

*How sustainable is the communalising discourse of 'new' conservation?
The masking of difference, inequality and aspiration in the fledgling
'conservancies' of Namibia.*

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Abstract

A so-called 'new' conservation of community-based resource management attempts to address issues of equity and rural development by creating pathways whereby local 'communities' can benefit from, and ultimately hold decision-making power over, wildlife resources. As such, it is celebrated as a radical departure from the exclusive, centralised and alienating 'fortress' conservation practices of the past. In this paper I contend that 'new' conservation is not the qualitatively different ideology or practice that it purports to be. My analysis is based on the emerging communal area 'conservancies' of Namibia's USAID-funded Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) programme, internationally acclaimed as southern Africa's most progressive, people-centred conservation initiative. My discussion begins with an alternative framing of the conservancy model as the continuation of a northern concern for the preservation of threatened large mammal species, albeit in a rather more politically-correct world where the blatant alienation of people from resources is no longer acceptable. Divergences between national and local objectives become apparent when considering the different ways in which debate over conservancy establishment is articulated: namely, that while presented nationally as a policy enabling decentralisation of rights to animal wildlife, it has been appropriated locally as a forum for expressing and contesting claims to land in a context of gross inequity in land distribution. The paper moves on to critique some of the claims made for the success of community-based conservation initiatives in Namibia under the rubric of conservancy formation: first, that the anticipated diversification of incomes will improve livelihood sustainability; second, that decision-making processes are representative and participatory; and third, that conservancies *per se* provide an enabling environment for the empowerment of disadvantaged people. Throughout, and as apparently identified by local people themselves, tensions existing between individual aspirations and differences, particularly in relation to gender and ethnicity, are made explicit. A donor-led equalising of 'other' people as 'communities' thus displaces both individual entrepreneurial initiative *and* priorities not held by those who become ascendant in the hierarchies of CBNRM institutions. Despite both the emancipatory rhetoric of current environment and development discourse, and the specific context of a 'successful' community-based conservation initiative, it seems that a more realistic (and honest) reframing of 'new' conservation is required: as the fine-tuning of an existing *status quo* of inequality in the global and national distribution of capital; as a shifting of the costs of conservation onto communal area residents; and as driven by a preservationist concern for saving a spectacular fauna of 'the south'.

Introduction

'We have also come to understand and realize that many of the ... people who came to introduce the Act¹ to us, are the former all-white employees of your Ministry who as individuals resigned from Government to venture into private sector businesses'.

The above quote is from a letter to the Minister of Environment and Tourism (MET), Namibia, sent in June 1999. It was written by two residents of southern Kunene Region who some time ago each applied for a formal Permission to Occupy Land (PTO)² to establish campsites and thereby capitalise on an increasing flow of tourists to the area following independence in 1990³. Their immediate complaint is that the granting of all such applications has been put on hold following a request to this effect by the local 'conservancy committee' in July 1998. More revealing, however, is the rationale behind their complaint: that how can this hold on local entrepreneurial activity be justified when national policy *vis à vis* conservation in communal areas has been largely driven by expatriates, many of whom are themselves currently employed in the private sector. This is coupled with serious allegations levelled at the 'legality and authority' of the conservancy committee. First, that it is comprised largely of persons in the employ of the primary implementing agency, the non-government organisation (NGO) Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC), and who are considered as not independent of this organisation and its interests. Second, that it was not democratically elected and is therefore unconstitutional. And third, that its election excluded involvement of other authorities, namely members of the 'traditional' leadership and the Regional Council.

It is typical for many reviews of a 'new' conservation focusing on community benefits and empowerment to celebrate its departure from the 'fortress conservation' typical of the past⁴. As such, each initiative is evaluated according to the extent to which it can be portrayed as 'participatory' and decentralised in terms of decision-making and revenue distribution, while maintaining wildlife conservation ideals⁵. Recent analyses of 'new' conservation which identify state, society (including 'communities') and the market as the three key actors, the combination of which determines 'success'⁶, thus completely avoid consideration and deconstruction of the ideological context the 'new' conservation supports.

As apparently identified by recipients, however, the 'new' conservation can also be viewed as a qualitatively similar continuation of past conservation policies: in terms of who is driving and implementing policy and in the ways in which local difference and aspirations are masked by the associated 'communalising' rhetoric. Even among the apparently more progressive United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) programmes of southern Africa, murmurs of dissent are audible⁷. Matenga claims, for example, that the decade-long ADMADE (Administrative Management Design) programme in Zambia, far from being a dramatic departure from previous policy, '... is just a modernization project in the wildlife sector designed not to improve economic livelihoods of local communities but to defuse local opposition towards national wildlife conservation'⁸. On occasion, this is explicitly how implementers oriented towards wildlife conservation have appropriated the CBNRM approach: as Taylor reports that '[o]ne of the expatriate NRMP team members in Botswana

admitted informally that their real aim is conservation, and community development is included as a means to achieve this⁹. This seems to be mirrored by local understandings of CBNRM programmes as compensation for a continuing lack of real control over wildlife resources. As Patel contends in an analysis of local perceptions of Zimbabwe's famous CAMPFIRE (Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources) programme, villagers from five districts considered the wildlife sector to remain in the control of '... a distant "white" force, in which the safari operator and his clients yield the ultimate power', thus bolstering '... the economic and political power of minority whites in Zimbabwe' rather than constituting meaningful local empowerment¹⁰. This view is echoed by the desperately poor Tembo-Mvura of north Zimbabwe, where it is compounded by ethnic tensions as evidenced by statements such as the following that 'CAMPFIRE is a programme for the Chikunda and the Safari people. They are the ones who gain from it. What CAMPFIRE does is to stop us from hunting so that white people can come from far away to kill animals for fun. We have heard that these people pay money but we have never seen any of it. ... All the village wild life committee is made up of the Chikunda'¹¹.

Displacement in these contexts becomes something more subtle than the physical eviction of peoples from their land in the name of conservation. It is about the manner in which local, multilayered narratives of, and rights to, land and resources are displaced in global discourses which survive only by excluding such complexity; and about how local differences can constitute distinct relations of disadvantage, enhanced in ways which are masked by such normalising discourses. Emerging analyses are thus concluding that '... while these projects were in theory supposed to empower the local communities through their participation in the management and sharing in the benefits of wildlife related activities, their participation has proven to be elusive, ... leading to their disempowerment economically, socially, psychologically and politically'¹².

In Namibia, a 'conservancy policy' for communal areas has been developed as the basis for community-based conservation through devolved management of wildlife without moving people from the land¹³. This policy enables communal area residents, as conservancy members, to benefit from, and have management responsibilities for, animal wildlife. As a wildlife management institution, a conservancy requires a defined boundary and membership, a representative management committee, a legal constitution and a plan for the equitable distribution of benefits¹⁴. Like the much publicised CAMPFIRE programme of Zimbabwe - the blueprint for other USAID-funded natural resource management programmes throughout southern Africa - the assumption informing conservancy policy is that '... conservation and development goals can be achieved by creating strong collective tenure over wildlife resources in communal lands'¹⁵. Community-based conservation thus is driven by recognition of the costs experienced by farmers living alongside wildlife in these areas and the apparent lack of economic incentives for local people to maintain a benign relationship to animal wildlife. As in CBNRM programmes elsewhere, the primary 'facilitators' are NGOs. In the Namibian case, this role falls primarily to IRDNC which, as a recent evaluation by its major funders (WWF-US) makes clear, has '... a particular onus ... to facilitate conservancy registration and development'¹⁶.

Namibia's conservancy policy has been heralded as the most progressive initiative of its kind in southern Africa¹⁷. In September 1998 Namibia became the first country worldwide to be honoured for a people-centred environmental initiative with the World Wide Fund for Nature's (WWF) Gift to the Earth Award¹⁸. It is claimed variously that conservancies will improve livelihood sustainability through diversification of incomes¹⁹; that they are based

on a participatory decision-making process that is empowering to women²⁰; and that they will '... empower poor, disadvantaged rural people'²¹. This rhetoric, however, exists for Namibia in a near absence of independent and data-driven evaluation and critique, particularly with regard to local experiences and perceptions of CBNRM-related projects.

In this paper I wish to use the particular context of the establishment of Namibian communal-area conservancies to draw attention to several issues underlying a general internationally-led agenda of 'community-based conservation'. My discussion begins with an alternative framing of the conservancy model as a continuation of a 'northern' concern for the preservation of threatened large mammal species, where the blatant exclusion of people from resources is no longer acceptable. Divergences between national and local objectives become apparent when considering the different ways in which debate regarding conservancy establishment has been articulated: namely, that instead of being pursued as a policy enabling greater community rights to animal wildlife it has been appropriated locally as a forum for expressing and contesting claims to land. The paper moves on to critique assertions of the success of CBNRM initiatives in Namibia under the rubric of conservancy formation. By default, I focus on reviews by Jones²² who, as both the former Ministry of Environment and Tourism officer (MET) responsible for the national CBNRM programme and currently a consultant in 'environment and development', has authored much of the available material on 'new' policy and practice in Namibia. The specific claims discussed are: first, that the anticipated diversification of incomes will improve livelihood sustainability; second, that decision-making processes are representative and participatory; and third, that conservancies *per se* provide an enabling environment for the empowerment of disadvantaged people. Throughout, and as apparently identified by local people themselves, I wish to make explicit the tensions which exist between individual aspirations and differences, and in relation to an equalising discourse of 'community'. A donor-led categorisation of 'other' people as 'communities', and the subsequent discussion of these as meaningful 'entities', thus can both strangle individual initiative *and* mask priorities not held by those ascendant in the hierarchies of CBNRM institutions. With regard to the latter, my aim is to explore ways in which general structural tendencies and metanarratives, in this case an unproblematised ideal of 'community', can foster inequalities. At risk myself of essentialising categories, I focus here on gender and ethnicity as significant shared axes of difference with implications for participation and representation in project conceptualisation and implementation.

Conservancies and continuities: moulding an ethic of wildlife preservation to a post-apartheid context

Significantly, conservancies evolved in the 1970s in an apartheid-structured South Africa as a means of consolidating exclusive rights over animal wildlife by white settler farmers, largely through the employment of game guards to militate against 'poaching' by black African 'neighbours'²³. Furthering the 'ecological apartheid' of the protected area system, conservancies were seen as the only '... viable alternative for the *salvation* of wildlife on private land' in a context where it was considered that '[f]ailure to provide security and management for wildlife on private land must, inevitably, lead to its demise'²⁴.

In Namibia, the conservancy concept similarly emerged in the context of commercial farmland. Here, since 1968 and subject to certain conditions set by the MET, particularly with regard to fencing, European settler farmers have had legal rights to consumptively and otherwise utilise animal wildlife on their farms²⁵. Under these circumstances landowners

'... realised that it is advantageous to pool their land and financial resources to make available a larger unit on which integrated management practices can be carried out',²⁶. Some 12 conservancies now exist on freehold land. While acknowledged and supported by the MET, these have no legal status to date²⁷.

Alongside this strengthening of rights over land and wildlife by settler farmers on freehold land, growing concern was being expressed by conservationists regarding the future of animal wildlife in the Namibia's communally-managed indigenous 'homelands'. A particular focus of this anxiety was the Kaokoveld of north-west Namibia; the imagined 'last wilderness' of South African environmentalists²⁸, and the world-famous birthplace of Namibian community-based conservation. Here, large-scale losses in the 1970s and 1980s of internationally-valued large mammal species, particularly desert-dwelling elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) and black rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*), provided an impetus to enlist the support of local people for the conservation process²⁹. Initially, this was led by individuals spearheading the privately-funded conservation charity the Namibian Wildlife Trust (NWT). This organisation, via a somewhat circuitous route, has evolved into IRDNC, the NGO currently responsible for implementation of much of the activities falling under Namibia's CBNRM program.

