

**LAND USE PLANNING AND WOODLAND MANAGEMENT: A CASE
STUDY OF LOCAL CONTROL AND REGULATORY CAPACITY ON
HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNAL WOODLAND RESOURCES IN
ZIMBABWE**

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1998

IES Working Paper 8

Published by the Institute of Environmental Studies,
University of Zimbabwe,
Harare, Zimbabwe

Publication of this working paper was supported by the
J.F. Kapnek trust

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All Working Papers of IES are peer reviewed. For reviewing IES documents in 1997 we thank: Prof. M.F.C. Bourdillon, Dr C. Chidzuza, Mr S. Chikandi, Dr J. Chipika, Dr D. Cumming, Dr J. du Toit, Mr J. Gambiza, Dr E. Kunjeku, Mr M. Manda, Mrs N. Madzingira, Mr E. Madzudzo, Mr S. Mavi, Dr B. Mukamuri, Ms C. Musvoto, Mr O. Namasasu, Dr A. Ogunmokun, Mr D. Semwayo, Ms B. Sithole.

LAND USE PLANNING AND WOODLAND MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF LOCAL CONTROL AND REGULATORY CAPACITY ON HOUSEHOLD AND COMMUNAL WOODLAND RESOURCES IN ZIMBABWE¹

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The article is in two sections and addresses the issues surrounding how small-scale communal farmers protect and control the use of tree resources on individual plots and communal woodland resources. The first section is descriptive and the second section is explanatory. Three sets of forms of control can be identified: individual household controls on household controlled resources, cultural forms of control tied to traditional sacred and secular institutions, and secular controls synonymous with different layers/categories of state institutions. I argue that cultural forms of control are rather diffuse in their operation and effect. State-imposed controls and those issued through state-created community institutions, despite being mentioned across all sections of the community, were not enforced to the extent that community members abided by them. Exclusion of non-community members was the exception.

The second section attempts to unravel the forces behind the ineffectiveness of community institutions. I argue that contests over the control of resources within the community (and, paradoxically, the need to build community goodwill) and power relations which do not favour the community viz a viz state agencies, explain the ineffectiveness of community institutions to regulate use. The orchestration of a shift in the locus of control in favour of communities and institution building support programmes are identified as the ways forward.

Introduction

This article deals with how farmers protected tree resources in their arable plots and the communal woodlands in a newly settled communal area in Zimbabwe. The choice of the study area was guided by a need to find a locality with abundant woodland resources since the emergence and evolution of common property natural resource management regimes lacks attention in the literature on Zimbabwe. I was also familiar with Kanyati from previous research and it appeared appropriate because it had experienced spontaneous settlement from its former status as a forest frontier. The article concentrates on the management strategy with respect to rights over the trees and woodlands and the controls that were used. Investigation of the fostering of collective institutional arrangements was rooted in an anthropological frame of reference and related to both household and communal resources.

The data used in the paper comes from open-ended interviews with early settlers, a survey done under the auspices of the Agricultural and Rural

Development Authority (ARDA) and the Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Control Board (TTCB), a sample survey of households, open-ended interviews with members of sampled households, key informant interviews and notes on community meetings held during the year of fieldwork I spent in Kanyati Communal Area.

The first section of this article describes the case study setting and looks at the important influences on the woodland management system that obtained in the area. It then describes household resource control strategies, household and cultural controls that were buttressed by extension advice and controls on communal resources. Control and regulatory capacity incorporates issues of local governance, struggles around demands for natural resources and land, and the role of community structures and governmental agencies in the area. All these issues are enmeshed in local political dynamics. I look critically at these local level processes.

Several distinctions were made following Fortmann (1987) who argues for a separation

¹ Some insights in this paper have appeared in Nhira (1992a); Fortmann and Nhira (1992); Nhira and Fortmann (1993); Bruce, Fortmann and Nhira (1993); and Nhira (1994).

between planted trees and self-sown trees and the identification of the spaces on which the trees are found. First, a distinction is made between the controls that relate to planted trees, which in this case happen to be exotic fruit species and *Eucalyptus* trees planted at homesteads, and self-sown trees which are indigenous species found both at homesteads and in the main fields. Second, a distinction is made between indigenous fruit tree species and non-fruit bearing indigenous species which are found at homesteads and in the arable fields. The third distinction involves the controls that relate to the use of trees in the communal woodlands. These distinctions are akin to those arrived at by employing the concept of the tenure niche (Fortmann and Nhira, 1992). The concept was arrived at by expanding land tenure to include tree tenure. Tree tenure was defined as property claims to certain categories of trees by certain groups on land under various kinds of tenure (Fortmann and Nhira, 1992:1). A tenure niche becomes the space where a property claim is made. Fortmann and Nhira (1992:2) identified six tenurial niches in Zimbabwe:

1. Forestland controlled by the state;
2. Trees controlled by District Councils on communal land;
3. Indigenous woodland in communal and resettlement areas;
4. Trees planted by groups and institutions;
5. Trees planted/protected by individuals on individually controlled land; and
6. Trees on commercial farms.

In this article, we are primarily dealing with two of the tenure niches i.e. numbers 3 and 5 above. Number 5 is refined further to take account of trees in main fields and trees on homesteads.

Given the deficiencies in the woodland management system identified in Section One, Section Two attempts to explain why the communities were unable to organise themselves around the management of important common property resources as woodlands. From an institutional viewpoint, the management of woodland resources necessarily involves the intersection between the actions of individuals, households, community institutions and those of governmental agencies who might be located in the area. The second section of this article unravels state-local and local-local relations by investigating the interactions among community members (that is,

those with rights of use over the resources) and between them and agents of the state (*a la* Berry 1988; 1989; Peluso, 1992). Such interactions go beyond the realm of woodland management to dealing with land and other development goods which might be made available within the locality. Interactions within arena which may be somewhat removed from woodland management *per se* have important implications for woodland management as will be shown.

Several state-initiated community institutions which acted as power bases and served as channels of access to resources are discussed. The use of 'power' became an important explanatory tool *viz a viz* the interactions between the range of actors. Power is defined as the ability to deploy authority (authoritative resources) and material resources (allocative resources) towards a given objective (Giddens, 1984). Four power bases were identified: 1) state based power, 2) 'traditional' power, 3) inter-household power (or community power) and 4) intra-household power. The article explores apparent resistance to initiatives emanating from these power bases, the narratives used and implications for woodland management.

The discussion in the second section of the article begins with how state power manifested itself. Three issues are taken up i.e. land use provisions and land disputes², extension, and project investment and distribution of benefits. A discussion of 'traditional' power then follows, particularly relating to its potential considering that it had been sidelined somewhat. Inter-household power is discussed with respect to the factors making for convergence or divergence of interest which were identified as economic differentiation, ethnicity, and lineage organization. A discussion of intra-household power then follows particularly focusing on differences in perceptions according to gender.

² McGregor (1991: Chapter 3) emphasizes the need to look at land-use in general as it is the most important cause and consequence of deforestation. Land disputes are important to consider because strategies of manipulating supply of trees by leaving fields uncleared until it is necessary to clear them would not be considered in the event there is a dispute. Instead there would be rampant clearing of land to reinforce ownership claims.

The study area

Kanyati communal area is situated just before the escarpment overlooking the Zambezi valley in Mashonaland West province. It falls under Nyaminyami Rural District Council in Kariba district. It was used as a buffer tsetse fly control zone since 1954 and, thus, had been profoundly affected by human activity before the settlers arrived primarily through tsetse and trypanosomiasis control operations. Migration into the area began in 1982 and was heaviest up to the mid-1980s. Government attention was drawn to the area by perceived threats to Lake Kariba and its environs which include an important national park and safari area. Government decisively intervened beginning in 1987.

Influences on the evolution of the management system

Four major influences on the evolution of the management system can be identified: the residual effects of the legislative and planning framework, the land use planning exercise carried out in Kanyati, the frontier status of the area, and the cultural cognition of the settlers.

There are several elements within the broad policy framework which adversely affect management at local levels (Scoones and Matose (1993). Legislation in Zimbabwe still focusses on control and policing and so does not encourage local level management. Second, planning is sector based and technocratic so there is little support to local units of management. Third, there is little support from the forest authority, which remains commercially oriented, does not cover the country adequately, and does not have the requisite extension packages for building local resource management institutions. Fourth, sub-district local authorities' power has been undermined to the extent that they have little legitimacy.

