

# DIENFRANCHISEMENT AT LARGE

TRANSFRONTIER ZONES,  
CONSERVATION AND  
LOCAL LIVELIHOODS

Vupenyu Dzingirai

IUCN  
2004  
020

IUCN Bibliothek  
CH - 1196 Gland

Published by: IUCN – The World Conservation Union  
(Regional Office for Southern Africa)



Sponsored by: Ford Foundation and International Development  
and Research Centre

Copyright: 2004. IUCN The World Conservation Union

This publication may be produced in whole or part and in any form for education or non-profit uses, without special permission from the copyright holder, provided acknowledgement of the source is made. IUCN would appreciate receiving a copy of any publication which uses this publication as a source.

No use of this publication may be made for resale or other commercial purpose without the prior written permission of IUCN.

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of IUCN or of the sponsors of this publication.

Citation: Dzingirai V. (2004) Disenfranchisement at Large Transfrontier Zones, Conservation and Local Livelihoods. IUCN ROSA, Harare, Zimbabwe

Layout & Design: Design@7 Visual Works

Photograph: IUCN - Library

Available from: IUCN Regional Office for Southern Africa, 6 Lanark Road, Box 745, Harare Zimbabwe

## IUCN - THE WORLD CONSERVATION UNION

IUCN - The World Conservation Union was founded in 1948 and brings together 79 states, 112 government agencies, 760 NGOs, 37 affiliates, and some 10,000 scientists and experts from 141 countries in a unique worldwide partnership. Its mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. Within the framework of global conventions IUCN has helped over 75 countries to prepare and implement national conservation and biodiversity strategies. IUCN has approximately 1000 staff, most of whom are located in its 42 regional and country offices while 100 work at its Headquarters in Gland, Switzerland.

## IUCN - REGIONAL OFFICE FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

The IUCN Regional Office for Southern Africa was established in Zimbabwe in 1987 to serve the Southern African Region and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in the development of modern skills in conservation and natural resource management. IUCN-ROSA coordinates such regional services to over 69 members in 11 countries through its regional support programmes, regional networks, and its country offices in Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zambia.

IUCN ROSA's operational vision is to be a Development Partner of First Choice but the vision for IUCN's environmental and natural resource management work in the region is "Greater Environmental and Human Security in Southern Africa". Its mission for Southern Africa is to facilitate and strengthen an integrated approach for the sustainable and equitable use of natural resources and the conservation of biological diversity.

The underlying objective in all IUCN-ROSA's activities and programmes is capacity building and catalysing action. Developing, coordinating, and supporting programmatic partnerships is the preferred operational mechanism supporting this objective. Additional services include the provision of objective and scientifically-based advisory services and technical assistance, training inputs and programmes, and fora for national and inter-regional dialogue, networking, debate, and conflict resolution. At the regional level, IUCN-ROSA spearheads the World Conservation Union's efforts to integrate the Union's secretariat, membership and commissions in common purpose within the framework of the Union's mission.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	1
Introduction: From Community -based Conservation to Transfrontier Natural Resource Conservation	3
GLTFP and Popular Imagination	4
Transfrontier Resource Conservation and Narrowed Community Access to Resource Management	6
The Park and Community Access to Resources: Disenfranchisement and Translation of People into Secondary Citizens	7
Increased Wildlife and New Threats to Local Agriculture	10
Increased Wildlife, Wildlife/Tourism-based Revenue, and Local Livelihoods in the Transfrontier zone	12
Fences and Posts: Restructuring and Confining Local and Cross-border Mobility in the Transfrontier Zone	14
Conclusions	16
Footnotes	18
References	19



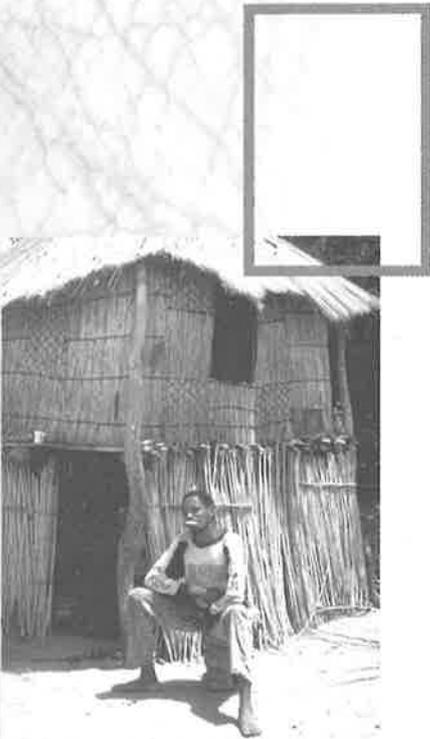
## ABSTRACT.

*Whereas much is now known about community based natural resources management and how it failed its promise to deliver both conservation and development, very little is known about the succeeding resources management strategy now upon us: transfrontier resource conservation. In part this is expected, for in spite of its widespread popularity, transfrontier resources conservation, whose focus is on resources in border zones, is still unfolding. This study is an attempt to tell a story about transfrontier resource management. Its argument is that because transfrontier resource conservation reduces community control and access to natural resources on large scale than CBNRM, it is disenfranchisement at large.*



## INTRODUCTION

### FROM COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION TO TRANSFRONTIER NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION



In Africa, there isn't anything new or unprecedented about transboundary natural resource conservation whose fever has gripped donors, scientists protected areas managers and non governmental organisations, seven decades after the idea was born in USA and Canada (Hanks, 2001). In the continent, particularly southern Africa where significant and unusual mammalian reserves can still be found, the USAID and World Bank-backed concept was preceded by the often ambiguously defined 'community-based natural resources management', (Burrow and Murphree, 2001; Agrawal and Gibson, 1999; Brosius, et al, 1998), this after it became clear that the century-long fortress and 'state-centric' conservation would no longer work to conserve the locally contested resources in protected areas (Wells and Brandon, 1992; Hulme and Murphree, 2001; Moore, 1998; Adams and McShane, (1992) as well as those frequently roaming freely in the colonially created 'tribal' or 'communal' lands (Ranger, 1983; 1985; Cheater, 1992; Weinrich, 1977). As its starting point, CBNRM would decentralize resource management by involving local people and extending benefits to them as payment for their critical role in the management process. Especially because CBNRM required a revision of the peripheral space traditionally given to grassroots communities, it passed for a new conservation narrative, a new paradigm in conservation even if it was one that was evolving (Western and Wright, 1994; Adams and Hulme, 2001).

