FACTORING CULTURE AND DISCOURSE INTO AN APPRAISAL OF THE NEOLIBERAL SYNTHESIS OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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M.A BY RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a holistic appraisal of community-based wildlife management (CWM) in sub-Saharan Africa. CWM, which aims to integrate large-landscape conservation and rural development, is a programme full of neoliberal aspirations, particularly in its call to decentralize decision-making and encourage African communities to engage in a market for wildlife. Its general failure to live up to these aspirations, however, is due to the wide scale retention of owner and user rights over wildlife at state level and the dominance of the private sector. Beyond these policy issues, it is stipulated that there lies at the very core of CWM a more profound stumbling block: the conflict between indigenous African beliefs and rituals towards wildlife and the cold market rationality of CWM in its current form. As well as exploring these cultural dimensions, CWM is also analyzed as a discourse in which new representations of the savannah lands and its peoples legitimize intervention by an international environmental elite.

Key Words

Community-based conservation; rural development; resource rights; wildlife utilization; neoliberalism; indigenous knowledge; discourse.

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STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT

ACRONYMS

ADMADE – Administrative Management Design Programme

CAMPFIRE – Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources

CBO – Community-based Organization

COMPASS – Community Partnerships for Sustainable Resources Management

CBNRM – Community-based Natural Resource Management

CPPP – Community-public-private partnership

CWM – Community-based Wildlife Management

GTZ – Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit

IUCN – International Union for the Conservation of Nature

JVA – Joint-venture Agreement

SAP – Structural Adjustment Programme

UMA – Unit of Sustainable Management

WMA – Wildlife Management Area

WWF – World Wildlife Fund

INTRODUCTION

Choice of subject

The idea that wildlife conservation can be a means to getting people out of poverty is an enchanting one which caught my eye as I went searching for a subject for this essay; not least for its topicality, as biodiversity loss and the poverty continue to be at the forefront of global concerns, but also for its relevance to anthropology.

Rural development is historically intertwined with anthropology. From as far back as its evolutionist beginnings through to its relativist form, anthropology has focused on marginal peoples and their state of development (Ferguson, 2005). Indeed, *"..far from defining a mere sub-field within the discipline, development continues to be at the heart of the constitution of anthropology itself"* (ibid, 2002; pp 159).

But how well tuned is anthropology to appraising wildlife conservation? Well, if we consider that the human/nature dichotomy is absolutely intrinsic to anthropology and has, like development, marked the discipline's very existence, then it can be said that it is very well tuned to understanding the human dimensions of wildlife conservation (cf. McCormack and Strathern, 1980). From the work of Levi-Strauss and Mary Douglas to, more recently, that of Roy Willis, Brian Morris and others, anthropologists have sought to understand cultures as systems of meanings for which nature plays a key constructive role (Carrithers, 2002).

For these reasons the integration wildlife conservation and rural development - realized in the form of community-based wildlife management, or 'CWM' - offers itself as a sound target for anthropological inspection.

Approach and methodology

The plan, initially, was to go to Tanzania to carry out fieldwork in a village bordering the Selous game reserve, Ngarambe (see map in Appendix), to discover how the new system of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) was working as a means to rural development. In 2008, with the permission and assistance of TAWIRI, the Tanzania wildlife research body, I went on a reconnaissance trip to the village for two weeks to prepare myself for an intensive, two-month, rapid rural appraisal the

following summer. This trip was very informative and personally formative but unfortunately my permit for the following year was rejected due to a misunderstanding of the subject of my work. The WMA system had undergone some criticism from previous students and I had not explained well enough the depth of my proposed investigation, which was ultimately deemed too intrusive.

Despite the frustrations of not being able to carry out the *rites de passages* of fieldwork, I decided to remain with the subject of community-based conservation in Africa, only revert to a literature-based study. There is plenty of good literature on this subject, covering a wide range of empirical phenomena such as livelihoods impacts, policy context, types of enterprise etc. from schemes across sub-Saharan Africa; certainly enough to entertain a holistic appraisal of how community-based conservation is being lived out generally.