The land-use planning project in Kanyati was intended to focus on natural resources but this element tended to be neglected in the execution of the plan. Forestry was not tightly integrated into the land-use planning process. Yet land use planning has profound implications on the availability of woodland resources (McGregor, 1991).

The frontier status of the area has several

implications. First, people might have had intentions of finding enough space to create an idealized model of their areas of origin (Kopytoff, 1987). I will elaborate on this below. Second, people assumed that resources were abundant, which determined their behaviour, even though there was evidence to the contrary. Third, outsiders, who would have been looking for land to settle on well after the land use project had begun, assumed that there was enough space to accommodate them. Thus, there were problems of 'squatting' which led to the clearance of woodlands to establish fields and homes. Fourthly, neighbouring communal land residents used resources in Kanyati, the claims being based on prior usage rights.

Cultural cognition was expected to have two opposed implications. One, that since people carried a mental cultural model (of resource characteristics, how they can be used and for what, and the institutions which should be responsible for regulating use) it could be expected that there would only be some experimentation when the model did not fit the reality. On the other hand, since people had uprooted themselves from the hierarchical structures which conditioned their behaviour on migrating, culture might not have had much of an impact on the way they would conduct themselves in the new locality.

How all these elements came together in the study context is the subject of the two sections of the article.

SECTION ONE

Household resource control strategies

Fortmann (1987), Wilson (1987) and McGregor (1991) argue that labour sometimes creates rights (or rather that rights are justified by virtue of having invested labour), so we might expect that controls would be greatest where labour was invested. Table 1 shows the locations where trees could be found on land controlled by households, the species of trees and the degree of control that was exercised.

Controls were greatest with regard to *Eucalyptus* and planted exotic fruit trees at homesteads followed in descending order by fruit-bearing indigenous species at homesteads, non-fruit-bearing indigenous species at homesteads, fruit-bearing indigenous

Table 1: Location of trees grown/conserved, the species and the degree of control exercised

Location	Species	Degree of Control
Homestead	Eucalyptus	High
'	Exotic Fruit	High
'	Indigenous Fruit	Moderate
'	Non-Fruit Indigenous	Moderate
Arable	Indigenous Fruit	Low
'	Non-Fruit Indigenous	Low

species in arable fields, and non-fruit-bearing indigenous trees in arable fields. A fair number of the homesteads were perimeter fenced. Interviewees who had not done so intended to fence off their homesteads in time. Moreover, there was usually somebody left at home to guard against intruders.

Seedlings and small plants of *Eucalyptus* and exotic fruit trees were often protected against domestic livestock and wildlife by fencing in the plants with twigs, grass and rope. Since the trees were invariably planted at homesteads, much care was taken of them including ensuring that the plants got the desired watering regime. Interviewees often assumed, when questioned about the controls they applied, that the question was focused on these particular species only. An array of views was expressed regarding the controls that could be applied to outsiders i.e. non-household members who wanted to use the resources. The details about these views are given below.

Eucalyptus trees tended to be under the direct control of the heads of households, who tended to be male. The mature trees were meant for sale and for household building projects. All the respondents who had planted *Eucalyptus* (10, N=44) pointed out that an unauthorized user would be brought before the Village Development Committee (VIDCO) where they would be asked to pay for the unauthorized cutting and/or use of the trees.

With regard to exotic fruit tree species, in some instances it was pointed out by the owners that those who asked would be granted permission to pick the fruit. It seemed though that the owners would not grant permission to pick fruit to an unknown person,

while a known local resident with whom reciprocity is applied in other spheres of social life would get permission to pick. Another view expressed was that somebody picking fruit without permission would be cautioned not to do so again. Others expressed the view that the culprit picking fruit without permission would be brought before the VIDCO and asked to pay, especially if the fruit was meant for sale. During fieldwork only one household was observed to have started to sell exotic fruit from a home orchard to passers-by, who included school children. Notwithstanding these sentiments, not one case had been brought before the VIDCOs, suggesting that these controls were generally

understood and adhered to or alternatively that the controls were not applied by the owners despite the owners' expressions of what they would do.

On their part, the VIDCO chairs emphasised that good neighbourliness demanded that nobody took or used what was not his or hers. They believed that most members of their community were good neighbours. It appeared that if litigation was brought before them concerning VIDCO residents they would take a mediatory approach. The approach would be a reflection of the constitution of the community which allows for residents to respond to mediation. Lineages which had uprooted themselves from the same area of origin tended to live near each other, sometimes making up a whole village, hence being able to forge closer links amongst themselves.

Fruit-bearing indigenous trees far outnumbered non-fruit-bearing indigenous trees at the homesteads and in fields except in cases where a substantial part of the fields had not yet been cleared. Fruit-bearing indigenous trees at homesteads to some extent were viewed in the same light as sown exotic fruit trees. Attitudes regarding the controls tended to be along the same lines as those pointed out above for exotic fruit trees but with a greater leeway being given for access by others to the fruit. For example, no mention was made of seeking redress through the VIDCOs for the unauthorised taking of indigenous fruit. Indigenous fruit was not widely sold in the locality, perhaps due to its prevalence, neither was it exported outside the locality.

Opinions about the controls applied to fruit-bearing indigenous trees left in the fields varied from 'I do not care because I did not plant the trees', to access would be denied during the agricultural

season for fear that the crops would be trampled. Some trees fruit during the dry season so there is no threat of the crops being trampled. Other interviewees expressed the opinion that trees in fields are just the same as crops and, therefore, belong exclusively to the household. The latter opinion was more prevalent. This latter opinion is corroborated by McGregor (1991:314/5) who points out that 'apart from the fruit, other products from trees located in fields or in home yards are not common property' and that 'generally there has been a shift to greater use of resources which are increasingly regarded as privatised, as land pressure increases'. Most households practically lived in their fields during the wet season, only returning to the homesteads at night and, therefore, they could be able to monitor tree use in the fields by other people. Monitoring tree usage could even be done at night in VIDCOs close to the game area, where people would sleep overnight, along with guarding their crops against wildlife depredations. However, other people could harvest the fruit without asking during the dry season. Notwithstanding, residents of other villages might be seen as encroaching on a resource they were not entitled to.

Some non-fruit indigenous trees such as *Pseudolachnostylis maprouneifolia* and *Pterocarpus angolensis* which were associated with sacred/ritualistic significance and occurred at homesteads were not cut as doing so was seen as a bad omen for the household. Since trees were in plentiful supply, it was not usual for other community members to find it necessary to collect dry wood or to cut trees standing in somebody else's fields. The same applied to other gathering activities such as for grass. In one instance, an informant complained that a neighbour had cut trees for poles to construct a granary in an uncleared part of his fields. The complainant intended to approach the neighbour about the issue and to warn him not to do it again. On his part, the plaintiff pointed out that he had not been aware that the area in which he had cut constituted a part of the complainant's fields. In this instance the cutting of trees was of sufficient worry to warrant some animosity between neighbours.

Memories of ecological stress in community members' areas of origin served to stress the importance of resources that were directly under the

control of the household as can be seen from the above discussion. There was the use of both physical fences and 'social fences' in the control of outsiders for resources that were directly under the household³, details of which were provided above. There was widespread disappointment with community efforts that had been made with regard to the control of communal woodland resources (see below).

Household and cultural controls buttressed by extension advice

Unlike the institutional forms of control which will be discussed below where there was some threat of prosecution, household and cultural controls buttressed by extension advice were voluntary i.e. they were recommendations made by state extension services through their local resource overseers and VIDCOs to farmers. These recommendations relied on the predisposition of the farmer to adhere to them.

A number of recommendations were made to farmers by Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services (Agritex) and ARDA extension staff. One was that farmers build brick houses. The recommendation arose from a perception that building brick houses might lead to a reduction in the use of wood in the long run⁴. Secondly, farmers were enjoined not to clear their arable land until such time as they would want to use it, thereby maintaining the quality of the soil and avoiding wind erosion. Thirdly, it was recommended that farmers should not cut fruit trees or ringbark and burn trees in fields⁵. Rather, they were commended to clear

³ The terms 'physical and social fences' are borrowed from Fortmann (n.d.)