Those translating and converting the paradigm into programme-based action were to blame, for rather than passing the authority to local level institutions, they simply bestowed it on state level institutions (Murombedzi, 1992; 1994; Murphree, 1991; Nueumann, 1997) themselves not downwardly accountable and had a history of facilitating state control of the local level (Ribot, 1999; Murombedzi, 1999). What we had, and continue to have therefore, was not genuine involvement but rather a decentralization of despotism (Mamdani, 1996). With real management authority permanently hanging on these intermediate institutions of control, a host of problems emerged including the widespread appropriation of revenue originally meant for local communities (Bond, 2001) and the use of this revenue to strengthen and perfect means of exclusion: the creation of a whole physical infrastructure such as game guards, anti poaching units, purchase of vehicle, all aimed at further restricting local access to local resources while strengthening the state and private business' renewed grip on them (Dzingirai, 2003; Munro, 1998; Schroeder, 1999). With people getting very little of the promised revenue and this in programmes continuously widening frontiers at their expense (Hughes, 2001; Schroeder, 1999; Neumann, 1997; Dzingirai, 1994; Emerton, 2001) CBNRM in the region became more unpopular and by the end of the 90s when donors coincidentally withdrew their traditional support, became virtually dead.

It is not clear whether those behind transfrontier natural resources management accepted that the problem in CBNRM was endogenous decentralization, one that worked with the familiar state-centric institutions. But they did accept that CBNRM was no longer and could not be viable unless the concept was scaled upwards in ways that optimized returns to communities and biodiversity (Hanks, 2001). The problem, they reasoned, was that CBNRM was very small in focus, often organized around remote communities who, although historically and culturally similar, were artificially bounded from their contiguous other. If only all manner of boundaries were removed, if only wildlife would be allowed to roam freely even across national boundaries, vast tourism based opportunities would be created for both wildlife and those separated communities located in the fast closing transfrontier zones, (Nyambara, 2001). Thus the architects saw 'scale', rather than decentralisation, as the solution to conservation and community integration and development.

Time has passed by and a great deal of movement has been made in giving shape and form to this reborn CBNRM or transfrontier or transborder natural resources conservation. In the region, the initiatives include Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, The Four Corners and ZIMOZA. There are plans to increase this category so that by the end of the century transfrontier conservation will account for the world's largest bio-diversity zones. Africa, it seems, could be at the threshold of something, even if it's not clear whether this is improvement of wildlife-based livelihoods or disenfranchisement by which is meant the extraction from and suspension of community's control and access to resources they traditionally enjoyed.

Whatever this threshold is, it is difficult to know for several reasons including that the programmes are in their formative stages and are yet to fully evolve. It looks like environmental practitioners will have to wait for years to come before transfrontier-based researchers have applied stories to tell. However, and this is the approach adopted by this research, by examining the project and the process giving its shape, it is possible to develop some insights into the nature of the imminent thresholds. The argument of the paper is that while improving mobility for both wildlife and elites through the provision of enlarged and biologically appropriate landscapes, TBNRM is CBNRM at large; it disenfranchises trans-frontier communities by reducing their traditional access and control over resources. It transfers resources, including land upon which community livelihoods are based, to states and private business. From this it can be concluded that communities that are about to experiment with this form of resource conservation are entering a new zone and age of disenfranchisement in which their relationship to resources will be dramatically altered, forcing them to imagine and compose localized strategies to regain their autonomy and environmental control.

The argument is preliminary and is based on a two-month fieldwork with dwellers of Sengwe in the southeast lowveld of Zimbabwe where the GLTP<sup>1</sup> is already beginning to unfold. It is also based on interviews with various local level representatives and non-governmental functions giving support to the



new initiatives. Finally the argument is based on review of documents so far produced on the basis of workshops conducted on this important transfrontier national park whose promise for Sengwe is described below.

## GLTP AND POPULAR IMAGINATION

The Great Limpopo Park came into being in 2002 after pomp and ceremony at Xai Xai, Mozambique attended by the leaders of the 3 countries. With wines in hand and appropriate toasts, national figures, ignoring that the project had already unsettled communities at least in Mozambique, boasted that the Park was more than a single project in time (Herald, 2002). They declared that here was a project that in addition to reflecting the peace between nations also strengthening the same. And there was the happy even though ambiguous suggestions that the project stood for a new effecious triple alliance between the states, the private sector which in the region is mostly white commercial farmers (Suzuki, 2001) and rural communities (Herald, 2002).

In some sense, the leaders had a right to celebrate on that day: the published event was a culmination of months of fast and extremely frustrating behind-the-scenes consultations between the ministries from the three countries (Zimbabwe Independent, 2002). Meetings, many of which left out communities or worked with the familiar and undemocratic traditional institutions (West and Kloeck-Jenson, 1992), were held in the capitals of the participating countries throughout and beyond the 90s. Thus when they proposed toasts in the city far removed from the centre of the project, they were celebrating not just a great future, but a great past too.

The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park is truly a 'great' park at least in terms of spatial coverage. It spans over three countries, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Africa and covers an area of 3.5km, becoming the largest and most ambitious conservation effort in post colonial Africa. The park links Gaza National Park in Mozambique and Kruger National Park in South Africa. As there is a chasm between South Africa's Kruger and Zimbabwe's Gona reZhou, a corridor has been proposed to link up the two landmasses. This is the Sengwe corridor, which falls under Chiredzi Rural District Council, one of the poorest but wildlife-rich districts in Zimbabwe.

Beyond the political benefits highlighted by statesmen, the Park is imagined to bring development benefits to communities in and around the Park. Where colonial parks had existed because people were racked to the margins, this regional one and the first to be created after political independence, would exist for people who will occupy a centre in it. In the case of Zimbabwe, the Park would serve and centre on the Sengwe, a multi ethnic group long bypassed by development and therefore surviving on an illegal economy organized around border-jumping, poaching, smuggling, stream bank cultivation among others. Especially because they are remote from the centers of power, the Sengwe people have been able to continue with these activities with minor concern of interference and prosecution fro the state. The imminent Park would serve the Sengwe people in the following manner.



The project will create centers of crossing (border posts) to increase mobility and integration of people. These centers will be under the Immigration Department, which has already visited the place and expressed an interest starting a well-manned port. This is to allow easy movement of people in the transfrontier zone. The Sengwe people will be able to formally see their kin, the Makuleke, colonially cut on the other side of the Limpopo.

The Park will allow, especially after the matter of game diseases has been sorted, the movement and translocation of animals. Already Mozambique has had plains game from South Africa off-loaded on its depleted wilderness. Zimbabwe is anxious to avoid any animal movement through the Sengwe Corridor into its giant Gona reZhou Park, especially the tuberculosis infected lions and foot and mouth infected buffaloes. When all is sorted, Sengwe people will see increased wildlife traffic through the corridor and beyond.

While fences will be torn down and have already come down in places between Mozambique and South Africa (Zim Independent, 2002), the Park will be fenced, although the exact places are to be mapped. This is to physically protect people and to guide animal movements. The Sengwe corridor will be fenced on either side, safe from the elephants oscillating between the two national parks.

