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## INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, THE STATE, AND RESOURCE RIGHTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

*The governments of Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia are pursuing policies which theoretically devolve control over natural resources to local communities. A goal of these policies is to encourage conservation through allowing local people to benefit from resource utilization. This paper assesses the impacts of changing resource management rules of southern African states. Drawing on data from Bushmen (San), Himba, Kalanga, and Ndebele populations, it demonstrates that the degree to which local people have control over resources varies greatly. States in southern Africa have tended to grant only limited rights to resources to indigenous peoples, and many of the socioeconomic benefits from those resources fail to reach local communities. Clearly, greater efforts are needed on the part of states, NGOs, international donors, and local people themselves to promote land and resource rights of African indigenous populations.*

Over the past several years a dramatic upsurge has taken place in the efforts of governments, international donor agencies, and various non-governmental organizations to promote community-based natural resource management programs in southern Africa. These activities were initiated in part because of the failure of previous conservation policies, which took away the control of natural resources from local people and placed it in the hands of the state or private companies (Anderson and Grove 1987; Adams and McShane 1992; Bonner 1993).

The governments of Namibia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe currently are pursuing policies which theoretically devolve control over natural resources to local communities. The main assumption underlying these policies is that local people will be more willing to conserve resources if they are able to gain direct economic benefits from them.

Some of the people involved in the decentralized natural resource management programs are indigenous groups who depend to a certain extent on wild plants and animals for their subsistence and income. Often described as vulnerable populations because of their poverty and their low socioeconomic and political status, the indigenous peoples of southern Africa have begun to organize themselves into grassroots action committees and associations in an attempt to enhance their rights. The question is to what degree these efforts will be successful given current government policies.

This paper assesses the impacts of changing resource management rules of these southern African states (Figure 1). The governments of these three countries have tended to grant only limited rights to resources to indigenous peoples, and many of the socioeconomic benefits from those resources fail to reach local communities. Drawing on specific case material, it examines the degree to which indigenous peoples have benefitted from natural resource management policies.

### The Ju/'hoansi of Namibia

Perhaps the best-known of the community-based people's organizations involved in natural resource management activities is the Nyae Nyae Farmers Cooperative (NNFC), an association of Ju/'hoansi Bushmen involved in a multi-faceted development effort in north-eastern Namibia. Formed in 1986, this organization has undertaken a variety of projects, including the establishment of over 30 decentralized communities, each with its own water source, gardens, and small herds of livestock. Foraging makes up part of the subsistence of these Ju/'hoansi communities, while some income is derived from rural industries such as the manufacture of handicrafts.

The Ju/'hoansi have made efforts to gain greater control over their land and resources through petitions to the government of Namibia and by playing an active role in a national-level conference on land reform held in the country's capital in 1991 (Republic of Namibia 1991). The Namibian government gave tacit recognition to their land rights when they stated that they would accept the traditional Ju/'hoansi land management system as the basis for land allocations. Subsequently, the Ju/'hoansi were able to convince some pastoralists who had moved into their areas with their cattle herds to leave peacefully, thus demonstrating their willingness and ability to maintain control over their resources (Bieseke 1992; Hitchcock 1992).

One problem is that the Ju/'hoansi do not have definite legal control over the resources in their area. They are not allowed to protect their herds and water points from problem animals such as lions and elephants, nor can they exploit and sell local timber.

Efforts are now being made to establish a natural resource management program in Bushmanland. Some members of the Nyae Nyae Farmers Cooperative are concerned about the implications of new kinds of land management categories which could usurp the authority of the Ju/'hoansi. They are also concerned that most of the economic benefits will continue to flow to government or to a private safari company, Anvo Hunting Safaris, which has been operating in the area since 1988. Their efforts to convince the government to permit local people to make decisions about the use of natural resources have so far been unsuccessful. Progress is being made at the regional level, however, with the setting up of an Environmental Planning Committee (EPC) in early 1992. The government of Namibia is listening to the concerns of Ju/'hoansi, and efforts are being made to institutionalize resource access rights. Pressures continue to mount as pastoralists and tourism companies scout Eastern Bushmanland and request permission from local communities and the central government to move into the area.

### The Himba of Northwestern Namibia

The Himba are semi-nomadic pastoralists who utilize widely dispersed water points and grazing in the rugged mountains and sandy plains of northwestern Namibia and southwestern Angola. Numbering 9,000, the Himba have had to cope with drought, war, and changing economic circumstances over the past two decades (Jacobsohn, Pickford, and Pickford 1990). Once some of the wealthiest pastoralists in Africa, the Himba lost many of their animals in a major drought in 1979-1982. Many of them became more dependent upon the state for food, moving into towns. Others became wage laborers, while still others turned to foraging or irrigated gardening for a living.

