to colonial rule, wildlife was managed in a number of direct and indirect ways. Game products were used for a wide variety of purposes including the provision of meat and clothing and for trade. But use was not indiscriminate. Chiefs and headmen had authority over the use of certain species and reserved areas of land as their own hunting domains. Religious and cultural taboos also limited the use of game animals, and the modes of hunting technology limited the success rate. During the colonial period, the state appropriated formal control over all wildlife, and passed legislation providing hunting rights to white settlers and visiting sport hunters. Blacks were alienated from wildlife as a resource by laws which removed control from traditional leaders and made what had been customary use of wildlife illegal. Even on white farms, the wildlife belonged to the state and commercial farmers tended to see wildlife as competing with their livestock and crop farming. On both communal and freehold land conversion of wild habitat to farmland and illegal use led to declines in wildlife numbers. Parallel to the centralization of control over wildlife, the state also created 'game reserves', often in the process removing black people from their land.

In the 1960s a radical shift in wildlife policy, away from a protectionist philosophy to one of conservation through sustainable use, occurred in both countries. The shift was away from state control to individual proprietorship for white commercial farmers, who could now benefit financially from the wildlife on their farms. Proprietorship and benefit were seen as key incentives for sustainable management. During the 1980s and 1990s both countries sought ways of extending proprietorship to farmers on communal lands, based on the legislation originally designed to benefit white commercial farmers.

Interestingly, the focus on the devolution of rights to use wildlife on private and communal lands has meant that other approaches to community conservation – particularly park outreach and the collaborative management of resources in protected areas (see Barrow and Murphree, Chapter 3, this volume) – have received little attention. The management of the extensive national park systems in both countries focuses on law enforcement and the types of initiative experimented with in East Africa, such as park revenue-sharing and resource-sharing (see Barrow et al., in Chapter 5, this volume), have not been as important in Namibia and Zimbabwe. In consequence the focus in this chapter is on communal lands and not PAs.

Namibia

Rights over wildlife were conferred on white commercial farmers in 1968 and consolidated in the Nature Conservation Ordinance (1975), which is still Namibia's primary legislation for protected areas and the conservation and utilization of wildlife. The Ordinance gave conditional ownership over certain of the more common species of game and limited use rights over other species through a permit system. Ownership and use rights were conditional upon a farmer owning land of an appropriate size and enclosed by game-proof fencing. Commercial farmers were thus able to hunt game for their own use, buy and sell game, cull for the commercial sale of meat and entertain foreign trophy hunters on their farms. None of these rights were

disposal of worth is at his or her sole discretion. Murombedzi (1994 and Chapter 16, this volume) has suggested that under smallholder agricultural conditions prevailing in communal lands cattle are a main form of household accumulation and that unless CAMPFIRE revenues at household levels are at levels sufficient to off-set the perceived loss of the accumulative potential of livestock, the programme is likely to encounter opposition at these levels.

d) *Resource to demand ratios*. This is an issue closely related to (c). CAMPFIRE benefits in cash and kind at household levels are highest where human population densities are low and wildlife resources high. Within the programme districts these ratios differ widely. In 1993 all wards in the programme earning above Z$200,000 had population densities of less than 20 persons per square kilometre (see Bond, Chapter 15, this volume). This could lead to the conclusion that the programme can truly be successful only in certain favourable demand/resource ratio contexts, especially if it continues to be based primarily on economic incentive.

e) *Devolution of revenue appropriation*. The devolution of revenue appropriation from state to councils and from councils to producer communities (at various levels, see (a) above) is demonstrable in the programme's history. Whether this has meant a devolution of resource value in real terms has been questioned. At the national level the government has forgone direct revenues from safari hunting but has maintained the base for a rapidly expanding tourism industry which is taxed, suggesting a win/win arrangement for both the state and district councils. At the council level the programme has provided revenues from a commodity which previously had little financial value to councils, leading Hill (1996: 116) to make the perceptive comment that CAMPFIRE 'not only is a wildlife program; it is also very much a rural taxation program'. At the locality level there remains the possibility that real appropriation of value can be siphoned away, if government uses the development of local infrastructure through wildlife revenues as an excuse to avoid its commitments to provide these through central funding.