The further I read into this subject, and from the recommendation of my supervisors, the more I came to appreciate the significance of culture in constructing human-animal relations. The possibility arose that I could match cultural theory with community-based conservation, thereby applying the full force of anthropological analysis. This, I think of as a 'step in', deeper towards the meanings attached to animals and beyond the empirical, mundane studies of community-based conservation, devoid, as often they are, of cultural considerations.

Later, I also became aware of the need to 'step out' of the data, anecdotes and ethnographies to include critiques of the *discourse* of community-based conservation which highlight processes of representation, knowledge production and power. This was encouraging because since I had had to re-orientate myself around the subject after my fieldwork plans fell through, here was a chance to salvage something by adding real critical weight to the essay (which perhaps wouldn't have been allowed so much if research permission had been granted!). It also seemed an appropriate point of entry because conservation and development are two 'giant discourses' of late modernity and the merging of the two, although effected at ground level, has been conceived in the abstract heights of international

science and politics. Indeed by taking this 'step out' it is possible to explain a lot about the difficulties which various schemes have been experiencing.

What links the step 'out' with the step 'in' is *meaning*. Essentially, discourse is a system of contested meanings, whilst culture is a system of shared meanings. This focus on meaning runs throughout the final two-thirds of the essay and necessarily brings in two types of critical analysis: i) *structuralism* for understanding meanings in culture and ii) *post-structuralism* for understanding the manipulation of meanings in a discourse. These types of analysis, together with the collation of themes and empirical findings from CWM commentaries which are presented in part 1, comprise the methodology for the essay. Added to this, six in-depth interviews were conducted in order to bolster the literary content, add opinion and prompt further reading.

Essay aim and structure

The aim of the essay is to examine the impact of the neoliberal ethic which currently underpins conservation and rural development in sub-Saharan Africa, assessing the performance at ground level and later, its cultural and discursive dimensions.

The essay is correspondingly split into three parts.

The first part (chapters 1 to 4) introduces neoliberal development-by-conservation, specifically community-based wildlife management (CWM), as emerging out of a string of narratives, and later how its aspirations are being carried out in various schemes across the savannah lands of Africa.

The second part (Chapters 5 to 8) is the aforementioned 'step in', which presents the ways in which Africans and westerners view wild animals and how culture can be an obstacle or a catalyst to the processes of neoliberal conservation.

The third part (Chapters 9 and 10) is the 'step out', reviewing critiques on the discourse of neoliberal conservation in Africa and the new ways in which power relations are being mediated through this.

A note of warning

To apply diverse selections of ethnographies and abstract cultural theory to an analysis of conservation is risky in terms of comparative legitimacy, but it is intended that only relevant and sound inferences can be made and at the right points. Cultural theory of natural resource use is, more often than not, categorically distinct from studies of community-based conservation. These types of study do not necessarily match, epistemologically speaking, and no direct link should be expected. But surely it is worth the risk of trying to apply the former to the latter in order to understand better why people think and act in certain culturally-ordained ways towards wildlife? To see what lies behind the mundane and quantitative in order to place it in an altogether more human context.

Parameters

Besides a boyhood fascination towards the big game of the African savannah lands, East and Southern Africa is the focus of the study for two principal reasons. First is that my Tanzania experience, although aborted nevertheless provides valuable first-hand input at certain points. Second is that the savannah of East and Southern Africa is perhaps, alongside the Amazon, lodged in Western consciousness like no other ecological habitat on earth. When one (a westerner) thinks of Africa, savannah immediately leaps to mind (perhaps with lions and Masaai too?) largely due to it having been toured and filmed and represented or 'produced' by all sorts of people and institutions throughout its history of contact with the West. This makes it a poignant locus for the essay which seeks to understand the meanings attached to wildlife, in the eyes of *all* stakeholders: conservationist, donor, development professional, bureaucrat, villager and many more.