The reasons for the 1970s and 1980s wildlife losses are many and complex. In the 1960s the area was exploited essentially as a private hunting reserve by top government officials, including Cabinet Ministers in the South African government³⁰. In the 1970s, it appears that '... the majority of men appointed to safeguard the Kaokoveld embarked on a hunting frenzy'³¹. In the late 1970s and early 1980s devastating drought caused wildlife losses, both directly and through stimulating local 'poaching' in attempts to counter erosion of local pastoralist livelihoods. It seems likely, however, that the desert elephant and rhino of north-west Namibia were reduced primarily as part of organised regional illegal trafficking in ivory and horn during the 1980s. This is known to have been pursued as a '... deliberate policy of the various organs of the South African state', including white South African military personnel³². As Ellis argues, although outwardly successful in conserving its own wildlife, the South African state had few scruples when it came to plundering the elephant and rhino populations of its neighbours³³. In north-west Namibia the situation was exacerbated by the context of regional warfare between South Africa, Namibia and Angola. This created widespread availability of firearms, often distributed by the South African Defence Force (SADF) to local people as a means of fostering tensions between different interest groups and thereby weakening the growth of effective regional and national opposition. Exacerbating differences between race, gender and political affiliation in the region, for example, the SADF distributed firearms to Herero-speaking male herders to prevent the predominantly Owambo South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) guerillas, who were engaged in active combat against the SADF, from infiltrating the region and reaching the white commercial farming areas further south³⁴.

In other words, the ultimate causes of wildlife losses appear largely to have been beyond the control of local people. Nevertheless, among private conservation organisations local people were increasingly constructed as the locus of responsibility for protecting regional wildlife populations. To this end, a network of paid male 'community game guards' was created, appointed with the help of local headmen and oriented towards protecting the threatened large mammal species of concern to the then NWT. This initiative is generally credited with creating local empowerment and a sense of 'ownership' over wildlife³⁵ and it is this 'participation' of local people which is claimed to have played the major role in

enabling recovery of wildlife populations during the late 1980s. Realistically, however, the community game guard system provided a much needed avenue for local waged employment at a time of impoverishment. Indicative of this, and not surprisingly, community game guards became less effective after the mid-1980s in areas where salaries and rations, as well as supervision by the MET and NWT/IRDNC, were reduced³⁶. Any contribution to wildlife population increases, otherwise related to improved rainfall and a relaxing of combat activities in the area, was basically through extending the policing and anti-poaching role of MET rangers.

Following independence in 1990, the apparent success of the north-west Namibian community game guard system in relation to increasing populations of wildlife was invoked by the then Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism (MWCT) and the directors of IRDNC in the reworking of the concept of conservancies for a 'conservancy policy' which included communal areas³⁷. This extends rights to rural 'communities' on communal land to benefits from locally-managed animal wildlife and to undertake tourism ventures³⁸. The Nature Conservation Amendment Act of 1996 thus significantly amends the 1975 Nature Conservation Ordinance by devolving *proprietorship* over wildlife, and concessionary rights over commercial tourism, to people on communal land. As detailed above, this is conditional on registration as a conservancy with a defined boundary and membership, a representative management committee, a legal constitution and a plan for the equitable distribution of benefits³⁹. Proprietorship, however, does *not* constitute full 'ownership'. Central government retains '... the legal responsibility for the nation's wildlife'⁴⁰ and, as reported for Salambala Conservancy in Caprivi Region, quotas for hunting '... are worked out and awarded by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism in accordance with game numbers in the area'⁴¹. As observed elsewhere⁴², the ultimate power over animal wildlife thus remains with the state.

The employment of male community game guards remains a defining component of the wildlife-rich emerging conservancies in Namibia's communal areas⁴³. Although they are viewed by NGOs and donors as the 'primary link' between 'communities' and the formal conservation authority⁴⁴, their major functions, like game guards on both protected areas and private conservancies, are wildlife monitoring, policing and anti-poaching. As an MET ranger for Opuwo District asserts '... around 95% of poaching cases investigated by MET staff were as a result of information provided by the [community] game guards'⁴⁵. In Caprivi, the role of the community game guards initiated by IRDNC for Salambala conservancy in Caprivi is perceived as '... to create awareness about the importance of wildlife and the prevention of poaching'⁴⁶. In Nyae Nyae it appears that the inception of the LIFE programme in 1994 has been accompanied by a narrowing of the focus of community rangers to animal wildlife, having previously monitored and generated information about the wide range of resources used by Ju/'hoansi 'Bushmen' in the area⁴⁷. 'Community-based conservation' elsewhere is similarly viewed as a means whereby the regulation of wildlife access is intensified, often in ways which impact on the livelihoods of ethnically-defined groups. As Marindo-Ranganai and Zaba detail for Chapoto Ward in the Zambezi Valley, northern Zimbabwe, the long-standing hunting activities of the minority Tembo-Mvura people have been 'strongly circumscribed' by the CAMPFIRE programme in the area⁴⁸.

Recently, consultants for WWF have recommended that community game guards be equipped with firearms, suggesting that wildlife protection activities in Namibia's communal areas might become increasingly militarised⁴⁹. Ironically, given the language of

devolving rights to resources to local 'communities', it seems that 'community-based conservation' has actually ushered in an intensified policing of animal wildlife in communal areas. Even more serious are the potential implications of what amounts to arming civil society in the name of wildlife conservation, as testified by the recent emergency situation in Caprivi Region, not to mention conflict situations involving civilians in many areas of Africa. Leach, for example, describes how a new focus among donors on working through local hunters' brotherhoods as wildlife custodians in West Africa has constructed a 'second army' of civilians: in some cases, particularly Sierra Leone, these 'community game guards' are also active participants and leaders in devastating regional warfare⁵⁰.

It has been observed that '... similarities in institutional arrangement between the conservancies that have developed on freehold land and those on communal land are striking', with both measuring '... up well against the principles for designing long lasting common property resource management institutions'⁵¹. Given the historical evolution of the conservancy concept, the legacy of exploitative policies supporting state and settler interests, and extremely restricted access to alternative models for 'self-determination' among communal area inhabitants, it is hardly surprising that 'joint solutions' for the conservation of wildlife in communal areas have emerged which are in line with existing ideas of conservancies promoted by the MET. While the legislative situation may be more progressive than elsewhere⁵², continuities with past protectionist concerns are evident. Conservancy establishment in communal areas remains '... *land acquisition for conservation* in the non-formal sense'⁵³ with the emphasis on instituting effective local protection and policing of an internationally-valued animal wildlife of large and dangerous mammals. As a resource, these animals constitute the mainstay of a foreign wildlife tourism industry built on 'game-viewing' and trophy hunting. Negotiations with outside investors in these activities are encouraged as the primary means for communal area conservancies to generate income. 'Rural development' and 'empowerment' in these contexts thus seem to be somewhat circumscribed: constrained to providing effective protection for a handful of species which are potentially harmful to local residents and their other economic activities; and dependent on deals struck-up with outside tourism and hunting operators, often outfits whose claims to capitalise on wildlife and wilderness are considered legitimate by agencies and individuals advising 'communities'. In this sense, CBNRM *in practice* reflects the concerns of the conservationists and environmentalists who have been its main protagonists.

Claims to land, claims to wildlife: objectives and interests framing policy appropriation

It is asserted that the conservancy legislation devolves '... a large measure of authority, and responsibility over wildlife and the right to benefit from wildlife use to *landholders* themselves, both freehold and communal'⁵⁴. Simplistic observations of parallels in the development of conservancies on the different categories of land (see above), together with references to communal area residents as 'landholders', however, obscure substantial structural differences in relation to land distribution and rights. Specifically, that a minority of settler freehold farmers have inalienable rights to a major proportion of the most productive land in southern and central Namibia⁵⁵. As such they effectively and legally own the capital constituted by their land and the resources on it, including 'hunnable game'⁵⁶. Ensuring returns on this capital is by no means dependent on gaining or retaining membership to a conservancy. As described by Murphree⁵⁷, smaller social groups are

better able to manage themselves and their resources than large anonymous institutions: the complement to this is that generally the larger the land unit the better from an animal wildlife conservation perspective. These conditions are precisely those which pertain on freehold land where settler farmers have the luxury of small numbers of people to support from land areas substantially larger per person, and in many cases less marginal in terms of productivity, than in the communal areas⁵⁸.

This context of gross inequality of land distribution has fuelled local appropriation of conservancies in communal areas as the only existing forum in which claims to land can be made and contested, and access to land and resources permitted or denied. From the outset, therefore, local meetings to translate the conservancy concept to communal land have been fraught with debate regarding claims to land rather than to wildlife. This subverting of the aims of CBNRM discourse has been observed elsewhere. Taylor, for example, describes how the Basarwa of Botswana framed debate around their own concerns regarding land rights as the basis for their cultural survival only to have this issue considered 'a distraction' by NRMP personnel⁵⁹. In other words, and to the frustration of MET and NGO officials trying to accelerate the registration of conservancies, conservancy policy since its inception has been understood and appropriated by local people primarily as a land issue, and only secondarily as a wildlife management issue.

In the Namibian context this is not surprising for three reasons. First, discussions over establishing conservancies have provided a primary outlet for debate regarding land redistribution and the possibilities for securing ancestral land claims in the context of speculation and optimism ushered in by an independent Namibia. Second, because two of the main criteria for gazetting a conservancy are that its physical boundaries⁶⁰ and community membership be defined, the situation is treated as one of establishing rights to land areas even though officially a 'community' is only establishing rights to returns on animal wildlife in those areas⁶¹.

Third, and related to this, because there has been a lack of an overriding legal procedural basis for establishing tenure rights to land in communal areas the conservancy option has become the only means by which people can gain any apparent security to land. This, together with a national policy context in which Namibian citizens can move to wherever they wish on communal land (with the unmonitored *proviso* that they observe the customary rights of existing inhabitants), seems set to raise further complications and insecurities regarding claims to community 'membership'⁶². As well as reflecting enthusiastic and successful marketing of the conservancy concept, particularly in some areas, the exponential rate at which conservancies are now being formed can be interpreted as an attempt on the part of communal area inhabitants to establish possibly exclusionary rights to land and resources in the absence of any other legitimate way of doing so.

There are indications that this is indeed the case. For example, in Omusati Region in the north the Uukwaluudhi King Taapopi appears to be employing conservancy legislation as a means of fencing off a 40 km² area as a Wildlife Reserve, including an area of neighbouring Ongandjera tribal land. While publicly claimed to be a reserve for the benefit of the 'community', accusations abound that it is intended to enable '... some highranking Government officials ... to create moneyspinning lodges for themselves'⁶³. Given a context of *de facto* privatisation of land through illegal fencing by wealthy herders in north-central Namibia it is likely that these fears are not completely groundless⁶⁴. Similarly, complaints have arisen from Torra conservancy in north-west Namibia that '... Sesfontein residents in search of emergency grazing areas were driving their cattle and goats into the area and

were also involved in illegal activities such as ensnaring game and poaching⁶⁵. In this case, the conservancy is invoked to legitimise powers of exclusion over land and resources other than animal wildlife⁶⁶. Again, the quote at the start of this paper suggests that the newly-registered Sesfontein conservancy committee itself is attempting to regulate access to and use of land as well as of wildlife, by obstructing applications by local entrepreneurs for PTOs to specific sites for the purpose of establishing campsites. This is despite the fact that the development of a specific site as a local enterprise requires no proprietorship over animal wildlife⁶⁷, and that conservancies currently do not give people legal rights of exclusion to resources other than revenue received from consumptive and non-consumptive uses of animal wildlife. Elsewhere, and reflecting ambiguities in how the conservancy policy is understood, people have been unable to use conservancy policy to ensure that they retain access to resources other than wildlife. As Powell reports for Nyae Nyae (eastern Otjozondjupa Region), concern expressed by inhabitants of Tsumkwe regarding rights to cut poles and grass under the conservancy's proposed boundary definitions were dismissed as irrelevant by the local Wildlife Management Committee⁶⁸.