Wildlife in the corridor will be under some form of community control. In fact the community through the transfrontier natural resources committee will own the wildlife or Trusts formed for that purposes. The community will benefit from the increased animal population, as utilization will be along CAMPFIRE lines. The Project will thus support local livelihoods in the same way that CAMPFIRE is doing.

However where CAMPFIRE benefits people mainly through spot hunting, the Park would broaden revenue source to include tourism to be facilitated through a streamlined visa system. The Park will issue one single visa to tourists increasing foreign investment into the region. With one single visa, easily obtained, the tourist would be able to visit the three countries. The Sengwe people will thus have a market for their crafts.

Rhetorically and in popular imagination, then, the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park passes as more than a Park. It is a development and conservation project, one that while taking care of wildlife, is simultaneously supporting local livelihoods. This however is a superficial reading of the project and its processes. Underneath, the project promises disenfranchisement and has in fact started to do so. In the section below I discuss how the project undermines local livelihoods.



## TRANSFRONTIER RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND NARROWED COMMUNITY CONTROL TO RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

While it promises communities control and ownership of corridor resources, the GLTP in practice gives this privilege to the state constituting the collaboration in terms of the signed Treaty between Zimbabwe, South Africa and Mozambique. The treaty<sup>2</sup>, does not specify that communities would own the resources, only that the states undertakes to collaborate in transfrontier resource management. Even if the states really wanted to decentralize resources management, there aren't, in Sengwe or any other communal lands in Zimbabwe, any natural resources institutions beyond the rural district council upon which such authority can be legally bestowed (Nhira, et al, 1998). The resource-deficient ward institutions ministerial created in the 80s, have no proprietary function, their role being to act as political conduits for central government (Brand.1991; Nhira, 1998).



The same charge can be leveled against the village, a banal institution whose primary function it is to facilitate control of the periphery rather than to excise any control over wildlife and other natural resources in a geographically defined territory (Nhira, et al 1998;). Presently there are innovative attempts to create a transfrontier natural resources committee which draws membership from the district's key institutions, including chiefs and rural district council (Cesvi, 2002). As a matter of fact one such transfrontier institution already exists, although it is one that hardly functions on account of logistical problems<sup>3</sup>. Even more interesting are unprecedented attempts to create a Ward Trust or Trusts to either own or control transfrontier resources on behalf of the Sengwe community<sup>4</sup>. However even if these appear on the scene and even if they improved their mobility through acquiring vehicles, they still would be lacking the legal status to own the international transfrontier park resources whose control legitimately remain with either the state or its nominated departments.

The existing and proposed proprietary institutions will no doubt play an important role in controlling the state and ensuring that community wildlife-based interests are taken on board by this banal and centralist institution. This is expected because institutions, even in undemocratic contexts, survive in part because they play some important functions in society (Nhira, 1994). However, it is important to note that such functions, however socially sensitive, can not qualify as community ownership, or a conditioned right of communities to determine whatever they want to do with their resources (Murphree, 1993). As a matter of fact, such control, if ever it comes, will certainly serve to mystify the Sengwe people's relationship to wildlife, providing for a desired semblance of community-based conservation<sup>5</sup>.

The Sengwe people are naturally anxious about what this aborted decentralization implies in terms of their future place and role in wildlife management. There

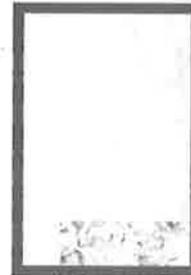
is uneasiness that states would use their mighty and newly found resources to exclude and displace other forms of management<sup>6</sup>. This anxiety is exaggerated and indeed ought to be so as happens in cases where rural livelihoods and custom face imagined peril from social change (Bailey, 1973). While they are exaggerated; they certainly are not irrational and without a basis: CBNRM has been characterized by state-centric local authorities' submergence of traditional wisdom and knowledge in conservation, which in turn expands the role of the state in resource management (Dzingirai, 2003). In the section below I examine the matter of how in addition to precluding people in the formal governance of their resources the GLTP limits access to resources.

## THE GLTP AND COMMUNITY ACCESS TO RESOURCES: DISENFRANCHISEMENT AND TRANSLATION OF PEOPLE INTO SECONDARY CITIZENS

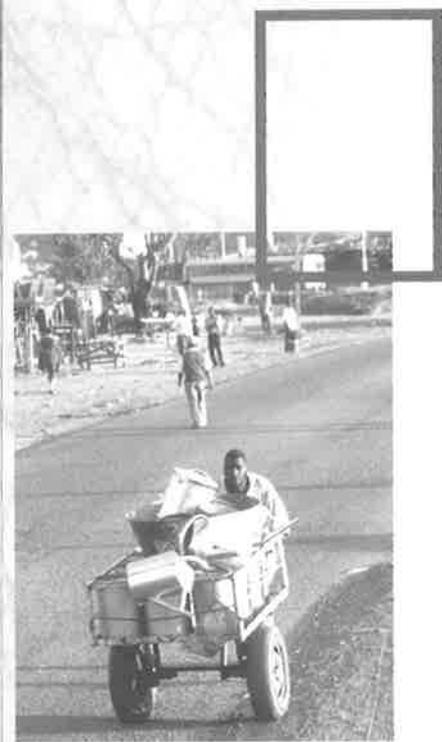
The project promises not to end local access to natural resources, instead that it will broaden and enhance local access to the same in ways that sustains or even improves local livelihood. Beyond doubt, this means the project will respect community's rights to land, a resource upon which livelihoods are constructed. In practice however, the project constitutes an assault not only on rights to resources but also on people's rights as citizens.

First the mega park will displace people from their homestead, in a bid to create a traditionally desired wilderness and space for wildlife mobility that animates tourism. The displaced villagers will include people currently located both in the immediate periphery of the Park and inside the corridor itself. Chilohlela is one such obvious village that will be displaced and its homes perhaps destroyed. Secondly, the project has indicated it will take away arable land that falls in the corridor. In particular the project plans to take away fertile portions of land along the river. Especially because the riverain land is fertile and accounts for most of the production in the area in the transfrontier zone (Cesvi, 2002), this expropriation, whenever it occurs, will constitute a major assault on the people's livelihood. This is the main reason why people are anxious that sanity prevails and the whole idea dropped.

Third and most important of all, the project plans to take away land and resources held as common property. These common property resources include grazing land, an important natural resource since livestock rearing and export is a major practice in Sengwe and other surrounding lands nearby the rich and insatiable illegal Mozambican cattle market<sup>7</sup>. The resources also include rivers, pools and pans and other water sources, which are critical to both humans and livestock. In Sengwe, there are no water pumps and dams are very few so that people depend on the Mwenezi River and its tributaries. Moreover, the resources include forest products, such as the llala palm that is a critical ingredient in craft work. Also notable is that the project will take away 'community reserve land': that small but critical mass of land which communities often set aside for use for expanding households and strategic relocation as a result of conflict, witchcraft accusations, feuds, and general misunderstanding<sup>8</sup>.