Another thing to acknowledge is the selection of community-based *wildlife* management (CWM), as opposed to other types of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM), which include forestry and fishing. This has been chosen partly because wildlife conservation was my initial focus in Tanzania, partly due to the need to reduce the quantity of reading, and partly for the same reason as the savannah lands of East and Southern Africa were chosen: because the

conservation of charismatic African wildlife carries a special significance which is globally received.

PART 1

THE NEOLIBERAL INTEGRATION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 1

THE BACKGROUND: A CONVERGENCE OF NARRATIVES

1.1 From modernization to participatory sustainable development

The synthesis of conservation and rural development is a *"genealogical tree with myriad roots"* (Hayden, 2003; pp 48). It could be said that it is a flashpoint of narratives: where the agendas and aspirations of large landscape conservation, rural development, and global governance meet (Igoe and Croucher, 2007). In recent decades, conservation and rural development have taken remarkably parallel paths from central to participatory control, and their convergence has been permeated by neoliberalism which seeks to alleviate poverty (and practically all vices) by the spread of free markets. It is necessary to track these parallel paths in order to put CWM in an historical context. First and foremost then, a brief account of modern rural development.

The old post-War modernization paradigm for alleviating poverty had four basic components: capital investment; the application of science to production and services; the emergence of nation-states and large scale politics; and urbanization (Shepard, 1998). The emphasis in this era was to bring poor nations out of backwardness and into 'modernity' (Chatterjee, 1986). For rural populations, this meant suffering technological modernization often at total odds with their previous, more successful, modes of production as well as exclusion from the decision-making process (Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995). Indeed, by the 1970s, the flaws of modernization came under heavy assault from neo-Marxist dependency theory which saw poverty not as a given condition but as created by a dominant capitalist order which placed unprecedented stresses upon the world's poor. At this same time, modernization's catastrophic effects upon the environment came to the fore as a closely-linked grand narrative of concern in that era.

A sea-change was needed in development. Unfortunately, the alternative put forward by dependency theorists - socialism - was also failing (e.g. Jamaica, Tanzania, Chile etc.). A consensus gradually arose that development should be less about the universal, 'macro' forces of capitalism or socialism and more about the 'micro' or 'substantivist', referring to basic human needs of access to natural resources, welfare, health, literacy etc. (Hettne, 1995). It should also be environmentally sustainable, so that future generations may not suffer for it and environmental degradation be stopped. This new 'sustainable development' paradigm was formally acknowledged by the UN Brundtland report in 1983.

At the same time as this report was published, rural development philosophy was stressing *participation* as the key to poverty reduction (Chambers, 1983), as was the indigenous rights movement (Anaya, 1996). Accordingly, participation gradually became ever more central to the hegemonic sustainable development idea. At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, Agenda 21 stated:

"Indigenous peoples and their communities have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should...enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development."

(www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21).

Grass-roots participation came to be seen as the most effective way of managing the environment and preventing repeats of the terrible development mistakes of modernization (e.g. the infamous groundnut scheme in Tanzania). Now that 'the locals' were to inform the process itself, development was to become a) more efficient and b) reflexive to human needs, far more so than rigid technocratic and statal structures which had once been responsible under the modernization model (Shepherd, 1998).

In this way development had been tipped on its head, so to speak, with communities as the key decision-makers and do-ers in the process, not economists, scientists, nor politicians who had once commanded modernization.

1.2 A parallel course in conservation: from fortress to community-based

Since conservation is one form of environmental management, it followed essentially the same course as this rural development narrative in ceding responsibility to the locals. Here, the progression of African conservation from the exclusionary 'fortress' type to the contemporary participatory type shall be briefly laid out.

Historically, conservation has attempted to separate humans from nature. With its roots in English and American nineteenth century romanticism and science, 'fortress conservation' or 'coercive conservation', as it is otherwise called, sees wildlife as something to be protected from human interference for its own sake (Anderson and Grove, 1987). The notion of *pristine wilderness* was behind the creation of the first national parks in North America and was eventually carried into Africa by the British empire during the last decades of the nineteenth century as seen by the establishment of the Kruger and Amboseli parks, for example. These parks were initially play grounds for colonial white hunters whilst African hunters were labelled 'poachers' and forbidden from entering. Post World War II conservation policy continued in this vein, only with more bureaucratic legitimization (boards, departments, committees etc.), as national parks (Tsavo, Serengeti, Nairobi etc.) continued to be carved out.