In recognition of the importance of secure land tenure to support rights to wildlife resources, policy-makers in the MET as well as implementing conservation NGOs anticipated and hoped that '... the conservancy approach, even if embedded only in wildlife legislation, could help shape appropriate [land] tenure reform'⁶⁹. In the National Land Policy tabled in 1997 it appeared that this was indeed the case. This included an option for '... legally constituted bodies and institutions to exercise joint ownership rights over land', implying that a community which has defined itself as a conservancy could register tenure rights to the land on which the conservancy is located⁷⁰. The recently tabled Communal Land Reform Bill, however, does not appear to support this option⁷¹. While recognising the existence of conservancies registered under the Nature Conservation Ordinance⁷², the Bill does not explicitly vest conservancies with tenure rights other than those set out in the Nature Conservation Ordinance, i.e. to wildlife and wildlife-related revenues. Elsewhere, the Bill appears to focus on the individualisation of land-holdings: in the allocation of farming and residential units as customary land rights approved by the relevant Traditional Authorities which are to be registered '... in the name of the person [singular] to whom it was allocated'⁷³; and in the granting, by a Land Board, of leasehold tenure to individual applicants⁷⁴. While, in cases where an applicant applies for leasehold tenure within a conservancy, the Land Boards '... must have due regard to any management and utilization plan framed by the conservancy committee'⁷⁵, the conservancy *per se* apparently does not constitute legal tenure over land. It remains to be seen how this essentially individualising land policy trajectory will affect the establishing and maintenance of 'community-held' communal area conservancies.

Diversification of incomes will improve livelihood sustainability

Community-based conservation and community-based tourism, particularly if shaped in Namibia by the establishment of communal area conservancies, is generally considered a valuable means of improving 'livelihood sustainability'. There are two stages to the logic. First, revenue from consumptive and non-consumptive uses of wildlife will enhance livelihoods by diversifying sources of income. Second, that this will be sustainable for two reasons: because tourism, worldwide and in Namibia, is currently a growth industry⁷⁶; and because '[o]nce income is derived by local communities from the use of wildlife, they develop a vested interest in conserving game animals'⁷⁷, whereby environmental degradation, in terms of maintaining biodiversity and habitat integrity, is reduced. CBNRM

thus relies on an economising framework in which cost-benefit analyses based on monetary values drive the justification of projects and policy based on the 'sustainable use of natural resources'⁷⁸. I wish to be realistic here about several issues with respect to assumptions constituting this framework.

First, it is highly unlikely that revenue from wildlife and/or tourism will ever constitute a particularly large source of income for all members of a 'community' at household and individual levels⁷⁹. This is without projected increases in rural (human) populations⁸⁰. Again, this reflects a structural situation whereby population densities throughout the communal areas are generally higher than in the commercial farming areas, in some areas by an order of magnitude, so per capita average benefits are likely to only ever be much lower. Table 1 summarises available information for actual and potential per capita income from the consumptive and non-consumptive uses of wildlife for different communally-managed areas of Namibia. Some points are worth drawing attention to. For example, actual and projected per capita income is low in all cases, even though these figures are drawn from regions which have substantial wildlife resources and where a handful of Namibian 'five-star conservancies'⁸¹ have been the recipients of several years' NGO support and funding. In Table 1, the highest recent annual per capita income appears to be approximately N\$254 or £25⁸², with the next highest at N\$85 or £8.50. A comparison with the monthly old age pension of N\$160 received from the state provides an idea of the relatively small annual contribution this will make to household income⁸³. As Callihan states, most of the benefits received by members of communal area conservancies will continue to be '... in the form of employment income from tourism lodges and hunting contracts, or from an increased level of economic activity in the area, ... rather than as a result of the distribution of net conservancy income'⁸⁴. Also misleading is the use of surrogate monetary values for resources consumed directly by local people, which enhance the economic returns received by people through conservation. For example, the figure of US\$25,000 calculated for the value of meat consumed in Kunene Region in 1993⁸⁵ might be considered somewhat spurious considering the manner in which local people have been alienated from the consumption of 'bushmeat' throughout this century and criminalised should they hunt for own use. One could say that the 1993 hunting season instead 'allowed' local residents to utilise resources which formerly they would have considered theirs to consume.

CBNRM discourse often goes further than simply arguing that incomes from wildlife and tourism can diversify livelihoods. In many instances it is suggested that returns on wildlife will actually encourage people to disinvest in other means of livelihood, particularly livestock and cultivation, thereby reducing the 'degrading' effects of these forms of land-use while sustaining incomes⁸⁶. For north-west Namibia Hulme and Murphree⁸⁷, for example, maintain that '... the economic incentives created by devolving proprietorship over wildlife and tourism have led to people in this area re-evaluating the relative roles of wildlife and agriculture (domestic livestock and crops) in local development'. However, if per capita incomes from community-based wildlife and tourism initiatives remain as low as they are now, and even without cultural influences over choices of subsistence, it is highly unlikely that people will view this as an alternative to their usual means of livelihood. Instead, it might be anticipated that people will direct any income received from community-based conservation projects towards sources of income over which they have direct control and ownership, and via which they are more likely to raise their individual material standards of living.

This is precisely what has been observed by Murombedzi for CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe where people have invested income received from CAMPFIRE in livestock and cultivation⁸⁸, forms of land-use otherwise framed negatively as degrading by conservationists. Similarly, in Caprivi (north-east Namibia), income received from IRDNC by community game guards has been documented as used to hire oxen or a tractor for the ploughing of fields: as well as 'degrading' wildlife habitat by expanding the amount of land put under cultivation, gender analysis demonstrates this to increase the amount of agricultural work, namely weeding and harvesting, done by women while men's labour is effectively subsidised through their earnings⁸⁹. In Torra conservancy, southern Kunene Region, rights to manage animal wildlife are apparently seen very much in terms of aiding livestock productivity. As Jones elaborates, a member of the Torra conservancy committee told him '... that gaining rights over wildlife meant that the community could now manage its livestock properly. Although the community was conserving its wildlife [i.e. their use of it was illegal], a build up of numbers meant that game animals were competing with livestock for browse and grazing. In the past, the community could reduce its livestock but not its wildlife. Now they would be able to achieve a balance between the two'⁹⁰. In other words, it seems that while initiators and implementers of CBNRM schemes are banking on diversification of incomes and some degree of infrastructural underdevelopment to keep wildlife and wilderness intact, the recipients of these schemes are transforming them into pathways for intensification of land-use. Not surprisingly, their priorities as individuals and householders, in part at least, lie in providing for growing populations and for achieving higher expectations with respect to acquiring the commodities of modern-living.

Further, while some communal areas of Namibia appear ideal for enhancing livelihood opportunities through capitalising on animal wildlife this is by no means evenly distributed. Kunene Region in north-west Namibia, for example, is characterised by diverse landscapes, a spectacular wildlife of large mammals, and relatively low human population densities. Under donor-led framings of community-based conservation, these constitute perfect conditions for the evolution of so-called '5-star conservancies'⁹¹. Not surprisingly, therefore, this area has been a focus of NGO and donor support for the establishment of conservancies: 3 out of 5 registered conservancies, and several immediately planned conservancies are located in this region⁹². Critique is particularly unwelcome in this context because these circumstances appear so ripe for 'success'. At the same time, widely publicised elaborations of success based on these situations, present a rather unrealistic picture of the possibilities for the national conservancy policy to improve livelihoods in the country's communal areas as a whole. Areas of north-central Namibia, for example, with high human population densities and little animal wildlife or 'wild' landscapes, present limited opportunities for wildlife-based tourism to contribute to rural development and livelihood sustainability.

The above suggest some serious constraints on the ability of community-based wildlife conservation to significantly contribute to people's livelihoods in communal areas⁹³. What is also obscured by the rhetoric of participation, empowerment and benefits defining 'community-based' projects are the very real concerns which exist at national level to increase user-accountability for the costs of maintaining public sector services in remote and difficult environments. This is extremely clear in the context of water provision for which a community-based system of water-point committees is being advocated ostensibly as a means of empowering communal area farmers, but basically by encouraging their participation in funding and maintaining boreholes⁹⁴. Community conservation of wildlife similarly involves the shifting of costs and responsibilities to the local level: in the policing

of people's activities in relation to wildlife; in the funding of community institutions designed to manage wildlife and related revenues; and in the day-to-day experience of living with large and sometimes dangerous mammals⁹⁵. Not content with shifting responsibilities only within the wildlife sector, and as occurs in some CAMPFIRE areas of Zimbabwe⁹⁶, MET and IRDNC employees have also argued that revenue accruing to conservancies from wildlife could be mobilised to fund other sectoral developments such as school-building⁹⁷.

Available figures for the income that is or might be received from wildlife and tourism via conservancies make no provision for the costs involved in running conservancies. As Durbin, Jones and Murphree state, and in accordance with the USAID's LIFE programme objective that at least five conservancies will become self-sustaining by 2002⁹⁸, the '... expectation is that conservancies, once financially viable, will take on the payment of the game guards, some of the staff and equipment such as vehicles and/or radios required to support them'⁹⁹. To date these have been paid for by NGOs via the major donor-funded national CBNRM programme (LIFE); for which a staggering US\$25 million has been received from 1993-2000¹⁰⁰ of which US\$14 million has been channelled to IRDNC between 1992 and 1999¹⁰¹. It is envisaged that the running costs of conservancies will be transferred to the new conservancy institutions as, to paraphrase Jones, communities are able to 'wean' themselves off NGO support¹⁰² (see also Durbin *et al.*, 1997). It is entirely probable, however, that very little income will remain after the running costs of the conservancies have been covered. As reported in Callihan, the LIFE programme estimates that US\$28,000 per year are required to run a conservancy while average income will be around US\$28,600 plus wages accruing to individuals working for wildlife-related tourism ventures¹⁰³. This amounts logically to a situation whereby the community conservancy finances the costs of conserving an animal wildlife accessed and valued by predominantly white conservationists, ecotourists and trophy hunters, while receiving very little additional income for its efforts. The phasing out of donor-funding thus raises significant questions regarding the 'sustainability' and, importantly, the development claims, of these conservation ventures.

Confronting the above can only reveal communal-area conservancies as a fine-tuning of resource management arrangements which in no way challenges an existing status quo of structural inequity in the distribution of capital (i.e. land and natural resources)¹⁰⁴. Moreover, and as summarised by Gaisford, global trends regarding ecotourism and community-based tourism indicate limitations and threats to the sustainability of this source of revenue¹⁰⁵. For example: some 50% of tourism income leaks back to developed countries via foreign airlines, tour operators and investors; by creating inflation in local prices local people are effectively excluded as investors and consumers; local employment opportunities are often limited to unskilled, low income positions; and tourism demands, reflecting income sustainability, fluctuate, particularly in relation to regional political instability¹⁰⁶. The latter point is forcefully brought home by the recent emergency situation in Caprivi Region, a focus of conservancy developments, which appears to be fuelling cancellations by tourists to the area and to Namibia in general¹⁰⁷.

Participation, representation, empowerment - and inequality

Community-based approaches to conservation are generally credited with providing an enabling context for the development of democratic and empowering local institutions for decision-making regarding natural resources¹⁰⁸. One of the legal requirements of the

Namibian conservancy legislation, in fact, is that the committee representing the community is democratically elected. A second claim is that arriving at the idea of communal areas conservancies was a participatory process, involving a consultative approach which encompassed the wider community¹⁰⁹. While running the risk of nihilism, I wish in this section to introduce some alternative perspectives and 'evidence' which suggests an 'on-the-ground' reality somewhat in conflict with these claims. This again raises questions about the sustainability of a donor-led communalising development agenda, which requires assertions of participation, representation and empowerment as measures of the success of the projects and programmes it supports.