⁴ McGregor's (1991) discussion about differences in wood used for brick and wooden houses points out that while total volumes are less for brick houses, the type of wood used (often whole, living trees are cut down to fire brick kilns) is far more destructive of woodlands than the harvesting of wood for constructing pole and dagga huts. For the latter, the trees generally coppice.

⁵ Ring-barking and burning was mainly practised by those households which experienced labour deficiencies, so there was the need to minimise labour inputs. For the others, it was

trees in the fields only when the need to use the land for agriculture arose and then to gather the trees cut for future use. Fourthly, farmers were commended to leave trees standing in areas which would not be planted such as field drains.

The control of use of communal woodlands

Cultural forms of control

Kanyati was characterised by the near absence of sacred controls enforced by customary institutions and practices as defined by Nhira and Fortmann (1993). Nhira and Fortmann (1993) distinguish between several types of controls. Sacred controls are defined as norms of tree use and protection that are based in folk or 'traditional' religious belief and that are enforced by individual internalisation of the norms, community sanction or by religious and/or 'traditional' leaders. Pragmatic controls are 'traditional' and recently adopted norms of tree use and protection that are designed to ensure a steady flow of a particular product. The civil contract are norms of civility that govern daily conduct and which restrain excessively avaricious behaviour. Parts of the contract can be reinforced by religious mores and norms but they are not generally thought of as being 'religious'. All these controls have been lumped together here as cultural controls. 'Customary' and 'traditional' are used advisedly here. They do not imply something static and unchanging but something that could be innovative and a rational response to perceived or potential scarcity firmly rooted in the culture.

The few sacred controls that were observed by households were maintained in the absence of recognised 'traditional' institutions. Unlike other communal areas which might have had 'traditional' religious cults, the institution was supplanted by administrative fiat in Kanyati⁶. 'Traditional' authority was unrecognised in resettlement areas as well.

because people did not see the need to conserve wood for future use since supplies of dry wood were plentiful in the area.

⁶ This issue will be treated more extensively in the section below when 'traditional' power *viz-a-viz* other power bases is discussed.

Notwithstanding, some households did not use certain tree species because of their ritualistic significance eg. *Pseudolachnostylis maprouneifolia*. These species could still be cut eg. when clearing fields so the fact that they could not be used after being cut did not preclude their being cut. However, residents also pointed out that they only cut trees when they intended to use them and so would not normally cut a tree for which there was no use except when clearing fields. The idea that a tree was only cut for a purpose has been linked to the fact that settlers wanted to show that they were stewards of the land, particularly to an outsider (Nhira and Fortmann, 1993). This cognitive set also applied to indigenous fruit trees.

Indigenous fruit trees such as *Berchemia discolor* and *Diospyros mespiliformis* which occurred in large quantities in the area were not cut except in the process of clearing fields. Other trees were not used because of their burning properties. Residents pointed out that they did not need to cut down live trees for fuelwood⁷ because of the plentiful supplies of dead wood available from road cutting, field clearance and normal tree mortality. Wood was gathered on a first come first served basis in Kanyati, unlike in other settings where prior claims could be made to fuelwood by gathering it together and leaving it for later collection (Nhira and Fortmann, 1993). Such controls arise from a combination of common sense and preference.

The above mentioned controls were brought with the settlers from their areas of origin as part of a cognitive set embedded in the culture (or more crudely cultural baggage). In this sense a frontier can be a force for cultural-historical continuity and conservatism (Kopytoff, 1987). The existence of the cultural controls suggests that immigrants had come with a mental cultural ideal which they wanted to establish had it not been for state intervention.

The new institutional controls

There were a number of institutions responsible for monitoring woodland usage and, more generally, natural resource use in Kanyati. Their history did not span more than the life of the land use project. Common characteristics to all the institutions were that they were imposed on the community either by

⁷ McGregor (1991) notes that women prefer deadwood and will go to great pains to collect it even when it is scarce.

the project or by other government bodies and that they all depended on the VIDCOs to execute the functions. The VIDCOs had also been imposed on the community at the time the decision to rationalise land use and settlement was made.

The Department of Natural Resources approached the District Council with a view to exhorting Kanyati residents to preserve their environment just after the earliest in-migrants had settled in Kanyati in 1982. Initially, meetings were held with the residents and the process culminated in the election of unpaid natural resource overseers (*majengetavhu*) in each of the ten VIDCOs, with each VIDCO having two or three resource overseers. These resource overseers were further trained outside the community in methods of conservation. They monitored resource use and advised ward councillors and VIDCOs on what action to take in cases of infringements of 'laid down procedures' of woodland use. The laid down procedures were unwritten and thus open to various interpretations. The councillors could take the issues up with the District Council Conservation Committee constituted under the Natural Resources Act and the District Councils Act. District conservation committees have conservation and control functions (Murphree, 1992). Natural resource overseers also liaised with the Department of Natural Resources' natural resource officers based at the provincial headquarters with respect to their extension and control functions. Natural resource officers and the District Council's conservation committee can make an order for the provisions of the Act to be complied with (Section 75 sub-section 1). However, natural resource officers made infrequent visits to Kanyati. They were encountered once during the year-long period of field research. They were in Kanyati over a period of three days showing films on tree planting and monitoring the removal of cotton stumps from farmers' fields.

Two ward wildlife committees had been formed in Kanyati through the initiative of the Nyaminyami District Wildlife Management Trust (NDWMT), an arm of the District Council responsible for wildlife management in the whole district. However, the essential components of the CAMPFIRE

programme⁸ had not yet been established at the time fieldwork ended. The two committees were responsible to the wards, their constituencies in addition to serving the NDWMT. Proposals had been made to establish a joint wildlife management committee above the two wildlife committees since the wildlife area from which benefits would flow was in one block (Murphree, 1992). The NDWMT appointed game guards who were to be responsible for Kanyati. Their duties entailed educating people on the need to conserve forests, soil, water and wildlife; control of problem animals; assessing crop damages; control of snaring, hunting and fishing; game cropping and the sale of the meat as communicated to Kanyati residents⁹. The relationship between natural resource overseers and game guards had not been discussed among community members nor had the relationship between the conservation committee and the ward wildlife committees. Ward wildlife committees embrace conservation, management and exploitative responsibilities unlike the conservation committees (Murphree, 1992). By-laws to govern the operations of the ward wildlife committees were still being discussed when fieldwork ended.

The wildlife management programme was likely to be the lead programme in the local context in the management of natural resources since wildlife had much more economic value than the other natural resources found in the area. Murombedzi (1992a) offered a critique on how the CAMPFIRE programme had been orchestrated by the Nyaminyami District Council, under which Kanyati falls, since its inception. His main argument is that control over the programme had been retained by the district council without it filtering to the local level. The same could be expected to have applied to Kanyati in due course even though not much had been done on the ground in Kanyati¹⁰. In its attempt

⁸ Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management (Martin, 1986).

⁹ ARDA extension worker at Ward A meeting 18/8/90.

¹⁰ NDWMT conducted workshops on revenue handling and rule formulation for game management apart from the formation of ward wildlife committees and the disbursement

to deal with the problem of control remaining at district level, the Department of National Parks and Wild Life Management (DNPWLM) issued a set of guidelines which sought to force district councils to devolve authority at least to the wards on pain of having their appropriate authority status withdrawn.

Other institutions which were likely to affect the management of woodlands were the proposed VIDCO grazing and livestock management committees which would have fallen under the control of the VIDCOs (ARDA, 1987:65). The demarcation of grazing areas, which approximated the areas of woodland cover, had been completed. Fencing of the grazing areas started in 1994. The committees were to be responsible for maintaining cattle handling facilities and stock water dams, notification of livestock diseases, controlling the number of herds per plotholder, changing paddocks and simple veld management. Community members had been enthusiastic in contributing labour towards the fencing of the grazing areas not least because of anticipated savings on herding time. However, the process under which the grazing areas and paddocks were demarcated was typically technocratic and top-down. VIDCOs were shown the demarcated boundaries by extension personnel after the boundaries had been demarcated using land use maps. Boundaries were negotiated with the VIDCOs only when some arable land was unwittingly included within the grazing area, at which point the plotholder was offered land elsewhere by the VIDCO or if that was not possible then the project undertook to fence in the affected arable land.