In this period Africa became a hotspot for international conservation interest. This was due to the wonderfully charismatic large game species which still roamed the savannah lands and the rapid political and demographic transitions which apparently threatened their survival (Boardman, 1981). This interest in African conservation was led by a coalition of conservation institutions such as WWF and the IUCN which brought in principles of scientific management and regulation, at that time entirely congruous to the modernization paradigm of development.

It was not only science which allegedly legitimized fortress conservation, there emerged in the 1960s scares or 'crisis narratives' about the state of poaching and the decline of wildlife which were conveyed to a mass public by book and film, for example *Serengeti Darf Nicht Sterben* (Serengeti will not die) which was described by film-maker Alan Root as *"perhaps the most well known and influential wildlife film ever made"* (wildfilmhistory.org). The African savannah was being portrayed as a paradise being lost and in need of strong protectionist measures.

In this context there was little room for the African villagers who lived alongside the wildlife which was being championed by international media and science-led conservation agencies, and, as we shall see, bureaucracies who were keen to maintain control over this valuable resource. This 'fortress' type of conservation entailed a militaristic, heavily top-down form of management which caused enormous tension between the park-adjacent communities and the state agencies granted with the responsibility of wildlife protection. This tension reached its peak when whole communities were displaced to make room for protected areas (Brockington and Homewood, 1996). Ultimately, this antagonism was the undoing of fortress conservation as it failed to protect the wildlife efficiently, without the cooperation of the local people. What is more, cooperation between the state and these communities was becoming ever more crucial to the principles of large landscape conservation which was coming to recognise the importance, for large species such as elephant, wildebeest and buffalo, of migratory 'buffer zones' outside protected areas which obviously meant more human-wildlife contact and possibly conflict (Blanc et al, 2005).

Community-based wildlife management (CWM) emerged, in the 1980s, as a 'counter-narrative' to the dysfunctional, antiquated model of fortress conservation (Roe, 1995), just as participatory sustainable development had to the modernization paradigm. CWM aimed to include the local people in the process of conservation and, at the same time, be an opportunity for their development. Here, it is evident that the parallel courses of development and conservation, although driven by different priorities, arrived at the same point by the late 1980s.

Conservation had become one of these forms of participatory sustainable development, effectively synthesizing with the latter.

1.3 The permeation of neoliberalism

At the same time as rural development and African conservation were unshackling themselves from top-down decision making there were big political and economic changes that were happening at the top.

Shortly after the Cold War had ended, in the early 1990s, the Bretton Woods institutions were implementing their structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) which ruthlessly demanded that African nations ditch the socialist protectionism which they had almost universally adopted in some form or other post-Independence, in favour of free-market economy (Toye, 1993). The free-market was intended to replace the lumbering states which were seen to weigh down on African progress. This was deemed a necessary course of action to stimulate economic recovery at the same time as improve the mode of government. How can the free-market govern? Well, here is a succinct answer:

"...a positive synergy is perceived to exist between economic liberalization and democracy...economic liberalization is expected to decentralize decision-making away from the state and multiply the centres of power. This in turn is assumed to lead to the development of a civil society capable of limiting the power of the state and providing the basis for liberal, democratic politics."

(Abrahamsen, 2000; pp 51)

This has been varyingly called the 'second liberation' (the first being Independence), the 'good governance agenda' or the 'Washington consensus' (Diamond, 1994). The last term gives a clue to the international, western, capitalist sub-text, despite the fact that African citizens were the ones who were assigned the deconstruction of state apparatus. There is disagreement towards the extent to which neoliberal reform was pushed by outside forces (Abrahamsen, 2000) or from within, by African citizens tired of the corruption, poor management and human rights abuses of state authority (Wiseman, 1995), but what is clear is that the African citizen was

to be, at the very least, supported by a *"watchful international community"* (Barkan, 1994; pp 1). With the break down of the state, social, economic and political networks were to become ever more internationally rooted (Halliday, 1987).