The initiation of dialogue with rural 'communities' regarding wildlife conservation in communal areas in a post-independent Namibia began with the conducting of several 'socioecological' surveys by the MET. Following Jones, these are generally credited with assessing the attitudes of communal area residents to wildlife, identifying problems *and seeking joint solutions*¹¹⁰. As Jones states, '[t]he conservancy approach was not imposed from outside, but developed from a joint recognition of problems and solutions between communities, government and NGOs'¹¹¹. I have already traced the evolution of the conservancy model in Namibia and I suggest that it is unsurprising that it has become prevalent because communities did not have access to alternative models. As Powell claims regarding the activities of the LIFE programme in Nyae Nyae, '... the participatory process that LIFE advocates appears to only enable the community to participate at the level of implementation, and not within the domains of program design or planning', which are led instead by established ideas for wildlife conservation¹¹². What is also apparent from follow-up surveys is first, that initial meetings regarding communal area conservancies took place with individuals who were not necessarily representative of the wider community and second, that there was little accessibility of the issues discussed to the diverse range of residents comprising 'communities'.

For example, in 1994 a two-week 'socioecological' survey of southern Kunene region was conducted to introduce the idea of establishing locally-managed conservancies to rural communities. One of the initial meetings comprising this survey took place in Sesfontein, a relatively large settlement in southern Kunene Region. Shortly after this, I interviewed people from some 20% of 'households' in the settlement. Of the 28 individual and small-group discussions no adults had attended the public meeting. In fact, the vast majority did not even know that the meeting took place and certainly did not realise that they had a right to attend and contribute to discussion. This survey was of primarily Damara-speaking people, the major language group in an area otherwise shared with Herero-speakers plus some Nama and Owambo people. Otherwise it included men and women, young and old, and rich and poor. What is significant about the survey is that it suggests that the then Development Committee of Sesfontein, in whom the MET had vested responsibility for informing the wider community of the meeting, had not fulfilled this responsibility¹¹³. Echoing recent local criticism of the composition of the Sesfontein conservancy committee (see introduction), it is now acknowledged that '...people chosen as IRDNC staff [in Kunene] were often also chosen for office in committees'¹¹⁴. This blatantly compromises the legality of such committees, given the requirement of the conservancy legislation that each conservancy member should have a say in electing the committee. As observed elsewhere, when individuals are selected to serve on new committees by established authorities such as the traditional leadership, government departments or NGOs, there is a high likelihood that they will not be representative of the full diversity of community interests¹¹⁵.

Similar problems with the representativeness of community institutions have been identified with regard to the Nyae Nyae Farmers' Cooperative (NNFC) in Eastern Tsumkwe District (formerly Bushmanland) and the wider Ju/'hoan San community. Jones concludes that, after some five years of pursuing activities framed specifically as CBNRM in this area, '... there has not yet emerged a community institution which has been able to fully integrate the interests and activities of other community institutions' existing from local to district levels¹¹⁶. Importantly, this was primarily because, '... while the government and NGOs were legitimising the NNFC by working through it and strengthening it, its legitimacy within the community was far less strong than was realised by many outsiders'¹¹⁷. As detailed by Gaisford the NNFC is criticised locally for acting in the interests of its representatives while compromising the possibilities for benefits to be received by communities who do not support this institution¹¹⁸. Similarly, people affected by the 'proto-conservancy' of Uukwaluudhi in Omusati Region, north-central Namibia, have protested to the national press that they were not consulted about decisions which affect their access to land and rights as community members. As Shivute reports, 'Uukwaluudhi residents unhappy about the creation of the wildlife conservancy descended on The Namibian's office in Oshakati to complain that the ... plan [to fence off land as part of the Uukwaluudhi Wildlife Reserve] had been "one-sided". They claim that many residents had not been informed what was afoot'¹¹⁹.

These experiences suggest that, while relying on local institutions is a more than justifiable position, this is by no means a guarantee that 'community-based' 'joint solutions' have been reached in a consultative and representative manner. Making claims to this effect, however, conveniently side-steps the importance of *evaluating* the process in communication with the range of individuals comprising 'communities' in the broadest sense¹²⁰. Further, suggesting that Western democratic elective models may be inappropriate in relation to certain 'cultural norms'¹²¹, seems to justify the lack of engagement with encouraging and monitoring possibilities for wide representation in decision-making and elections.

The above begins to illustrate ways in which a communalising discourse by necessity moulds heterogeneous social groupings into an abstract categorisation of homogeneous 'communities'. As such, and as I have argued elsewhere¹²², contemporary 'community-based' approaches to conservation and development trace a direct lineage to colonial tendencies to perceive the rural African 'other' in terms of undifferentiated groupings which were conceptually easier both to administer and to maintain in structural positions of disadvantage. In this sense, like the colonial and conventional ethnographic application of the term 'tribe', the term 'community' is opaque and misleading, obscuring social, economic, cultural and gendered differences in access to, and symbolic associations with, natural resources.

Recent analyses are revealing a number of instances where axes of shared differences are actually exacerbated in CBNRM initiatives, despite their stated focus on equality, representation and empowerment¹²³. If some groups are marginalised despite the inclusive rhetoric of 'community-based natural resources management' then an important issue becomes how to enhance a context for dialogue and negotiation which is more empowering to those groups. The first step might be a commitment to exploring what it is about the economic and symbolic relationships people have, or are perceived to have, with the wider landscape that structures either the occlusion or the elevation of particular groups in

CBNRM initiatives. If '... livelihoods are not just about subsistence but also represent notions of identity and provide continuity with the past'¹²⁴, then implementers of CBNRM programmes could do well to engage with these symbolic complexities as a strategy to meet aims of both empowerment and livelihood sustainability.

An obvious issue is the way in which conservation projects in southern Africa revolve around a limited wildlife of large mammals which is inextricable from constructions of a white South African masculine identity linked economically and psychologically to hunting¹²⁵. Historically and today, amongst European and African societies, women have been the 'decorative fringe' to men as hunters and conservationists such that they are conceptually, and sometimes literally, excluded from discussion. Monbiot makes the gendered associations underlying wildlife use and management rather more explicit than most in his critique of Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE programme that 'Campfire has little to do with the welfare of poor Zimbabweans. It has little to do with conserving wildlife. It has everything to do with servicing the perverse and lucrative fantasies of a bunch of American gun fanatics who have something missing in the trousers department'¹²⁶. Given that gendered associations with environment and wildlife are so strong, conferring 'distinct relations of disadvantage' for women¹²⁷, it is perhaps surprising that they are afforded so little attention in wider CBNRM discourse.

A number of reported incidents suggest that these associations have conferred a less than enabling context for the participation of women in community-based conservation in Namibia. At the final workshop of the 1994 southern Kunene 'socioecological survey', for example, all Damara and Herero women who attended the meeting were physically excluded from participating by being obliged to sit outside the shelter in which the meeting was held¹²⁸. This was justified by the MET convenors of the meeting on the strength that they were working within the constraints of the (male) traditional leadership. Notwithstanding the extent to which current forms of this traditional leadership are a construction of Namibia's colonial history¹²⁹, this is somewhat ironic given that the whole purpose of the meeting was to try and begin a process of new institution-building, enabling better representation and participation in the decentralisation of decision-making power¹³⁰. Nabane also details the consolidation of male decision-making power in negotiations between an all men group of village representatives, traditional leadership and a lodge manager over establishing a 'community' campsite at Lianshulu Village – an initiative which, until women's opinions were explicitly sought, actually seemed set to constrain access to 'critical' riverine plant resources collected by women in the course of generating household livelihoods¹³¹. Gaisford similarly notes that among the Ju/'hoansi, a people otherwise constructed as egalitarian and non-hierarchical in decision-making, men have been at the '... forefront of interactions with officials and outsiders as the representatives of the people'¹³². As elsewhere¹³³, current emphases on encouraging trophy hunting in communal area conservancies as a means of generating the highest monetary returns on wildlife resources¹³⁴, despite previous considerations that non-consumptive uses are more appropriate in the Namibian, and particularly the Kunene, context¹³⁵, might be expected to increase these differences in access to dialogue and decision-making. At the same time, conservation success in terms of increasing animal wildlife populations conflicts directly with women's responsibilities as cultivators and resource-gatherers by raising the likelihood of damage to crops and exacerbating the dangers of travelling away from homesteads to collect valued non-timber items¹³⁶.

Namibia's LIFE project is forging attempts to specifically involve women in CBNRM initiatives, through the employment of women by IRDNC as 'community resource monitors' '... to better exploit natural resource management opportunities and to facilitate the flow of information' regarding resource management issues¹³⁷. Unqualified claims for the success of women's activators¹³⁸ leave open questions as to what extent women are integrated into existing conservancy committees, and whether an accentuation of difference compromises the contribution of women to male domains of decision-making¹³⁹. Fieldwork in southern Kunene Region in early 1999 elicited some perhaps illuminating responses when asking women about conservancies. For example, |Hairo, an elderly woman in Sesfontein stated that '[o]nly women are here, there are no men at these houses', meaning that she did not know anything about the conservancy in her area because it was effectively 'men's business'. Similarly, when I asked Habuhege, a middle-aged woman at Ani#gab, !U#gab River, about conservancies she immediately turned to her partner and urged him to speak instead of her, despite being the primary speaker throughout the interview on issues ranging from resource-use practices to perceptions of environmental degradation.

A second question regards the influence of ethnicity in conceptions of, and claims to, land, resources and decision-making power. The significance of ethnicity in development debates is a hoary issue. This is especially so in a context such as Namibia, where a unifying ideology of nation-building has been so important in structuring a 'struggle for independence' from the 'divide and rule' policies of an apartheid administration. The reification by the state of static ethnic categories imagined by a missionary and colonial ethnography's '...excessive preoccupation with ethnicity and cultural distinctiveness'¹⁴⁰ further contributes to a shying away from the implications of ethnic differences¹⁴¹. In considerations of representation in local-level institutions, and in understanding issues infusing use of, and competing claims to, natural resources, however, ethnicity becomes a crucial axis of difference. Particularly important is a recognition that in areas of historically overlapping and contested claims to land it tends to be the same groups who are marginalised from decision-making on account of both culturally-influenced associations with resources, and perceptions of these associations by others.

As Taylor observes for the Botswanan context, despite '[o]fficial discourses of sameness' *de facto* prejudices along ethnic lines exist and emerge in national policy and its enactment at local levels¹⁴². The Tembo-Mvura of northern Zimbabwe, for example, imaged derogatorily in the national press as '... a backward community of two-toed people', have experienced a constant diversion to locally powerful Chikunda people of resources and revenue generated under national programmes, including CAMPFIRE¹⁴³. The politics of difference seems to be particularly consistent when considering the 'Bushmen' peoples of southern Africa. For the 'Bushmen', their constructed status as 'Stone Age' 'creatures of the veld' with no social history of tenure relationships to land¹⁴⁴ compromises their chances for engaging with a modern state-led CBNRM discourse in a way which affirms their rights to land. Such rights are crucial as the symbolic and economic foundation underlying both cultural identity and livelihoods¹⁴⁵. A recent newspaper article detailing the death of five Kxoe Bushmen due to starvation in western Caprivi, however, epitomises continuing discriminatory perceptions in the statement by an unnamed government official that '[t]o them it is a natural thing that at this time of year people should die of hunger'¹⁴⁶. In other words, they remain constructed as people 'of nature' who are still governed by unmediated natural forces: a view which completely discounts their history of marginalisation from land and official discourses and the contribution of these to instances of starvation in a contemporary context. In Namibia, historic constructions of the Damara as 'culturally

hunter-gatherers' without formal conceptions of land tenure¹⁴⁷ also have compromised their possibilities for legitimising claims to land, particularly in relation to an ascendant and wealthy Herero cattle pastoralism. For the Bushmen, the situation is further exacerbated by their apparently egalitarian and non-hierarchical distribution of power. While this should be perfect in terms of intra-community decision-making which matches the communalising ideals of community-based conservation, it is proving a major drawback in interactions and negotiations with outsiders such as government, established pastoralists and, in the Namibian case, repatriated Herero people¹⁴⁸.