The VIDCOs were initiated simultaneously with land reorganisation. Initially, the former emergent *sabhukus* were transformed into temporary VIDCOs at the instigation of the District Administration. Eventually, the positions were made elective. In essence a fundamental shift had been made from the 'traditional' authorities to new institutions in keeping with administrative policy directions issued at the time. At the same time people had to move from where they had chosen to settle initially to the plots that had been demarcated.

A number of factors can be isolated which made

of revenue. The workshops also dealt with the use of trees and grass, the adjudication of land disputes and the control of squatting. The sessions did not go beyond what is reported in this article in terms of the control functions.

land reorganisation and relocations possible. The immigrants were aware that they did not have government blessing when they settled in Kanyati, so they welcomed the legitimisation that land reorganisation provided. Second, they had not been resident in the area for a long time (three years in the case of the earliest settlers) and so would not have built durable structures and cleared up much land to make moving again difficult. Third, the experience of negotiating for a home had been so recent that they could do it again if they were not to abandon any claims to a piece of land. Fourth, the earliest settlers had complaints against the way settlement had occurred prior to land reorganisation particularly regarding continued influx of people onto a diminishing resource which the nascent *sabhukus* and Hurungwe¹¹ chiefs were encouraging as they were receiving payment from each settler. Immigrants had to pay Z\$10.50 each for the allocation of a plot. Fifth, the land use project came with promises of additional resources for improvement of agriculture and the building of infrastructure such as roads and clinics which persuaded the settlers to go along with it. In the words of one settler:

'We accepted the 'squatter' label because we knew we were haphazardly settled. When Agritex came in and the District Administrator began moving around we knew government had accepted the idea that we should settle here permanently. Then the government entered into a \$6,5 million agreement on our behalf and started arranging things for us. We knew we had been accepted when we eventually got land registration forms. This ensured that more people would not come into the area'¹².

Acceptance of project intervention however masked deeply held opinions about the intrusive nature of the intervention. For example, those who had to move from more fertile fields to less fertile ones and those who had staked larger portions of land than was eventually distributed were

¹¹ Hurungwe is the neighbouring communal area to the east of Kanyati.

¹² Interview with Mr. Masara, Nyadara Vidco 20/8/90.

disappointed. In addition, none of the settlers were compensated for the labour they had put into clearing the land and whatever structures they might have built up to that stage. This was a basis for confrontation between the original claimants and those subsequently settled on the land. Others moved out of Kanyati because of the unavailability of land and disappointment with state interference. Non-residents lost their claims. However, government officials who were in the forefront of demarcating and distributing land were prepared to consider land exchanges among the settlers to ease the burden of shifting around. In some sense, therefore, there was a limited choice about where one could settle and with whom; hence some lineages were clustered together. In other instances, the arable fields that had been staked out on arrival in Kanyati were authenticated by the land use project but people had to move their homes to new sub-village sites. Those who had settled in the demarcated game area had to abandon their claims. Some of them secured land elsewhere in the project area.

The sense of community was still developing in these new villages. Most of the residents were Shona, although belonging to different Shona sub-groupings. The nature of the Shona kinship system allowed for people who would otherwise not be related to build a close relationship eg. relationships could be built on the basis of totems. These nominal relationships might be buttressed by the demands of proximity such as material exchanges, co-operation in ritual matters, inter-household work parties, inter-marriages and other community efforts eg. building schools, worshipping together, in farmers' groups, etc. Colson (1971) has shown the inclusive nature of kinship through the use of one or another device of fictive kinship, ritual innovation in the face of a breakdown in relationships and the use of religion as a way of coping with damage to social relationships. I had occasion to observe instances where the solidarity that had been built up was shown. For example, people would no longer refer to their areas of origin as 'home' but would instead disparage bad conditions in their areas of origin. School children would sing about what a beautiful part of Zimbabwe

they would inherit¹³.

It is however, these same forces identified above (ie. village alignment, kinship and other relationships) that tended to divide people in the direction of emphasizing membership of specific groups such as VIDCOs, sub-villages, ethnic groups, the rich and the poor, and hence to develop cleavages as a way of maintaining identifying markers or boundaries in custom or otherwise (cf Colson, 1971:65).

Some authority on land allocation and arbitration of disputes had been turned over to VIDCOs. Still, they were passive actors in the land reorganisation exercise, except when they exhorted people to follow the land use guidelines. They possessed authority over the control and use of woodlands since they were the bodies through which the District Council could delegate its authority. In doing so they worked in close collaboration with the natural resource overseers, the game guards, and the ward wildlife committees which should be seen as organs of the VIDCOs.

Below are the normative statements of rules that were made by the VIDCOs with respect to the controls in the use of woodlands. The normative requirement before one could cut a tree outside of one's fields was for one to seek permission from both the resource overseer and the VIDCO chair, both of whom would advise on the best methods of cutting and where cutting could be done depending on availability and the amount desired. Residents were not to ring bark trees in the woodlands to use in making bee-hives. They were not to cut down trees near river banks. They were also not allowed to cut down fruit trees. The VIDCO reserved the right to call the person concerned to appear before it to account for his/her actions in cases of infringements.

These normative statements of rules did not stand up to scrutiny in their application. Consultation was seen as a contingency measure for when the situation got worse in Chitete VIDCO¹⁴. Only non-VIDCO residents needed to consult the VIDCO. VIDCO

¹³ Tobacco field day rendition of *Kanyati Musha Wakanaka* (Kanyati is a beautiful place) by the Makande School Choir 26/2/91.

¹⁴ Interview with Mr. Chasara, VIDCO chair, 7/8/90.

residents did not seek permission in the VIDCOs sharing a border with Hurungwe communal area, ie. Kanyati, Nyadara, Chitete and Hwamira, primarily because Hurungwe residents also used the resources without seeking permission (see below). Outsiders had to seek permission to cut bamboo in Hurenje VIDCO. The bamboo was used for making mats and was unavailable in other VIDCOs¹⁵. The general view in Makande VIDCO was that the woodlot *Eucalyptus* trees should mature first before controls on tree cutting could be effected¹⁶. Residents of the other VIDCOs were of the view that the greatest saving of trees could be achieved through no further clearance of land for agriculture, hence the greatest need was perceived to be control of further immigration.

In reality, therefore, residents of Kanyati VIDCOs could cut trees in their VIDCOs without seeking permission. VIDCOs which did not share a boundary with Hurungwe communal area were successful in controlling outsiders (ie. non-Vidco Kanyati residents) from using their resource. A case was reported of *Colophospermum mopane* poles being confiscated in Nyajena VIDCO. The control of non-Kanyati residents for VIDCOs sharing a boundary with Hurungwe was particularly problematic. Hurungwe residents claimed that they had always used the resources in Kanyati even before the present Kanyati residents were living in the area. These claims were supported by former Hurungwe residents incorporated into the project area. A power struggle developed between what were generically referred to as 'Karangas' (the VIDCO chair was Karanga) and 'Korekores' (former Hurungwe residents) in one VIDCO, Hwamira, with the latter not attending meetings and not wanting to be bound by the decisions of the committee until they had wrested power from the other faction¹⁷.

Normative sanctions that were reported could be applied by the VIDCOs varied from one VIDCO to the other. The chair of Hurenje VIDCO was of the opinion that if it came to the crunch they could evict

a recalcitrant resident by recommending to the District Council through the councillor that such a course of action be taken¹⁸. The sanctions that could be prescribed in other VIDCOs were extra work at the schools, in the construction of paddocks and in the woodlots. Fines in the order of \$50 for a fruit tree and \$25 for any other tree could be imposed in Hwamira¹⁹.

VIDCOs could use their discretion in deciding what punishment to mete out. The offender could appeal to the District Council if he/she found the punishment to be excessive. Only two cases were taken up by the VIDCOs during the research period. The one case occurred in Hurenje and involved a case reported to the VIDCO by the resource overseer of somebody who had cut trees along the river bank. No punishment was meted out as no precedent had been set²⁰. The other case occurred in Nyajena VIDCO where 180 *Colophospermum mopane* trees were cut by an outsider. It was not clear whether the resource overseer had given his permission but the VIDCO chair had declined to give his. On examination it turned out that project management had overruled the VIDCO chair because the poles were needed for the construction of a tobacco barn²¹. In general, however, resource overseers and VIDCO chairs did not appear to be prepared to interfere with other residents' survival strategies and risk souring relationships when they were not paid for their trouble. They chose instead to rely on 'management by exhortation', an integral part of community building.