The image of neoliberal reform, as it pertains to Africa, is one of society bursting with suppressed, capitalist energy and entrepreneurial spirit, engaging with the global market and forming networks with international clients, customers and investors. The state still plays a part but very much as a level-pegged partner to, not a ruler of, the African citizenship. Here, it is clear to see the applicability of neoliberalism to the new, bottom-up models of wildlife conservation and sustainable rural development being consolidated at the same time in the early 1990s. In all three narratives, the grass roots, the community, the African was championed as the means to progress, not the state.

So what was the final product of this tri-partite narrative of conservation, rural development and neoliberalism? The answer is a type of community-based, *utilitarian* conservation:

"What was required to achieve conservation goals, therefore, was less regulation, the acceptance that all ecosystems and species are 'natural resources' and more entrepreneurial action by local communities, individual businessmen and private companies. This would permit the economic values of conservation resources to be unlocked... for leisure, tourism, trophy hunting, meat, other products, theme parks, medicines – as they were traded in open markets... Wildlife must 'pay its way'"

(Hulme and Murphree, 2001; pp 17).

Neoliberalism had thus ushered free market economics into the realm of conservation. This is generally termed private-sector conservation (PSC). And typical to neoliberalism, PSC is full of promises, destined to benefit both wildlife and rural communities. With wild animals becoming commodities, instantly an economic value is placed upon them which incentivizes their protection by profiting the local people. The alternative, prohibiting use, is an incentive not to protect:

"Consider the goat – and suppose you were not allowed to use it in any way at all (no marketing, no slaughter, no use of milk, meat or skin) and that if you were to be discovered to be using it you would at worst be shot dead, or at best imprisoned – indeed image that all you could do with your goat was hope a mini-bus of tourists would drive by and photograph it, from which you might obtain a meagre reward, how many goats do you imagine would remain in Kenya? This is the nub of the continued survival of wildlife on the rangelands of Kenya..."

(Norton-Griffiths, 2007; pp 51)

Now, a confusing paradox of neoliberal conservation is that is also prescribes outright protection in vast proportions (Brockington, interview; 07/10). The 'off-set industry' which includes carbon-credits and the sponsorship by the corporate world of mega protected areas such as the Limpopo Transfrontier Park etc. is all part of the neoliberal drive to include nature in the market place. Protection thus sits strangely alongside consumption in neoliberal conservation, but they are connected by one thing - the market. Why the utilization of wildlife has gained ascendancy over protection and why it has become a core tenet of CWM, however, is its better fit into the sustainable development mandate which grants to indigenous peoples rights to use natural resources. Protection payments can recompense for loss of livelihoods - crop destruction, livestock loss, human death, etc. - to a degree, but this is not the local people recompensing *themselves.* PSC, however, by converting the animals from 'pests' to 'capital', encourages enterprise, self-development and responsibility, ticking all the boxes of sustainable development.

The concept of financially rewarding communities for bearing the costs of wildlife is not new. In 1975, Robin hurt, a famous professional hunter in East Africa, saw his livelihood – the big game of the savannah lands – being decimated at a dreadful rate and decided to pilot a scheme in which the villagers of Macao (bordering the Serengeti) were to be paid dividends from his clients' cheques in order to encourage them to collaborate for the protection of wildlife. He elaborated the link between wildlife and reward:

"You people see the Maasai, they are very rich because they have many cattle, but the wildlife are your cattle and if you look after that wildlife it can be very valuable to you"

(Hurt; quoted in Bonner, 1993; pp 249)