f) *The politics of resource appropriation*. The high and escalating values of the wildlife resource have had the effect of intensifying political conflict over the appropriation of these values at community, district and national levels. Within communities and districts the programme has brought into sharper focus competing interests drawn on class, gender[15] and ethnic lines. At the national level the economic performance of the industry has attracted the attention of the political elite and their private sector allies, who seek to gain a higher share of its earnings through patronage, shrewd negotiation or bureaucratic re-centralization. CAMPFIRE, which from its conceptualization had profound political implications, has through its relative success now become a high-profile arena of political manoeuvring with outcomes which will remain dynamic and dependent on the strength of its constituency.

g) *Vertical compartmentalization in legislation and agency responsibility*. Legislatively CAMPFIRE has been based largely on the Parks and Wild Life Act, as amended. Other resources, notably forestry and water resources, fall under different legislation and are served by other government agencies. Beyond this a number of other government ministries have jurisdictional responsibilities relevant to the programme, including the Ministry of Agriculture. This vertical compartmentalization of resource jurisdictions is one of the reasons why CAMPFIRE, in

concept and name a holistic programme encompassing all natural resources, has in practice been a programme focused on wildlife, fisheries and tourism. Devolution as conceptualized in CAMPFIRE requires a much wider legislative base than the Parks and Wild Life Act. Strategically, the programme needs to shift its government linkages to a broader spectrum of ministries. The CAMPFIRE Association is aware of this, and is attempting to form alliances with farmer associations and closer communication with the Forestry Commission and the Ministries of Agriculture and Lands.

The seven issues discussed above are among the primary factors constraining the performance of the programme. They are CAMPFIRE's clay feet, arising from conceptual gaps, implementational compromise and, paradoxically, its elements of success. They have been outlined in a form which masks the fact that the programme has made progress in dealing with some of them. Particularly in regard to the first two it should be noted that revenue retention by councils has progressively dropped and that imposition in implementation is diminishing (Madzudzo 1997). These issues nevertheless must remain high on CAMPFIRE's agenda if its goals are to be fully realized.

Implementation and Outcomes: Namibia

Developing policy

In drafting a policy for devolving rights over wildlife and tourism to rural communities, the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) had to solve the problem of transferring proprietorship over wildlife (often a mobile resource) and tourism (a 'resource' linked to land use and land rights) to groups of individuals who do not own the land and whose traditional management systems and leadership structures have been largely undermined. The policy had to find ways of defining *who* should be given proprietorship and how far these rights should extend spatially. It had to ensure that the existing or emerging elite would not capture the process at community level and appropriate the benefits that were expected to accrue. It also had to ensure that while devolving proprietorship to the local level, the State retained a regulatory role so that if the new system was abused, the rights could be withdrawn. Five major influences shaped policy.

1. The pioneering work carried out by the Namibian NGO, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC), in the north-west of the country. IRDNC helped local communities establish a network of community game guards and established a pilot project to bring tourism revenue to a local community as an incentive for conservation of local wildlife. IRDNC's work yielded important lessons about the need to combine responsibility and control over a resource with financial benefit, and to link this to local conservation ethics as incentives for conservation. Local leaders and other community members were concerned at the decline in wildlife in the early 1980s and agreed to take on some responsibility for conserving wildlife before there was any prospect of economic benefits. Emphasis has since shifted towards economic benefit and

wildlife through community game guard networks and involving communities in decision-making where possible, and enabling communities to gain income from tourism on their land within existing legislation. The aim was threefold: to develop a sense of responsibility for wildlife before substantial benefits accrued; to demonstrate to communities that benefits from wildlife were in fact possible; and to develop a constituency of local people who would support the proposed policy changes.

In forging ahead with these proposals proponents of a community-based approach were conscious that the need for institutional reform within MET was being ignored. For the first five years after independence the Ministry remained largely unchanged in its staff composition, particularly at senior levels. The majority of MET personnel were still steeped in conservation as preservation and ideologies which emphasized law enforcement as the primary mode of conservation. They viewed rural Africans as largely incapable of managing resources sustainably and believed in 'top-down' planning methods. The community-based programme was being driven by a small policy and planning directorate within MET and not by the powerful parks and wildlife directorate. The reformers took a decision not to pursue the institutionalization of community-based conservation within MET but to concentrate on policy and legislative change, in the belief that once conservancies began emerging change within MET would be inevitable.

One result of this was that communities received conflicting messages from reformers and traditionalists. More importantly, the decision meant that when policy began to change there were significant conceptual differences about the goals of the approach within the ministry. The policy and planning directorate viewed proprietorship and benefits as incentives for sustainable management while the parks and wildlife directorate viewed benefits as an end in themselves. This had important consequences for the development of the legislation which gave effect to the new policy.

