

COMMUNITY-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

CO-GOVERNING NATURAL RESOURCES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: Lessons from Fisheries Co-Management, Malawi & Conservation Co-Management, South Africa

By
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March 2001



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PROGRAMME FOR LAND AND AGRARIAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN CAPE

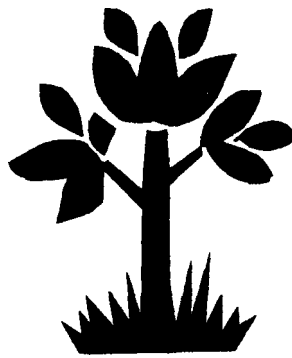
COMMONS SOUTHERN AFRICA

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1. Introduction

Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM), a term frequently used since the 1980s, denotes the increasing rapprochement between social justice and conservation management objectives in southern Africa. The colonial legacy of the region has had a profound effect on conservation and resource management policies. Many communities have been alienated by heavy state control over resource use and ownership. Shifts in conservation thinking can therefore be seen in the proliferation of decentralised, community-based projects and programmes, such as community wildlife management, social forestry and land use planning. This shift from 'fortress conservation' to community conservation has its roots in the emergence of discourses around sustainable development, local participation in public policies, market-based incentives for resource conservation, and the need to extend conservation beyond protected areas (Adams and Hulme, 1998). The promotion of CBNRM has also received extensive support from donor agencies. Thus, CBNRM approaches are essentially concerned with conferring greater control and responsibility for resource management on local resource users and actors.

Many authors have proclaimed the potential benefits of local natural resource management systems, such as CBNRM. These include local benefits such as revenue generation from natural resource-based enterprises, improved natural resource management and the development of community capacity to manage local resources (Korten, 1986; Brosius *et al.*, 1998; Uphoff, 1998; Schroeder, 1999). CBNRM also provides an opportunity to address the historical legacy of mistrust that exists between local resource users and state agencies (Schroeder, 1999). For state agencies, greater local involvement in resource management could also lead to increased compliance with regulations, reduced operational costs and greater legitimacy. In principle, CBNRM therefore involves the devolution of decision making power, thereby enhancing governance at the local level. However, many of the claimed benefits of CBNRM have yet to be realised in practice.

An emerging phenomenon of CBNRM programmes in southern Africa has been the development of partnerships between communities and other stakeholders, broadly termed co-management. Limited state capacity to implement conservation and natural resource management policies effectively, and the incapacity of local / community-based institutions to enforce rules, distribute benefits equitably and manage natural resources sustainably, have all contributed to the evolution, development and promotion of partnerships in natural resource management (Lawry, 1990). One of the key trends in the debate on CBNRM has therefore been the development of co-management arrangements, which involves the sharing of power and responsibility between user groups and other groups i.e. not only between local groups and state agencies, but also between local groups and the private sector (McCay, 1998). There is a wealth of experience in the southern African region, from fisheries, eco-tourism, and wildlife management to community-based conservation and joint forest management initiatives, demonstrating both success and failure in the co-management of natural resources.

Evidence of partnership arrangements emerges when one examines some of the earlier CBNRM programmes in southern Africa: the wildlife and habitat conservation programmes promoted in Botswana's Natural Resource Management Programme (BNRMP), Zambia's Administrative Management Design for Game Management Areas (ADMADe), the Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) initiative in Namibia, and the famous Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) in Zimbabwe. According to Barrow and Murphree (1998), most community conservation initiatives are in fact characterised by some degree of collaboration or co-management. So, many of the CBNRM initiatives in southern Africa display various degrees of participation and collaboration between communities, government, NGOs and private sector companies. This study seeks to investigate governance issues in co-management initiatives in southern Africa.

Governance is about finding a way to make "decisions that reduce the level of unwanted outcomes and increase the level of desirable outcomes" (Ostrom, 1998, 1). In the case of resource governance these outcomes include improved efficiency, equitability and sustainability of resource access, management and use. In this study the locus and distribution of power, responsibility and decision-making between the partners in two southern African co-management initiatives, will be investigated. Experiences from two established co-management cases are drawn upon to assess whether plans for shared responsibility, authority and decision making, three key components of resource governance, have been realised in practice. Co-management of artisanal fisheries in Malawi has been adopted as a national management strategy and essentially involves a partnership between the Fisheries Department and local-level institutions. The Richtersveld National Park, established as a contractual national park in 1991, has many lessons for the establishment and management of community-based conservation projects. The lessons from these two cases provide valuable insights into the viability of co-management, currently receiving a great deal of attention in resource governance debates in southern Africa.

2. Background

The CASS/PLAAS CBNRM programme is a southern African communications and analysis programme. It has the general objective of contributing to the sustainable enhancement of rural livelihoods in southern Africa by promoting a broader and deeper understanding of how natural resources can be used and managed sustainably through group-based institutions and decision-making. At the inaugural meeting of the programme, held in Kadoma, Zimbabwe in 1999, the research or thematic focus of the programme was identified as governance and CBNRM. The researcher thus had a mandate to investigate a particular aspect of resource governance. This research study is located within the broad framework of governance and CBNRM. Both secondary research and short field visits informed the findings in this paper.

The aim of this study is to assess the extent to which co-management approaches to resource management have enhanced local resource governance. The key questions asked of the two cases that were selected include the following: was there evidence of local input into decision-making? Whose knowledge counts? How was responsibility and authority for resource management distributed amongst partner institutions? It was not the intention of this study to develop a blueprint for partnership development processes as the specific political economies and histories of the countries in the region will lead to particular forms of partnerships being developed. However, to ensure that co-management cases are truly transparent, and built on mutual respect and trust, we need to develop basic principles which engage communities as partners, co-managers and co-decision makers. While it is possible to develop 'profiles of co-management processes' in the region, one should avoid blueprint solutions or meta-theories. Instead, we should examine "the interaction between these variables in specific, localised contexts" (Murphree, 1999, 8).

The study was based largely on the assessment of secondary data. However, while literature review and analysis formed the main methodological component, short field visits to the two selected case studies were also conducted. The cases were selected according to the following criteria: that they displayed a commitment to co-management; had a sufficient track record to enable the observation of the outcomes of co-management arrangements; and represented different resource sectors. Two cases, that of fisheries co-management in Malawi and conservation co-management in South Africa, were deemed suitable for analysis. One of the key drawbacks of the study was the limited time frame (approximately 10 months) that was available to the researcher. However, this challenge was met by maintaining contact with researchers who had conducted field research in the case study areas to develop a deeper understanding of broader debates on co-management in the two areas.

3. Co-management as Co-governance

Governance of natural resources involves "the structures and processes of power and authority, co-operation and conflict, that govern decision making and dispute resolution concerning resource allocation and use, through the interaction of organisations and social institutions" (Woodhouse, 1997, 540). Central to an examination of governance in CBNRM is therefore an assessment of the measures and procedures for "setting the rules for the exercise of power and settling conflicts over such rules" (Hyden, 1998). Furthermore, governance involves the implementation of these rules through a variety of institutional mechanisms such as policies, laws and organisational structures (both formal and informal). Murphree (1999) therefore rightly states that within the context of CBNRM, one of the key elements of governance is the capacity of communities to participate and contribute to decisions on access to and use of natural resources. What is co-management and how does it relate to governance?

There are many definitions of the term **co-management**. While some regard it as a middle-range management option situated somewhere between state and community management (Jentoft, 1989), others say that it "covers various partnership arrangements and degrees of power-sharing and integration of local and centralised management systems" (Pomeroy and Berkes, 1997, 466). Key issues of power and authority are therefore the degree of local participation in decision-making or the extent of devolution to the local level. Co-management arrangements are situated along a continuum, from coerced partnerships which are generally not motivated by local concerns to an organic partnership, where "the community has a sense of ownership of its resources, a clear vision and often has an idea of the type of partner and partnership it desires" (Katerere, 1999, 6). Middle-range arrangements can be classified as co-operative arrangements where decision-making is shared by the state and local groups (Sen and Raakjaer Nielsen, 1996).

"Co-management can thus offer a middle course between state-level concerns for efficiency and equity and local-level concerns for self-governance, self-regulation, and active participation in decision-making."
(Hilhorst and Aarnink, 1999, 15)

Co-management varies in relation to the degree of local participation and involvement. In the diagram below (Figure 1), co-management is seen as ranging from instructive arrangements where government is the key decision maker to informative co-management arrangements where the views and inputs of user groups play a more central role.

Co-management can be based on a localised coherent group taking responsibility for managing "their" resources in co-operation with central state agencies or other partners. This type of co-management is often based on a geographical locality and the resources that occur within this area and can be termed territorial. The second type of co-management is based on a co-operative tradition, where government co-operates with functional groups representing fishers, farmers or hunters (Isaacs and Mohamed, 2000). For example, the joint venture partnerships in Botswana's communal areas are essentially based on the use and management of resources that occur within a particular territory. Co-management could thus occur between a private sector investor and a body representing the interests of local people. On the other hand, co-management can also occur between external agents and a functional group, such as fishers.

According to Jentoft (1989) co-management has to include a considerable degree of responsibility for resource management by the users, not only token consultations with them by outsiders. Co-management thus spans partnerships with a variety of objectives between communities, NGOs, government and the private sector. Collaborative management (or co-management) has to consist of negotiated rights and responsibilities and should **seek** to

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establish "local responsibility for the management of such resources so as to achieve conservation as well as community objectives" (Barrow and Murphree, 1998, 15).