Within the first 6 months, 68 poachers were caught and the donations had paid for a tractor and a small grain mill for the village. This was the eureka moment for a utilitarian type of conservation which, alongside, provided an opening for community development. There was no formal participation at this stage, in fact it was essentially "*a bribe paid by rich Americans to poor Africans"* (Adams and McShane, 1992; pp 142) but, nevertheless, it put the villagers in the frame which fortress conservation denied, creating the crucial conceptual links between *wildlife use – conservation – community – development*. Only four years after Hurt's rough-edged prototype of CWM, in 1989, Zimbabwe established its archetypal CAMPFIRE (Communal Areas Management Programme For Indigenous Resources). This was the first formal, institutionalized attempt to allow rural communities to engage positively with a market in wildlife by controlling the redistribution of benefits and having a say in the management of this now precious asset. The success of CAMPFIRE, in turn, sparked a boom of management programmes and legislative areas throughout sub-Saharan Africa in the subsequent decades: COMPASS in Malawi, ADMADE in Zambia, Conservancies in Namibia, contractual parks in South Africa, wildlife management areas in Tanzania and Botswana, etc. (these are the focus of the next chapter, together with a description of this market in wildlife).

What is new (from the '90s at least), and what goes far beyond merely rewarding communities for the complicit protection of wildlife, is the politico-economic baggage of democratic empowerment and the obligation to engage in capitalist enterprise. This boom of CWM schemes occurred at the same time as neoliberal reforms were impacting upon the African political economy and, as a result, they became ingrained with a neoliberal imperative or 'liberal-democratic ethos' which had three main objectives: to improve efficiency; to safe-guard human rights and to promote sustainable development (cf. Sandbrook, 1993).

It is clear that this ethos borrows heavily from the sustainable development paradigm which was gradually instated during the 1970s and '80s but neoliberalism carries the emphasis ever further towards the free-market. On this liberal adventure, the global private sector and donor community are solicited to forge 'conservation-business partnerships' with Africans. It is an image full of promise and ambition; a world in which global power inequalities are upturned into opportunities for profit and economic growth (Liverman, 2004). A 'win-win-win-win situation' in which nature is protected through investment and consumption, from which people also benefit (Grandia, 2007; Hartwick and Peet, 2003).

The next three chapters break down neoliberal CWM into its three cornerstone components: democratic empowerment and rights consolidation; commercial use and enterprise of wildlife; and sustainability and local-foreign partnership. It will investigate how these winning promises are performing at ground level. The performance is measured principally in terms of rural development but conservation does feature where it relates directly to human/wildlife conflict; needless to say that the bulk of the biology side of wildlife conservation does not belong to an anthropology essay. Each chapter will seek to present the case of progress and promise first, and then to counter this with instances of conflict and discord.

CHAPTER 2

DEMOCRATIC EMPOWERMENT AND RIGHTS CONSOLIDATION

2.1 Indigenization and decentralization

Natural resources have always been a pawn in African independence movements and indigenous rights claims (Chatty and Colchester, 2002). Rights to resource use are emblematic of Africa's unshackling of the colonial past and CWM, as a form of natural resource management, fits into this category. CWM should, in fact, be seen as a kind of democratization/indigenization movement, sweeping across sub-Saharan Africa (Koch, 2004). It is proclaimed a champion of neoliberalism, there to scale back the state and its capacity to regulate, ushering in systems of free trade, free assembly and free speech under the banner of natural resource management (Igoe and Brockington, 2007). However, the extent to which CWM enables democratic empowerment varies from country to country, as will now be conveyed. Before proceeding, it is worth mentioning that a country-by-country breakdown has been avoided due to a dearth of the necessary information relating to some countries' schemes and in order to keep comparisons tied to the thread of the argument.

Particular southern African countries have been especially successful in facilitating the decentralization of wildlife management. Following the initial success of Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE, Namibia (Conservancy Programme, from 1995) and Botswana (Community-based Natural Resources Management Programme – CNRMP, from 1991) have been especially prominent in the effective decentralization of wildlife management (Fabricius et al, 2004). They are undoubtedly the pace-setters of CWM, fully devolving usufruct rights over wildlife (which are not term-limited like elsewhere; for example, the Tanzanian government grants user rights only in three year terms) to communities and with them the right *to make decisions* about how to manage wildlife. Locally elected committees administer wildlife management: species monitoring, restocking arrangements,

project finances, joint-venture negotiation, strategies for development etc. (Schlager and Ostrom, 1992; Long, 2002). Importantly, Namibian conservancies and Botswana's wildlife management areas (WMAs) receive directly 100% of the revenues from tourism and hunting operations to repartition as they see fit, in contrast to neighbouring countries where revenues are always centrally, to varying degrees, controlled. These are two of the more prosperous countries in sub-Saharan Africa and have remarkably transparent systems of governance which is reflected in healthily open and adaptive forms of CWM (Good, 1992).