Even though this disenfranchisement appears to be local, and indeed is presented as such by those in support of the mega park, the truth is that this will be a local process with global and rippling effects. The disenfranchisement impacts will be felt far and beyond because Sengwe people are bound in an intricate and mutual web of relationship so that a small change in one village will reverberate throughout the transfrontier. One example will suffice to make the point. If looked on a map and from a distance, Chilohlela community appears to be remote and separate from other Sengwe villages, which share the same territory. There is no road but a dangerously mined track which attempts to link this fast growing village of more than 13 large households. On close examination, however, a different picture emerges and the village is enmeshed to mainstream villages. The mainstream Sengwe people use the concealed village as the last post in their increasingly dangerous trip across the now patrolled border into either Mozambique or South Africa. In addition mainstream Sengwe villagers often use the village as hoarding point for smuggled goods, which include sugar, cooking oil and flour<sup>9</sup>. As regards the Chilohlela villagers, there is no single household that does not hold cattle, goats, donkeys, chicken, on behalf of a very close household/relative in mainstream Sengwe where pastures are increasingly degraded. From this perspective, Chilohlela is a functional appendage of Sengwe and displacing it is therefore simultaneously disenfranchising its diffused but invisible clients miles away. What this suggests is that the problem of displacement and disenfranchisement is much more larger, global and is not local as is imagined and presented by those favoring the quick establishment of what is claimed a unique Park.



Whatever its real magnitude, the displacement of people is one that does not happen in a rhetorical vacuum. Often it is sanitized in ways that presents it less disruptive. The project's loud claim is that those affected will be relocated to some place, and people have been told this could be a commercial farm<sup>10</sup> or some other local but unused land in nearby villages<sup>11</sup>. While this may appear mitigatory and enfranchising because Sengwe people will apparently continue with their lives, it actually is not. The Zimbabwean state is practically bankrupt (Bond and Manyanya, 2002) and as such lacks the requisite revenue to support even its own expanding but controversial national resettlement programme. Therefore those Sengwe farmers to be dumped on commercial farms will have to embark on private but difficult effort to raise the massive start up capital. They will have to approach the donors and urban based-kin, the latter no longer forthcoming on account of the depressing economic conditions in the country (Kaseke, 1998). Moreover, the Sengwe community is anxious that the displacement to distant commercial farms would wrestle and sever them from their border kinsmen. This social dislocation is an issue for them because cross border ties play an important role in the transference and flow of resources and commodities necessary for subsistence, particularly here where state-initiated development hardly exists. Thus external relocation is not a desirable or practical option for the Sengwe dwellers. This leaves the option of internal relocation, which is location to other villages within Sengwe.

Internal relocation is problematic. To begin with it is increasingly unfeasible because land is scarce and that whatever is available, is considered a critical reserve by the targeted villages<sup>12</sup>. The Sengwe villagers point out that given that there is a steady migration out of Sengwe proper into those areas in the margins of protected areas, a reversed migration simply makes things worse for both long-term residents and returnee residents. There will be increased defragmentation of land, overgrazing and people " will fight each other for land"<sup>13</sup>.

Secondly, and assuming it is feasible at least in some place, internal relocation will not enfranchise those displaced. In their settled places, those displaced communities will have to change and create their identity and citizenship as a precondition of accessing resources in locality they are considered strangers:

*"We will have to be their servants in order to be allowed to have a small piece of land: We will have to accept all the false blame for whatever happens in the village. We will have to accept the false accusation that it is only cattle responsible for raiding every field belonging to our new masters"<sup>14</sup>.*

That remark suggests that far from them being a one off and short-term event, the strategic reconstitution of identity and the translation of one into secondary citizen, will be permanent through out their sojourn in this refugee place. There is no doubt that such reconstitution of identity and citizenship is strategic, allowing the individuals to continue to reproduce themselves. Also they can be no doubt that such identity reformulation provides a scope for integration into society and perhaps offers opportunities for limited accumulation of resources. It is however important to point out that such reproduction, integration and limited accumulation only occurs because the individual dies as a citizens and, if we may extend the metaphor, resurrects as a subordinate person without full rights. It is likely that this capacity to disenfranchise communities, simultaneously translating them into secondary citizens accounts for why many Sengwe people would rather abandon everything for exile<sup>15</sup>.

The project then does not simply terminate rights to land through its inevitable displacement of people from their homes and arable land. More importantly and unlike other similar environmental projects, this mega park will unleash a process of further disenfranchisement in which those bereft of their property will have to forgo their basic rights and freedoms in order to continue living in their land soon to be subjected to increased wildlife. In the section below, we examine how wildlife will introduce more complication and problems to the region's agriculture practiced on the little land available.



## INCREASED WILDLIFE AND NEW THREATS TO LOCAL AGRICULTURE

Presently the zone is experiencing serious wildlife menace, just like many other parts in the margins of the country where crop cultivation constitute a major or predominant economic livelihood (Wunder, 1997). In numbers often locally exaggerated perhaps to stress the magnitude of wildlife related problems and the corresponding need to cull or kill some (Dzingirai, 2003) elephants traverse the much vulnerable Sengwe, raiding crops and trampling on others. There is also the often underreported but serious crop damage by warthogs and birds (Wunder, 1997), two menacing creatures that overwhelm the region during the agricultural season<sup>16</sup>. The local wildlife authority, the National Parks Authority, have created units to deal with this problem whose peak is when crops mature. The Authority is poorly funded (Duffy, 2000), and this presents logistical problems to the units operating in the affected zones. The already serious problem is worsened by the Authority's own usual and persisting preoccupation and obsession with anti poaching operation rather than protecting people and their property from wildlife. So poor is the protective service that communities get offended each time the Authority is mentioned in relation to problem-animal control in Sengwe<sup>17</sup>. The Authority accepts its inadequacy, which is why it has, albeit unwillingly, out sourced problem animal control to resident safari operators.

Resident safari operators, as businessmen, have busy schedules. They must source clients, develop their camps; attend to other operations, which are central to the business. This busy schedule prevents these safari operators from attending to the grassroots community relief calls. The problem is worsened by the mere fact that safari operators generally regard animal control as peripheral and in some cases as perilous to their operations organized a disciplined and systematic off take of trophy animals (Holleman, 1969) as opposed to random shooting of wildlife locally defined as problem animals. (Dzingirai, 1999). Moreover, the problem is compounded by the fact that safari operators are generally few to cover the vast Sengwe area onto which the GLTP is mapped. The vast Sengwe only has one safari operator, who must make the painful decision of which calls to ignore and which to attend to. In recent years there has been a further complication deriving from the condition of the economy. Safari operators, like all companies, have had their fuel supplies extensively cut resulting in them revising their field operations including attending to problem animal calls. For these reasons, safari operators' contribution, which exceeds that of the Authority<sup>18</sup>, has not always been popular with the people who remain exposed to these marauding animals, mostly nocturnal.