Project management premised their interventions on the basis that management of existing woodlands would not offset future wood deficits. They thus emphasised afforestation through woodlots and agroforestry practices. This was done despite the project document identifying localised overcutting as a risk (ARDA, 1987:67). Thus no support was being given to the VIDCOs in their efforts to control woodland use. Project management did not

¹⁵ Hurenje Group meeting 8/8/90.

¹⁶ Makande VIDCO group meeting 16/8/90.

¹⁷ All immigrants tend to be referred to as Karangas because the biggest sending area is South Central Zimbabwe where Karangas are concentrated.

¹⁸ Mr.Mavhuna, VIDCO chair, 8/8/90.

¹⁹ Mr.Masvosvere, VIDCO chair, 23/8/90.

²⁰ Hurenje VIDCO meeting 21/11/90.

²¹ Interview with Mr.Vengai, Nyajena VIDCO chair, 16/8/90.

appreciate that agroforestry, as they had defined it, was most unlikely to have an impact as marked as minor changes in the management of existing woodlands.

Resource overseers and some ordinary VIDCO residents expressed disappointment with community efforts aimed at controlling use and expressed the need for the application of the above sanctions since people had been 'educated' and most had finished building their homes. This was echoed particularly in interviews with women. Suggestions were made that resource overseers should be paid monthly wages, that government should take the initiative by selling poles at the rural service centre, and that game guards should arrest those who cut trees without permission²². Mrs. Masvisvi was adamant that:

'We cannot do it ourselves (ie. control cutting). We will not stop cutting trees even if the government tells us not to no matter how much talking is done. They should arrest those who keep cutting'.

Such sentiments criticise the way VIDCOs were handling the issue. These sentiments also appeal for the services of the largesse of the state. They reflect people's perceptions of the limits of community control in a situation of plenty, where conservation might not be a priority for everybody except to some concerned individuals. In the context of this case-study the issues needed more thorough treatment in order to be able to explain why things were as they were by looking at how the state permeates and reshapes the local arena.

SECTION TWO

In order to explain the ineffectiveness of community institutions in controlling woodland use, there is need to address the factors determining the inconsistencies related to non-application and/or differential application of rules and controls among community members in Kanyati. I attempt to do this below, focusing not on legislative and other macro-

institutional limitations²³, but on the arena of local action. As pointed out above, I look at the range of loci of power exhibited within the local arena, how that power is used and the implications for woodland management.

State power

The pervasiveness of state power in the project area is dealt with below to show that the communities had little leeway for taking initiatives. In part this reason might account for the communities taking little action with regard to the management of woodlands. Below I also highlight the preoccupations of state agencies which did not concern themselves with woodland management yet many of the components of the project had implications for the status of woodlands. In addition, the differential impacts of the project led to community segmentation which compromised community cohesiveness, a factor which is critical to community organisation around the management of common property natural resources.

State power in the project area was represented by extension personnel, district administration, the district council, project management and the various institutions emanating from the Prime Minister's Directive on Provincial Administration and Provincial Governorships of 1984 ie. the Vidcos. In theory development plans were to be channelled up the hierarchy of development committees where choices would be made about what should be implemented and in turn channelled down the hierarchy for their implementation. In practice the lowest structure mentioned above did not have budgets nor were they legal persona, therefore their plans did not usually see the light of day²⁴. VIDCOs should more appropriately be seen as agents of the state because they had little autonomous action beyond serving as conduits for ideas emanating from the state hierarchy although they were comprised of local residents (Murombedzi, 1992b). The political ties of VIDCOs to the state had left them dependent

²³ These issues have been the subject of other studies eg. Scoones and Matose (1993).

²⁴ See de Valk and Wekwete (1990) for an extended treatment of these structures.

²² Interviews with Mrs. Miriam Shumba 15/1/91, Mrs. Auxilia Mavhuna 16/1/91 and Mrs. Enis Masvisvi 21/1/91.

(Scoones and Matose, 1993). Community leaders did react to state manoeuvres, just as ordinary community members did, by manipulating state power for their own ends. However, 'development' goods were a monopoly of the project and by extension, the state, made possible through external donor funding. So, state power, in so far as it relates to the project, will be discussed below in relation to three local issue areas: land use provisions, extension, and project investment and distribution of benefits.

Since resources were being channelled through a state agency, project management wished to operate in a depoliticized environment. Management succeeded in co-opting people into strategizing around the capture of development goods to a large extent, although oppositional forces could be detected. These oppositional forces had not solidified in the frontier society that was unfolding, which enabled the government bureaucracy and the project to fill the institutional vacuum.

Land use provisions

Squatting and land disputes were contentious issues in the project area because land demarcation by the land use planning project was superimposed on the then existing land use practices. Squatting and land disputes led to uncontrolled clearance of woodlands.

Residents who had cleared more land than was subsequently allocated to them were unwilling to part with it. Non-Kanyati residents still regarded the area as a frontier and wanted to claim rights to land in the area. The typical intervention strategy to settle the disputes was for Vidco chairs and councillors to call in extension workers when they had failed to mediate satisfactorily themselves. Extension workers intervened on the presumption that if the disputants were shown their boundaries as reflected on the land use maps, then the disputants would heed the advice of extension workers. Often the advice of extension workers was taken, but in several instances it was not, mainly because the amount of land cleared was so extensive that the original settlers were loathe to give it up. The District Administration was called in to arbitrate if extension workers failed to mediate. District Administration claimed to act on behalf of the District Council which is the authority with legal jurisdiction over the area, as per the provisions of the Communal Lands Act 1982 and the District Councils Act 1980 (and as updated). VIDCO chairs and councillors stayed out of the more intractable

disputes until District Administration had reached a conclusion on the matter. Local leaders feared inadequate legal protection should their intervention result in violence as happened several times when the District Administration intervened.

District Administration used a 'development' discourse in the first instance in their intervention style. This entailed appealing to the disputants in a manner that emphasised rationality of the land use plan and the obfuscating nature of disputes for other development plans. District Administration threatened the protagonists with eviction from the project area when the disputes continued. Councillors and VIDCO chairs enjoined people not to go against government regulations as people would ultimately suffer as a way of backing the stance taken by District Administration. In such instances councillors and VIDCO chairs would be alluding to the perceived control/influence that the District Administration had on disbursement of funds for the project. Extension personnel usually fell back on blaming the community leadership ie. the councillors and VIDCO chairs for not knowing their duties or for being hesitant to make decisions. Extension personnel, however, tended to keep themselves out of the more volatile disputes to avoid them interfering with their extension function. Having intervened, successfully or not, District administration usually ended up reinforcing the idea that in fact VIDCOs and councillors should be able to resolve issues concerning the community on their own. The dilemma facing community representatives was that they were made accountable to both technical and administrative staff of the project and to their electorate. The expectations of the two often did not coincide.

There was resistance by individual community members against the intervention of the District Administration. Resistance took the form of litigation against eviction. The settlers concerned remained in the project area in spite of the District Administration's desire to have them evicted. The project withdrew its services from areas widely-affected by such disputes on the assumption that the District Administration was still pursuing eviction of the settlers²⁵. Community leaders often confronted

²⁵ The magistrate's court, the high court and the supreme court all ruled in favour of the state. However, the District administration seem to have shelved plans to evict the settlers

District Administration with a request that a conclusion be reached so that amends could be made with the settlers involved to enable 'development' activities to continue.

District Administration were more successful in evicting squatters who were new arrivals than in evicting long term settlers. The eviction of these squatters was a constant reminder to settlers and community leaders that the control over land by the District Council did not address community concerns even though some concessions had been made. Local people began manoeuvring to wrest some power from the District Council and the District Administration over land allocation because of untoward practices by the District Council. The District Council would allocate vacated plots to strangers rather than to landless community members. Led by the councillors, the community pointed out to administrative staff at local community meetings that the turnaround period between the council being informed about a vacant plot and actual allocation was unnecessarily long and that the practice of allocating plots to strangers was unfair to locals. The community was assured that in future VIDCO chairs and councillors would allocate land and that any further land use planning would respect the old plans and would not involve the shifting of people²⁶.