As far back as the late 1960s the governments of Namibia and Botswana gradually extended the user rights over wildlife to communal lands as they had already done with commercial, generally white owned, farms. This agricultural legacy combined with a strong political will to indigenize resource management meant that communal rights to resources were placed at a level-pegging to private rights. Zimbabwe was a partner in this pioneering movement. It was in fact, as already noted, the first country to formalize community-based natural resource management; CAMPFIRE was the original prototype, designed to confer 'appropriate authority to manage natural resources' to rural communities (Jones and Murphree, 2001, Metcalfe, 1994). Wildlife numbers rocketed and CAMPFIRE's contribution to the national economy was enormous (Cumming, 1990). After Zimbabwe's tragic demise under Mugabe's dictatorship (2000 to present), Namibia and Botswana have carried the flag for communal rights to manage and receive benefits from the wildlife industry. This means the effective devolution of responsibility from the state, causing 'downward accountability' unprecedented in the history of African rural development (Ribot, 2002).

Now, as will be shown later in the chapter, other eastern and southern African states have been struggling to keep up with Namibia and Botswana in terms of devolving user rights over wildlife to communities so effectively, for a variety of reasons. But, nevertheless, all CWM programmes have the same goal of decentralization in mind, evident in the proliferation of new village-level political institutions orientated around wildlife management: 'conservancy committees', 'village action groups', 'communal property associations', 'participatory

management forums' etc. These have many positive roles for the participating communities, acting as: i) focal points of communication and consultation with the many external players in wildlife conservation, ii) units of local employment around wildlife management e.g. monitoring and anti-poaching co-ordination, iii) democratic structures, representing household heads in communal decision making such as the allocation of revenues from wildlife use (Child, 2004).

Plate 1: Community Conservation Committee, Northern Kenya

They are seen by some as refreshing village politics, promoting democratic processes which can replace archaic, unpopular traditional systems, as Nott and Jacobsohn (2004) observed in Namibia;

"...the enhanced capacity and organization of ordinary people facilitated by conservancy development has enabled such people to voice their dissatisfaction with an established but unpopular headman"

(ibid; pp 197)

As Arntzen (2003) has learned in Botswana, villagers value these new institutions principally for the *choices* for development and livelihood improvement which they offer, and for the sense of agency and responsibility they generate. They even provide extra-statal welfare to households in times of extreme hardship. For example, during the 1991-2 drought in Zimbabawe, the Masoka ward's community-based organization for wildlife management (CBO) doubled household dividends from commercial wildlife operations to compensate for crop failures (Arntzen et al. 2007).

2.2 Legal representation and land security

Perhaps of equal significance to their democratic provision, however, is the legal representation and protection these institutions offer to participant communities, most pertinent when land rights are hazy and at risk of usurpation by either the private sector or bureaucracies keen to extend control over wild lands. A good example of this is provided by Turner's (2004) study of the Ntlaveni region, north of the Kruger national park in South Africa. Here the Makuleke people have entered into an agreement with SAN Parks, South Africa's national parks governing body, to form a 'contractual park' which is joint-managed by the Makuleke and SAN Parks as a buffer zone to the Kruger (copying similar set ups between indigenous peoples and national parks in Australia and Canada). The Makuleke are represented by a communal property association (CPA) which cooperates with SAN Parks. This CPA is viewed by the Makuleke as an affirmation of rights to their land which marks a departure from a dark past of displacement and conflict with state authorities. This theme is prevalent in South Africa where CWM is commonly associated with land restitution claims of communities which lost land for the establishment of parks in the apartheid era. White-owned farms and black communities now share a common strategy of signing up to contractual conservation agreements in order to guarantee their judicial protection from aggressive and powerful mining companies. This Makuleke case shows that the institutional development which CWM introduces is a means of representing indigenous peoples who once suffered political obscurity and oppression.