Especially because they see the limitation of these two measures, Sengwe people have joined the rest of margin communities, in calling for total elimination of wildlife from the area. Even if they are clear about what to do with wildlife, there remains an ambiguity in local imagination about the process of this elimination. A traditional leader said his people supported the incarceration of wildlife in something very like protected areas but far away from human



settlement, especially Sengwe<sup>19</sup>. Another suggested the bombing to extension of animals especially elephants and hyenas<sup>20</sup>. State officials and safari operators in the area are aware of these voices but according to people<sup>21</sup> do not regard them as intelligible and worth considering.

There is nothing in the project about how people's land will be protected, other than the mention of an electric fence and game guards. With respect to the fence, it is suggested by Council that it will prevent game especially elephants from wandering into farmers' fields. In regard to game guards, it is said these will combine anti poaching and protection of humans. Such trained game guards are already operational in Mozambican parts of the GLTP. Thus not only does the project have protective mechanism; it has modern, effective and friendly ones. These are assertions and assumptions that the people of Sengwe dispute and find offensive<sup>22</sup>.

Their objection arises in part because the proposed institutions are not fundamentally different to the old ones, which have been tried and failed to work in Sengwe and other areas where Campfire is taking place. 'How can a man', remarked Mr Sithole', protect us from an elephant?' Their point is not without basis. In Binga a district further northwest in the perimeter of the country, game guards have on many times fled from charging elephants, leaving the offended creatures to raid the crops. Even if game guards were created and worked, it is very unlikely that these will effectively cover Sengwe, a massive area far bigger than a small farm that can be protected by ten people<sup>23</sup>.

With respect to the fences, locals says elephants, especially, break fences, destroying human property<sup>24</sup>. Their charges are again not without basis. In the Zambezi Valley where settlements are not fenced, the problem of elephants and buffaloes has persisted (Dzingirai, 1999). It is true that some of the fences do not work on account of vandalism, but there is no doubt that since they have been covered, Zambezi Valley residents have continued to experience crop damage suggesting the limitation of fencing as a protection mechanism. This has not yet happened in the unfenced Sengwe, but is undoubtedly 'going to happen, even on large scale now that Kruger'<sup>25</sup> gates are about to open to allow all its elephants to traverse the area' that to date lacks a resolute and effective problem animal control strategy. The traditional leader may be exaggerating because not all of Kruger will migrate into Zimbabwe's Sengwe as he suggests, but there cant be no doubt that in the absence of a radical and robust problem animal control strategy, the Sengwe are on the edge of massive agricultural disruption.



## INCREASED WILDLIFE, WILDLIFE/TOURISM-BASED REVENUE, AND LOCAL LIVELIHOODS IN THE TRANSFRONTIER ZONE

If people lost land for agriculture, but still be able to enjoy revenue from wildlife as in the manner of Campfire, this would justify in, public mind, the creation and protection of the fenced corridor linking Kruger and Gona reZhou. The state which is the usual beneficiaries in conservation (Warren, 1997; McCarthy) and its local level functionaries campaigning for the project and hoping for its speedy implementation, think this will indeed be the happy case, that the 'Sengwe community will finally benefit from the great project in a big way'<sup>26</sup>. This wild development optimism is not imagined but is based on a critical assumption that the project will increase wildlife presence and visibility in the semi arid area in which normal agrarian possibilities are ruled out (Peterson, 1992; Cumming, 1992; Cesvi.). This unanticipated wildlife increase is thought of as benefiting communities in two related ways. First the additional animals such as elephants will enlarge the scope of spot hunting, the quality and viability of which have deteriorated on account of poaching and natural disasters endemic in the entire sub region (Cumming, 1992; Gibson 2001). More and better wildlife, explained a Chiredzi Rural District based wildlife officer, will be put on trophy hunting quotas thereby increasing the revenue base for communities<sup>27</sup>.



Secondly, additional wildlife is imagined to attract more tourists visiting the area<sup>28</sup> to see the mammalian spectacle that has over the ages animated and inspired, big and small, Africa (Roosevelt, 1910; Conrad, 1960; Pitman, 1980). As they go about to see wildlife, tourists will presumably penetrate into the interior buying unique traditional artifacts for which SAFIRE- supported craft centers managed by women have been built at different places of interest in the Sengwe area<sup>29</sup>. The same tourists would be able to commercially photograph indigenous people and mammals<sup>30</sup>. This difference-based tourism (Mbembe; 2001 Mowforth and Munt, 1998) is assumed to inject the much-needed cash in the local economy (The Herald, 2002).

That tourism will result in community development is based on a twin assumption: that local level authorities or appropriate authorities are committed to share revenue with those grassroots communities and that communities have the capacity to demand their share of tourism benefit from those controlling tourism-related development in the zone. These two related assumptions are problematic if they are not wrong, for three reasons: First, as Campfire has shown, the state and its local level institutions that include rural district councils are not interested in sharing benefits including sharing revenue. Their concern is to keep as much revenue as is possible for their own bureaucratic emolument (Murombedzi, 1992). The Chiredzi Rural District Council is guilty of this charge, which is why locals in Sengwe think Campfire is a fraud:

*"They promised us money and motorcars, which they said, would ply the villages. To date we are stuck here in Sengwe. There are no buses. We have no motorcars or anything that resembles them, other than these home made sandals from worn out vehicle tyres. Do not tell us anything about Campfire<sup>31</sup>."*

Secondly there are no institutions capable of claiming this revenue from wherever it hangs. In the case of Sengwe, Campfire committees are virtually nonexistent, and where they do exist, are accountable to Council, which is responsible for crafting them. One village head described these committees as workers of council because they want sitting allowances but never hold meetings with us<sup>32</sup>. There can be no doubt that the remark is an exaggeration but it does point out that there is a problem with wildlife based institution supposed to represent rural communities in dealings with the state.

Third, and perhaps more important than the above, these institutions lack the capacity to engage the state. While they are competent to run local and internal affairs, chiefs, councilors and village heads are hardly literate and cannot dialogue with the state especially on the technical and complex matter of wildlife management<sup>33</sup>. Youths who are numerically competent and possess the stamina to stare at the state and its local manifestations, are always mobile as labour migrants to South Africa<sup>34</sup>; where they are sedentary and based in Sengwe, they are as in many parts of the country<sup>35</sup>, on the periphery of these wildlife-related institutions, which therefore remain inappropriate for effecting the state's downward accountability.