Ethnicity and its constructions thus draw out continuing symbolic associations people have with the landscape and emphasises the significance of these in constructions and rationalisations of exclusion¹⁴⁹. Land-use mapping by different groups can reveal substantial variations in requirements for access to significant resources and places, and can go some way, perhaps, to empowering counter-claims to land and resources¹⁵⁰. For example, in north-west Namibia some Damara people travel substantial distances to gather specific resources and many trace ancestral associations in the wider landscape to areas far afield from current settlement locales¹⁵¹. As has been pointed out to me, if these are important to people in the establishment of conservancy boundaries then they will come up in debate regarding where these boundaries are established¹⁵². But if the conservancy committee is not representative of these wider issues and practices of resource use and landscape history, then it is highly unlikely that they will feature in boundary debates. The probable outcome of such a situation is that individuals will procure resources much as they have always done, across boundaries not of their choosing and into areas where restrictions may be operative, because these practices remain important in affirming 'who they are'. As long as collectors avoid large mammals, it is unlikely that anyone will take much notice: but one could hardly describe this as a situation which empowers people's diverse interests in land and natural resources.

Conclusion: 'Donor assistance has been significant, but donor agendas have not dominated'¹⁵³

Jones concludes a recent review of CBNRM in Namibia with the exhortation to '... beware the dominance of donors and the arrogance of academia in trying to categorise and judge the lives of rural Africans and the work of the people at the coalface of conservation'¹⁵⁴. Inappropriate mining metaphors aside, this seems to completely miss the point that it is donors who are driving a dominant communalising discourse - arrogant in its categorisation and homogenisation of diverse groupings of people - which is uncritically upheld and maintained in Jones' various reviews. Further, given that most evaluation of CBNRM projects is donor-led and written by a relatively small, self-referring group of consultants, who in many cases are intimately involved with the formulation and implementation of national CBNRM programmes, it would appear that academic research actually has a crucial role to play - particularly in problematising criteria for reckoning the 'success' of projects, and in highlighting issues of representation and revealing alternative perspectives. Interestingly, much critique of a communalising development discourse is being led by scholars from the south¹⁵⁵. Academic, actor-oriented research is a route whereby long-term and detailed work, exploring local diversity and multiple voices, can make explicit contradictions and tensions between an essentialising ideology of 'community' and local aspirations and differences. Contrary to Jones' accusations of academic categorisation of rural Africans, a relativist and poststructuralist social anthropology today is so concerned with *not* essentialising categories that in some

instances it could be likened more to individual psychology: to an explicit focus on how one's own subject-position is constructed and maintained through relationships with the 'other' of fieldwork¹⁵⁶. Be that as it may, a major challenge facing academic researches of environment and development which reveal alternative and occluded narratives is an embracing of the responsibility to make these researches available and accessible to national and international policy discourses¹⁵⁷.

As Matenga points out, the gloss of participatory success in the marketing of southern African CBNRM programmes makes it rather hard to criticise the famed and 'outstanding'¹⁵⁸ community conservation projects of the region¹⁵⁹. Clearly, it is preferable that local people benefit from the animal wildlife with which they live instead of remaining alienated from these resources in a 'fortress conservation' of the colonial past. But underneath the rhetoric, 'community-based conservation' is not the radically and qualitatively different approach to conservation that it claims to be. As Escobar argues, it seems that the language of emancipation and democratisation is inseparable from a northern modernising development discourse which asserts conformity and control through donor-funding to the countries of 'the south'¹⁶⁰. In the case of conservation, a cavalier coinage of the term 'community' is a means of extending the modernising agenda of the so-called 'Washington consensus'¹⁶¹ of the World bank and International Monetary Fund, via the various international conventions relating to environment and development and via implementing agencies such as WWF-US and USAID. Through this 'communities', as depoliticised and undifferentiated entities, '... are finally recognized as the owners of their territories (or what is left of them), but only to the extent that they accept seeing and treating territory and themselves as reservoirs of capital'¹⁶². In the case of conservation in Africa, this means that support is only available to 'communities' to the extent that they agree to construct themselves as 'suitable' custodians of internationally-valued biodiversity, particularly animal wildlife.

A middle-class of 'the developed world', collectively the 'virtual consumers'¹⁶³ of an exotic and spectacularly imaged fauna of 'the south', appears concerned about the pending loss of a 'global resource' of wildlife and 'wilderness'. While now stressing that local people should benefit from this wildlife, a number of perhaps unrealistic, and generally unvoiced, expectations remain. First, that African communal area residents should continue to live with a sometimes dangerous wildlife on 'their' land. Second, that efforts should be made to foster the increase of populations of these same dangerous, but threatened, species. Third, that this should occur over and above investment in alternative sources of livelihood. Fourth, that, as donor-funding is phased out, revenue received from conservation efforts should be used to finance newly created communal-area wildlife management institutions. Fifth, that a primary responsibility of these institutions, as Patel points out¹⁶⁴, should be the negotiation of business agreements which allow private safari operators continued access to the wildlife resources on which their profits depend.

Is it really reasonable to expect that a structurally entrenched rural poor should continue to service the fantasies of African wilderness projected by predominantly expatriate environmentalists, conservationists, tourists and trophy hunters? Or that a communalising discourse equating rural development and 'empowerment' with wildlife preservation and foreign tourism will be 'sustainable', given both the constraints it imposes on individual aspiration and the dissatisfaction it produces in people who feel excluded? It seems that 'sustainable development' and 'community-based conservation' only work if it is assumed that large proportions of the world's population will be content with remaining poor. If the

wealthy of the world wish to retain an ideal of African wildlife and 'wild' landscapes then perhaps we should put our money where our collective mouth is: through up-front payment for the service of maintaining wildlife¹⁶⁵. In Europe, and under certain conditions, we manipulate land-use through the payment of economically realistic subsidies to individual farmers¹⁶⁶. In some cases this includes 'setting aside' land rather than working or converting it to alternative uses. If conservation boils down to economic incentives then, I would suggest, it will be 'sustainable' only if accompanied by a 'consumer pays' approach which is honest about the distribution of both interests in, and the costs of, wildlife conservation. This implies nothing short of a secure commitment to substantial and long-term (upwards of several decades) international subsidies directly to local land-users, of amounts realistic enough to compensate for the opportunity costs of not converting either land to alternative uses or large mammals to cash. Failing this, it seems logical that policing and law enforcement, whether by government officials, NGO employees or community game guards, will remain the foundation on which preservation of an internationally-valued animal wildlife depends. So, what else is 'new'?

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¹ i.e. Namibia's Nature Conservation Amendment Act of 1996. This amends the 1975 Nature Conservation Ordinance such that communal area residents can gain, subject to qualifications, the same rights to wildlife as farmers with freehold title to land.

² A PTO is a license granted by the government to offer a degree of tenure to land in communal areas, usually for the purpose of developing entrepreneurial activity such as a trading outlet or campsite. See W. Gaisford, *Healing the Crippled Hand: Tourism and Community-Based Tourism as Sustainable Forms of Land Use and Development in Eastern Tsumkwe, Namibia* (Dept. of Environmental and Geographical Science, University of Cape Town, Unpublished Mphil. Thesis, 1997).

³ This letter is in the author's possession. To protect the anonymity of its authors, their names are not revealed here.

⁴ For example, D. Hulme and M. Murphree, 'Communities, Wildlife and the 'New Conservation' in Africa', *Journal of International Development*, 11, (1999), pp. 277-285.

⁵ For the Namibian context, see B.T.B. Jones, 'Policy Lessons from the Evolution of a Community-Based Approach to Wildlife Management, Kunene Region, Namibia', *Journal of International Development*, 11 (1999), pp. 295-304.

⁶ Hulme and Murphree, 'Communities, Wildlife and the 'New' Conservation'.

⁷ In southern Africa USAID funds CBNRM programmes in Botswana (Natural Resources Management Programme, NRMP), Zimbabwe (Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources, CAMPFIRE), Zambia (Administrative Management Design, ADMADE) and Namibia (Living In a Finite Environment, LIFE).

⁸ C.R. Matenga, *Community-Based Wildlife Management Schemes in Zambia: Empowering or Disempowering Local Communities?* (Paper presented at conference on 'African environments - past and present', St. Anthony's College, University of Oxford, July 5-8 1999), p. i.

⁹ M. Taylor, 'You Cannot Put a Tie on a Buffalo and Say that is Development': *Differing Priorities in Community Conservation, Botswana* (Paper presented at conference on 'African environments - past and present', St. Anthony's College, University of Oxford, July 5-8 1999), p. 10.

- ²⁸ As constructed in M. Reardon, *The Beseiged Desert: War, Drought, Poaching in the Namib Desert* (London, Collins, 1986) and A. Hall-Martin, C. Walker and J du P. Bothma, *Kaokoveld: the Last Wilderness* (Johannesburg, Southern Book Publishers, 1988). Bollig instead portrays the 'wildness' of the area's landscapes and the 'traditional' character of its inhabitants as a product of a 150 years of seige and official policy which has encapsulated and marginalised its herding economy by preventing the participation of local herders in wider markets; M. Bollig, 'Power and Trade in Precolonial and Early Colonial Northern Kaokoland, 1860s-1940s', in P. Hayes, J. Silvester, M. Wallace and W. Hartmann (eds), *Namibia Under South African Rule: Mobility and Containment 1915-1946* (London, James Currey, 1998), pp. 175-193.
- ²⁹ G. Owen-Smith, 'The Evolution of Community-Based Natural Resource Management in Namibia', in N. Leader-Williams, J.A. Kayera and G.L. Overton (eds), *Community-Based Conservation in Tanzania*. (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Tanzania Planning and Assessment for Wildlife Management, Dept. of Wildlife, 1995), pp. 135-142.
- ³⁰ Detailed in Reardon, *The Beseiged Desert*, p.13.
- ³¹ Ibid., p. 13.
- ³² S. Ellis, 'Of Elephants and Men: Politics and Nature Conservation in South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 20, 1 (March 1994), pp. 53-69. Also Jones, 'Wildlife Management, Utilization and Tourism', p. 3.
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ Detailed in B.B. Fuller Jr., *Institutional Appropriation and Social Change Among Agropastoralists in Central Namibia 1916-1988*. (Boston, Unpublished PhD dissertation, Boston Graduate School, 1993), p. 81.
- ³⁵ H. Durbin, B.T.B. Jones and M. Murphree, *Namibian Community-based Natural resource Management Programme*, p. 13.
- ³⁶ Ibid., p. 20.
- ³⁷ Jones, 'Policy lessons from the evolution of a community-based approach'. The relevant policy document is MWCT, *Policy Document: The Establishment of Conservancies in Namibia* (Windhoek, Namibia, Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation and Tourism, 1992).
- ³⁸ MET, Promotion of community-based tourism; MET, Wildlife management, utilisation and tourism.
- ³⁹ Where conservancies are not formed, a Wildlife Council can also be formed under the Act which allows for co-management of wildlife by the government and community leaders.
- ⁴⁰ Ministry of Environment and Tourism, *Communal Area Conservancies in Namibia: a Simple Guide* (Windhoek, Namibia, n.d.), p. 9.
- ⁴¹ The Namibian, 'Residents celebrate new Salambala conservancy', *The Namibian* (January 25, 1999).
- ⁴² See, for example, R. Neuman, 'Primitive Ideas: Protected Area Buffer Zone and the Politics of Land in Africa', *Development and Change*, 28, 3 (1997), pp. 559-582.) for the Zimbabwean and Zambian contexts respectively, see also E. Madzudzo, *Community based natural resource management in Zimbabwe: opportunities and constraints*. (Paper presented at conference on 'African environments - past and present', St. Anthony's College, University of Oxford, July 5-8 1999) and Matenga, *Community-based Wildlife Management Schemes in Zambia*.
- ⁴³ In 1997 there were a total of 51 community game guards employed by IRDNC; as reported in Durbin, Jones and Murphree, *Namibian Community-based Natural resource Management Programme*, p. 13.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 15.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 14.
- ⁴⁶ The Namibian, 'Residents celebrate'.
- ⁴⁷ Powell, N. *Co-management in non-equilibrium systems: cases from Namibian rangelands* (Uppsala, Agraria 138, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, 1998).
- ⁴⁸ Marindo-Ranganai and Zaba, Animal conservation and human survival, p. 2.
- ⁴⁹ Durbin, Jones and Murphree, *Namibian Community-based Natural resource Management Programme*, p. 18, state that 'CGGs ([Community Game Guards] should be provided with weapons for self defence and dealing with problem predators. Weapons should be owned by the conservancy and returned to the committee if a game guard leaves'. Interestingly, Kiss lists the arming of guards essentially '... to protect the project from the beneficiaries' as one of her 10 'warning signs that your "community-based conservation" project has gone off-track'; A. Kiss, *Making community-based conservation work*. (Paper presented at Society for Conservation Biology annual meeting, College Park, MD, June 18 1999) p. 6.
- ⁵⁰ M. Leach, *New Shapes to Shift: War, Parks and the Hunting Persona in Modern West Africa*. (Audrey Richards Commemorative Lecture, Centre for Cross-Cultural Research on Women, University of Oxford, April 28 1999). Both Leach and Ellis also make clear the gender implications of links between conservation, firearms, masculinity and warfare; S. Ellis, 'Of Elephants and Men: Politics and Nature Conservation in South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21, 1 (March 1994), pp. 53-69. As Ellis states, there is a longstanding association '... between game parks and military men all over Africa'; Ibid., p. 55.