Local people and their leaders appeared to favour disguising the disruptiveness of land disputes and were deploying what Rose (1992:4) has termed harmony ideologies. The disputants involved were concerned with protecting and promoting their land use interests, while the state functionaries were concerned with maintaining their relative power and control over the land use project. It was only after sustained appeals that the District Administration and the District Council informally devolved their authority to elected bodies (ie. VIDCOs) within the project area on the crucial matter of land settlement.

Surprisingly, a regime of rigid control over land settlement was coupled with a *laissez faire* attitude

because of the time which had elapsed since the final judgement (Kanyati Communal Land File, D.A. Kariba).

²⁶ Proceedings of the Workshop on Wildlife and Institutional Developments in Kanyati and Gatshe Gatshe Communal Lands, Kariba, 1/4/92.

to the use of trees and woodlands even though the District Council could invoke the Natural Resources Act, The Communal Forest Produce Act, the Communal Land (Model) (Land Use and Conservation) By-Laws of 1985 and associated legislation. The *laissez faire* attitude taken by the state with regard to woodlands in the study area provided some limited space for the nascent local institutions to attempt to manage the resources as was discussed in Section One. Such attempts were made without the support of project resources.

Extension

The provision of extension services tended to favour some farmers to the exclusion of others. The content of extension messages did not emphasise management of natural resources nor was conservation a priority in the farmers' own perceptions. Extension activities also tended to support activities that relied on the exploitation of woodlands eg. tobacco growing which requires the building of barns from wood. No effort was made to control such exploitation of woodlands by tobacco growing farmers leading to other farmers being unwilling to live by the rules imposed by the VIDCOs. Thus the extension mode followed also led to segmentation of the communities living little room for community effort.

Extension services were geared towards cash cropping, especially cotton and burley tobacco. Attention was to be given to soya beans and horticulture in the future. Cotton and burley tobacco tended to be grown by the better off farmers because they were labour intensive and involved relatively high input costs.

Extension activities took the form of extension meetings (or extension messages being passed on at other community meetings), visits by extension workers to farms, master farmer training courses, and demonstrations and trials; some of which were held on-farm. Selection criteria favoured those who were literate, had time available, had status in the community and were 'innovators' (cf Zwart, 1990:25/26).

In Ward A, 125 of the 325 plottolders had acquired master farmer certificates, some since they had settled in Kanyati, while others had acquired the training in their areas of origin. The project was training at the rate of ten farmers per Vidco per

annum (100 farmers per annum). Parts of the courses focussed on the creation of new supplies of tree products such as establishing woodlots and orchards rather than on managing existing woodlands.

Results of a survey conducted by ARDA and TTCB (1990:47) show that 60% of farmers had attended at least one or more extension meetings a month. In descending order, farmers needed more information on crops, livestock, transport, health, education, water, conservation and wildlife management. Thus, issues of conservation and management of natural resources took low priority in the farmers' own perceptions compared to other needs. 14% of the sampled households in the above survey reported that they had been visited by extension workers at least once during the 1990/91 agricultural season. The better off farmers reported more than one visit while the bulk of farmers did not report any. Extension was, therefore, unevenly spread, a situation confirmed by my own observations reported below.

At any one extension meeting men usually outnumbered women. The reasons for this are multiple. Extension workers were men; there were high levels of illiteracy among women; and women carried a considerable burden of work around the home and were not able to attend meetings (cf Zwart, 1990:28). Men tended to live at home in Kanyati possibly because it was a newly settled area in which male labour was required for heavy tasks such as clearing land, a situation unlike in other communal areas where there is heavy male labour migration. Moreover, male involvement in the process of migration to Kanyati implied that male members of households had no alternative/competing demands and, therefore, were more committed to staying on the land than in other communal areas.

Demonstrations and trials are best illustrated by the introduction of burley tobacco into the project area. The point also illustrates the increase in demands made on the woodland resource from cropping patterns encouraged by the project. Burley tobacco growing started during the 1990/91 agricultural season with 14 volunteer farmers who received all the inputs required, including transport for marketing the crop. Farmers pocketed all the revenue and were supposed to continue on their own after that initial boost. The project then took on 14 other farmers during the next season. It was

expecting to continue at that rate presumably until its withdrawal from the area.

Tobacco growing necessitated the building of tobacco curing barns and grading sheds. Each barn needed at least 222 poles and each grading shed 18 poles. Farmers selected hard woods for these purposes, with *Colophospermum mopane* being the favoured species. If each pole were to represent a tree felled, then 240 trees would be felled by one farmer to construct a barn and a shed. The prize winning tobacco farmer during the 1990/91 season was expected to need at least 2 more barns in addition to the one he had finished building for his 1,5 acre crop. No suggestions were made for these farmers to obtain their materials from elsewhere such as buying treated poles. The farmers involved maintained that other community members were allowed to cut trees for logs to be used in beer brewing, so they believed they were morally in the right by cutting trees in such numbers for their tobacco barns. There were, thus, disagreements between community members on the appropriate woodland use levels.

The extension worker-project staff-farmer interface had many similarities to the forester-farmer relation described by Peluso (1992:418-431) in relation to forestry extension in Java where connections were made with villagers through the formal administrative leaders or through informal leaders who tended to be the more wealthy farmers. These leaders prevail on farmers to do what the government wants them to do. Peluso points out that it was difficult for the forester (read extension worker) to bypass the patrons as the state had extended its power and influence down to the village level (in Zimbabwe's case through the VIDCOs) such that if the extension workers did not succumb, the patron could sabotage their efforts. This alliance with government representatives was exploited by community leaders as a source of status and access to government resources. Community leaders in Kanyati went to the extent of notifying the representatives of the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU) that community leaders could not be expected to cooperate with ZFU programmes since the ZFU representatives did not bother to inform the leaders when they came into the area to visit their area committees²⁷.

²⁷ Proceedings of the Workshop on Wildlife and Institutional Developments in Kanyati and Gatshe Gatshe Communal Lands, Kariba, 1/4/92.

Peluso goes further to point out that such an extension strategy led to a project being personified in the officers responsible, who were then expected to dispense their services as patrons. There was some latitude for the extension workers and project staff in Kanyati to use their discretion in dispensing the services that they provided. An incident involving the approval by project staff of a request by a resident of one Vidco to cut trees for poles to build a tobacco barn in another Vidco when the responsible community leaders had turned down the request is a case in point. The community leaders could do no more than inform the project staff that future requests would be vigorously resisted.

Project investment and distribution of benefits

More illustrative of the form and content of the power which the project and its staff wielded over the community were the issues surrounding project investment and the distribution of the benefits. Project management continued controlling and making critical decisions for the Tillage Association, which hired out tractors for tillage and secured inputs and markets for the membership, without consulting the elected local management committee and the general membership. This was done on the pretext that the community could not be trusted with running the association because its members did not have the requisite skills. This despite earlier commitments to devolving control and ownership of the Tillage Association to the membership. The membership of the association reacted against such control in a general meeting whereupon a commitment was made to involve them in decision making. For the community to have been able to manage the association effectively required a sustained training programme which had not yet been put in place. Complaints were also made that tractors spent disproportionate amounts of time with tobacco farmers compared to the time they spent with the rest of the farmers²⁸.

There was almost a complete absence of the project's presence in one VIDCO, Kanyati, because of the prevalence of land disputes and subsequent neglect by extension and project staff. No boreholes had been sunk and no secondary roads had been cut.

Other spheres of the project's operations were similarly conducted without consideration of community sentiments. There was widespread discontent with road cutting operations which ate into people's fields. No compensation was made to those farmers whose fields were affected. Instead, community leaders were asked to deal with the complaints individually. The community leaders had nothing to offer and ended up prevailing on the road cutting crews not to point road drainage lines towards people's fields because of the potential serious erosion consequences.