Donor involvement

During the phase of local-level project development the planners sought donor funding for project implementation. In the early stages donor influence was fairly benign. The main donor at the time was WWF (both US and International) and it allowed in-country personnel to act as project managers with occasional supervisory visits from WWF staff from Washington or Gland. Later, as the Namibian activities began to take on a more programmatic approach, funding was secured from United States Agency for International Development (USAID) as there was a significant overlap of interests and agendas between MET and USAID (see USAID 1995). However, over time, it became clear that MET and USAID had different approaches and these became sources of conflict. Institutionally USAID had an interventionist approach to project management and wanted rapid results. At one stage USAID wanted to withdraw funds from a particular community and use them more 'strategically' where there was more chance of success. This was resisted by project implementers and the community concerned went on to become the first in Namibia to have a communal conservancy registered. Clearly, the time frames and criteria for the estimation of possible success for the donor and the Namibian agencies were quite different. The process model of the Namibian agencies was subsequently justified by the outcomes achieved.

From policy to legislation

Once policy had been passed by Cabinet in March 1995, the next step was to give effect to the policy through legislation. As the parks and wildlife directorate within MET would administer the legislation it had to be involved in drafting a legislative amendment. This was when the disadvantages of the MET's policy and planning directorate forging ahead without institutionalizing community-based conservation became apparent. During discussions it became clear that the goal of the parks and wildlife directorate was to enable all people in communal areas, and not simply 'producer communities', to benefit from wildlife utilization. Representatives of this directorate insisted that legislation make provision for a second institution, a Wildlife Council, which would enable those people not incorporated within a conservancy to gain benefits. A Wildlife Council (GRN 1996a and b) would comprise a mix of central government staff and local representatives and would be advised by the minister on how to spend its revenues. A MET internal policy document on Wildlife Councils envisages that income will be used for general rural development projects.

Such an institution clearly does not combine proprietorship with management, cost and benefit. If operationalized it will manifest many of the problems inherent within CAMPFIRE, i.e. that revenue derived from a 'producer' community which suffers the costs of living with wildlife may not reach that community. There is no special reward for a community investing in conserving the resource if the benefits are widely spread across a region. The Wildlife Council at a regional level holds authority, but those at the local level are expected to manage the resource.

Reluctantly, and in order to move ahead with the legislation, the policy and planning directorate compromised and Wildlife Councils were included in the amendment. They effectively replaced the regional natural resource management committees that had been proposed in the new policy, as mechanisms for regional coordination between MET, conservancies, NGOs and others involved in community-based conservation (MET 1995).

From legislation to implementation

The legislation providing for conservancies was gazetted in June 1997 and by January 1998, the Minister of Environment and Tourism had approved one conservancy and another was awaiting his signature. Given the approach of working with local communities and changing the enabling policy and legal environment at the same time, conservancies might have been expected to emerge more rapidly and in greater numbers. Some of the delay can be ascribed to the demands placed upon communities by the legislation to hold meetings and register all members. But delays have also been caused because of the strategic decisions and compromises described above.

1. *Communities define themselves.* In Kunene Region three emerging conservancies are disputing 'ownership' of parcels of land which have been allocated according to a Headman's Ward system. Some residents of these areas wish to be included in the conservancy being established by the neighbouring ward, and insist that they fall under the jurisdiction of the neighbouring headman. The MET response has been to inform these communities that it is willing to register these conservancies without the disputed areas pending adjudication by the Regional Council and Traditional Authority.

PART FOUR
Devolving Management

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AS COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

11

The Evolution of a Community-based Approach to Wildlife Management at Kunene, Namibia