Even though it may appear so, the lack of well-capacitated institutions that engage the state on behalf of rural communities is not really a serious problem. In fact it is understandable and expected why these downwardly accountable institutions are still in gestation: Campfire, even if it regarded itself as adaptive management, did not attend to details, its strategic and pragmatic thrust being to work with what was available and existing. What is unsettling in the transfrontier resource conservation initiative that is fast unfolding is the absence of a programmatic strategy to address this important governance issue whose resolution is necessary for any long term and meaningful conservation and development. And in the absence these strategies, it makes sense to accept the community charge that the conservation programme will pass them over<sup>36</sup>, in the manner in which CBNRM did before its fateful demise.



## FENCES AND POSTS: RESTRUCTURING AND CONFINING LOCAL AND CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY IN THE TRANSFRONTIER

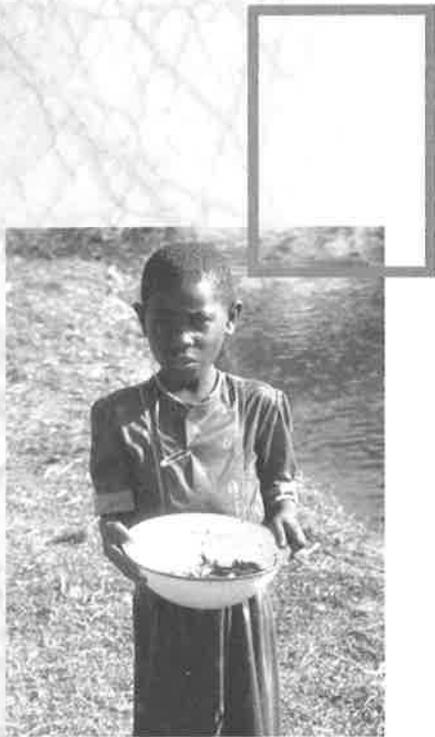
Mobility is important in society, because it is through it that people are able to access resources they need in order to survive. A mobile community is one that is empowered and enfranchised, one that is able to reproduce itself.

The project hopes to improve mobility within the Sengwe community by embarking on road construction. Even more important the project plans to facilitate communication between the two cross border communities. It plans to do this by means of installing a border post across the Limpopo. The immigration Depart has already visited the area, and progress towards the creation of a functioning border post will depend on available funding (Cesvi.). Other departments including law enforcement will also be represented and reinforced in the new local posts.

While wishing for improved mobility in Sengwe, my contention is that the process will have a more nefarious and an unintended consequence, one that communities have always wanted to avoid. What has dynamised the lively and vibrant movement of people across the fluid borders, in Sengwe as in other peripheral parts of Africa, has been the absence and invisibility, rather than the presence and visibility, of the state (Appadurai, 1997; Scott, 1998). Other than the few police officers who divide their time pursuing cross border cattle rustlers and engaging in illicit trade<sup>37</sup>, there are very few immigration and law enforcement officers manning the boundary and people oscillate between the two countries with no fear of either being detected or prosecuted<sup>38</sup>. It is the absence of the state, which enables people to continue the illegal trade and smuggling, which is so central in the region's economy.

The establishment of a border post and an armed bureaucracy to man the boundary will for the first time bring the area under scrutiny from the prosecuting eye of the state. As way of monitoring human movements and ensuring regional security, people will be required to have passports and have stamped visas to pass through formal ports, possibly paying a fee for crossing to see their loved ones. Because Zimbabwean travel documents are virtually difficult to get except by means of corruption, locals see this inevitable requirement as intended to ground their mobility<sup>39</sup>. In addition to tying their travel to modern travel documents, people from the Sengwe region would be charged for importing commodities from across the Limpopo and those wishing to escape the bureaucratic prosecution and undue impounding of goods will have to resort to the usual sharing of booty with the state. The locals are aware that this will happen to them, and even if they say they will have a way out, are worried that it should come to this.

*"We will continue to cross to south Africa and work there. It will be difficult to get the papers to go to work in South Africa, but we will continue to travel at night and to use our own secret border posts<sup>40</sup>."*



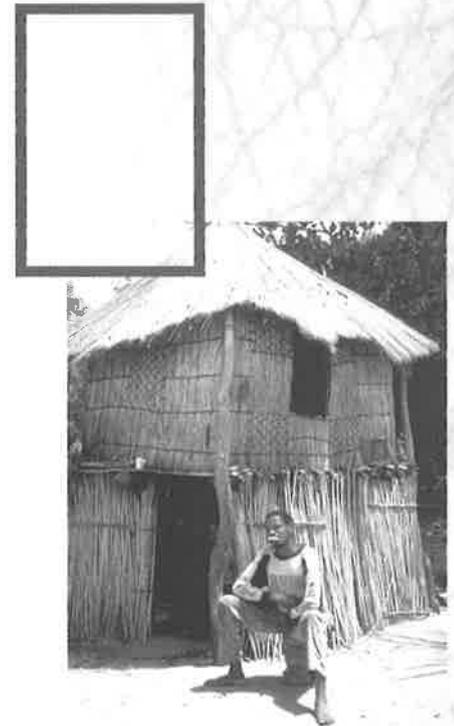
Clearly, formalisation of mobility will constitute a serious impediment to those border communities who have survived on account of its absence. It will complicate, as the remark above suggests, coping strategies among the poor, making survival options more risk than before. But it is not cross border mobility that will be affected by the project. Also certain to be affected will be the movement between villages, cut by the corridor.

As outlined earlier, there will be fences on both sides of the corridor, the function of which is to protect human property and guide mammalian mobility. The problem though is that these fences come in the background of high density and long-term human movements between and across villages on both side of the planned corridor:

*"We have always moved between villages, without any hindrance. We started moving to and from villages long before those who are planning to separate us were born<sup>41</sup>."*

The forced eviction to create the park, the colonial induced protected villages and their confined mobility, will quickly suggest that the remark itself is at odds with reality, perhaps a bit exaggerated. But even if their historicity is contested, village movements are functional, strategic and certainly not random. There are reports that in times of famine, stricken households follow windy paths to other well-endowed villages in search of food<sup>42</sup>. Established and emerging entrepreneurs oscillate between the track-linked villages in search of market for their South African products<sup>43</sup>. Religious followers make weekly journeys through forests to their places of worship, which are located in other villagers. It is also common for people in one village to attend ceremonies and rituals in other. People in Chilohlela narrated how they moved to other villages to attend to rain ceremonies in places across the intended corridor. The type of movements therefore is as varied as they are people but always functional and related to household or community reproduction. It is these or some of these movements, which will undoubtedly be affected by the multiple fences to be installed along the corridor. Even if there would be gates at intervals, it is likely that these will not be flexible and coincide with the various short cuts presently used by the people.