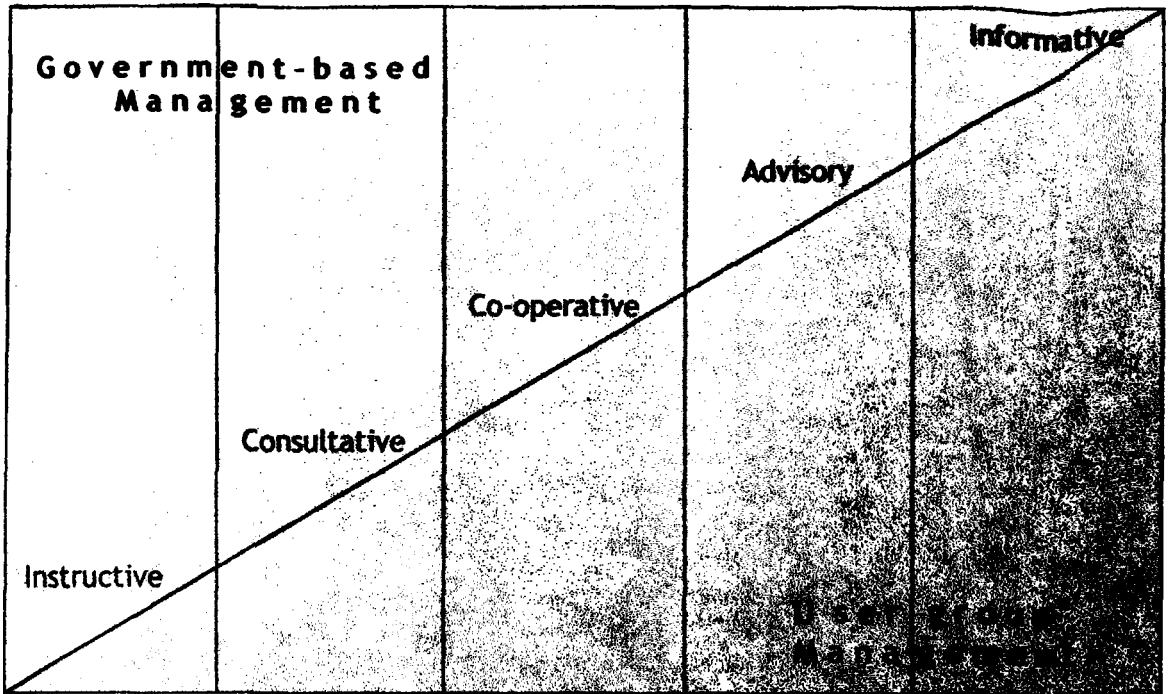


Figure 1: A spectrum of co-management arrangements (Adapted from McCay, 1993 and Berkes, 1994 in Sen and Raakjaer Nielsen, 1996)

In the table below, the range of objectives of some of the key partners in co-management is listed. Different partners often share similar objectives, for example government agencies and NGOs often have redistributive objectives that inform their projects. Donor agencies in particular have had an important influence on the implementation of CBNRM in southern Africa and have actively promoted community conservation since the 1980s (Adams and Hulme, 1998). The international character of the actors involved in CBNRM across the world can also be seen by the involvement of actors such as international NGOs and environmental groups.

Table 1: Objectives of key partners in co-management initiatives

OBJECTIVES	KEY PARTNERS				
	GOVT. (government)	NGOs	PRIVATE SECTOR	DONOR AGENCIES	LOCAL GROUPS
Regulation	X				
Redistribution	X	X			
Biodiversity conservation	X	X		X	X
Service provision	X	X	X		
Facilitation	X	X		X	
Socio-economic development	X	X		X	X
Enterprise Development & Profit			X		X

One of the key benefits put forward by the proponents of co-management is its ability to move beyond the limitations of either state OR community management on their own (Taylor, 1998). For example, lack of accountability and limited enforcement capacity of community-based institutions, and limited state understanding of local conditions – shortcomings that seriously undermine both state and local-level environmental management – could be addressed by combining the knowledge and strength of various partners (Lawry, 1990; Taylor, 1998). Strictly defined property rights (state, private) could also be combined in a number of imaginative ways to build productive, mutually beneficial relationships for resource management (Baland and Platteau, 1996; Hilhorst and Aarnink, 1999). Co-management can also result in sustainable natural resource use, power sharing for natural resource management and conservation, participation of local peoples, legitimacy, and an opportunity to introduce enterprise-based partnerships with the private sector (Jentoft, 1989; Berkes, 1997; McCay, 1998; Brosius *et al.*, 1998; Uphoff, 1998; Hara, 1999). It offers the prospect of being more cost-effective as the transaction costs related to the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of regulations is likely to be lower with community involvement (Hilhorst and Aarnink, 1999). Co-management will thus have to incorporate

“... a genuine ceding of power from the national and international authorities to local groups and individuals, and development of planning and negotiation processes that facilitate substantive contact between them and conservation authorities.” (Schroeder, 1999, 372)

Co-management arrangements thus potentially provide incentives for a variety of actors and objectives. The move towards privatisation and market liberalisation across the region also implies that the private sector will increasingly become involved in economic development and in the utilisation of the region's rich natural resource base. Short-term priorities of the private sector, such as profit-generation, will need to be reconciled with benefits and goals related to sustainable natural resource use, justice and equity. This is an important source of concern as market considerations could undermine local priorities. In some instances, local actors are already engaging directly with the private sector as illustrated by commercial interests in wildlife management in Tanzania (Wøien and Lama, 1999). How do we ensure that the state continues to play a pivotal role in co-management arrangements when there are tensions between devolutionist and privatisation trends in the region? The development of local institutions to participate in co-management is therefore essential. However, it is likely that, as with all institution-building processes, this will take time. As Barrow and Murphree (1998) state:

“Implementing community conservation in practice and creating mechanisms to do so has taken time, and much learning, changing essentially more preservationist “military” type state conservation institutions to one of facilitating, sharing power and empowering local community and resource users. It has been fraught with difficulties related to attitude, motivation, acceptance and the need for retraining.” (Barrow and Murphree, 1998, 23)

Recently, a range of criticisms of co-management has developed in relation to the lack of community capacity and state willingness to engage in partnership arrangements; the costs and efforts to sustain co-management; and the challenge of dealing with social differentiation and contestation at the local level (Hara, 2000; Lele, 2000). Furthermore, evidence is emerging that local elites are capturing the action space created by the co-management paradigm (Isaacs and Mohamed 2000). Thus, limited capacity within local communities could result in the usurpation of local needs and priorities by outside actors or local elites in pursuit of their own goals. Community involvement will thus have to move beyond coercion and consultation to participation. The weak definition of the concept has also served to empty “the concept of its value as a precise tool when applying it to the local context”

(Hermes and Sandersen, 1998, 5). Despite these criticisms, it has become clear that government and private sector involvement and interest in establishing formal partnerships with communities in natural resource management is increasing.

The third biannual meeting of the USAID-sponsored Southern African Development Community Natural Resource Management Programme (SADC NRMP), held in October 1999, discussed the issue of private sector involvement and enterprise development in CBNRM as a major theme. At this meeting as in the previous southern African conference held in 1997, co-management was identified as a key theme. This was further illustrated by the thematic focus of a workshop convened by IUCN-South Africa in November 1999. The high profile meeting homed in on the partnership theme by focussing on the viability of community-public-private partnerships (CPPPs) in natural resource management. A critical issue raised at these fora has been the need to develop guidelines to enable the establishment of equitable, meaningful partnerships between communities and other stakeholders in natural resource management.

In theory, co-management seeks to combine the strengths of partner institutions to achieve outcomes such as efficient, equitable and sustainable use of natural resources. Co-management essentially involves many of the key governance issues discussed above: attempts are made to develop joint structures of power and authority, and to share decision-making and responsibility for resource use and allocation. Institutional mechanisms and structures, such as joint management boards, are being developed to design and implement joint management regimes. While co-management involves technical management decisions related to resource use, access and management, it also incorporates elements of governance. Has co-management, as implemented in the two cases analysed here, strengthened resource governance?

4. Fisheries Co-management: The implementation of the Participatory Fisheries Management Programme in Lake Malombe and the Upper Shire River, Malawi

In 1993, the Government of Malawi, with the assistance of a multi-donor funded programme, piloted a new management regime for regulating the artisanal fisheries sector in Malawi. The pilot programme, premised on the principles of co-management, was initiated in Lake Malombe and the Upper Shire River, Mangochi District (Figure 2).

The pilot project was called the Participatory Fisheries Management Programme (PFMP), and aimed "to persuade the fishing community to allow fish stocks to recover" (Fisheries Department, 1993, 5) by developing and enforcing mutually acceptable regulations for managing the fishery. The project was initiated after a dramatic decline in fish stocks, particularly of the high value *chambo* species. The results of one of the studies indicate that a loss in catch led to a loss in income of 76.6% (Nyando, 2000). According to Donda and Hara (1999, 7), there were three main causes suggested for the decline of the stocks: "over capitalisation, increased use of illegal fishing gears/illegal methods and government's inability to enforce existing regulations effectively". A co-management regime was established between the Fisheries Department (FD) and a newly created local-level institution, the Beach Village Committee (BVC). The regime was initially tested in the pilot area, but has since been extended to the artisanal fisheries sector in the rest of Malawi through the National Aquatic Resource Management Programme (NARMAP) established in 1998.