BRIAN JONES

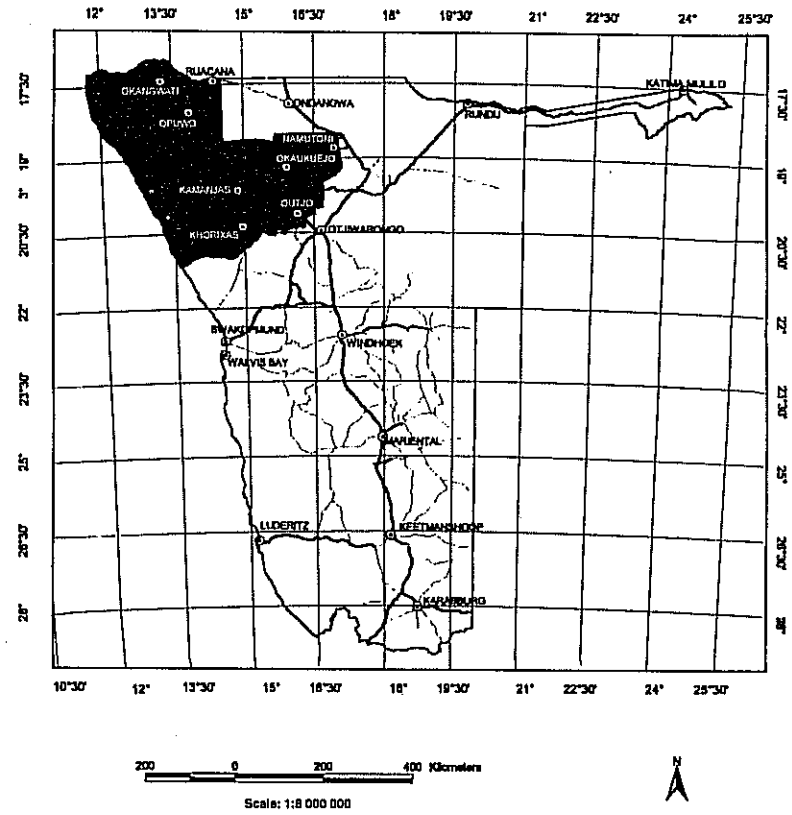
Introduction

The community conservation activities in Namibia's Kunene Region are an approach to community conservation based on the devolution to rural communities of responsibility and proprietorship over wildlife and tourism as resources.[1] Thus, they represent a relatively radical form of community conservation in terms of Barrow and Murphree's (Chapter 3, this volume) typology. As a case study, community-based conservation in the Kunene Region illuminates a number of key issues relevant to approaches which view wildlife as a sustainable natural resource. Five key issues are examined in detail.

1. The shifting balance between intrinsic and instrumental incentives for conservation.
2. Scale as a factor influencing the development of viable common property resource management institutions for wildlife and tourism.
3. The importance of external facilitation based on 'light-touch' adaptive management.
4. Modes of relationship between communities and the private sector.
5. The difficulties of reconciling intra-community differences.

The Kunene Region

The Kunene Region is situated in north-western Namibia (Map 11.1) and covers an area of about 70, 000 km^2. The region includes the northern Namib desert (100 to 600 m a.s.l.) and interior highlands (1000 to 2000 m a.s.l) divided by a steep and rugged escarpment. The climate is semi-arid to hyper-arid (350 mm of rainfall in the interior highlands to less than 50 mm in the Namib Desert). Wildlife in the region consists of a variety of arid savanna and desert-adapted species including elephant, black rhino, giraffe, Hartmann's mountain zebra, greater kudu, oryx, black-faced



Map 11.1 The Kunene Region, Namibia

impala, springbok and warthog. Predators include lion, leopard, cheetah and spotted and brown hyena.

As a result of the low and erratic rainfall, combined with soils generally unsuitable for agriculture, the economy of the region is largely dominated by semi-nomadic pastoralism or sedentary livestock farming at low stocking rates. Tourism, based on the great scenic beauty, wildlife and cultural interaction with local residents, is increasingly playing a more significant role in the local economy. The western and northern parts of Kunene Region are inhabited by about 50,000 Herero, Himba, Damara, Nama and Riemvasmaker people who live in interspersed groups as a result of a series of forced removals and relocations imposed by successive colonial governments. The consequence has been frequent tensions between different groups, tenure insecurity and leadership instability, factors which make effective local organization difficult (Durbin et al. 1997).

Project History and Evolution

Poachers turned gamekeepers 1980–92

During the 1970s a number of factors resulted in heavy poaching and a major decline in wildlife numbers in Kunene Region. These factors were (WWF 1995):

- the increased availability of firearms during the liberation war;
- commercial demand for ivory and rhino horn as well as leopard, cheetah and zebra skins;
- subsistence meat and cash requirements after the loss of up to 85 per cent of residents' cattle during the severe drought of 1980–1.

Poaching came from a number of sources: government officials; South African Defence Force personnel stationed in the region; Portuguese refugees from Angola after 1975; and local residents on communal land (WWF 1995). While all of these groups were involved in commercial poaching for ivory and rhino horn, the biggest impact probably came from government officials and Defence Force personnel. Evidence exists of organized forays into remote areas with helicopters, the removal of elephant tusks with chainsaws and the hunting by senior South African officials of rare black-faced impala. While some local poachers were supplying tusks and horn to middlemen, most were hunting for the pot.