In the 1980s, the Himba were affected by the war between the South African Defense Force and the South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO). As a result of the spread of weapons in the region, poaching increased substantially. Administrative changes occurred in Kaokoland, with a centralization of control by the government. Strict anti-poaching regulations were on the books in

Namibia, but the enforcement of these regulations was complicated in a region as remote as Kaokoland.

As an attempt to respond to problems facing Himba and others in northwestern Namibia, two programs were developed through the combined efforts of the communities affected and a non-government organization known as Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC). One program involved the setting up of a community game guard system in which local Himba were appointed to monitor areas where they reside. The guards are responsible for tracking wildlife and looking for poachers; all enforcement is handled by government officials. The game guards are serviced by the field staff of the Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation, and Tourism. In exchange for their services, the guards are given a small salary and a food and commodities allotment. In the area where the game guards exist, poaching has declined considerably and wildlife numbers have increased in the past several years.

The community game guard system has been successful for two important reasons. Firstly, the system was planned and implemented by the communities involved, and capitalized on the people's inherent value of wildlife as a resource by allowing them the authority and responsibility to manage it. Secondly, the system brought together the expertise and support of several actors - the community, the IRDNC, and the government - who play complementary roles in the program.

The second program was a pilot tourism one in which tourists coming in to the area paid a levy of R25 (about US \$10) per head per night. The funds from the levy were distributed among the communities with traditional rights in the area. People were also able to benefit from tourism through the sale of crafts to visitors. Tour operators were encouraged to have tourists stop and greet and talk to the residents of the area and to be more conscious of the environmental impacts of tourism, including depletion of firewood and the leaving of refuse.

The Himba tourism project is one example of what is being tried to allow communities to tap into a share of local resource potential. The project is working well in that the relationship between tourists and communities is now more positive, and the communities are enjoying an economic gain. The arrangement, however, is an ad hoc one. Tour operators could decide not to cooperate with the communities, and there are no legal restrictions requiring them to do so. To assure that the project continues to work smoothly, the communities' right to manage the wildlife and tourism must be protected legally.

## Remote Area Dwellers in Botswana

A different situation exists in the remote areas of the Republic of Botswana. The Botswana government has yet to pass specific legislation which will allow local people control over resources in tribal land areas (71% of the country). Under the Botswana government's Tribal Grazing Land Policy (1975) and Wildlife Conservation Policy (1986), there are stipulations that local communities will be encouraged to utilize wildlife and other natural resources, but as yet there are few communities which have been able to obtain a portion of the benefits from the sale of hunting licenses or the granting of safari company concessions.

There is a stipulation under the Fauna Conservation (Unified Hunting) Regulations of 1979 that „special licenses“ can be granted to subsistence hunters. Remote Area Dwellers (RADs) who depend to a significant extent on wildlife can use these licenses to hunt specified types of animals. In practice, people have been arrested for illegal hunting even if they had these licenses. The degree to which rural people actually have access rights to wildlife resources is thus open to question.

Efforts have been made by the Botswana government, local communities, and non-government organizations to set up community projects involving wildlife. These projects have not been very successful in part because of organizational problems and because the benefits of the projects have been low. The distribution of the benefits has not always been very wide in the communities where the projects have been implemented (e.g. in Kedia and Mabutshane) (Cumming and Taylor et al. 1989; Hitchcock 1991).

In the case of the Nata Conservation Trust, which ostensibly is a community-based resource management program in northeastern Botswana, benefits have yet to reach the residents of the region. In the establishment of the program there was fairly limited consultation with local people. Some individuals, including Tyua Bushmen, were excluded from the area set aside for conservation and eco-tourism purposes. In addition, the region which the trust controls contains an important salt source which was a major item used by Tyua for income generation and exchange. The project has thus led to lowered access to important resources and a reduction in the incomes of local people.

Several of the remote area communities in Botswana are trying to set up their own resource utilization programmes. The people of Manxotae on the Nata River in northeastern Botswana, for example,

are working on small-scale rural industry projects. In the western part of the Okavango Delta region, women's groups are starting to practise conservation of the palms used for the manufacture of baskets. Groups in Ghanzi District have begun horticulture and agroforestry projects. Kuru Development Trust in northern Ghanzi District has initiated an array of development projects which have resource management implications (Kann, Hitchcock, and Mbere 1990).

The complexity of the insecure land and resource tenure situation can be seen in the case of the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. There the approximately 1,000 Bushmen and Bakgalagadi have been told that they have to move out of many of the areas where they have lived for generations and move in to a relatively small (900 square kilometer) area around the community of !Xade. Not only will high population densities quickly outstrip local resources, but there will be land use conflicts between resident groups and those who are resettled there. There are no formal mechanisms in place for people in !Xade to benefit from tourism in the Central Kalahari. There have been incidents in the Kalahari in which local people have been beaten and tortured by police and Department of Wildlife and National Parks officials (Mogwe 1992).