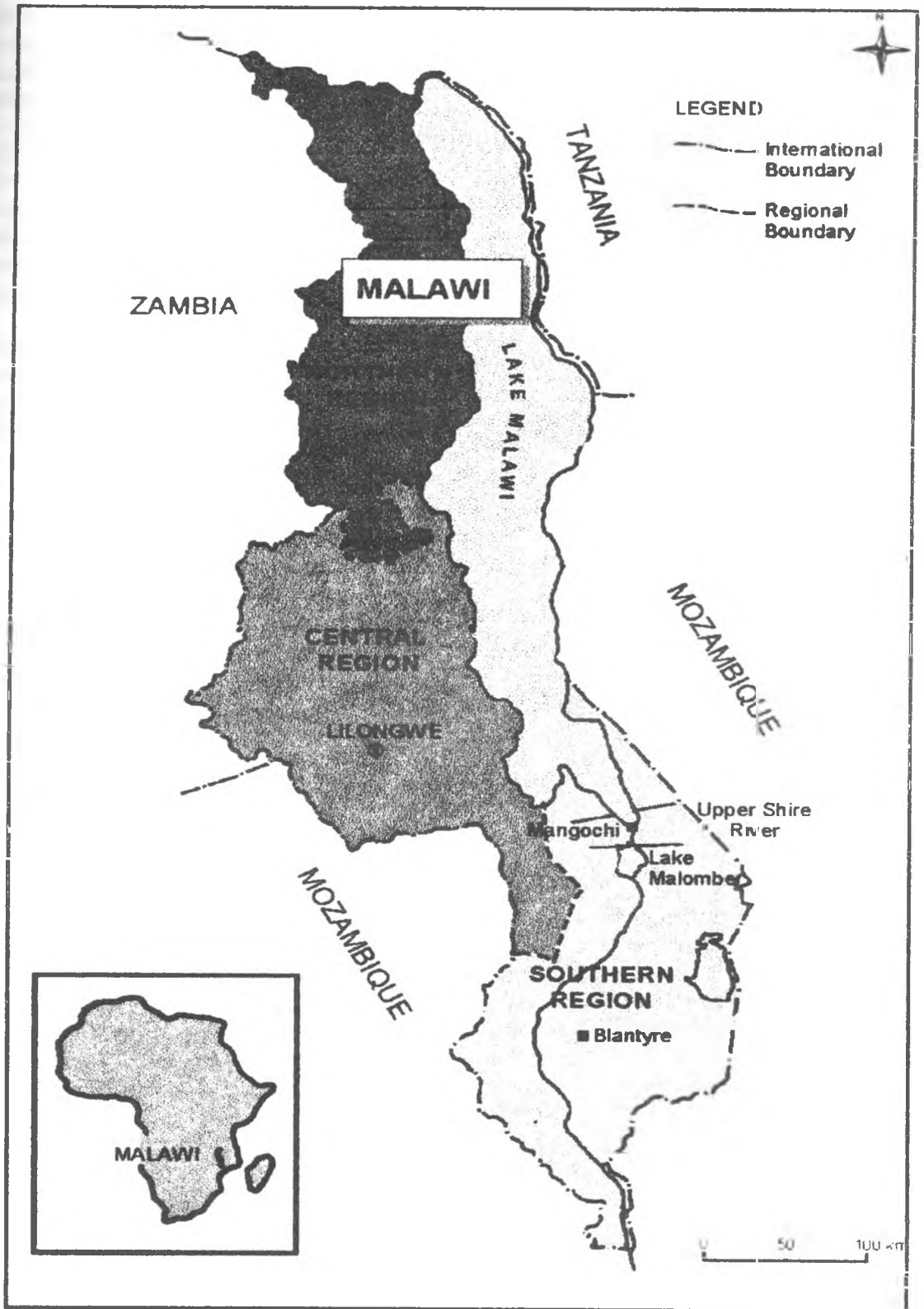


Figure 2: The location of Lake Malombe and the Upper Shire River (Adapted from Hara, 2000)

Malawi is a land-locked country. Lake Malawi, the third largest lake on the African continent, covers 20% of the country's surface area. In addition to fishing on Lake Malawi, the fishing industry on a number of smaller water bodies, such as the Shire River and Lakes Chiuta, Malombe and Chirwa, has an equally important role to play in the rural economy of the country. Ranked in 1993 amongst the poorest 15 countries in the world, Malawi has a very high population growth rate and one of the highest population densities in southern Africa (Government of Malawi (GOM), 1993). The majority of the population is dependent on subsistence farming, and fisheries provide a substantial percentage of the animal protein intake (GOM, 1996). A lack of manufacturing and industrial development in Malawi means that a large proportion of the population is directly dependent on natural resources – thus there have been incidences of severe resource depletion.

Mangochi district, in the Southern Region of Malawi, was the pilot district for the co-management initiative and displays similar characteristics. The district suffers from low agricultural productivity, a lack of income opportunities and poor health and social infrastructure. The Mangochi district office of the Fisheries Department (FD) has jurisdiction over the South East arm of Lake Malawi, the South West arm of Lake Malawi, the Upper Shire River and Lake Malombe. In Mangochi, fisheries form one of the major sources of livelihoods. In total there are 13000 households along the lakeshore in 735 villages as well as the urban centre of Mangochi District, the town of Mangochi (GOM, 1998). The district also has a national park, Liwonde National Park, situated on the eastern shores of lake Malombe. Lake Malombe and the Upper Shire were selected as pilot areas because the fishery is primarily artisanal and is highly productive and because 90% of the fishing units operating in Lake Malombe were classified as illegal in 1992 (FD, 1993). Though only 283 km², Lake Malombe provided 17% of Malawi's total fish production (FD, 1993). The ideas presented in this paper were drawn primarily from the experiences of the pilot programme in Lake Malombe and the Upper Shire River.

4.1. Toward fisheries co-management in Lake Malombe and the Upper Shire River

Mistrust and suspicion characterised the relationship between state officials and artisanal fishers in the decades preceding the introduction of co-management (Hara, 2000). Dwindling catches and the collapse of the key species in the late 1980s (*Oreochromis spp.*, locally known as *chambo*), prompted the investigation of alternatives to the centralised fisheries management systems in place (FD, 1993). Several studies were commissioned in the early 1990s to assess management options for artisanal fisheries management in Malawi. It was proposed that a co-management arrangement, in which the responsibility and authority for fisheries management are shared between the government and a local-level institution, be instituted. With the assistance of donors, a co-management initiative was launched in 1993, and Beach Village Committees (BVCs) were elected to represent the interests of fishers. Traditional leaders, in the form of Village Headmen (VH) or Chiefs were incorporated into the BVCs as ex-officio members. The gear owners and crewmembers were the main target of the co-management programme and were also elected onto BVCs. According to the Artisanal Fisheries Management Plan of 1993:

“The eventual aim is to have in place a sustainable management regime that will require minimum input from the Fisheries Department. The area of Lake Malombe and the Upper Shire River is viewed as a pilot operation where lessons may be learned for other areas in Malawi.” (GOM, 1993, 3)

The PFMP hinged on a number of activities aimed at broadcasting and facilitating the development of co-management. These include: policy and legislation; research, monitoring and extension messages; community participation; public relations and extension; licensing; compensation and income-generating activities and law enforcement (FD, 1993). The Extension Unit of the FD was most active in working with villagers in the establishment of the

community structure, the BVCs, which would be pivotal in co-management. Fisheries extension officers are based in the communities to provide assistance to the BVCs. In addition, *Usodzi Walero*, a radio programme that is aimed at fisheries extension was launched. It is therefore evident that this management strategy encompassed transformation of not only the practices, but also the philosophy and policies of fisheries management in Malawi (Chirwa, 1998).

The FD approached the villages located around Lake Malombe and the Upper Shire and proposed the establishment of a co-management arrangement. It was hoped that co-management would eventually evolve into a self-regulated system akin to classic common property resource management systems. BVCs were elected to represent the interests of fishers. This local-level institution, it was hoped, would enhance the legitimacy of fisheries management and ensure co-operation with regulations. It would also act as a negotiator between the fishers and the department. The BVC members received training from the FD, which developed a training programme with the assistance of donors. BVC members should be elected for a period of two years after which re-election should take place. Unfortunately elections have not been held on a regular basis. In 1998, a Lake Malombe/Upper Shire River Fisheries Association (FA) was formed as an umbrella-body to co-ordinate the inputs of the various BVCs in Mangochi District.

At the time that the field visit for this study was undertaken, there were 34 BVCs operating in Lake Malombe and the Upper Shire River. However, elections were also being held at the time and it was predicted that more groups would be formed in this area. The key regulatory measures adopted in the co-management of the fishery include regulating gear types, adhering to closed seasons and checking licences. The joint management forums, at which the various role players are present, provide a further opportunity to discuss fisheries management issues on an annual basis. At these annual meetings FD officials, BVC members, the FA, donor agencies and other government departments, such as the local prosecuting agency, are all represented. At these fora BVC members are given an opportunity to input into the development of an annual fisheries management plan and to review fisheries regulations. In 1997, amendments to the Fisheries Act were made and a new act (the Fisheries Conservation and Management Act) was passed that promoted community participation in fisheries management (Malawi Government, 1997). Inter-BVC meetings are also held in the various areas to facilitate an exchange of information and experiences. The primary roles of the two primary partners in the co-management arrangement, the FD and BVCs, are outlined in the table below.

A further area in which the FD has also been involved in is the development of alternative income-generating activities (IGAs). These were initiated in order to decrease the pressure on the fishery. Support has been provided for small-scale farming, trading, crafts and other retail activities. The dire socio-economic circumstances of many rural people in Malawi and the limited production capacity of fisheries require that alternative IGAs be investigated. However, key limiting factors include inadequate provision of technical, market and financial support for these income-generating activities.

The greatest advantage of co-management in the Malawian fisheries, according to both the FD and the BVCs, is improved relations between the FD and the fishers. Relationships have improved dramatically and fishers feel more empowered through the BVCs to manage the resource. There is shared formulation of fisheries regulations, enforcement of regulations by BVCs and monitoring of the gear types that fishers are using (Nyando, 2000). However, many of the key benefits that should have accrued from co-management, such as local participation in decision making, shared responsibility and authority, have not yet materialised. This has resulted in local participants not feeling they have much at stake in the co-management regime. It was clear from both secondary, evaluative material on the

programme, as well as the researcher's visits to the area, that there were a number of problems in the pilot area.

Table 2: Responsibilities of partners in fisheries co-management, Malawi
(From Mkandawire, 1996; Hara, 2000)

The partners	Fisheries Department (FD)	Beach Village Committees (BVCs)
Key role	To conserve and manage fisheries resources in a participatory manner.	To participate on behalf of fishing communities in conservation and management of the fisheries.
Main functions	<p>To orientate existing services towards facilitating co-management;</p> <p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy development - Legislation - Extension services - Training - Enforcement - Research - Monitoring and evaluation 	<p>To register all users on the beach;</p> <p>To issue licences and maintain records of licences issued;</p> <p>To discuss problems with fishers;</p> <p>To enforce fishing regulations & expel members who don't comply;</p> <p>To control admission and limit access;</p> <p>To represent the fishers at higher forums, such as policy development processes.</p>

1.2. The governance aspects of fisheries co-management

Fisheries co-management in Malawi, as in other parts of southern Africa, is increasingly being promoted as a management model. It promises to reverse the trends of top-down, command and control approaches that characterised fisheries management in the past. The experience of establishing a mutually beneficial relationship between the FD and the BVCs provides important lessons for co-management of natural resources in southern Africa more generally. It is a long-standing example of co-management in southern Africa and presents an opportunity to evaluate whether the claims that are being made for co-management are being realised in practice.

Unfortunately implementation has not addressed key components of joint resource governance: i.e. clear delineation of roles and responsibilities, legitimacy and authority and shared decision-making. Fisheries co-management, in practice, thus faces many obstacles.