At the time, the region was afforded a low conservation priority by the South African government and the first conservation official did not take up station until 1978, with responsibility for a vast tract of remote and inhospitable country. Poaching continued and by 1982 the elephant population had been reduced to about 250 from an estimated 1200 in 1970. Black rhino numbers had been reduced from an estimated 300 in 1970 to about 65. Other large mammal populations declined by 60 to 90 per cent (WWF 1995).

In 1982 a local NGO, the Namibian Wildlife Trust (NWT), concerned at the lack of official response to the poaching, appointed its own conservator to work in the region. The NWT, supported by the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) in South Africa, hired Garth Owen-Smith, a former agricultural extension officer and

government game ranger. He had worked in the area in the early 1970s before being transferred out by the government for exposing poaching by high-ranking officials. Owen-Smith used his knowledge of the area and relationships with traditional leaders to open discussions with residents about the poaching and decline in wildlife. He established that the headmen and others were concerned at the situation, but were helpless to halt the decline as they had no authority over wildlife as game belonged to the government.

Teaming up with government conservator Chris Eyre, Owen-Smith proposed to the headmen that they appoint their own community game guards, who would be paid for by the EWT, but would be responsible to the headmen. The community game guards (CGGs) were initially part-timers who were expected to patrol their areas at least once a month. They were not there to apprehend poachers, but to monitor wildlife and any suspicious activities and then report to their headmen, who would decide upon a course of action. If there was a serious poaching incident, the headmen would hand the case over to the government.

Over the next ten years the game guards played an important role in reducing poaching. Game numbers were also helped by the end of the drought, increased anti-poaching activities by the conservation authorities and the rhino monitoring of the Save the Rhino Trust, another Namibian NGO (Durbin et al. 1997). Table 11.1 shows the increase in wildlife numbers in Kunene region since 1982. The support given to the game guards by the headmen during this period was considerable and came to symbolize community commitment to wildlife conservation.

Table 11.1 Wildlife statistics for key species in Kunene Region, 1982–97

	1982	1986	1990	1992	1995	1997 (est)*
Springbok	650	2000	7500			
Oryx	400	800	1800			
Mountain zebra	450	900	2200			
Elephant	250			384	415	
Black rhino	65	93		114		130
Giraffe	220		300			

*Estimate based on ground and air sightings.

Source: Durbin et al. (1997).

During the mid-1980s Owen-Smith teamed up with an anthropologist, Margaret Jacobsohn, who was studying the Himba semi-nomadic pastoralists of northern Kunene. Jacobsohn was living at a small desert village called Puros on the banks of the Hoarusib River. The people there, the Herero and the Himba, survived by moving their herds in response to rainfall and pasture growth. During her stay at Puros, Jacobsohn witnessed the beginning of tourism and the effects this was having on the local people. The regular passage of small groups of tourists 'on safari' resulted in people begging from the tourists, families moving their dwellings closer to the track to be first to the spoils and some families abandoning trekking with their herds. Social tensions developed as families competed for the handouts and tourists were unhappy at the 'beggars' they were encountering.

Key Issues for Community Wildlife Management Raised by the Kunene Case Study

The shifting balance between intrinsic and instrumental incentives for conservation

At the heart of attempts to promote sustainable management of natural resources in southern Africa is a belief that local communities will respond to economic incentives that can be established or enhanced through government policy and legislation. The hypothesis is that if local communities have secure rights (proprietorship) over the resource, can retain the benefits of use, and these benefits outweigh the costs of managing the resource, then sustainable use is likely (Steiner and Rihoy 1995; SASUSG 1997).The Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) in Zimbabwe, for example, places considerable emphasis on the revenues from trophy hunting and tourism as incentives to local communities for conservation of wildlife and wild habitat (Steiner and Rihoy 1995). Wildlife policy in Botswana enables local communities to gain rights over tourism and hunting concessions in designated areas and a crucial part of Namibia's communal area conservancy policy and legislation is that communities will retain the full amount of income generated by their wildlife and tourism enterprises.

Much emphasis has been given to these instrumental incentives, but there are other incentives, based on intrinsic cultural and religious values, which affect the way in which Africans respond to wildlife. Like many Westerners, many Africans value wildlife for its existence and wish their children and grandchildren to be able to enjoy seeing the wild animals they and their parents witnessed. As George Mutwa, chairperson of the Salambala Conservancy in eastern Caprivi states: 'They are also looking for cultural, indirect benefits. In the old days people attached great importance to wildlife' (Mutwa, pers. comm., 1998). Religious beliefs in many African societies promote respect for wildlife and have contributed to the development of systems of use and non-use (Matowanyika et al. 1995).