If it is considered that short and long term migration is and have been central to livelihoods in southern Africa (Kaseke, 1997), then the revised or termination of mobility, through the medium of fences and posts, will correspondingly impact the movement of those critical goods and livelihood-based services between individuals and villages. Other than facilitating the state's control of humans and their movement, fences and posts will only take from people those opportunities for which the park claims to enhance. Perhaps this is another major reason grassroots communities hope that some more consultation be held before posts, and fences are erected. It is certainly another the reason villages such as Chilohlela are engaging the traditional weapons of the weak (Scott, 1985) fast recruiting additional members to fill up the wilderness so there wont be a transfrontier park which sets into motion a process that can constrain local mobility.



## CONCLUSIONS

What conclusions and insights can be drawn from this case study about transfrontier resource conservation, which has gripped environmentalists' imagination in southern Africa? Is transfrontier conservation a promising and empowering strategy for conservation and community development much in the spirit of CBNRM? Or is it an icon of disenfranchisement, constraining local access and control of natural resources in ways that leave communities vulnerable and worse off than before? These questions are important and relevant especially because there are presently unfettered and growing plans to cover the Southern African landscape with many of these as yet untrained conservation initiatives. Whether these are ecologically and socially sustainable and therefore worth reproducing on a transnational scale, is a matter requiring urgent settlement.



Although research on the matter is preliminary and formative, two observations can be made. First, contrary to claims by its proponents, transfrontier resources conservation approaches do not bring its intended benefits whether this is revenue or community development projects. This is because transfrontier resource management does not attend to the critical task of developing institutions that make a delivery of these promised benefits to communities possible (Ribot, 1991). The GLTP will not help communities because it plans and continues to work with those upwardly accountable and locally unpopular institutions that in part failed CBNRM.

Secondly, transfrontier resources conservation appears to take away from communities those natural resources previously central to local livelihoods and for which communities have enjoyed access over time (Schroeder, 1999). The resources expropriated include arable land, grazing pastures, wildlife, forest products, rivers and pans. The GLTFP plans to create a fenced corridor by taking and evicting people from their land, which would be fenced from the indigenous communities. The suggestion therefore is that transfrontier natural resource management, in spite of its ideology, narrows and compromises traditional access to natural resources which in southern Africa are central to subsistence (Hasler, 1996).

With respect to the second observation, it is important to note that the resources taken from people are not held in some co management fashion. Transfrontier resource conservation, it seems, simply converts and transfers the coveted resources to the almost exclusive control of the state and its partners who traditionally have dominated wildlife management (Hughes, 2000; Zerner, 2001). In the case of GLTFP, resources will be transferred to a state department, which may or way not factor in local interests. Alternatively the Park will decentralize control of resources to yet other local-level state institutions. In both cases, the transference of control and ownership of resources is to state or quasi-state institutions, and not to a collaborative institution with a community bias (Murombedzi, 1992).

This form of decentralization to the state (or its other) is expected because there are no legal community-based institutions and there is no indication of readiness on the part of the state to modify or define new institutions that can demand and be the focus of decentralisation or co management (Brosius et al, 1998). The result therefore is the kind of decentralisation that enhances state control over resources at the local level while at the same time providing ambiguous and tenuous resource rights to those who make transfrontier conservation possible indigenous communities (Hill, 1966; Dzingirai, 2003).

Communities under such aborted decentralized resource management would not unusually be bothered if the state through its local level representatives only displaced them from natural resources use and nothing more. What complicates matters and in the process brings out peasant hostility is that the localized and stepped up presence of the state ultimately leads to the usual control of those primary activities supplementing if not central to livelihoods. These activities, which the state would want to see controlled if not totally eliminated, include illegal trade, border jumping and illegal resource use such as stream bank cultivation. It is this dimension of control that accompanies the evolution of transfrontier resources conservation which is of concern to local communities.

We may conclude therefore, that to the extent that it takes away natural resources and other vital resources from communities, transfrontier natural resources conservation disposes and disenfranchise transfrontier communities, leaving them much vulnerable and worse off than before. This leads to the important question why and how the state continues to present transfrontier conservation as being community centred. There could be many answers to this but one of the most obvious is that this repackaging of conservation allows the state to continue its control of natural resource even with the support of those who would traditionally oppose it (Dzingirai, 2003.) The rhetoric of transfrontier conservation disguises community exclusion from natural resource management.

But if it is disguised control of natural resources, it is one that generates hostility and opposition among communities able to peer through its form. We have already seen how even long before the GLTFP rolls into operation, Sengwe villagers are protesting in silence with some already packing their belongings. We have also seen how others with no escape option are engaged in land allocation whose objective is to destroy the frontier in ways that discourage transfrontier conservation (Nyambara, 2001; Dzingirai, 1996). Whatever the strategy adopted by cornered villagers', it is one which heightens, on a large scale, threats against wildlife and the transfrontier park.



## FOOT NOTES

- 1 Until 4th October, 2001 when it was christened GLTFP, the proposed tri-national park was popularly referred to as Gona Kruger national Park
- 2 Interview with Mr Mhlanga
- 3 Interview with Mr Gezani, Headman Gezani, an important member in the committee has failed to attend meetings on numerous occasions.
- 4 Interview with Ndebele, Chiredzi,
- 5 Interview Mr Sengwe,
- 6 Interview with Chohlela, Sango Border Post
- 7 So lucrative is cattle market, that some Sengwe engage cattle rustling across the border (Interview with Norman, Sengwe)
- 8 In Sengwe, conflict expressed in witchcraft accusations and often resulting in feuds, is common especially between male relatives and in some cases between mothers and their sons. It is common for aggrieved parties to relocate to safe places which includes unsettled land. Interview with Headman Gezani,
- 9 So increasingly serious is the problem that recently armed soldiers after a tip off swooped the villagers in search of the scarce commodities. Interview with Chihlohlela,
- 10 Interview with chief Sengwe,
- 11 Interview with Headman Gezani,
- 12 Interview with Chihlohlela,
- 13 Interview with Chihlohlela, Sango
- 14 Interview with Ndebele, Sango
- 15 The people Chohlela village leader planned to swoop all his followers into Mocambique.
- 16 Interview with Gezani,
- 17 Interview with Mr Hlengwe,
- 18 Interview with Mr Norman
- 19 Interview with Chihlohlela,
- 20 Interview with Pahlela,
- 21 Interview with Mrs Chauke,
- 22 Interview with Chihlohlela
- 23 Interview, Mrs Ndebele,
- 24 Interviews with Pahlela,
- 25 Interview with Sengwe,
- 26 Interview with Mr Mhlanga, Chiredzi,
- 27 Interview with Mr Choga, Chiredzi,
- 28 Interview Mr Takonda, Harare
- 29 Places on which these craft centers have been built in advance of tourism include the locally contested spirit mediums, sacred gorges and other wetland areas.
- 30 Interview with Ndebele, Chiredzi,
- 31 Interview with Mr Chihlohlela, Sango
- 32 Interview with Moyo, Sango
- 33 Interview with Gezani, Sango
- 34 Interview with Chief Sengwe,
- 35 The exception would be lower Zambezi, Masoka, where young people are active members in Campfire institutions (Nabane, 1997)
- 36 Interview with Mr Mate,
- 37 In Sengwe, especially on the border, police trade in sugar and other scarce commodities in Zimbabwe
- 38 In the short research period, I encountered and even helped hordes of young men and women drifting to the border of South Africa and Macambique.
- 39 Interview with Dumisani,
- 40 Interview Gezani, Sengwe,
- 41 Interview with Sibanda,
- 42 Interview with Sithole,
- 43 Scores of migrants from South Africa were encountered during fieldwork selling mostly radios and cellphones



## REFERENCES

Adam, W. and D. Hulme, (2001) 'Community and Conservation: Changing Narratives, Policies and Practices in African Conservation', in M.W. Murphree and D. Hulme (eds) *African Wildlife and Livelihoods: the Promise and Performance*, pp. 24-38. Oxford: James Currey.