With the extension of this philosophy to not only the rest of the artisanal fisheries sector but also other resource sectors in Malawi, it is imperative that these issues be highlighted.

Firstly, the roles and responsibilities of the various partners remain unclear. The roles and responsibilities of BVCs, FD, donor agency, local enforcement agents and the Fisheries Association (FA) are unclear and in some instances contested. The FA that would have originally played a co-ordinating role is also engaged in enforcement of regulations. The Vice-Chairperson of the FA sees the role of the Association as "bridging the gap between the BVCs and the FD" (Pers. Comm. ¹, Mangochi District, 2000). However, others are concerned that the Association is requesting equipment to patrol lake areas and enforce regulations. The issue of enforcement is further clouded by the fact that the legitimacy of BVCs to enforce regulations remains unclear. There is a lack of co-operation between the Enforcement Unit of the FD and the BVCs who are also performing an enforcement function. The working relationship between the FD and BVCs exists mostly between the Extension Unit of the FD and the BVCs, thus the Enforcement Unit is not actively involved in the co-management initiative. The BVCs are also seen in some instances as an extension of the FD's authority, rather than a locally accountable body. As Donda and Hara (1999, 15) state:

"In Lake Malombe, the formation and training of BVCs had been facilitated by government. This role of government as facilitator in initiating and mobilising communities for participation in the new management regime is somehow problematic. Concurrently, most BVC members feel that they derive their powers from government."

The second issue thus relates to legitimacy and authority. The formation of the BVCs met with many obstacles. They did not factor in the existence of the Beach Chairman, an advisor to the Village Head (VH) and thus potentially an important source of legitimacy (Hara, 2000). However, while the VH and the BVC have a co-operative relationship in some villages, in others the VHs view BVCs as a threat to their power base. Conflicts have thus arisen between BVCs and traditional leaders. Furthermore, BVCs are not always seen as representing the interests of the fishers. Fisheries co-management in Malawi is essentially focused on a particular user group, the fishers, but the BVCs in some areas have few fishers represented on their structures. Instead, villagers who do not have a direct stake in fishing are elected or in some instances appointed as BVC members. For example, in Lake Malombe the representation of fishers (i.e. gear owners and crew members) is only 30% (Donda and Hara, 1999). This has important implications for the legitimacy of the structure. Some villagers and fishers continue to see the BVCs as an extension of the authority of the FD. Attempts are being made to include more crewmembers and gear owners and elections were being held in the area in the period May – June 2000. Representivity could enhance the legitimacy and authority of BVCs who are faced with the difficult task of regulating access to the fishery.

A related 'authority and legitimacy' issue is the concern among some that BVCs are still not legal bodies, despite numerous calls to grant them legal status. The lack of legal support and legitimacy can be very problematic as BVC members are putting themselves at risk when they confiscate and destroy undersized nets. Instances have already arisen in which BVC members, in the process of confiscating nets, have been involved in altercations with fishers. There are thus tensions emerging between the BVC and the FD that relate specifically to the lack of clarity on the nature and authority of BVCs. What is the legal status of the BVC? Who does the BVC represent? Many feel that the BVCs should be given the legal backing to set, monitor and enforce regulations. Allegations of corruption in the police department and light sentencing detract from and undermine the decisions taken by the BVCs. For example, a

¹ For reasons of confidentiality, the names of the respondents in both Mangochi District and the Richtersveld, have been withheld.

BVC member reported the use of an undersized net during the closed season to the police department who subsequently fined the offender only for using the net and not for fishing in the closed season (Pers. Comm., Mangochi District, 2000). Furthermore, the fines imposed by BVCs are much more stringent than those of the magistrate, but the 'powers' of the BVC and the VH in particular, to impose fines on offenders, have no legal backing.

For an efficient fisheries co-management programme, there must be some legal provision made to sanction those who deliberately deviate from the agreed norm. It should be borne in mind that peer pressure alone, without legal backing, in a world of transparency, may not serve any meaningful purpose. (Mtika, 1996, 78)

A third governance issue is that of joint decision-making. Many BVC members and villagers feel that this has not been resolved yet. They feel that their opinions are not taken into consideration at annual meetings when fishing regulations are made – scientific knowledge is still privileged despite the opportunity to voice their concerns at annual meetings. Furthermore, limited provision for input into fisheries policy amendments, has led to the view that co-management has yet to materialise. The functioning of the joint decision making structures is still not to the satisfaction of the BVCs. They feel that their inputs are not counted and that "community suggestions and regulations are not accepted and the FD is not empowering the community" (Pers. comm., Mangochi District, 2000). There is still a feeling that "the government has more power and that BVCs are not fully empowered yet" (Pers. Comm., Mangochi District, 2000). The following statement supports this:

"In policy making, for example, FD has adopted what it perceives to be a consensus approach, making proposals based on biological research and seeking the approval of the fishing communities. What the communities perceive is that the FD is setting the agenda, and delaying the discussion of issues brought forward by the fishermen." (de Gabriele, 1998, 12)

Other factors, such as the failure to uphold promises of training, sitting allowances and transport for BVC members, have also hindered the development of joint decision-making. Initially the FD was committed to provide compensation to fishers who were changing their gear. In addition, it was envisioned that a proportion of the fisheries license fees would accrue to BVCs so that they could become self-sustaining. A loan scheme was eventually put in place to assist fishers to change their gear. The payment of licence fees to BVCs is an unresolved issue. If the benefits from fisheries co-management that were initially envisioned had materialised, i.e. paying licence fees to BVCs to act on behalf of fisher communities, then this conflict might not have arisen. Villages would then have been able to support BVCs because the benefits of resource management would accrue to local people. Furthermore, by demonstrating the benefits for local participation more concretely, the programme could have increased the local stake and interest in co-management. As one villager stated:

"In Malawi, licences for fishing are obtained from the FD and not from the BVC. This is a problem. The BVCs are there to protect not to benefit from the resource. The money from the licences is currently going to the FD. A percentage of the money is supposed to go the BVCs, but this has not happened. Money must come to the communities, not to the government." (Pers. Comm., Mangochi District, 2000)

Another issue impacting on fisheries co-management in the pilot area is reliance on the various donor agencies in the implementation of the co-management regime. One FD official criticised the donor-dependent character of the PFMP and has said that it was unlikely that the FD would be able to provide adequate training for BVC members without donor support. The donor support has diminished over the years and only one of the original five donor

agencies that supported the programme, remains. The reliance on this outside support has led to the FD having to renege on its commitments to provide transport, sitting allowances and compensation to fishers changing their gear. The functioning of the co-management regime and its related activities thus rely heavily on the support of donor agencies. It is also doubtful that the government of Malawi, in view of its current adherence to a Structural Adjustment Programme, will be able to contribute to the programme in the future. There are thus serious issues relating to the dependency and sustainability of the programme (Hara, 1996) that have to be addressed, particularly as co-management has since been extended to artisanal fisheries throughout Malawi.

A number of authors have listed further problem areas in the co-management programme in Lake Malombe and the Upper Shire River. These include the continued role of government as a lead player in co-management; cases of non-compliance with regulations; corruption; the acceptability of the BVCs; and the difficulty in enforcing regulations (Donda, 1996, Nkono and Banda, 1996; Nyando, 2000). As Chirwa comments:

"...the initiative to institute the co-management arrangements did not come from the fishing community in the area. Instead, it came from the Fisheries Department (FD), donor agencies and other external stakeholders. As a result, the philosophical bases of the programme have not taken root." (Chirwa, 1998, 61)

Moreover, controlling the access to the fishery is, according to Hara (1996), a moral problem to BVCs, especially in instances where fishing represents the only real source of income.

"The fears expressed surround mainly the morality of keeping out others who desperately need to earn an income in an economically depressed area. This raises doubts as to whether limited access could be implemented in the face of limited opportunities outside fishing. This problem is more serious in Lake Malombe where agricultural land is also in short supply and fishing is viewed as an employer of last resort." (Donda and Hara, 1999, 18)

Lake Malombe and Upper Shire River was selected as the pilot area of the programme because fishers were relatively less mobile and thus more dependent on fishing (Donda, 1996). However, this has perhaps made implementation more difficult as BVCs are faced with the problem outlined above – how to confiscate nets from people who need to fish. Furthermore, according to Banda (1996), the regulations that have been set in place do not seem to address the issue of overfishing. The gear that is being recommended by the FD still catches a large percentage of juvenile species, and there were indications in Banda's study that closed seasons do not protect breeding of another economically important fish species, *kambuzi*. It would therefore appear that the programme's attempts to reverse the decline of fish stocks, particularly that of *chambo* species, has not been successful (Hara *et al.*, 1999). According to Donda and Hara (1999), the current regulations do not address the problem of overfishing, users are ignoring regulations, more time is needed for the programme to be established, and not enough attention has been paid to the impact of external factors on the fishery. Although biological monitoring and an assessment of external factors on the lake biology should have been an important part of the programme, in-depth and rigorous investigations have not been undertaken as yet.

Much more than enforcement responsibilities will have to be given to local people if they are to be engaged as partners in co-management. As Ferguson *et al.* (1993, 14) state, "community involvement in regulation (policing, in this instance) is not the same as community participation or co-management in the management of the fisheries". A clear delineation of responsibilities, enhanced legitimacy (formal and informal) and accountability

of the BVC structure, as well as an incorporation of local knowledge into joint decision making is imperative to put the co-management arrangement fully into effect.

Sen and Raakjaer Nielsen (1996), in their analysis of co-management cases, have termed the co-management arrangement in Lake Malombe as "consultative" in character. This refers to an arrangement in which mechanisms exist for government to consult with users but all decisions are effectively taken by government. Greater attention to these governance issues, as well as to the broader issue of strengthening local stakes in co-management, could assist in shifting the arrangement from being merely consultative towards a more co-operative and informative regime.

4.3. Co-management in the broader governance context of the area

Decentralisation processes, in both natural resource sectors as well as local government, provides further challenges for the implementation of co-management in the artisanal fishery of Malawi. In line with decentralisation trends observed in governance systems throughout southern Africa, Malawi has also embarked on decentralisation processes in several natural resource sectors. Community-based policies and approaches that involve the establishment of local-level structures are also being developed. For example, Village Natural Resource Management Committees (VNRMCs) and Wildlife Management Authorities (WMAs), are being developed by forestry and national parks and wildlife departments in Malawi (Trick, 2000). Lessons from the co-management of fisheries in Malawi are relevant in these sectors. Furthermore, it is important that local government restructuring and natural resource management processes be looked at jointly. Ultimately, the local-level natural resource bodies being formed, such as the BVCs, VNRMCs and WMAs, will be integrated into the proposed local governance structure of Mangochi district.