The experience of community-based natural resource management in Namibia's Kunene Region has helped to focus attention on intrinsic incentives for conservation and on the dynamic relationship between intrinsic and instrumental incentives. The activities initiated by IRDNC in the early 1980s were based on the realization that local communities had an ethic of conservation and sustainable use which could be built upon to halt the large-scale poaching of that time. While individuals were poaching for a variety of reasons, there was evidence of community-level concern at the disappearance of wildlife from the area. Furthermore, traditional leaders, important figures within the community, wanted to do something about the situation.

Local communities today might be suspected of mouthing what they think donors, NGOs and others want to hear in the hope of getting some benefit. When Owen-Smith and Eyre first discussed conservation and poaching with community leaders, there was nothing on offer in return except the knowledge and satisfaction that the community was doing something itself to halt the decline in wildlife. It became clear in the early 1980s that communities in the Kunene Region 'could and would take responsibility for resources before benefit flows' (Durbin et al. 1997: 2). The community game guards, while having certain functional responsibilities, were an

expression of community responsibility 'which can be interpreted as ownership on a cultural rather than an economic level' (ibid. 13). People defined 'ownership' in terms of a connection to wildlife based on cultural values rather than property rights derived from the state. Owen-Smith and Jacobsohn (1991: 19) conclude of the Game Guard and Puros Projects: 'Although much attention has been given to the cash benefits generated by these projects, an equally or possibly more important benefit has been the social re-empowerment that has resulted from local communities regaining some control over the management and conservation of their wildlife resource.'

From the early days of the game guard programme there has been a clearly discernible evolution of community-based natural resource management activities in Kunene Region. Through the game guards the poachers collectively (if not all individually!) turned gamekeepers accepting responsibility for a resource which they felt some cultural ownership over. Once the principle and practice of responsibility had been established, this was reinforced by the prospect and realization of benefits flowing from the results of taking responsibility. The third evolutionary stage was moving from responsibility and benefit to proprietorship once government policy and legislation had changed.

Durbin et al. (1997) suggest a number of reasons why this development took place.

- Communities themselves recognized the evolutionary nature of the process and while the conservation ethic was an appropriate starting point, there was also a time frame in which there was an expectation that conservation investments would produce financial benefits.
- Pressure from younger people demanding jobs and wages meant that if the programme was to retain popular support it would have to give more emphasis to the generation of income.
- Wildlife and tourism needed to become more economically competitive because increased human population and schemes for other land uses were resulting in increased competition for land.
- The increase in wildlife as a result of community efforts (and other factors noted earlier), resulted in increased competition between wildlife and livestock for water and grazing, increased damage to water points by elephants and stock losses to predators. The increased costs of conservation demanded a compensating increase in benefits.

Another important factor which facilitated the evolution from responsibility through benefit to proprietorship was the timely intervention of government through the conservancy policy and legislation. The shift in emphasis from responsibility to benefit increased communities' expectations of gaining full 'economic ownership' of the resource. These expectations had been fuelled by the rhetoric of government and conservation NGOs which had promoted the notion of community 'ownership' particularly since Namibia's independence in 1990. By 1996, for community-based conservation to be maintained in Kunene Region, and much of the rest of the country, it had become crucial that government deliver on its promises. The involvement of IRDNC in a national programme which included policy and legislative reform provided the opportunity for its own and community experiences to influence policy development and to help government provide the policy and

it and eventually afford to maintain and replace equipment and other infrastructure provided for them.

The approach of the NGO that has worked with specific Kunene region communities over a period of about 15 years demonstrates the importance not only of persistence and consistency, but of a real commitment to a 'bottom up' philosophy based on flexibility and adaptation in the face of the contingencies of communities, governments and environments. IRDNC has founded its activities at Kunene on a number of key principles. These principles have helped shape the way in which it has supported communities, and can be described as 'facilitation based on light touch adaptive management'.

IRDNC has recognized the intrinsic values that wildlife have for local people and has built upon this conservation ethic through other more instrumental incentives. The recognition of a local conservation ethic has had major significance in the way that IRDNC has approached its work. Many conservation programmes begin with the premise that local people need to be taught that conservation is necessary and hence develop a 'top down' environmental awareness approach, trying to teach locals that a set of conservation problems defined by outsiders needs addressing (Brown and Wyckoff-Baird 1992). By contrast IRDNC has built a set of activities upon a problem which was also defined by the local community, which wanted to act to solve the problem. The NGO believes strongly that local people are knowledgeable about their environment and its problems. Outside assistance therefore needs to focus on issues where communities' own knowledge and experience is lacking.