Unless efforts are made to ensure that local people in Botswana are able to retain the rights over land and resources, these projects could be threatened by outside interests. Indeed, this has already occurred in several parts of Botswana where non-local people have brought in their cattle to use the grazing and water. The livestock have had negative effects on the gardens and other resource-related projects of local residents. Requests have been made by local communities that the Botswana government grant them security of tenure over their resources, but as yet there has been no formal response to these requests.

### Natural Resource Management and CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe

In the case of Zimbabwe, whose Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) is held up as the best example of community-based resource management and development in Africa, rural Zimbabweans have begun to gain a certain amount of access to economic benefits from wildlife resources (Adams and McShane 1992; Bonner 1993). In the past, many of the

people in rural Zimbabwe saw wildlife more as a problem than a potential source of income, subsistence, and employment. Elephants, buffalo, and other animals destroyed their fields and sometimes killed people, and predators such as lions and leopards reduced their livestock numbers. The safari industry catered to non-local hunters and tourists, and people in the communal areas saw few, if any, benefits from the presence of safari companies. Personnel of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management were viewed as enforcers of laws which sometimes meant that local people were jailed for illegal hunting or obtaining resources inside the Parks and Wildlife Estate.

Realizing some of the problems in ways wildlife and other resources have been managed, the Zimbabwe Government passed the *Parks and Wildlife Act* which enables districts and local communities to gain access to benefits from wildlife resources. The devolution of authority over wildlife was done through the granting of what is known as Appropriate Authority status to districts. As of early 1993, 20 districts were recognized as having the right to benefits from their wildlife resources.

The basic principle behind CAMPFIRE is the re-empowerment of local communities through providing them with access to, control over, and responsibility for natural resources. A second principle is that local communities should have the right to make decisions regarding those natural resources and any activities that affect them. A third principle is that communities should receive the benefits from the exploitation of natural resources (Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management 1992; Environmental Consultants 1990, 1992). As Martin (1986:iv, 17) has noted, the ways to achieve the objectives of the CAMPFIRE program were (1) to obtain the voluntary participation of the communities in a flexible program that incorporates long-term solutions to resource problems and (2) to provide the appropriate institutions under which resources can be legitimately managed and exploited by the communities for their own direct benefit.

CAMPFIRE seeks to ensure that wildlife revenues are provided to producer communities. Under current legislation, it is the districts that have the right to make decisions about benefit distributions. Suggestions have been made by organizations involved in the implementation of CAMPFIRE activities that legislation should be changed to allow lower-level institutions (e.g. ward development committees, WAD-COS, and village development committees, VIDCOS) to have the authority to make resource management and distribution decisions.

Given the socioeconomic and ecological diversity in Zimbabwe, no one model of community empowerment is appropriate to all situations. Whereas Nyaminyami District Council has its own wildlife trust, other districts have chosen to have only wildlife steering committees. Some of Zimbabwe's districts have provided benefits to households whereas others have maintained the revenues at council level and have used those revenues to underwrite development projects in the various wards in their areas.

Interest in CAMPFIRE programs was generated in Beitbridge District in the late 1980s with visits by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management (DNPWM) and, later, meetings of the CAMPFIRE Association and regional CAMPFIRE awareness workshops of Zimbabwe Trust. This interest was enhanced by contacts with a local safari operator and commercial farmers. Subsequently, a district wildlife committee was formed. This committee recommended to the council that 90% of the revenues be returned to the local community. It also suggested that revenues be given to the wards and villages which produced those revenues. An additional recommendation was that the village which received the largest proportion of the revenues, Chikwarakwara, should have the right to decide the amount of money that should be allocated to community projects and to household benefits (Child and Peterson 1991). The District Council accepted these recommendations and provided benefits to the villages and households. The Beitbridge experience indicates that communities can gain access to wildlife revenues under CAMPFIRE and that the linkage between conservation and development can be recognized.

Another of the districts where CAMPFIRE is being implemented is Tsholotsho, south of Hwange National Park in the Matabeleland North Province in western Zimbabwe. The Tsholotsho area was once occupied solely by Bushmen peoples known as Tyua (Chwa) who were mobile foragers. Today, the district is also occupied by Kalanga agropastoralists and Ndebele pastoralists. Most of the people in the district now obtain their incomes and subsistence from crop production, livestock-raising, small-scale rural industries, and wage labor.