The new local government structure being proposed will attempt to integrate the inputs of all community-based organisations, such as BVCs, Health Committees, Agricultural Committees etc., into a structure known as the Village Development Committee (VDC). This Committee will then be represented on an Area Development Committee that will ultimately be answerable to the Mangochi District Development Committee (DDC). Mangochi District is one of the pilot areas for the implementation of the new local governance reforms. In addition, revisions to fisheries legislation have also been enacted. The Fisheries, Conservation and Management Act of 1997 supports the participatory fisheries management regime of the FD. However, it has not gone far enough in clarifying the role of BVCs. The local governance reforms currently underway are geared towards a consultative process in which local bodies such as BVCs, representing various interests, will be provided with opportunities to input into development planning and decision-making. However, as Hara (2000) comments below, the integration of fisheries into the broader development planning processes, while necessary, is often difficult to put into practice.

"One contentious issue about the district focus approach is the clash between the sector based and the integrated development approach being proposed under the district focus. While the integrated system sounds logical and is a positive departure from the narrowly focused sectoral planning approaches, the main players have not yet come to terms with its practical implementation." (Hara, 2000, 243)

Integration is being tested not only in local governance reform, but is also being investigated by government departments concerned with natural resource management. Trick (2000, 1) has stated that the "proliferation of CBNRM committees, mechanisms and procedures demands streamlining, consolidation, and harmonisation so that implementation is accelerated". The Director of the FD also commented that there was a proposal to harmonise community institutions (e.g. environment, forestry, fisheries) to form Natural

Resource Management Committees rather than have a situation of institutional overload (Pers. Comm., Mangochi District, 2000). In Mtenje village in Mangochi district, a USAID-funded programme, COMPASS (Community Partnerships for Sustainable Resource Management in Malawi) has initiated a project that aims to integrate natural resource activities. The Community-based Integrated Environmental Project sets out to improve integrated sustainable management, protection and utilisation of the environment and natural resources in this area. The objectives of the programme are to rehabilitate degraded areas; build community capacity; decrease over-dependency on fish and wood resources as sources of income; decrease incidences of disease in project catchment areas; and increase food production on project areas. The Mtenje Natural Resources Management Committee has also been formed (Pers. Comm., Mangochi District, 2000). It is thus important that the lessons emerging from this experience be shared with other departments who are implementing CBNRM programmes.

Co-management of natural resources in Malawi is an approach that is increasingly being investigated by different government departments. It is an approach that many feel could work in view of budgetary cuts and diminishing government support and capacity for resource management. Local people are being co-opted into the management of natural resources such as forests and wildlife. For co-management to develop, government will have to hand over the stick. As in many parts of southern Africa, governments are still not relinquishing enough power and authority to local level institutions, such as BVCs. Strengthening the institutional framework for co-management could thus facilitate the sharing of authority, decision making and responsibility that should characterise local governance of the artisanal fishery. Furthermore, the co-management initiative has to be placed within the socio-economic context of rural Malawi, in which limited alternative economic development opportunities and high population densities set the scene for natural resource utilisation.

5. Co-managing Protected Areas: The case of the Richtersveld National Park, South Africa

The local communities of the Richtersveld entered into a contractual agreement with the then National Parks Board² in July 1991. This agreement was a milestone for the implementation of new conservation policies and practices in South Africa. This biologically rich area, situated in the north-western corner of South Africa, had long been earmarked as a potential conservation area. The mountain desert environment, with its associated natural endowments, is said to have the most biologically diverse representation of this particular biome. With substantial support from the wider conservation community, the National Parks Board (NPB) entered into negotiations to establish a contractual national park in the Richtersveld. In August 1991, the 162, 445 hectares Richtersveld National Park (RNP) was proclaimed. The national park is currently managed jointly by the conservation agency and local communities but was initially premised on the notion of local ownership with management functions resting with the national park.

The people of the Richtersveld, a former coloured rural reserve in the Northern Cape province, South Africa were subject to not only colonial and apartheid legislation and development schemes, but also to the exploitation of the region's mineral wealth by state and private mining operators. The Richtersveld is one of several areas set aside by the apartheid government for occupation by 'coloured' people in the Northern Cape. In addition

² The National Parks Board (NPB) was renamed in 1996 and is now referred to as South African National Parks (SANP).

to the arrival of colonial settlers in the late 19th century, rich deposits of alluvial diamonds were discovered in the 1920s. While many Richtersvelders were employed in the mining operations, very few benefits and improvements were visible in the towns located in the 'reserve'. Instead, wealth was siphoned from the area to fill distant coffers. The Richtersveld communal area has four towns, Kuboes and Sanddrif in the North and Eksteenfontein and Lekkersing in the South, as well as the RNP (Figure 3). The people of the Richtersveld are amongst the poor of South Africa and both infrastructure and service provision are undeveloped (Eco-Africa, 1999). Two of the Richtersveld towns were only electrified in December 1999, while roads in the area are in a poor condition. This can be contrasted to the concentration of developed infrastructure around the mining towns.

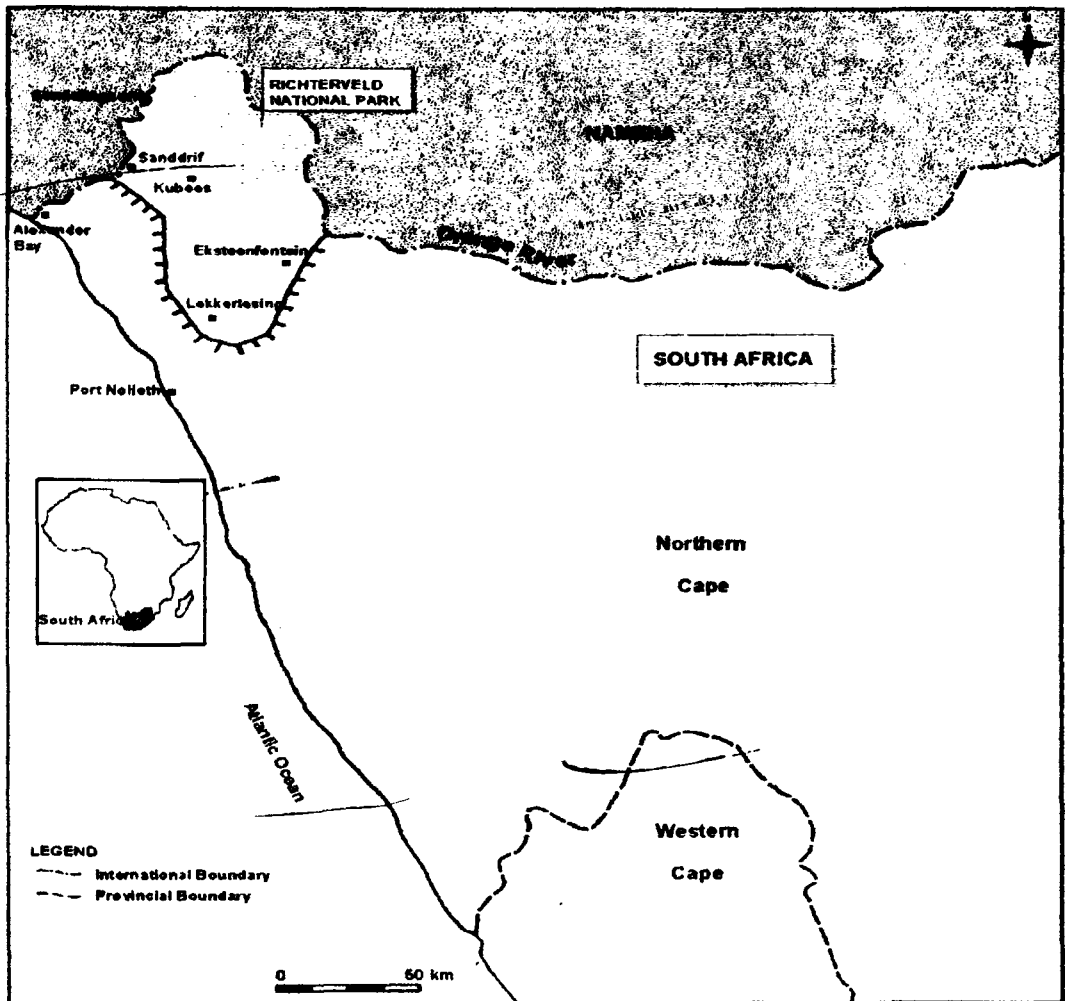


Figure 3: The location of the Richtersveld 'communal area' and the Richtersveld National Park

In addition to employment in the mines and in distant places like Cape Town, the estimated 4000 inhabitants of the Richtersveld depend on the natural resources of the area for their livelihoods. Livestock farming forms an important source of livelihoods, but the mountainous

terrain and mining concessions reduce the amount of land available for grazing. Increased pressure is therefore placed on existing grazing lands. An attempt to privatise the communal grazing land of the Richtersveld in the 1980s was met with opposition and was challenged in the Supreme Court in 1989. Negotiations for the establishment of a national park that were undertaken with the then local government body, the Northern Richtersveld Management Board, an apartheid governance structure, met a similar fate. The difficulties in establishing the contractual park have to be seen within the context of this legacy of mistrust.

5.1. The process of establishing and co-managing a national park in the Richtersveld

Two decades of negotiation preceded the proclamation of the national park in the Richtersveld. These "were characterised by the virtual exclusion of the local community and negative local sentiments were translated into fatalistic acceptance" (Boonzaaier, 1991, 156). All this changed in 1989 when vehement opposition from the local people to the establishment of the park led to a court interdict at the eleventh hour. Though the park was to be premised on a contractual model, the communities were not satisfied with the compensatory mechanisms, or with many other conditions set out in the draft agreement with the local authority. Negotiations had been taking place primarily between the NPB and the local authority. At the time, people regarded the local authority as 'selling out' their interests. A Park Resistance Movement (*'Parkeweerstandsbeweging'*) was formed to ensure that representatives from local communities were included in negotiations around the establishment of the park.