⁵¹ Jones, 'Rights, revenues and resources', p. 13.

⁵² cf. ADMAD in Zambia where local people have little formal role regarding the management of wildlife; this situation is likely to change, however, with the institution of legally recognised Community Resources Boards (CRBs) which will have greater decision-making power over natural resources, albeit in consultation with the Zambian Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) (Matenga, 1999).

⁵³ Jones, 'Community-Based Natural Resource Management in Botswana and Namibia', p. 47.

⁵⁴ Jones, 'Rights, revenues and resources', p. 13, emphasis added.

⁵⁵ Nb. Sections 14(2) and 20 of the Commercial (Agricultural) Lands Act (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1995) does provide the government with the right to expropriate, with suitable compensation, land otherwise under freehold tenure under certain circumstances; namely, if it is considered inadequately or underutilised for agricultural purposes or if land-holdings exceed two economic units as defined for different agro-ecological zones.

⁵⁶ More than 70% of Namibia's animal wildlife is concentrated on the 44% of the country's land area which constitutes private land; Jones, 'Wildlife Management, Utilization and Tourism', p. 4.

⁵⁷ M.W. Murphree, 'Communities as Resource Management Institutions', *Gatekeeper Series* 36. (London, Sustainable Agriculture Programme, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), 1993).

⁵⁸ Extrapolating from various published sources, the population density in the commercial farming districts is approximately 121.9 ha/person; R. Moorsom, *Transforming a wasted land* (London, the Catholic Institution for International Relations (CIIR), 1982), F. Adams and W. Werner *The land issue in Namibia: an enquiry* (Windhoek, Namibia Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Namibia, 1990), and Central Statistics Office 1991 *population and housing census* (Windhoek, Central Statistics Office, National Planning Commission, 1994). This excludes urban populations estimated at 26% for Namibia overall; Central Statistics Office 1991 *population and housing census*, p. 10. For the former 'homelands' the population density in 1991 was 35 ha/person (this figure excludes Rehoboth because of its atypical land tenure arrangements); Adams and Werner, *The land issue* 1990.

⁵⁹ Taylor, 'You cannot put a tie on a buffalo...', p. 10.

⁶⁰ Indicating both the problems of demarcating conservancy boundaries, and the MET's concern to have conservancies gazetted as rapidly as possible, the government has recently agreed to register conservancies with dispute areas as part of their boundaries; Jones, 'Policy lessons from the evolution of a community-based approach'.

⁶¹ What is also interesting here is that while the 'community' is vested with legal status, this is dependent on the registration of its membership and boundaries with central state authorities. In other words, a process which appears to be about the decentralisation of rights also becomes a way of allowing the state to gain more control over who has legitimate rights to land and resources, and over who is a legitimate member of 'a community'. I am grateful to James Fairhead, Dept. Anthropology & Sociology, School of Oriental and African Studies, for this observation.

⁶² A context of insecurity regarding rights to communal land is likely to be exacerbated by President Nujoma's recent offer, as a '... gesture of pan-Africanist solidarity', to Africans throughout the continent and overseas to settle in Namibia's vast landscapes; The Namibian, 'Nujoma Invites Africans Across the World to Settle in Namibia', *The Namibian*, (July 14, 1999).

⁶³ O. Shivute, 'Conservancy Plan Sparks Tribal Row', *The Namibian* (July 16, 1998).

⁶⁴ C. Tapscott and L. Hangula, 'Fencing of Communal Range Land in Northern Namibia: Social and Ecological Implications', *SSD Discussion Paper* 6 (Windhoek, Social Sciences Division, Multi-Disciplinary Research Centre, University of Namibia, 1994). Also see C. Maletsky, 'NUNW raises fencing fears', *The Namibian* (June 23, 1999). Interestingly given concerns regarding potential exclusion from land in conservancies, there is a noticeable trend in CAMPFIRE areas of Zimbabwe towards the construction of fences by safari and hunting operators around hunting blocks so that '... clients can hunt freely and safely without having to worry about human habitation' and to '... prevent animals from damaging property and crops and humans themselves outside the hunting area'; Wels, *The Origin and Spread of Private Wildlife Conservancies*, pp. 20-21. Given justifiable associations of fencing with alienation and exclusion, this has led to perceptions on the part of villagers '... that the safari operator wanted to create a private farm out of their land, ... to prevent people from accessing ... resources ... [and] to reintroduce white colonialism'; V. Dzingirai 'Take Back Your CAMPFIRE'. *A Study of Local Level Perceptions to Electric Fencing in the Framework of Binga's CAMPFIRE programme*, (Harare, Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS), 1995), p. 4 in Wels, *The Origin and Spread of Private Wildlife Conservancies*, p. 21.

⁶⁵ C. Inambao, 'Torra on Threshold of Brighter Future', *The Namibian* (September 9, 1998).

⁶⁶ Nb. as well as demonstrating local transformation of the conservancy concept to prioritise resources other than wildlife, an emphasis on exclusion, regulation and control over grazing is something which has been extensively problematised in analyses of pastoral land-use and dryland dynamics over the last two decades:

see, for example, S. Sandford, *Management of pastoral development in the third world* (Chichester, John Wiley and Sons, 1983); K. Homewood and W.A. Rodgers, 'Pastoralism, Conservation and the Overgrazing Controversy', in D. Anderson and R. Grove (eds.), *Conservation in Africa: people, policies and practice* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 111-128; K. Homewood and W.A. Rodgers, *Maasailand Ecology: Pastoralist Development and Wildlife Conservation in Ngorongoro, Tanzania* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991); J.E. Ellis and D.M. Swift, 'Stability of African Pastoral Ecosystems: Alternative Paradigms and Implications for Development', *Journal of Range Management*, 41 (1988), pp. 450-459; R.H. Behnke, I. Scoones and C. Kerven (eds.), *Range Ecology at Disequilibrium: New Models of Natural Variability and Pastoral Adaptation in African Savannas* (London, Overseas Development Institute, International Institute for Environment and Development, Commonwealth Secretariat, 1993); S. Sullivan, 'Towards a Non-equilibrium Ecology: Perspectives From an Arid Land', *Journal of Biogeography*, 23 (1996), pp. 1-5; N. Powell, *Co-management in Non-Equilibrium Systems: Cases From Namibian Rangelands* (Uppsala, Agraria 138, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, 1998); E. Roe, L. Huntsinger and K. Labnow, 'High Reliability Pastoralism', *Journal of Arid Environments*, 39 (1998), pp. 39-55. Such analyses suggest instead that strengthening flexibility in spatial and temporal patterns of land-use, enhancing reciprocal relationships among land-users and assisting with conflict management over spatially and temporally dispersed key resources should be the key tenets of socially and ecologically appropriate policy in variable dryland contexts.

⁶⁷ C. Ashley, 'Tourism, Communities, and the Potential Impacts on Local Incomes and Conservation', *DEA Research Discussion Paper 10* (Windhoek, Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 1995).

⁶⁸ Powell, *Co-management in Non-Equilibrium Systems*, p. 120.

⁶⁹ Jones, *Namibia's approach to Community-Based Natural Resources Management*, p. 5; see also Durbin, Jones and Murphree, *Namibian Community-based Natural resource Management Programme*, p. 10.

⁷⁰ Government of the Republic of Namibia, *National Land Policy* (Windhoek, Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1997) p. 9. The document elaborates that: '[i]f they so choose, communities will be able to register as holders of rights to specific areas of land and will be authorised to manage the use of specified resources on that land, provided that they do so on a sustainable basis. Within community owned areas, subordinate title can be awarded to individuals or families for such purposes as residence or cultivation ... Communities which have constituted themselves conservancies under the Nature Conservation Amendment Act, 1996 may choose to apply for registration as owners of land on which their conservancies are located'; Jones, 'Community-Based Natural Resource Management in Botswana and Namibia', p. 56.

⁷¹ Government of the Republic of Namibia, *Communal Land Reform Bill* (Windhoek, Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1999). Nb. The 1997 draft *National Land Policy* apparently makes provision for a second Bill which '... will set out forms of family, group and community ownership'; Jones, 'Community-Based Natural Resource Management in Botswana and Namibia', p. 57. This has not appeared as yet, however, and it is difficult to see how these will mesh with the remit of the *Communal Land Reform Bill* which is 'to provide for the allocation of rights in respect to communal land', p. 2.

⁷² Section 4 in Government of the Republic of Namibia, *Communal Land Reform Bill*, p. 6; this states that one nominee of a conservancy or conservancies falling under proposed regional Communal Land Boards should serve on the relevant Board.

⁷³ *Ibid.* Section 25, p. 14.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* Section 30, p. 19.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* Section 31(4), p. 20.

⁷⁶ In Namibia, tourism currently contributes approximately 5% of GDP and 12% of foreign exchange earnings (after mining and agriculture) and is the only sector experiencing strong growth; Gaisford, *Healing the Crippled Hand*.

⁷⁷ Jones, 'Wildlife Management, Utilization and Tourism', p. 9.

⁷⁸ As framed, for example, in: C. Ashley and E. Garland 'Promoting Community-Based Tourism Development: Why, What and How?' *DEA Research Discussion Paper 4*, (Windhoek, Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment, 1994); C. Ashley, J. Barnes and T. Healy, 'Profits, Equity, Growth and Sustainability: The Potential Role of Wildlife Enterprises in Caprivi and Other Communal Areas of Namibia', *DEA Research Discussion Paper 2* (Windhoek, Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment, 1994); C. Ashley, 'Tourism, Communities, and the Potential Impacts', *DEA Research Discussion Paper*; Ashley, *Wildlife Integration for Livelihood Diversification*; Callihan, *Using Tourism as a Means to Sustain Community-Based Conservation*; Jones, 'Rights, Revenues and Resources', following Murphree, 'Communities as Resource Management Institutions'.

⁷⁹ Also see Patel, *Sustainable Utilization and African Wildlife Policy*.