IRDNC's support has been flexible, adapting to changing needs and circumstances within communities and within the emerging policy and legal framework for community-based conservation, while retaining integrity of approach. This is seen in the transition from the game guard programme, with its emphasis on responsibility, through projects emphasizing benefit creation and finally to support for conservancies as proprietorial units. As this transition has taken place, IRDNC has focused on building community capacity at each stage. Inherent in the game guard programme has been the phased handover of responsibility to the community. IRDNC has helped communities build their own offices from where the game guards can be administered and other conservation activities planned, such as community hunting of surplus game. IRDNC has facilitated the formation of local conservation committees or worked with existing development committees which have increasingly taken over the administration of the game guards. These committees negotiated relationships with tourism concessionnaires and handled the distribution of income. They then drove the conservancy formation process and are now evolving into representative conservancy committees. The light touch approach of IRDNC has meant leaving communities to get on with their own decision-making processes and accepting their decisions, even where IRDNC staff might believe unwise choices have been made.

IRDNC has also tried to relate the level of its support to the degree to which a conservancy can generate its own revenue. Thus funding for game guards, community conservation offices and vehicles is not provided unless there is evidence that conservancies will later be able to cover their own costs and make a profit for members. At the same time, this prudence has to be balanced against the practicalities of communities trying to mobilize and organize themselves over vast distances. In

order to hold meetings, respond to the demands of government and other outsiders and for leadership to provide feedback, communities need faster means of transport than the traditional donkey cart. For strategic reasons, strict considerations of sustainability often have to be balanced against the practical problems of organization in areas of very dispersed population.

The ability of NGOs to work closely with local communities is often dependent upon the attitude of government to NGO activities. In Namibia, generally, NGOs are free to operate as they wish within the laws of the country and are not regulated by government. The relationship between IRDNC and government has, however, been a mixed one for a number of reasons. The organization's strongest relationship with a government agency has been with the Directorate of Environmental Affairs (DEA) in the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET). The DEA developed a partnership with IRDNC in establishing a national CBNRM programme, based on the acknowledgement that MET did not have the necessary institution building and community development skills and that it would be costly and time-consuming to build this capacity up. The DEA saw the role of government as being to provide the enabling framework within which communities could gain rights over wildlife and tourism while NGOs could facilitate and support community action.

However, other branches of government were not so sanguine about the role of NGOs. Within MET some Directorate of Resource Management (DRM) staff felt that IRDNC was undermining the Ministry and was so pro-community that it did not share MET's conservation objectives (also see Jones and Murphree, Chapter 4, this volume). Other field personnel have resented NGOs that appear to have more money and better equipment than government conservation staff and who are viewed by communities as the 'good guys' while the MET conservators are thought of as the 'bad guys'. Some of these perceptions might have been avoided if senior MET staff had shown a greater commitment to community-based approaches to wildlife management, thus giving clear direction to their personnel. Often, individual conservators have been willing to work with communities and develop a partnership with IRDNC, but have been hindered by institutional constraints. The situation has begun to change with new leadership within DRM and agreement on the shift of responsibility for community-based wildlife management from the DEA to DRM. Despite the frictions between some MET personnel and IRDNC, senior DRM staff acknowledge the contribution that local communities and NGOs have made to conservation in Kunene Region.

Modes of relationship between communities and the private sector

The private sector can play an important and positive role in community conservation, provided the power relations between the two can be equalized as far as possible. Community conservation activities in Kunene Region illustrate some of the contradictions inherent in community relationships with the private sector and some of the ways in which successful partnerships can be developed. In their attempts to create sustainable use regimes for wildlife and tourism, local communities in Kunene Region have forged different types of partnerships with the private sector. These relationships have not always been straightforward or easy and have reflected the dual nature of the private sector as potential partner and potential competitor for resources, markets and profits.

project emerged aimed at providing information to young people about conservancies and natural resource management.