In the 1930s hundreds of Tyua were removed from their traditional territories when Wankie Game Reserve (now Hwange National Park) was established. The process of dispossession was nearly completed in the late 1940s and early 1950s with the appropriation of grazing land in both Zimbabwe and Botswana for a Colonial Development Corporation (CDC) ranching and agricul-

tural scheme. Settlement in the modern period expanded in the 1950s, many of whom had been evicted from then overcrowded districts of Matabeleland South. The movements into remote western sandveld areas were instigated by colonial administrators to resettle people and make way for commercial white farming.

Tyua and other rural Tsholotsho residents are not allowed to hunt or to shoot animals that raid their fields. They must depend instead on Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management (DNP-WLM) game scouts to deal with problem animals. With the granting of Appropriate Authority status to Tsholotsho in 1991, residents were theoretically given the authority to manage the wildlife in their areas and benefit from revenues that are produced through wildlife-related activities such as hunting and tourism. In practice, however, benefits have gone to the District Council and have not been distributed at the local level except in the form of projects decided upon by the council (e.g. roads, schools). As several people noted in interviews in 1992, the people in the rural parts of the district are not receiving full benefits from the wildlife in their areas.

In Bulalima Mangwe District, the District Council invested substantial resources from a USAID-funded Natural Resource Management Project in refurbishing a dam which is being used for livestock watering purposes. The increased numbers of cattle have had impacts on grasses in the region, particularly those grasses which Tyua women use for thatching houses and for sale to other people. Tyua women have argued forcefully that the natural resource management projects are having negative effects on their standards of living.

CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe is being implemented in areas where common property management regimes exist. Local communities do not own land; rather, they hold land under traditional tenure systems. At the same time, communities in communal lands in Zimbabwe do not have legally defined rights to natural resources besides wildlife; instead, they have customary rights to exploit resources such as grazing, timber, and thatching grass. What this means, in essence, is that local communities have little, if any, recourse if district councils or individual entrepreneurs enter their areas and exploit their non-wildlife resources.

One of the problems with CAMPFIRE and other rural development programs in southern Africa is that many of the decisions about resource management come from outside the producer community. This can be seen, for example, in those cases where the district councils make suggestions to lower-level institutions as to

how they should spend the money obtained from wildlife revenues. It should be stressed, however, that some of the people at the ward and village level have begun to lobby hard for greater decision-making power, something that district councils have begun to take greater notice of. Even if the situation in Zimbabwe cannot at present be described as one in which communities have been empowered, it is not unlikely that the trend is toward increased participation in decision-making at the local level.

### Conclusions

These cases indicate that there is significant variation in the degree to which local people actually benefit from natural resource management policies and programs in southern Africa. In some cases, these projects have done more harm than good. In other cases, they have had slightly beneficial effects, but it is unclear whether they will continue to be positive over the long term.

The problem with most natural resource management projects and government policies in southern Africa is that they fail to give local people secure legal control over natural resources and the power to make decisions about their use. Until this is done, the laudable goals of conservation, social justice, and economic development will remain impossible to achieve. Clearly, greater efforts are needed on the part of states, non-government organizations, international donors, and local people themselves to promote land and resource rights of African indigenous populations.

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Table 1. Projects in Community-Based Natural Resource Management and Development in Southern Africa.

Project	Country	General Comments
D'Kar	Botswana	development trust known as Kuru comprised of 5 communities involved in a wide range of activities
Kedia	Botswana	wildlife utilization project in a remote community of 700 in the western Central District
Lorolwane	Botswana	communal grazing area with an estimated 200 households involved in a livestock management scheme
Mabutsane	Botswana	several rural communities involved in wildlife utilization, tourism, and a handicrafts project
Nata Sanctuary	Botswana	conservation trust involved in a sanctuary and tourism program
Bokong Reserve	Lesotho	local communities involved in a multi-purpose reserve area that includes grazing, a vultury, and tourism
Sehlabathebe	Lesotho	grazing association consisting of livestock owners who manage an area of range land on a communal basis

Bazaruto	Mozambique	fishermen in Bazaruto archipelago involved in a game guard system overseeing turtle nests and tourism
Caprivi	Namibia	two groups in Mafue involved in a community game guard system
Purros	Namibia	Himba and Herero communities involved in tourism, handicrafts, and a community game guard system
Zeederburg	South Africa	a small group of Bushmen on a farm in the northern Cape involved in tourism
Richtersveld National Park	South Africa	Nama groups allowed access to a park for grazing and tourism
Kosi Bay Nature Reserve	South Africa	a chiefly game reserve with Tonga and Zulu involved in tourism
Piggs Peak	Swaziland	number of <i>zenzele</i> associations (women's self-help groups) engaged in income generating activities, horticulture, and fish production
Lupande (ADMADE)	Zambia	wildlife utilization program with environmental education and training as well as village scouts
CAMPFIRE	Zimbabwe	wildlife utilization, tourism, and income generating projects in a dozen of Zimbabwe's 55 districts