Traditional power

One locus of power which could have been useful in the management of natural resources was traditional authority as has been shown by Schoffeleers (1978). However, secular 'traditional' power was eroded by the state, first through the severing of links between Hurungwe chiefs and the formative Kanyati *sabhukus*; and second, through the creation of VIDCOs which were the only local representative organs recognised by the state. Other secular 'traditional' authorities ie. lineage heads got their influence, not through recourse to tradition, but through sitting on the development committees. 'Traditional' religious power, shown through a *mhondoro* spirit medium, was disregarded by both the state and the majority of the local population. Because of the antipathy shown to the *mhondoro* spirit medium and traditional religion in general by some sections of the community, there was no clear link for traditional religion to legitimise traditional secular authority. The way the *mhondoro* spirit medium attempted to manipulate himself into a position of prominence and the reaction of the state provides a window into unravelling these dynamics.

Manouvres of the mhondoro

The *mhondoro* (lion spirit) medium who resided in Kanyati was one of the first settlers, having relocated from the neighbouring Hurungwe communal area. *Mhondoros* have traditionally provided spirit guidance to much larger areas than do ordinary spirit mediums who provide guidance to lineages. *Mhondoros* also act as advisers to chiefs. The *mhondoro* spirit medium's intention on initial settlement was to create a sub-chiefship under a

²⁸ Interview with group of farmers 28/1/91.

Hurungwe chief from whence he came to which sub-chiefship he would be strongly aligned. A large number of immigrants into Kanyati indeed were given permission to settle through the Hurungwe chief (Chief Nematombo). There had been competition from another Hurungwe chief (Chief Nyamhunga) in sending immigrants to Kanyati. As government involvement increased, led by Kariba District Administration, the *mhondoro* spirit medium's strategy then shifted to claiming that in fact there was a dormant chiefship (Nemarindi) whose descendants were living under Chief Nematombo (Hurungwe) who had been living close to Kanyati at the time Lake Kariba was built. The descendants had dispersed as the lake flooded. However, none of the descendants were resident in Kanyati except for the extended family of the *mhondoro* spirit medium.

Kariba District Administration decided to establish VIDCOs as the only local authorities in Kanyati and not bother with trying to reconstruct what perhaps might have been perceived as tenuous territorial claims by the *mhondoro* spirit medium. During this time, as has been noted by Alexander (n.d.), chiefs had lost a lot of their power as a consequence of their perceived alliance with the settler state and what was perceived to be their 'perniciously traditionalist and conservative influence' in an atmosphere pregnant with socialist rhetoric.

The majority of immigrants who came from other parts of the country other than Hurungwe were happy with the decision to be under Kariba District, notwithstanding that there were groups of people who went along with the *mhondoro* spirit medium's plans, particularly those who had acquired authority as temporary *sabhukus*. On the one hand, they had immediately rid themselves of overlordship by the Hurungwe chiefs who had been usurping payment from the immigrants to allow them to settle in Kanyati, and on the other, an opportunity had presented itself for them to control their own affairs through democratic structures. Community feelings against the *mhondoro* spirit medium were particularly high during the course of fieldwork as he was accused of inviting more Hurungwe residents to settle in Kanyati so as to increase his following, something which was perceived as going against land use provisions. The *mhondoro* spirit medium was against the top-down approach to land use planning and the creation of VIDCOs. He articulated

his interests to District Administration as he did at one point by asking rhetorically, 'Where else in Zimbabwe are chiefs and lion spirits/spirit mediums unrecognised?'

In the short run, it did not appear that the *mhondoro* spirit medium would be able to impose himself over an area larger than the VIDCO (Chebere) where he resided, in which his immediate relatives and other former Hurungwe residents were concentrated. The extension of his authority relied on the support he could muster from Hurungwe chiefs who were cut off administratively from Kanyati, and the District Administration which was unlikely to change its stance having already set a precedent²⁹. In addition most of the Kanyati residents could insulate themselves from his influence by appealing to a different cosmology. Most belonged to mainstream Christian and African Independent Churches and proclaimed an unwillingness to dabble in 'traditional' ritualistic behaviour. It seemed that these claims of difference were likely to be attenuated if serious contestations came about.

As things stood, there was an absence of a 'traditional' authority which could define and enforce sacred controls on the use of the woodlands. Both the state and the local population had an ambiguous relationship with the *mhondoro* spirit medium and the institutions he represented. The potential role of the *mhondoro* spirit medium was important to the extent that he might have provided a check on state plans in the area and established control over land settlement and use. His influence was limited to a small group of his relatives. Beyond this group there was some support from former *sabhukus* of Hurungwe origin who were replaced by

²⁹ On a visit made to Kanyati in 1993 I met a large party from Hurungwe who had come for a *bira* (propitiation) gathering and to build a 'home' for the *mhondoro* spirit medium (termed *Dendemaro*). The people in the party said that they had been urged to attend by Chief Nematombo. Other people in the party claimed that the *bira* was being held so that a person who was claiming possession by a late Chief Nemarindi could 'come out' publicly. The person claiming possession would nominate a person for the Nemarindi chiefship, it was claimed. Other Kanyati residents I spoke to were sceptical of these proceedings pointing out that the *mhondoro's* intentions were likely to clash with those of Omay Communal Land chiefs who had similar intentions for Kanyati.

the Vidcos.

In some cases, lineages with spirit mediums consulted the *mhondoro* spirit medium on whether or not their lineage spirit medium could be recognized. Some settlers observed a rest day (*chisi*) declared by the *mhondoro* spirit medium. The arrangement introduced a complication in that the settlers then needed to observe two rest days in a week, one day following their own traditions and the other as dictated by the *mhondoro* spirit medium (referred to as *chisi chasahwira*-a special ritually validated rest day for a 'friend'). Some of these settlers did not bother observing the *mhondoro* spirit medium's rest day as it would involve losing time from their work schedules. *Chisi* denotes ritual control over land. The fact that no group managed to establish its own day as the *chisi* for all Kanyati residents pointed to struggles at the level of ritual which had still to be resolved³⁰.

The position of lineage heads

The heads of lineages were 'first comers' who 'showed the place' to newcomers and mediated between the settlers and the Hurungwe chiefs. The status of the lineage heads was raised as new layers of immigrants voluntarily 'inserted' themselves under them (cf Kopytoff, 1987). The 'first comer' was also the elected VIDCO chair in one of the three VIDCOs which were studied. Thus, some lineage heads were able to influence the political process. Some of these lineage heads had links with the *mhondoro* spirit medium, in cases where their place of origin was Hurungwe. Most lineage heads did not want to be associated with him for reasons given previously.

Spiritual traditional power was also used in land disputes. A case in point was when a settler was unable to take over fields allocated to her because the fields were being used by a spirit medium and traditional healer and she feared that a spell would be put on her. The spirit medium continued to use

the fields. The owner was not bothered to involve the local leadership on the issue.

The traditional authorities were biding their time and had chosen to engage in activities that had ritual significance and which were important as recruiting grounds for followers, it would appear. These activities included healing the sick, consultations with other spirit mediums and struggles over *chisi* days. These activities served to remind the community of the traditional authorities' potential power. Still, there were no viable structures within which traditional authorities could prevail on resource management matters.

Inter-household power

As distinct from traditional power discussed above, inter-household power refers to the collective power exhibited by local people. In this section I point out and explain those factors making for convergence and/or divergence of interest among households. These factors were the tendency to split or band together along economic interests, and lineage and ethnic lines further eroding the possibilities for collective action.

Economic differentiation

Household differentiation can lead to uncertainty and lack of concern with the aims of communal management of natural resources (Lawry, 1990). The sale of crops and off-farm income were the most important vehicles of household economic differentiation in Kanyati.

The ARDA and TTCB report points out that the largest source of total household income was from the sale of crops. Income from crops made up 69,5% of total income earned on average. The smaller sample survey that I conducted indicated that the mean agricultural income is Z\$508.31 per annum and the range is Z\$1901 per annum, thus showing a high degree of variation in local terms. About 24% of the households in the sample had no income from crops.

Crops were followed by off-farm income in terms of overall household security in the ARDA and TTCB survey. Off-farm income made up 24,8% of the income on average. 13% of the off-farm income was earned within Kanyati. Employment opportunities were available through the project in

³⁰ I received information that the *mhondoro* spirit medium had passed away in 1994. Doubtless, another medium will come up, but it may take a long time before that happens. The next medium might not have as much leverage as the previous one given changes over time in the political landscape in Kanyati.

building, construction of dams and tsetse control operations. The bulk of those employed were temporary employees. Income earned outside Kanyati constituted 11% of total income and was at Z\$128.00 per month on average.