Ethnic conflict has arisen in different ways among the communities forming conservancies in Kunene Region. The Bersig/De Riet community is made up of mostly Damara speaking people and the Riemvasmakers, people who were moved from South Africa to Namibia as one of the quirks of South Africa's apartheid system. During 1997 there were allegations that the conservancy formation process was being dominated by Riemvasmakers and that Damara people were being left out, for example, of the proto-conservancy committee. There were newspaper reports that the Damaraland Camp joint venture was employing only Riemvasmakers and not Damaras. Regional councillors used the ethnic issue to delay their endorsement of the Bersig/De Riet application. Responding to the allegations, the committee held new elections for office bearers, resulting in a Damara speaking person becoming chair of the committee. The committee was able to show that Damaras were also benefiting from the joint venture and there was no discrimination in employment policy. The ethnic issue was probably one of perception, rather than reality in the sense that many Damara people had been very actively involved in conservancy formation, but were not on the 'high profile' committee. A pragmatic and quick response by the conservancy committee in ensuring that Damara involvement became visible was able to prevent a potentially divisive conflict from developing.

In the Sesfontein proto-conservancy, there has been conflict between different factions within one ethnic group, with each faction owing allegiance to competing headmen. One faction has held up the establishment of the conservancy for many months by delaying agreement on crucial issues. The Sesfontein community had tried to deal with the issue of competing interests among geographically dispersed settlements by allocating committee seats to each settlement according to its size. The faction in dispute perceived themselves to be a minority group on the conservancy committee and wished to have greater representation so that they would not be swamped by the majority. This issue remains unresolved at the time of writing.

With regard to gender issues, the experience of communities in Kunene Region has been interesting. The programme began based on the involvement and commitment of male headmen and male community game guards. At the time this was the appropriate (and successful) entry point for the discussion and implementation of active wildlife conservation by the community. Over time, however, the involvement of women has grown, particularly with the process of conservancy formation. During 1993, the author attended an all-male meeting at the community of Warmquelle. When asked if we could not call the women to attend, our interpreter told us 'That might be your way, but in our culture, it is the men who take the decisions.' Yet by 1997, women community activators were playing an important role in informing community members about the conservancy, women were present and participated at conservancy meetings, were well involved in committee elections and were represented on the committees (Durbin et al. 1997). This shift in the level of involvement by women reflects both the dynamic nature of the facilitation provided by IRDNC and the adaptability of the communities themselves. It should also be noted that a focus on large mammals may have led to a neglect of other natural resources that are mainly used and managed by women and that this may have reduced opportunities for women's involvement on conservancy committees (Sullivan 1999 and 2000). The

experience of women's involvement also illustrates the clash between different cultural views. The strong Western agenda of equality for women is reflected in development programmes led by Western donors and NGOs, some of which try to force the issue, for example by setting quotas for women on community committees. At times this has generated resistance from community leaders.

The equitable distribution of benefits from wildlife management is a key issue from both social and resource management perspectives. If there is inequitable benefit distribution, there could be conflict, leading to the collapse of collective management institutions such as conservancies. If groups or individuals within a community perceive they are treated unfairly, they will no longer have incentives to adhere to rules about use of the resource, and are likely to become free-riders. The damage they inflict will be in inverse proportion to the authority and ability the management institution has to enforce rules.

The bed-night levy collection and distribution was an important learning experience for the emerging conservancies in Kunene Region, particularly as the establishment of a method for equitable distribution of benefits is a requirement of the conservancy legislation. IRDNC assisted communities in undertaking a consultation process among their members in order to decide how the income could be equitably distributed. For the Etendeka bed-night levy a household survey was conducted by a bed-night levy committee. Durbin et al. (1997) conclude that although the negotiations with the Lodge owner and the community surveys were time-consuming, they appear to have been very useful. The surveys explained the source of the income, thus reinforcing its links with tourism and wildlife, and ensured that all households had a vote on how the money would be used and could express their views on the distribution process.

Conclusion

The Kunene case demonstrates a number of innovative and positive responses to the challenges posed by community-based wildlife conservation on communal land. The case study also demonstrates the dynamic nature of a set of community-based activities which have evolved over a period of 16 years. These activities have influenced national policy development and, in their turn, had to respond to the opportunities presented by new policy and legislation. The pioneering work of IRDNC, along with the commitment of community leaders, was crucial for the development of national policy, while the establishment of an enabling framework by government was crucial for community conservation in Kunene Region. The significance of intrinsic incentives for conservation in Kunene Region suggests that the level of instrumental benefits required to achieve sustainable use of the wildlife resource is not always as high as a purely economic analysis would indicate. It also suggests that policies and practices are required that will favour the retention, and passing on to future generations, of intrinsic values.[2]

As government begins to register the first conservancies in the Kunene Region there are exciting new opportunities for communities to begin integrating wildlife and tourism with their other land uses, and to realize significant economic benefit. Conservancies also provide the potential for the social and political empowerment of