After lengthy negotiations, an agreement was finally reached in 1991. This agreement addressed community concerns and culminated in the signing of a contract between the NPB and the community of the Richtersveld. The contract agreement specified a number of conditions for co-management of the park. The key differences between the 1989 and 1991 agreement are outlined in the table below. According to the contractual agreement, a Management Plan Committee (MPC), known by its Afrikaans acronym BPK (*Bestuurplankomitee*), would be set up to guide the management of the park. The park also accommodated the seemingly competitive land uses of conservation, grazing and mining within its borders. Agreements were reached that existing mining operations would continue and that local stock farmers would be accommodated within the park. The initial fears of the community that stock farming would be phased out (as proposed in the 1989 agreement, see Table 3), had been allayed and the permanent and seasonal stock farmers that used the grazing land within the park would remain. A limited number of stock farmers were thus allowed to graze 6,600 livestock in the park, a figure that was to be reviewed later. The SANP would also compensate the stock farmers for the loss in grazing by providing two farms for their use. The future of mining and stock farming activities within the park would be further elucidated in a management plan that would be drawn up by the BPK.

The South African National Parks (SANP) leases the park land from the Richtersveld and the monies are then distributed by a charitable trust, the Richtersveld Community Trust. The trust, which consists of independent board members, administers the funds that are primarily spent on educational and social upliftment programmes in the area. The key areas that the trust has funded thus far include education and community development initiatives, such as bursaries, transport and boarding fees for school attendance and community initiatives such as educational workshops for adults (Boonzaaier *et al.*, 1999). The park has also provided assistance in employing a social worker in the Richtersveld. A system of preferential employment for residents from the Richtersveld towns is in place in the RNP. At present, 14 residents of the Richtersveld are employed at the park in both conservation and other positions. People from the Richtersveld occupy no senior conservation positions. The social ecologist from SANP has also been involved in an arts and crafts project involving women from the Richtersveld and a German-funded programme, TRANSFORM (Training and

Support for Resource Management), is also actively involved in facilitating sustainable resource management and eco-tourism in the Richtersveld. Collaboration between the SANP social ecologist and TRANSFORM has also seen the training of community field guides.

Table 3: Incorporating community considerations in the RNP contractual agreement (Archer et al., 1996)

The Richtersveld National Park contract		
	Pre 1989	Post 1990
Management structure	NPB – with input from an Advisory Board (no decision making powers) appointed by local government.	Management Plan Committee with four members from the NPB and five elected from and by the community – one for each of the villages and one to represent stock farmers.
Use of the park	Three zones with gradual withdrawal of all use within one year 'Corridor west' farms as compensation for grazing	Utilisation of grazing and other natural resources remains. Stock numbers limited to status quo of 1989 but Ceiling of stock numbers to come down as stock enter the 'corridor west' farms for grazing.
Payment of lease	Into coffers of local government.	Trust formed. Community members elect Trustees (who are outsiders).
Lease period	99 years	24 years + 6 year notice period

These tangible benefits do not reflect all the objectives of the contractual agreement, but are nevertheless important signs that some benefits have filtered through to the community. The contribution of the park can be seen in both direct and indirect benefits for the Richtersveld (Participatory Research and Planning CC, 1999). One study examined changes in community expectations between the establishment of the RNP and four years later by comparing a questionnaire survey (1991) and community interviews (1995). It was found that whereas the provision of electricity and fresh water were the primary expectations in 1991, this had changed considerably by 1995 (Participatory Research and Planning, 1999). Respondents had by then realised that the initial commitments of the SANP to provide electricity, improved roads and water were not going to be met. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that the SANP had provided the services of a social worker, as well as some employment opportunities.

The presence of a national park in the area has also greatly enhanced the tourism potential of the Richtersveld. Several community-based tourism initiatives, focused on both the natural and cultural heritage of the Richtersveld, have been initiated. The SANP has been instrumental in providing assistance to community groups in this regard. The tourism potential of the Richtersveld has yet to be fully assessed. However, tourist visits to the RNP between the periods April 1999 – December 1999 and January 2000 – October 2000 increased by more than 50 % (RNP, 2000). It remains to be seen whether these numbers can be drawn into the planned and existing tourism initiatives of the various Richtersveld towns.

The vision of the SANP is "to acquire and manage a system of national parks that represents indigenous wildlife, vegetation, landscape and associated cultural assets of South Africa" (Joseph and Parris, 2000, 19). Broader developments in South Africa, that include paradigm shifts in conservation, an increase in land claims in and around national parks and changes within the SANP structure, all favour the introduction of the co-management model (Cock and Fig, 1999; Wynberg and Kepe, 1999). Thus contractual parks are now recognised as a park category by the SANP. The Richtersveld, by virtue of being the first park established in its entirety on a contractual basis and involving local groups in joint decision-making, provides important lessons for the establishment of contractual national parks in South Africa and in the region.

5.2. The governance aspects of conservation co-management in the RNP

The primary institutional mechanism guiding the co-management arrangement is the constitution of the Bestuurplankomitee (BPK), the joint management structure. Four town representatives, a stock farmer representative and four SANP officials constitute the BPK. Community representatives are elected on a biennial basis and the BPK meets four times a year. An Action Committee, a sub-committee of the BPK that deals with implementing the decisions taken at the BPK meetings, was also constituted. The community representatives and the park warden are represented on the Action Committee. The key function of the community representatives on the BPK is to ensure that the interests of the Richtersvelders are met in the management of the park. To this end, the BPK should be active in the development of a management plan for the RNP in which guidelines for the various land uses within the RNP, i.e. conservation; mining, stock farming and local natural resource use (such as medicinal plant collection), are drawn up. The BPK should also participate in joint decision making with the SANP to implement, assess and review the regulations and decisions set up in the management plan. These provisions clearly lay the foundation for a system of co-managing the park.

However, there have been many problems in the functioning of the BPK. Numerous researchers who have investigated the performance of the BPK structure have noted its poor performance. Negative local sentiments towards the national park and towards the BPK structure in particular, are also expressed when one discusses the RNP with people from the Richtersveld. These include statements such as "*The park exists only on paper*" and "*What is the BPK? It is there but it does not exist*" (Pers. Comm., Richtersveld, 2000). For co-management to work effectively, the structure and process of joint management are of crucial importance. The BPK resource governance structure is fundamental to the functioning of co-management but is beset by numerous problems. As a recent evaluative study notes:

"It is almost seven years since the signing of the Park contract. The fact that no Management Plan (acceptable to all parties) has yet been passed, and reports of significant negative sentiments towards the Park (especially from the local community), can be readily construed as evidence that the MPC [i.e. BPK] has failed in its task." (Boonzaaier, 1998, 3)

The establishment of Joint Management Committees, such as the BPK, is a critical step in giving effect to the principles of contractual parks. However, a number of critical issues need to be addressed. Firstly, there needs to be clarity about the objectives and responsibility of such committees. Local representatives have to understand whom, how and what they are representing. Capacity building and training should be tied closely to this process, as limited organisational capacity has impacted on joint decision making in the Richtersveld (Archer et al., 1996). Numerous attempts have been made in the past to strengthen the capacity of local representatives to participate in the BPK. Although the SANP undertakes the daily management of the park, as well as the conservation management functions, several issues

related to opportunities for tourism, service provision and education are highly relevant to the people of the area.

One example relates to the privatisation of services, increasingly observed in other sectors in South Africa. The SANP has embarked on a process of commercialisation in which non-core functions, such as the management of accommodation facilities and service provision, will be outsourced. The private sector is well placed, in terms of capacity, skills and capital, to perform non-core functions in conservation areas. However, contractual parks bind conservation agencies to identify communities as key partners in conservation development and the increasing eco-tourism opportunities that accompany these. In the context of a market economy driven by economic growth rather than redistributive or ecological principles, contractual agreements could thus entrench local involvement in protected area management. Commercialisation is one of the most important challenges for the Richtersveld and the BPK should ensure that the interests of the local people, the owners of the land, remain a priority.

One of the most important drawbacks of the BPK is that there is a lack of clarity about the roles and functions of the different partners. BPK members should receive a much clearer mandate from their constituency to guide their participation in the BPK. It has been said from several quarters, including the SANP and the local community, that a clearer understanding of co-management and the notion of partnerships need to be developed by both parties. In the words of the current Park Warden:

"Does anyone know what co-management is? How it should function? We need a clear outline of our objectives and our roles. Who does the execution of functions? Who decides what is needed in the park?" (Pers. Comm., Richtersveld, 2000)

The second issue relates to the lack of local interest in the functioning of the park and the resultant lack of legitimacy and effective authority of the BPK. Local respondents have mentioned that there is very poor feedback to communities from BPK members. However, there is also a lack of interest as well as knowledge on the part of the four towns about the role and functioning of the national park. In theory, community representatives on the BPK should convene meetings with their local constituencies prior to BPK meetings. However, neither pre- nor post-BPK meetings, which are crucial to ensure that local interests are being adequately represented, are being held. The BPK is seen as an ineffectual committee but at the same time community attendance at elections or feedback meetings is poor. BPK members are known to only a part of the community. If the park is to be managed jointly and the interests of all actors in the area are to be represented, the BPK structure and the legitimacy of local representation will have to be strengthened.

A further aspect relating to the legitimacy and representivity of the BPK is the composition of the BPK. At present, four of the five community representatives on the BPK are stock farmers or have an interest in stock farming. Thus, the danger exists that these members could represent the interests of stock farmers only rather than those of the broader Richtersveld community. Moreover, the high level representation of the SANP in the structure has led to SANP representatives paying short visits to the area and departing for their offices in Pretoria, the administrative base of the SANP. While the Richtersveld had, at the time that the contract was being negotiated, requested that national representatives of the SANP be included in the BPK, this condition might need to be revised. It was initially agreed that the entire BPK would convene report back meetings in the four towns. The present composition of the BPK renders this option unfeasible.