- ⁸⁰ The average national population growth rate is calculated as 3.33%; in R. Dewdney, *Policy Factors and Desertification – Analysis and Proposals*, (Windhoek, Report prepared for the Namibian Programme to Combat Desertification (NAPCOD) Steering Committee, 1996).
- ⁸¹ Durbin, Jones and Murphree, Namibian Community-based Natural Resource Management Programme.
- ⁸² US\$1 = approximately N\$6.
- ⁸³ Nb. Namibia and South Africa are unique in the distribution of state pensions. Income from CBNRM programmes elsewhere is likely to make a proportionately greater contribution to household livelihoods; pers. comm. Debby Potts, Dept. Geography, School of Oriental and African Studies, London.
- ⁸⁴ Callihan, *Using Tourism as a Means to Sustain Community-Based Conservation*, p. 10.
- ⁸⁵ Jones, 'Rights, Revenues and Resources', p. 2.
- ⁸⁶ See, for example, Ashley, 'Tourism, Communities and the Potential Impacts', and Ashley, *Wildlife Integration for Livelihood Diversification*; references in Powell, *Co-management in Non-equilibrium Systems*, p. 121; and Callihan, *Using Tourism as a Means to Sustain Community-Based Conservation*.
- ⁸⁷ Hulme and Murphree, 'Communities, Wildlife and the 'New' Conservation', p. 282, after Jones, 'Policy Lessons From the Evolution of a Community-Based Approach'.
- ⁸⁸ J.C. Murombedzi, 'Devolution and Stewardship in Zimbabwe's Campfire Programme', *Journal of International Development*, 11 (1999), pp. 287-293.
- ⁸⁹ N. Nabane, Gender as a Factor in Community-Based Natural Resource Management: a Case Study of Nongozi, Linashulu, Lizauli and Sachona Villages in East Caprivi – Namibia. (Windhoek, Report submitted to WWF-LIFE program, 1995).
- ⁹⁰ Jones, 'Rights, Revenue and Resources', p. 31.
- ⁹¹ As referred to in Durbin, Jones and Murphree, *Namibian Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme* and in Jones, 'Rights, Revenues and Resources'.
- ⁹² Registered conservancies are Torra, ≠Khoadi ||Hoas and Sesfontein, in Kunene Region, with Nyae Nyae in eastern Otjozondjupa Region and Salambala in Eastern Caprivi. There are some 22 emerging conservancies; Callihan, *Using Tourism as a Means to Sustain Community-Based Conservation*. These include Orupembe, Doro !Nawas and Puros in Kunene Region and Uukwaluudhi in Omusati Region.
- ⁹³ Also see J.D. Hackel, 'Community Conservation and the Future of Africa's Wildlife', *Conservation Biology*, 13, 4, pp. 726-734.
- ⁹⁴ Africare, *Rural Water Supply Maintenance in the Kunene Region, Republic of Namibia* (Windhoek, Unpublished report to the Africa Bureau of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 1993); J.G. Tarr, 'Summary report of a retrospective study of the environmental impacts of emergency borehole supply in the Gam and Khorixas areas of Namibia', *DEA Discussion Paper 25* (Windhoek, Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism and Environmental Evaluation Unit, University of Cape Town, 1998).
- ⁹⁵ In a 1998 survey of residents in Caprivi's Kwandu area (adjacent to West Caprivi Game Reserve) 74% had experienced crop losses due to wildlife in the last five years; A.W. Mosimane, *An Assessment on Knowledge and Attitudes About Kwandu Conservancy and the Socio-economic Status*. (Windhoek, Social Sciences Division, Multi-disciplinary Research Centre, University of Namibia, 1998) in Callihan, *Using Tourism as a Means to Sustain Community-Based Conservation*. In this area four people were killed by crocodiles in the first three months of 1998; The Namibian, 'Farmers Fed up with Elephants', *The Namibian* (March 13, 1998). In Kunene, conflicts between people and elephant are perhaps particularly marked at settlements along the Ugab River. Elephant moved to this river in 1994 having not been known in the area for some 50 years. Far from experiencing this new constraint on livelihoods in a passive way, and without compensation for their troubles, many people living in the area have rebuilt their homes on hillsides away from the river and avoid danger through not venturing out at night (pers. comm. with inhabitants of Ani≠gab, Gudipos and ||Gaisoas). As well as these constraints on daily life, they experience direct losses through the destruction of wind-pumps and gardens by elephant. And early in 1999 a child was killed while crossing the river on route to the school in Ani≠gab, having unwittingly disturbed a group of elephants concealed in the *Tamarix usneoides* thickets along the river. Local protest by people against animal wildlife is apparent. For example, In Mukwe district, western Caprivi, and given a lack of response from MET officials, farmers recently warned that '... they would take up fire arms to protect their produce from marauding elephants which have been destroying their mahangu [millet] crops'; *ibid.* In June 1998 it was reported that fires were started in Mamili National Park, Caprivi, by villagers living around the park as a means of injuring wildlife in the expectation that such animals would be slaughtered and the meat distributed to neighbouring villagers – some 110 buffalo were affected by the blaze; C. Inambao, 'Hope for Buffalo at Mamili', *The Namibian* (June 8, 1998).
- ⁹⁶ Marindo-Ranganai and Zaba, *Animal Conservation and Human Survival*.
- ⁹⁷ See statements in Gaisford, *Healing the Crippled Hand*, p. 124.

- ⁹⁸ Callihan, *Using Tourism as a Means to Sustain Community-Based Conservation*.
- ⁹⁹ Durbin, Jones and Murphree, *Namibian Community-based Natural Resource Management Programme*, p. 17.
- ¹⁰⁰ Figures in Callihan, *Using Tourism as a Means to Sustain Community-Based Conservation*, pp. 6-7; a further US\$12 million from USAID has been approved to carry the Namibian CBNRM programme from late 1999-2004.
- ¹⁰¹ Durbin, Jones and Murphree, *Namibian Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme*, p. 28.
- ¹⁰² Jones, 'Policy Lessons From the Evolution of a Community-Based Approach' p. 300.
- ¹⁰³ This is calculated on the basis of an income US\$13,000 from both a joint venture lodge operation and a trophy hunting contract, plus US\$2,600 from a campsite, presumably run by 'the community'. An additional US\$18,000 is the approximate additional figure calculated for wages to members of the community from foreign-led investments; Callihan, *Using Tourism as a Means to Sustain Community-Based Conservation*, p. 22.
- ¹⁰⁴ Not to mention the implications of alternative framings of communal tenure as '... largely normative and based on an ideological construct, started in the colonial era to rationalize the racial division of land' Murombedzi, 'Devolution and Stewardship', p. 288, after A.P. Cheater, 'The ideology of "communal" land tenure in Zimbabwe: mythogenesis enacted Africa', 60, 2, pp. 188-206.
- ¹⁰⁵ Gaisford, *Healing the Crippled Hand*. A depressing indicator of this are recent reports that '[f]ewer than expected international tourists have visited southern Africa over the past year'; *The Namibian*, 'SADC Tourism Records Slump', *The Namibian*, (October 7, 1999).
- ¹⁰⁶ Also see M. Infield and W.M. Adams, 'Institutional Sustainability and Community Conservation: a Case Study from Uganda', *Journal of International Development*, 11, pp. 305-315.
- ¹⁰⁷ C. Inambao 'Caprivi attack "will have lasting effect on tourism"', *The Namibian* (August 12, 1999).
- ¹⁰⁸ The need for this is driven by wider concerns that local resource management practices have collapsed such that '[t]he erosion of the powers and status of traditional leaders has combined with other factors to create in most cases an *open access* situation on Namibian communal land'; Jones, 'Rights, Revenue and Resources', p. 12. Also see J. Quan, D. Barton and C. Conroy, 'A Preliminary Assessment of the Economic Impact of Desertification in Namibia', *DEA Research Discussion Paper 3* (Windhoek, Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 1994) and critique in S. Sullivan, 'Folk and Formal, Local and National – Damara Knowledge and Community Conservation in Southern Kunene, Namibia', *Cimbebasia*, 15 (1999), pp. 1-28, and S. Sullivan, *Nothing is Stationary, all is Change: Collapse or Complexity in an African Dryland*, (London, Paper presented in seminar series on Political Ecology, Department of Geography, School of Oriental and African Studies, February 1, 1999).
- ¹⁰⁹ Jones, 'Community-Based Natural Resource Management in Botswana and Namibia', p.
- ¹¹⁰ Jones, 'Rights, Revenues and Resources', p. 1.
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 3; also Jones, 'Policy Lessons from the Evolution of a Community-Based Approach', p. 57.
- ¹¹² Powell, *Co-management in Non-equilibrium Systems*, p. 117.
- ¹¹³ This survey is reported in full in S. Sullivan *Local Participation in Community Resource Management Initiatives: Findings of Interviews with Individuals Following the MET's Socioecological Survey Meeting in Sesfontein*, April 1994. (Windhoek, Unpublished document prepared for B.T.B. Jones, Officer responsible for CBNRM, Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 1995).
- ¹¹⁴ Durbin, Jones and Murphree, *Namibian Community-based Natural Resource Management Programme*, p. 24.
- ¹¹⁵ Mafune, *Common Property Regimes and Land Reform in Namibia ; Matenga, Community-Based Wildlife Management Schemes in Zambia*, p. 9.
- ¹¹⁶ B.T.B. Jones, 'Institutional Relationships, Capacity and Sustainability: Lessons Learned from a Community-Based Conservation Project, Eastern Tsumkwe District, Namibia, 1991-1996', *DEA Research Discussion Paper 11*. Windhoek, Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment, 1995), p. 25.
- ¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, also see Powell, *Co-management in Non-equilibrium Systems*.
- ¹¹⁸ Gaisford, *Healing the Crippled Hand*.
- ¹¹⁹ Shivute, *Conservancy Plan Sparks Tribal Row*.
- ¹²⁰ With regard to CBNRM initiatives in the Nyae Nyae area, eastern Tsumkwe District, it has been retrospectively recognised that '[t]he introduction of a more formal monitoring and evaluation component to the project, incorporating social science research, closer analysis of project reports, and information from different quarters would have helped to provide a better understanding of community dynamics'; Jones, 'Institutional Relationships, Capacity and Sustainability', p. 38.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39. Not only does this seem to run counter to the 'new institution-building' rhetoric of CBNRM programmes, but it also does not acknowledge that many 'traditional' forms of leadership, as well as notions of 'culture', are themselves at least partly an outcome of the country's colonial past; discussed further in S. Sullivan, 'Perfume and Pastoralism: Damara Women as Users and Managers of Natural Resources in Arid North-West Namibia', in D. Hodgson (ed) *Rethinking Pastoralism: Gender, Culture and the Myth of the Patriarchal Pastoralist*, forthcoming.

¹²² Sullivan, 'Perfume and pastoralism'.

¹²³ Marindo-Ranganai and Zaba, Animal Conservation and Human Survival; Patel, Sustainable Utilization and African Wildlife Policy; C. Twyman, Livelihood Opportunity and Diversity in Kalahari Wildlife Management Areas, Botswana: Rethinking Community Resource Management (Paper presented at conference on 'African environments - past and present', St. Anthony's College, University of Oxford, July 5-8, 1999); Taylor, 'You Cannot put a Tie on a Buffalo'.

¹²⁴ Twyman, Livelihood Opportunity and Diversity, p. 10.

¹²⁵ See J.M. Mackenzie, 'Chivalry, Social Darwinism and Ritualised Killing: the Hunting Ethos in Central Africa up to 1914', in D. Anderson and R. Grove, R (eds) *Conservation in Africa: people, policies and practice* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 41-61; S. Ellis, 'Of Elephants and Men: Politics and Nature Conservation in South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 20, 1 (March 1994), pp. 53-69; J. Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park: a social and political history* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1995); C. Skidmore-Hess, *Flora and Flood-Plains: Technology, Gender and Ethnicity in Northern Botswana 1900-1990* (Paper presented at conference on 'African environments - past and present', St. Anthony's College, University of Oxford, July 5-8, 1999); Wels, *The Origin and Spread of Private Wildlife Conservancies*.

¹²⁶ G. Monbiot, 'Campfire Colonialism', *The Guardian* (February 13, 1999).

¹²⁷ L. McNay, *Foucault and Feminism* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1992); C. Jackson, 'Actor Orientation and Gender Relations at a Participatory Project Interface', in A-M Goetz (ed.) *Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development* (London, Zed Books, 1997), pp. 161-175.

¹²⁸ Discussed in Sullivan, 'Perfume and Pastoralism'.