Adams J. and T. McShane, (1992) *The Myth of Wildlife, Conservation Without Illusion*. New York: Norton.

Agrawal A. and C. Gibson (2001) 'The Role of Community Natural Resource Management' in A. Agrawal and C. Gibson (eds) *Communities and Environment*', pp.1-32. New Jersey: Rutgers University.

Bonner, R. (1993) *At The Hand of Man*. New York: Alfred Knopf  
Brosious, P. A. Tsing, and C. Zerner (1998). 'Representing Communities: Histories and Politics of Community based Natural Resources Management', *Society and Natural Resources* 11: 169-178.

Dzingirai, V. (2003) 'The new Scramble for the African Countryside', *Development and Change*, 34, 2.

Duffy, R. (2000) *Killing for Conservation: Wildlife Policy in Zimbabwe* London: James Currey.

Goldman, M. (1998) 'The Political Resurgence of the Commons' in M. Goldman (ed) *Privatising Nature: Political Struggles For the Global Commons*, pp.1-20. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Gibson, C. (1999) *Politicians and Poachers: The Political Economy of Wildlife Policy in Africa* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goldman, M. (1991) 'The Birth of a Discipline: Producing Authoritative Green Knowledge, World Bank Style', *Ethnography* 2, (2): 217-237.

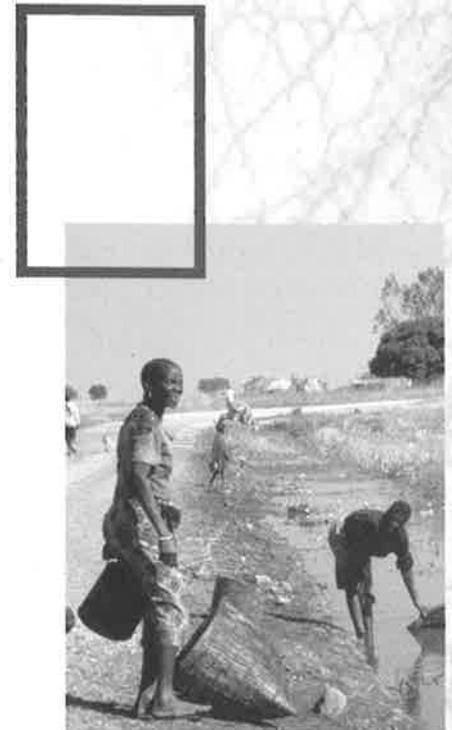
Hasler, R. (1996) *Agriculture Foraging and Wildlife Resource Use in Africa: Cultural and Political Dynamic in the Zambezi Valley*. New York: Paul Kegan International.

Hill, K. (1996) 'Zimbabwe's Wildlife Utilisation Programme: Grassroots Democracy or An Extension of State Power?', *African Studies Review* 39, (1): 103-121.

Hughes, D. (2001) 'Cadastral Politics: The Making of Community -based Resource Management in Zimbabwe and Mocambique', *Development and Change* 32,; 741-768.

Leach, M. (1994) *Rainforest Relations: Gender and Resource Use Among the Mende of Gola, Sierra Leone*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.  
Madzudzo E. and R. Hawkes, 1996 'Grazing and Cattle as Challenges in Community-Based Natural Resources Management in Bulilimangwe District of Zimbabwe' *Zambezia* 23, (1) 1-19.

McAfee, C. (1999) 'Selling Nature to Save it? Biodiversity and Green Developmentalism', *Environment and Planning D*, 17:133-154.



Moyo, S., J. Makumbe and B. Raftopoulos, (2000) *NGOS, The State and the Politics in Zimbabwe*. Harare: Sapes Books.

Munro, W. (1998) *The Moral Economy of the State*. Ohio: Ohio University Press.

Murombedzi, J. 1999 'Land expropriation, communal tenure and common property resource management in southern Africa', *The Common Property Resource Digest* 50: 1-3.

Murombedzi, J. (1994) 'Dynamics of Conflict in Environmental Management Policy in the Context of the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources'. D. Phil Thesis, University of Zimbabwe.

Murombedzi, J. 1992. 'Decentralization or Recentralization? Implementing CAMPFIRE in the Omay Communal Lands of the Nyaminyami District'. CASS Occasional Paper, Harare: University of Zimbabwe.

Neumann, R. P. (1997) 'Primitive Ideas: Protected Area Buffer Zones and the Politics of Land in Africa', *Development and Change* 28:559-582.

Ribot, J.C. 1991 'Decentralisation, Participation and Accountability in Sahelian Forestry: Legal Instruments of Political Administrative Control'. *Africa* 69, (1): 22-65.

Schroeder R. (1999) 'Geographies of Environmental Intervention in Africa', *Progress in Human Geography* 23 (3), 359-378.

Suzuki, Y. (2001) 'Drifting Rhinos and Fluid Properties: The Turn to Wildlife Production in Western Zimbabwe', *Journal of Agrarian Change* 1, (4): 600-625.

Tremel, M. 1994 *The People of the Great River*. Silveira House, Social Series No. 9 Gweru: Mambo Press.

Warren, L. (1997) *The Hunters' Game: Poachers and Conservationists in 20th Century America* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Wells, M. and K. Brandon, (1992) *People and Parks: Linking Protected Area with Local Communities*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

West H. and S. Jenson, (1998) 'Betwixt and Between: Traditional Authority and Democratic Decentralisation in Post-war Mozambique', *Africa* 98: 455-484.

Western D. and R. Wright, (1994) 'The Background to Community Conservation' in D. Western and R. Wright (eds) *Natural Connection: Perspectives in Community-based Conservation*, , pp.1-12. Washington DC: Island Press.

Zerner, C. (2000) 'Towards a Broader Vision of Justice and Nature Conservation', in C. Zerner, (ed) *People Parks and Plants. The Politics of Nature Conservation*, pp.3-20. New York: Columbia University Press.