Two of the community representatives on the BPK mentioned that they needed more training, particularly in scientific aspects of conservation, in order to participate effectively in

joint decision making. Several researchers have found that there is a lack of active participation in decision-making by community representatives of the BPK (Participatory Research and Planning, 1995; Reid, 2000). There was a suggestion by a local government representative that the BPK members should understand what is meant by co-management and should not be "scared" of scientific inputs being made by their partner institution (Pers. Comm., 2000, Richtersveld). Rather, they should represent the interests of the local community more effectively by understanding the issues at hand. As Archer *et al.* state:

"...the community representation on the BPK, provide ample channels for the members of the Richtersveld resource using group to have a voice in NRM decision making. This voice must, however, be united and properly skilled in the other scientific and economic languages spoken by the NPB, commercial land using interests in the area and government departments."
(Archer...*et al.*, 1996, 192)

One of the key outputs of the BPK should have been the development of a management plan, but nine years since the signing of the agreement, this has not yet been concluded. This is a critical issue as the tenuous relationship between conservation, mining and stock farming in the RNP, needs to be guided by sound management guidelines. While these are not in place, transgressions by the resource users that could impact on the conservation value of the park, cannot be effectively monitored and rectified along agreed lines. Research currently being undertaken into the sustainability of grazing within the park could be important in kick-starting the development of a management plan. However, as Boonzaaier (1998) states, there are still a number of outstanding issues relating to mining, a grazing plan and the compensation farms that were made available for stock farmers, that need to be resolved. The management plan as it stands at present has therefore not been discussed and accepted by the broader Richtersveld community. In order to facilitate the finalisation of this plan, BPK members would need much clearer delineation of their duties, would require further training to input into the development of the plan and would have to ensure that a locally consultative and legitimate process is adhered to.

Other key issues impacting on the functioning of the BPK relate to logistical arrangements, such as the cost involved in attending meetings and the provision of a sitting allowance. The distances between the Richtersveld towns are large and although meetings are supposed to be rotated between the towns, they are often held at the headquarters of the RNP, Sendelingsdrift. Another issue relates to the frequent changes in park management that hamper continuity on the side of the SANP. It thus becomes difficult to build the rapport between members required for the BPK to function effectively. The failure of the SANP to deliver on the promises made during the signing of the agreement and the concomitant social problems facing the Richtersveld, such as unemployment and poor infrastructure, also impact on co-management. However, many of the promises made by the SANP were unrealistic and beyond the scope of a conservation agency (Reid, 2000). This has had serious implications in creating a perception that the park had not delivered on its promises. Underlying these issues is a history of tension between the northern and southern towns of the Richtersveld, further exacerbating problems of the park.

While the motivations of different partners for entering into contractual agreements do differ, it is critical that a relationship of mutual trust and respect exist between them. The legacy of authoritarian conservation in South Africa behoves conservation authorities to recognise the importance of restructuring relations between people and parks. Without this, conservation authorities will be seen, as the mining companies in the Richtersveld are, as acting only in their own interests. For this to occur, the power relationships, particularly between the conservation authorities and communities, will have to change (Dladla, 1998; Cock and Fig, 1999). In practice therefore, the RNP as it currently stands, is to some people a "paper park" or as Fakir (1996) puts it, a 'compensatory mechanism' in which the SANP is the key

decision maker. The community at present does not exert the full extent of its influence on the way in which development in the park takes place. As the *de facto* landowner of the RNP, the process of SANP-community negotiations should have led to community-driven co-management of the RNP. However, poor representation of community interests on the BPK as well as inadequate attention to the finer details of joint management during the initial agreement has resulted in the conservation agency being, in practice, the lead partner.

Important shifts in South African conservation thinking have their origin in the RNP experience, such as the development of a framework for co-management of conservation areas. But the structure and process of joint management have clearly not been implemented as it had originally been envisioned. In spite of this, there are presently a number of initiatives in the broader political economy of the area that provide an opportunity for restructuring co-management. The performance and future of co-management of the RNP, which constitutes approximately 20% of the surface area of the Richtersveld communal area, cannot be divorced from these initiatives.

5.3. Co-management in the broader governance context of the area

A number of development, conservation and tourism planning processes are currently afoot in the Richtersveld. The tenurial status of the communal land is governed by a recent act that has made provision for the transfer of communal lands to the local inhabitants. The Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs, according to the Transformation of Certain Rural Areas Act 94 of 1998, will transfer the land of the 'coloured' rural 'reserves' to the local municipality or a legal entity. This Act applies specifically to 'coloured' rural areas in South Africa and not the former 'homeland' areas. The land can therefore be transferred to a local authority, or held under a legal entity such as a Communal Property Association (CPA). Current municipal restructuring processes, notably new ward demarcations, will significantly reduce Richtersveld representation on a new municipality. Indications are therefore that the people of the Richtersveld favour the development of a CPA to hold the land on behalf of the people. The transfer of the communal land, on which the RNP is situated, could tremendously strengthen the sense of proprietorship of the Richtersveld community. Linked to this is a land claim, based on the notion of aboriginal title, which the people of the Richtersveld have instituted against a state-owned diamond company in the area. The claim is to a large area west of the present communal area, including the diamond mining areas, the rich coastline, farms bordering the Orange River, as well as the internationally recognised Ramsar Site at the mouth of the Orange River.

Increasingly the conservation potential and status of the Richtersveld area is being capitalised on by a variety of actors. Not only is the area home to a national park, but it has also been short listed on South Africa's submission of World Heritage Sites; it is the site of a proposed Trans-frontier Conservation Area (TFCA); and the local people of the Richtersveld are in the process of establishing a Richtersveld Communal Heritage Area (RCHA) loosely modelled on conservancies in Namibia and South Africa. The TFCA (<http://www.peaceparks.org.za/profiles/richtersveld.html>) will result in a 6,222 km² area that will incorporate the RNP and the Fish River Canyon and Ais-Ais hot springs in Namibia. The heritage area, essentially a community-based conservancy area, will aim to manage natural resources sustainably, and will maintain the multi-purpose character of land use in the Richtersveld by accommodating tourism, conservation, stock farming and mining. The RNP could thus form part of a latticework of protected areas that could become an additional draw card for tourism in the area. Mining, an important provider of employment, will be downscaled in the foreseeable future and alternative livelihood opportunities, such as tourism and agriculture, will have to be investigated.

Opportunities for community-based tourism development and conservation, such as in the form of the proposed Heritage Area, indicate that tourism is being developed as a key land use in the Richtersveld. A Richtersveld Tourism Association has been established, while the Richtersveld has also been listed on a new community-based tourism initiative, the South-North Tourism Route. The Route is 'a community-based tourism route that is being developed on the basis of equitable, sustainable and responsible tourism in conjunction with local people from the route' (<http://www.south-north.co.za>) and stretches from Cape Town to southern Namibia. In all four towns attempts are being made to position themselves in order to benefit from the increased marketing potential this could offer. Several tourist accommodation facilities and services are being updated and developed. Guesthouses, sewing, textile printing and other crafts are already in existence. Five community tour guides have already started a training programme that will see them qualify as recognised training guides, while twenty guides were trained in the past. Future plans to develop guided walks, hiking trails, river rafting, a petrol station, and a 4X4 trail in the Heritage Area are also in the pipeline. A challenge for the body that will manage the communal land, in all likelihood a Richtersveld CPA, will be to accommodate plans being drawn up by local entrepreneurs in the Richtersveld. How will the communal character of the Richtersveld be maintained in a macro-economic environment in which privatisation looms large?

These initiatives, as well as broader development planning, have all been brought together in an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) that is currently being drawn up. This participatory, locally-driven process was overseen by the Richtersveld Transitional Local Council. It involves the development of a plan that integrates all the existing and proposed development objectives and plans of the people of the Richtersveld. This has incorporated objectives and plans linked to a range of local needs and objectives, such as physical and social infrastructure, conservation, tourism, and agriculture. Specialist studies that will need to evaluate the viability of these various land use options, such as conservation and tourism, will still be conducted. The IDP process has provided a unique opportunity to develop an integrated vision of the Richtersveld, and therefore meaningfully integrate conservation with other local development objectives.

The institutional landscape of the Richtersveld is in flux. The strengthened proprietorship of the Richtersvelders; new agriculture, tourism and conservation opportunities; and a new local government structure will require the development of institutions to control access to and use of the land. The institutional mechanisms for governing land and natural resources in the Richtersveld are therefore currently being negotiated. It is critical that co-management of the national park be included in this process. If the BPK or another management structure is to attain the authority and legitimacy of a community-based structure, it should become a part of the current debate. The Richtersveld has to date not capitalised fully on the opportunities presented by co-management of the national park – but current institutional development processes offer a way to address this.

6. Prospects for Co-management in Southern Africa

In relation to the key governance issues discussed above, i.e. the process of establishing local structures to share responsibility, authority and decision making, neither of the two co-management cases display meaningful power sharing as yet. Despite the differences in the nature and history of the co-management arrangements, the considerable resources committed to these two initiatives have not resulted in fundamental shifts in power. This relates to difficulties in reconciling the diverging motivations of the key partners, as well as resistance to relinquishing state power to local groups. The approaches adopted in the two co-management initiatives displays striking similarities that could provide important lessons for partnership models of resource governance in the region.

In both instances, the key motivation of the state partner for entering into co-management was the conservation and management of natural resources. In both cases the state partners were the initiators of the co-management arrangement. Both made unrealistic promises at the outset of the arrangement. A history of poor relations with local groups and limited experience of participatory management regimes characterised the state partners. The motivations of the two local groups on the other hand were strongly linked to securing access to resources that were important in local livelihoods – mining and grazing land and fisheries. While the motivations of the Richtersveld community had a strong land rights basis, access to a healthy fish resource for socio-economic well-being was the primary motivating factor for the fishers in Malawi. At the outset of these two initiatives, expectations of remuneration were raised amongst local groups. Remunerating representatives on local structures has been an issue discussed in both the cases. This illustrates the lack of ownership of the programme and also the need to increase the stake of local partners in co-management. There is also a need to move beyond the idea of benefits constituted as economic incentives, and to address non-economic incentives such as tenure security and the preservation of ties to the landscape (Schroeder, 1999).