The average income earned within Kanyati inclusive of all income sources was Z\$1089.00 per annum. The average income increased with livestock ownership. The numbers of cattle owned by residents were increasing all the time. The ARDA and TTCB survey found that 31% of farmers kept cattle and on average each farmer owned 4.8 head. 17% of farmers kept cattle outside of the project area, on average keeping a total of 6 head outside the land use project area. Farmers expressed a wish to bring them into Kanyati as soon as the ban on cattle keeping was lifted in Ward B (p.34).

The gaps in incomes among households should increase with the introduction of tobacco, a high income earner but also a high input crop. It could be expected that not all the farmers would be able to grow the crop even with the initial project subsidies.

As previously noted the gaps in incomes occurred at least in part under the sponsorship of the state. A considerable number of farmers were not happy with the unevenness and perceived impoverishment of some farmers from state intervention. To quote one farmer:

'No, I am not a member of the ZFU or the Tillage Association. I still want to see how they function. I do not have cattle. I am still suspicious of ARDA intentions. I was not happy with being moved from the fields I had initially chosen. They were more fertile than the ones I was allocated under the project'³¹.

As at October 1991 membership of the Tillage Association stood at 566 out of a total of about 847 plottolders (67%) (Nhira, 1992b). There were other economic interest organizations such as area committees of the ZFU and Catholic Development Commission (CADEC) input supply co-operatives. The project tillage association dispensed its services to a limited number of farmers although, as initially envisioned, it should have been all inclusive in its activities and membership. Farmers who were not benefiting were therefore at the least ambivalent

about the project's presence or hostile to it outright. It was not surprising that some farmers were also ambivalent about the woodlots set up under the project, particularly since arrangements for benefit distribution had not been discussed in the wider community. Inequalities also tended to express themselves across VIDCOs due to differences in natural resource endowments.

It was not possible to separate out the individual effect of crop sales, off-farm income and livestock ownership on production and the differences in average incomes earned per household in different VIDCOs. The differences in average household income across VIDCOs are noticeable in the following table on one variable contained in the original ARDA and TTCB report.

These differences should be considered high in a local context and could have been magnified were consideration taken of individual households. Social differentiation was occurring under the uneven sponsorship of the state. Accumulation of wealth was being achieved, in part, through methods that ignored community opinions about the exploitation of communally held resources for private gain for which there was little community sanction.

Ethnicity and lineage organization

Ethnicity was perceived as important in local political discourse³². It also exhibited potential for developing common identity for people living in close proximity. Common identity could then be used as a mobilising force for activities around communal management of natural resources. However, as is shown below, ethnicity and common identity were tenuous factors with respect to control of the usage of woodlands.

Kanyati settlers came from all parts of Zimbabwe with the majority coming from Masvingo Province (42.8%) and the Midlands (20.9%) (ARDA and TTCB, 1990:10). While ethnicity cannot be strictly related to geographical area of origin, it was not surprising that the majority of household heads (59.25%) considered themselves as Karanga³³. The

³² Ethnicity is used here as self defined by the actors involved.

³³ Karanga is an ethnic group that is generally identified with South Central Zimbabwe which includes Masvingo and Midlands provinces. South Central Zimbabwe is drought prone and highly populated relative to the rest of the country.

³¹ Interview with Mr.Maramba, Makande Vidco, 16/8/90.

Karanga ethnic group provided the political leadership such as councillors and VIDCO chairs because Karanga voters who were in the majority tended to vote for other Karangas. The example quoted in the section above of a VIDCO in which Korekores were struggling to capture political office without success illustrates Karanga dominance.

The sample survey that I conducted in three VIDCOs suggests district of origin, ethnicity and residential location (VIDCO) were closely associated. People who were related (either classificatory kin or consanguinial kin) tended to reside in the same VIDCO in general. There was some limited choice as to where one could settle as was noted earlier.

Households which were previously unrelated were increasingly becoming related through intermarriages and manipulation of social identity since they found themselves living in close proximity. Cases of land disputes discussed above suggested that in cases where neighbours still regarded each other as strangers, there was a potential for acrimonious and seemingly endless disputes to occur without the VIDCOs being able to mediate effectively.

Social identity could make for common interests as was shown when all the VIDCOs presented a common position on the need for VIDCOs to control land allocation so that they could distribute it to local residents fairly. There was also a consensus that VIDCOs should control access to trees and woodlands within their boundaries. However, social identity seemed a tenuous factor in determining effective control over the usage of the woodlands within the VIDCO as discussed in Section One of this article.

Intra household power

Intra household power for the purposes of the research on which this article is based denoted differences between men and women with respect to their views on woodland management. It also denoted the primacy accorded to each of the views in local discourse.

It was found that there was a difference between the general views expressed by women and those of men even for those sharing the same household. The views of women tended to coincide as did those of

men. Women appealed for government intervention and the hardening of rule application with respect to woodland usage arguing that controls were not being effective. The reason was because women bore the brunt of collecting fuelwood for household use and feared that as agricultural land was cleared they might have to travel greater distances to obtain fuelwood. Male community members used a type of discourse that was a reaction against further government interference. The discourse pointed to the need for more community empowerment while underplaying the need for more controls on woodland usage. Examples of the discourse that was used by men are:

'The situation has not worsened';

'VIDCOs need to control the use of the woodlands';

'Let the woodlot trees mature first before bringing in further controls'; and

'We do not need controls on the use of the woodlands but on further clearance of land for agriculture'.

Loaded as they are, such statements reflect the preoccupation of men with changing the balance of power between the Kanyati community and the state. Conservation was not much of a priority for them. Men's views were considered more important since they dominated community institutions as office bearers. There was little participation by women in community institutions.

Conclusion

Section One of this article dealt with the range of controls that were shown in the study context with regard to the use of household controlled trees and communal woodlands. Mechanisms for controlling the use of household resources included the use of physical and 'social' fences which were effective. Extension advice in relation to the use of woodlands was advisory but did not support local institutions in managing the resources. The forms of control exhibited in controlling woodland use included cultural forms and those applied by new state-initiated local institutions. Cultural controls were rather diffuse and were not backed up by traditional authority. Controls by the new local institutions were widely understood but largely not applied to local people. Local institutions were not backed up by

project support in their attempts to manage the woodlands. Project support focussed on developing woodlots and agroforestry. There was no appreciation of the fact that woodlots and agroforestry were unlikely to have an impact as marked as minor changes in the management of existing woodlands.

The article sought to explain the ineffectiveness in managing communal woodlands by looking at the loci of power within the local arena of action in Section Two. These loci of power were seen as the state, traditional authority, the community in general, and men and women.

The state was all pervasive in its influence and left little room for community initiatives. Agencies associated with the state were pre-occupied with controlling land settlement and land use while showing little concern for woodland management or the implications of land use for the status of woodlands. State agency extension support activities were differentiated and led to community segmentation which tended to erode community cohesiveness. Extension activities also favoured crops that relied on exploitation of woodlands on their preparation after harvest, such as tobacco. The exploitation of woodlands was done without community sanction.

Traditional authority had been eroded by the state and so could not contribute to woodland management initiatives. The community exhibited differential interests partly as a result of differential impacts of the project as pointed out above and partly as a result of its make-up. Apart from ethnic and lineage divisions, the community was further divided according to different perceptions about appropriate community sanctions to be applied to woodland use. Women were in favour of hardening the rules of use for fear of continued heavy depletion of the resources while men were pre-occupied with community empowerment *viz a viz* project management and state agencies. Men tended to underplay the need for more controls in woodland use. The views of men were dominant because of their greater access to community institutions.

Given these conclusions the question about the most appropriate ways of ensuring that woodlands are accorded attention needs to be posed. First, a shift in the locus of power in favour of the communities and away from the state would have to

be made in practice³⁴. Second, such a shift would have to be accompanied by greater support to local institutions particularly in terms of institution building initiatives. As observed above there is much that resides in communities which can segment their interests thus placing bottlenecks on collective action. Thus, extension needs to rise above such differences. Third and last, state extension activities should include woodlands as an integral form of land use.

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³⁴ The argument for doing so was captured in the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Appropriate Agricultural Land Tenure Systems (1994) and need not be repeated here. The important point to emphasise is that state and other agencies need to reflect such a shift in their approach to and interactions with communities.

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