¹²⁹ B. Lau, *A Critique of the Historical Sources and Historiography Relating to the 'Damaras' in Pre-Colonial Namibia* (Cape Town, Unpublished BA(Hons) dissertation, Dept. of History, University of Cape Town, 1979); B.B. Fuller Jr., *Institutional Appropriation and Social Change Among Agropastoralists in Central Namibia 1916-1988*. (Boston, Unpublished PhD dissertation, Boston Graduate School, 1993); E.H.P.M. Krieke, 'Historical Dynamics of Traditional Land Tenure in Ovamboland', in *Proceedings of the National Conference on Land Reform and the Land Question* (Windhoek, NEPRU, 1991), pp. 545-565.

¹³⁰ Also interesting in this regard is that Damara people do not appear to observe strict divisions of labour and decision-making along gender lines, and during fieldwork people were often quick to draw a distinction in this regard between themselves and Herero people. A question here, therefore, is *which* 'traditional leadership' sensibilities the MET and conservation NGOs were trying to observe.

¹³¹ N. Nabane, Gender as a Factor in Community-Based Natural Resource Management: a Case Study of Nongozi, Linashulu, Lizauli and Sachona Villages in East Caprivi – Namibia (Windhoek, Report submitted to WWF-LIFE program, 1995), p. 12.

¹³² Gaisford, *Healing the Crippled Hand*, p. 32.

¹³³ Matenga, Community-Based Wildlife Management Schemes in Zambia; Wels, *The Origin and Spread of Private Wildlife Conservancies*.

¹³⁴ See, for example, H. Schutz, 'Namibia Takes Aim at World Hunting Body', *The Namibian* (July 29, 1999), and Jones, *Rights Revenues and Resources*.

¹³⁵ Ashley, *Tourism, Communities, and the Potential Impacts*.

¹³⁶ Nabane, Gender as a Factor in Community-Based Natural Resource Management.

¹³⁷ B. Wyckoff-Baird and J. Matota *Moving Beyond Wildlife: Enlisting Women as Community Resource Monitors in Namibia* (Windhoek, Paper for the Living In a Finite Environment (LIFE) programme, 1995), p. 1.

¹³⁸ See, for example, Durbin, Jones and Murphree, *Namibian Community-based Natural Resource Management Programme*, p. 40.

¹³⁹ Nabane, Gender as a Factor in Community-Based Natural Resource Management.

¹⁴⁰ L.J. Fosse, 'The social construction of ethnicity and nationalism in independent Namibia', *Discussion Paper 14* (Windhoek, Social Sciences Division, Multi-disciplinary Research Centre, University of Namibia, 1992), p. 3.

¹⁴¹ While these categories were in many instances imposed upon diverse groupings of people, often speaking different dialects and practising varied forms of subsistence, this categorisation has not been experienced passively. Fuller, for example, elaborates how the construction of a homogenous 'tribe' of the Damara

involved the 'lumping' together of at least eleven independent groups, but that this amalgamation was appropriated as a tribal structure by Damara themselves during this century in a bid to consolidate regional power and increase their national standing; B.B. Fuller Jnr., *Institutional Appropriation and Social Change Among Agropastoralists in Central Namibia 1916-1988*. (Boston, Unpublished PhD dissertation, Boston Graduate School, 1993).

¹⁴² Taylor, 'You Cannot Put a Tie on a Buffalo', p. 9.

¹⁴³ Marindo-Ranganai and Zaba, *Animal Conservation and Human Survival*, p. 5.

¹⁴⁴ A.G. Morris, 'Trophy Skulls, Museums and the San', in P. Skotnes (ed) *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town, University of Cape Town Press, 1996), p. 79.

¹⁴⁵ Extensive documentation and critique of the 'chilling' constructions of 'Bushmen' as '... people who were not people'; Morris, 'Trophy Skulls, Museums and the San', pp. 67-79; and of ensuing persecution and alienation from land, resources and a modern developmental discourse can be found in, for example, E.N. Wilmsen, *Land Filled with Flies: a Political Economy of the Kalahari* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989), and papers in P. Skotnes (ed.), *Miscast: Negotiating the Presence of the Bushmen* (Cape Town, University of Cape Town Press, 1996).

¹⁴⁶ C. Inambao, 'San "starving to death"', *The Namibian* (November 12, 1998).

¹⁴⁷ H. Vedder, 'The Berg Damara' in H. Vedder *The Native Tribes of South West Africa* (Cape Town, Cape Times Ltd., 1928), pp. 38-78; critiqued by B. Lau, 'Thank God the Germans Came': Vedder and Namibian Historiography', in A. Heywood (ed.) *History and Historiography: 4 Essays in Reprint* (Windhoek, Discourse/MSORP, 1995), pp. 1-16, and S. Sullivan, 'Detail and Dogma, Data and Discourse: Food-Gathering by Damara Herders and Conservation in Arid North-West Namibia', in K. Homewood. K. (ed), forthcoming.

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¹⁵² Pers. comm. J. Tagg, (Windhoek, Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 1999).

¹⁵³ Jones, 'Rights, Revenues and Resources', p. 3.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 36.

¹⁵⁵ See, for example, A. Escobar, 'Constructing Nature: Elements for a Poststructural Political Ecology', in R. Peet and M. Watts (eds) *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements* (London, Routledge, 1996), pp. 46-68, for the Latin American context, and Murombedzi, 'Devolution and Stewardship' and Matenga, *Community-Based Wildlife Management Schemes in Zambia*, for critiques of southern African CBNRM schemes.

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¹⁵⁸ Durbin, Jones and Murphree, *Namibian Community-based Natural Resource Management Programme*, p. 5.

¹⁵⁹ Matenga, *Community-Based Wildlife Management Schemes in Zambia*, p. 15.

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¹⁶¹ R. Peet and M. Watts, 'Liberation Ecology: Development, Sustainability, and Environment in an Age of Market Triumphalism', in R. Peet and M. Watts (eds) *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements* (London, Routledge, 1996), pp. 1-45.

¹⁶² Escobar, 'Constructing Nature', p. 57.

¹⁶³ Kiss, *Making Community-Based Conservation Work*, p. 8.

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Captions

Table 1. Income received and projected for communal areas from both consumptive and non-consumptive uses of wildlife. Question marks indicate an approximate figure for number of individuals in the area referred to, extrapolated from 1991 census figures for average household size for the Region. N\$ = Namibian dollars (currently N\$6.12 and N\$10.12 to US\$1 and £1 respectively); n = numbers of individuals in area; N\$/cap.^{a-1} = Namibian dollars per capita per year. Sources are: Central Statistics Office, *1991 population and housing census* (Windhoek, Central Statistics Office, National Planning Commission, 1994), pp. 11, 16; C. Ashley, 'Tourism, Communities, and the Potential Impacts on Local Incomes and Conservation', *DEA Research Discussion Paper 10* (Windhoek, Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 1995), pp. 12, 17, 19; J.I. Barnes, 'Current and Potential Use Values for Natural Resources in Some Namibian Communal Areas: a Planning Tool', *DEA Working Paper* (Windhoek, Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 1995); B.T.B. Jones, 'Wildlife Management, Utilization and Tourism in Communal Areas: Benefits to Communities an Improved Resource Management', *DEA Research Discussion Paper 5* (Windhoek, Directorate of Environmental Affairs, Ministry of Environment, 1995), p. 9; C. Inambao, 'Light at the End of Conservancy Tunnel', *The Namibian* (March 20, 1998); B.T.B. Jones, 'Rights, Revenues and Resources: the Problems and Potential of Conservancies as Community Wildlife Management Institutions in Namibia', *Evaluating Eden Working Paper 2*. (London, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), 1999), p. 4; B.T.B. Jones, 'Community-Based Natural Resource Management in Botswana and Namibia: an Inventory and Preliminary Analysis of Progress', *Evaluating Eden Series Discussion Paper 6*. (London, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), 1999), p. 78-79; The Namibian, 'Residents Celebrate new Salambala Conservancy', *The Namibian* (January 25, 1999).

Figure 1. Map of Namibia showing new regional boundaries, regional populations sizes, and approximate locations of gazetted and some proposed conservancies in communal areas (details in italics). Sources are: Central Statistics Office, *1991 population and housing census* (Windhoek, Central Statistics Office, National Planning Commission, 1994); MET *Some facts and figures about communal area conservancies* (Windhoek, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, 1998); C. Maletsky, 'Himba seize initiative', *The Namibian* (June 4, 1998); C. Maletsky, 'Himbis in conservancy move', *The Namibian* (July 29, 1998); O. Shivute, 'Conservancy Plan Sparks Tribal Row', *The Namibian* (July 16, 1998); B.T.B. Jones, 'Community-Based Natural Resource Management in Botswana and Namibia: an Inventory and Preliminary Analysis of Progress', *Evaluating Eden Series Discussion Paper 6*. (London, International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), 1999), p. 73-83; The Namibian, 'Residents Celebrate New Salambala Conservancy', *The Namibian* (January 25, 1999).

Year	N\$	n	N\$/cap. ^{a-1}	details
non-consumptive uses:				
1993	25,000	?	?	Received by Puros community from tourists over 2-3 years.
1994	26,000	3581?	7.26	Distributed by Lianshulu Lodge, Caprivi Region, to 5 neighbouring villages (comprising 746 households with an average of 4.8 people per household in Caprivi Region).
1994	2,200,000	130,000	19.92	Estimated local incomes from tourism, primarily wages from private sector and government operations (very unevenly distributed), but also from local enterprises such as craft production, for the communal areas of Caprivi (excluding the urban centre of Katima Mulilo), former 'Damaraland', Opuwo District and former 'Bushmanland'.
1994			15	Tourism income averages across Caprivi.
projected (in 1995)			35	Tourism income averages across Caprivi.
1996	40,000	4,500	8.89	Bed night levies collected by Etendeka Mountain Camp and distributed to 5 neighbouring communities in southern Kunene Region.
1998	210,000	552?	253.62	Income received by 120 households (with an average of 4.6 per household for Kunene Region) over 18 months by Torra Conservancy, southern Kunene Region, from joint business venture with Damaraland Camp (run by Wilderness Safaris).
1999	2,000	7,000	0.29	Campsite earnings for Salambala Conservancy, Caprivi.
consumptive:				
1993	150,000	3,000	50	Consumption of US\$25,000 worth of meat, as calculated by IRDNC, in the 1993 hunting season by communities in Sesfontein and Bergsig, Kunene Region..
1993	18,250	3,000	4.08	Sale of skins after 1993 hunting season, in Sesfontein and Bergsig areas, Kunene Region with N\$6,000 recouped by IRDNC to cover ammunition costs. IRDNC estimated that transport costs amounted to a further N\$10,000.
1995	150,000+	3,000	50	Rough estimate for value of meat consumed in Sesfontein and Bergsig areas, Kunene Region, in 1995 hunting season.
1995	13,000	3,000	4.33	Sale of skins after 1995 hunting season in Sesfontein and Bergsig areas, Kunene Region. Nb. assisted by IRDNC at a cost of N\$23,000.
1999 & 2000	180,000	7,000	12.86	Two-year hunting concession negotiated by Salambala Conservancy, Caprivi Region.
1999	900	7,000	0.13	Income from trophy hunting of birds for Salambala Conservancy, Caprivi Region.
1999 & 2000	170,000	2,000	42.5	Fee for hunting quota granted to La Rochelle Hunting and Guest Farm by the Nyae Nyae Conservancy, eastern Otjozondjupa Region, to be paid in 2 instalments over 2 years.
initiatives combining consumptive and non-consumptive uses:				
projected (in 1995)	1,800,000	33,000	54.55	Projected potential income from wildlife and tourism in former Damaraland with all concessions as joint ventures, i.e. through establishment of conservancies to gain concessionary rights. Assuming that up-

				market lodges pay N\$40,000 ^{a-1} and hunting concessions pay N\$30,000 ^{a-1} .
1999 & 2000	170,000	2,000	42.5	Value of unspecified 'other benefits' to Nyae Nyae Conservancy, eastern Otjozondjupa Region, from La Rochelle Hunting and Guest Farm.
1999 & 2000	160,000	2,000	40	Value of restocking Nyae Nyae Conservancy, eastern Otjozondjupa Region, with oryx and red hartebeest by La Rochelle Hunting and Guest Farm.