The state partners in both cases showed very little willingness initially to share real power with the local groups, and participation was initially seen only as a means to achieve their goals of resource conservation. As in the case of decentralisation initiatives in other parts of the world, these co-management approaches “do not show enough awareness of the very process of disempowerment of communities and usurpation of community resources by the state, even when the reversal of the same process is supposed to be the goal of devolution efforts” (Jodha and Bhatia, 1998, 4). Several years later, the policies of state agencies in both conservation in South Africa and fisheries in Malawi have, on the surface, changed dramatically. While participatory approaches, such as co-management, are now virtually entrenched in policy frameworks across the region, the willingness of the state to relinquish power in practice, still remains dubious.

Dladla, the former head of the Social Ecology Unit within the SANP has also stated that power relationships, particularly between the conservation authorities and communities in South Africa, need to change.

“Equal partnerships between local communities and National Parks becomes an elusive concept, because the relationship is at best unequal as the control of resources rests with National Parks officials. Those involved in programme development and implementation exercise considerable power over communities. The nature of the relationship between the community and park needs to change fundamentally.” (Dladla, 1998, 7)

Consideration of the governance components of co-management investigated in both cases, i.e. the sharing of responsibility, decision-making and authority for resource management, further illustrates these points. The process of developing institutional mechanisms to implement the new management regime proceeded in a similar manner in each of the two cases. New institutional structures (BVC and BPK) and policies were developed to facilitate joint management of the resource. Capacity problems and low legitimacy and authority status still constrains the two local structures. Uncertainty about the particular responsibilities of the local representatives, and of the structures themselves, still persists. According to Symes (1997, 5), “the roles and responsibilities ascribed to user groups [in co-management] should be clear, specific [and] substantive”. While the legitimacy of the existing institutions in the Richtersveld at the time the park was initiated was questionable due to its links with apartheid governance structures, traditional systems of resource governance in Malawi should have been investigated more intensively (Hara, 2000). As Hilhorst and Aarnink, writing on co-management in Mali and Zambia, state:

“Building on existing informal authority structures may improve the applicability of a management system. Moreover, prior local-level experiences with rule-making and monitoring are important assets for developing and agreeing on a management system for common pool resources.” (Hilhorst and Aarnink, 1999, 64)

The process of decision-making in the two cases also shows clearly that the knowledge and inputs of scientists and experts are still valued above that of local groups. This makes local representatives in both cases feel ill equipped to participate in joint decision making. However, questioning the superiority generally assigned to “scientific knowledge” does not necessarily mean that one rejects scientific enquiry, the scientific method or empirical research. Agrawal, writing on the great divide between indigenous and scientific knowledge states that we have to “seek out bridges across the constructed chasm between the traditional [local] and the scientific [to] initiate a productive dialogue to safeguard the interest of those who are disadvantaged” (Agrawal, 1995, 433).

In the establishment of these two co-management regimes of governance, it was also envisioned that meaningful power sharing between the partners would take place. In this sense, the authority and responsibility for local resource management would be shared.

“Authority and responsibility should be linked. When they are de-linked and assigned to different institutional actors both are eroded. Authority without responsibility becomes meaningless or obstructive; responsibility without authority lacks the necessary components for its efficient exercise.” (Murphree, 2000, 4)

Neither of the two cases displays a genuine sharing of authority and responsibility for resource management. Despite the numerous challenges that face the two cases, there were some positive lessons drawn from their experiences as well. Participants in both co-management initiatives listed good relations, trust and respect as the primary benefits that they have derived thus far. Furthermore, co-management in both cases has broadened livelihood opportunities in the areas, by way of the increased community-based conservation and tourism opportunities in the Richtersveld and alternative income-generating activities in Malawi. Much will still have to be done, however, to address the governance aspects of co-management in both the Richtersveld and Malawi.

Co-management, according to Hasler (1998), is influenced by institutions and development processes (in the wider social context) at a number of levels. Thus, the institutional frameworks for co-management are located within the stark realities of much of rural southern Africa – insecure tenure, limited resources and economic opportunities and poor infrastructure. Institutional frameworks for co-management are also being developed in a context in which local-level social organisation has been altered by the colonial history that the majority of the countries in the region share. We have to acknowledge that the communal area context for most of the CBNRM initiatives is far from ideal. In fact, “the temporal and spatial distribution of the region’s communal areas has little economic, ecological or social rationale” (Katerere, 2000, 15). Murombedzi (1998), in a historical analysis of CBNRM in Sub-Saharan Africa confirms this:

“Top-down authoritarian resource control, in destroying local institutional arrangements for resource management, also annihilated the resource management regimes under which resources had hitherto been jointly managed by communities.” (Murombedzi, 1998, 3)

What lessons can then be learnt from the two cases that could inform the establishment of co-management of natural resources in the region? I would concur with Jodha and Bhatia

998) that rebuilding community stakes in resource management, increasing local control and using local knowledge and perspectives can make CBNRM more relevant to local groups. The lessons drawn from the two cases build on this recommendation.

External agents such as donors have too often driven co-management initiatives. Thus, in order for co-management to meaningfully involve local groups, the importance of local-level support and involvement cannot be overemphasised. If CBNRM is to impact on the lives of people in southern Africa, it will have to move from an externally driven approach to a viable process that meaningfully addresses joint power sharing and local resource rights. It will have to be based within the framework of land reform in order to address the "expropriatory bases of the existing communal tenure regimes" (Murombedzi, 1999, 4) within which many CBNRM programmes are operating. Thus, in order to move from co-management as an imposed system to one that actually strengthens local resource governance, we will need to:

- ***Understand the context of resource governance.*** Limited understanding of the context for co-management at multiple scales often leads to inappropriate programme design and implementation. If CBNRM approaches, such as co-management, seek to reverse the trends of earlier top-down development planning approaches, they will have to understand and incorporate contextual factors. These include the policy and legal framework for co-management; the historical and cultural context; ecological factors and processes; as well as the tensions within and between these factors. We need to understand contextual factors in order to respond to critical questions relating to the rationale and form of co-management initiatives. The context of co-management initiatives is complex. There exists a multiplicity of actors, contested claims to resources, limited economic opportunities and a range of intermittent stresses and shocks, such as migration, drought and Structural Adjustment Programmes, that impact on rural systems in the region. By understanding contextual factors, we can begin to respond adequately to governance questions of ownership, power, access, control and distribution.
- ***Address governance issues more centrally.*** If co-management is to be a partnership in which rights and responsibilities of partners are shared, then it has to engage with the deeply political question of governance. Co-management involves the development of structures, processes and systems by which resources will be co-governed. In designing these structures, issues of legitimacy, authority, accountability and responsibility which will impact on the ultimate aim of joint power sharing and decision making will have to be addressed. This questions the basis of many of the 'imposed' co-management regimes across the region that have paid scant attention to contextual and governance issues.
- ***Develop appropriate design, planning and implementation strategies.*** State and private partners in co-management will have to transform their planning ideologies and practices, steeped in earlier modes of expert-led support, towards modes in which local values and objectives are incorporated in a meaningful way. The majority of the personnel in state departments have been trained in the era of 'preservationist' thinking about natural resource management. In some institutions this view is still adhered to. Much will have to be done to elevate the status of community liaison units, social ecology units and the extension agents in the organisational structure and philosophy of natural resource departments across the region. The role of civil society institutions as powerbrokers or facilitators is also important so that interests of local groups can be highlighted in co-management.

- **Provide an enabling and supportive legislative and institutional environment.** The mismatch between the objectives and the implementation practices of co-management is often due to a limited understanding of the context, of the governance issues and of the procedural issues discussed above. However, often the policies, institutions and laws for natural resource management are not in tune with the realities on the ground. For example, issues of resource rights, land tenure and customary law remain unresolved. The expropriation of these rights and undermining of these institutions has had an indelible effect on the communal areas in southern Africa (Katerere, 2000). CBNRM programmes in some countries have conferred legal rights and status to local groups, but progress in other countries has been slow. The recognition and validation of local resource rights will be crucial in building co-management arrangements in which local groups have a stake. Irrespective of what is written in law, local people have and will continue to hold their own perceptions of resource tenure and ownership. Validating this will give them the leverage to negotiate with partners on a more equal basis.

Can co-management of natural resources work for both local groups and the resources upon which they depend? Conservation objectives in the Richtersveld have been met, but the recovery of the *chambo* fish stock in Mangochi District, at which the fisheries co-management programme was initially aimed, has not materialised. While catches in the rest of the fishery have fluctuated, the dramatic collapse that occurred in the *chamba* fishery has not occurred in the rest of the fishery. However, many of the key outcomes relating to local participation, benefits and ownership have not materialised in both cases yet. In addition, key components of governance have not been adequately addressed.

Considerable resources, incorporating human, financial and physical resources, have already been committed to making co-management work in these two cases. Notwithstanding, there is still an indication that the resources and willingness required to develop co-governance regimes, are lacking. The reliance on the inputs of donor agencies and the private sector in CBNRM poses challenges for the efficiency, sustainability and equitability of these co-management initiatives. It also raises questions about the agenda of those implementing co-management. Furthermore, the privatisation trends and cutbacks observed in governments across southern Africa will diminish the resources that the state has at its disposal. Thus, in order to develop co-management arrangement that engage local groups as partners, rigorous guidelines for their implementation will have to be developed. These should take cognisance of the factors outlined above.

7. Conclusion

Co-management of natural resources in the form of joint forest management, contractual national parks, fisheries co-management and community wildlife management is an established feature of natural resource management in southern Africa. Moreover, the development of partnerships around natural resource-based industries such as joint venture partnerships, agricultural enterprises and eco-tourism is becoming more common. The move towards privatisation and market liberalisation across the southern African region confirms that the private sector is increasingly becoming involved in economic development programmes linked to the utilisation of the rich natural resource base in communal areas. While this approach potentially holds benefits for local groups, critical questions have to be addressed.

Experiences in the two case studies in Malawi and South Africa clearly indicate that co-management regimes have yet to adequately address fundamental questions related to resource governance. Co-management or any other community-based approach to resource

management occurs in a rapidly changing political-economic environment that shapes the context for local action in the region. Recent policy shifts in southern Africa have created a space for the development of partnership arrangements. A key challenge remains to develop an institutional framework that benefits local groups. However, the greater challenge lies in transforming co-management from the level of technical resource management to address the local resource governance issues in southern Africa. It is in responding to questions of resource rights, ownership, authority, power and other political questions that co-management could begin to resemble a system of co-governance in which outcomes such as local participation, joint power sharing and local resource management are achieved.

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