A similar story is told of the Maasai in Kenya by Okello et al. (2003). The Maasai live in fear that the government may seize their land at any minute wherever wildlife exists, as it has done throughout the 20th century. The Maasai see 'community wildlife sanctuary committees' as a means to protect their land from possible seizure by the government or by tourism companies which have been rampant in buying up Maasai lands. These committees are legally recognized management institutions and therefore cannot be ignored should the Maasai fears materialize in the future.

2.3 Aborted devolution

So, there are levels of empowerment in CWM, both in terms of political representation and, in the case of Botswana and Namibia especially, real opportunities for rural communities to decide over and participate in new management systems. Two major obstacles are holding back empowerment across southern and eastern Africa, however: i) the universal retention of ownership rights over wildlife by the state and ii) the failed devolution of user rights in all countries bar Namibia and Botswana. Namibia and Botswana are alone in balancing state and private rights to land with the acknowledgment of communal rights and in this way they give community participation and democracy a real chance. What is seen across the rest of southern Africa is a polarity of rights, strong at the state level and strong at the private level, and not much in between at the community level, despite the rhetoric.

At this point it is worth noting a general separation in devolutionary standing between east and southern Africa. In the east - here referring to Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania - CWM has not followed agriculture (in devolving private user rights) nearly so closely, nor has it been championed so much as an indigenization/land restitution process; instead it is characterized by the outright protection of wildlife. In this corner of Africa, states somewhat nervously guard from communities all rights to wildlife and community development is mostly limited to 'park outreach', or what could otherwise be described as the passive redistribution of benefits (Hulme and Murphree, 2001). In east Africa, communal lands continue to be "*a kind of fiefdom of state bureaucracies, political elites and their private-sector partners"* (Barrow and Murphree, 2001; pp 30),

In Kenya and Uganda this can largely be attributed to i) high levels of corruption which make states especially protective over all resources, wild included (Hulme and Infield, 2001), and ii) the ubiquitous presence of conservation NGOs. This part of Africa is a hotspot for powerful animal rights orientated conservation groups such as IUCN, WWF, AWF etc. which perceive central control and outright protection as crucial components in wildlife conservation efforts. In Kenya, the

state, through the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), oversees all wildlife operations and prohibits fully the consumptive use of wildlife for economic gain. The Maasai pastoralists are organizing themselves into 'community wildlife sanctuaries' but with the user and ownership rights over wildlife so strongly centrifuged, to the approval of international conservation organizations, there is little scope for participatory management and democratic empowerment through CWM here. The inherent tensions between different stakeholders in wildlife conservation, particularly between the rich Western players and the poor local communities - clearly present in Kenya and Uganda - constitute another paradox of neoliberal devolution of wildlife management, as Western and Wright (1994) elucidate:

"At the root of these tensions are two opposing rights: the rights of communities to assume control over their land and resources and the right of outsiders to deny them the use of species and resources. One force of liberalization is pushing for community rights; the other, as in the case of the animal rights movement, calls for even more stringent controls."

(ibid; pp 7)

In Tanzania the state Wildlife Division makes all the decisions over wildlife and favours doing business with the private sector more so than with rural communities for the large revenues they generate (Nelson et al. 2007). This is also the case in Mozambique where communities are totally 'off-stage' (Anstey, 2001), as powerful private sector companies have succeeded in winning from the state the bulk of user rights over wildlife. Interestingly, in Mozambique, as in Tanzania, socialism - albeit defunct now - has played an important role in the failure of truly empowering forms of CWM since iconic leadership in the 1970s and '80s (the Frelimo party in Mozambique and president Nyerere in Tanzania) has left a lasting centralized legacy for policy decision-making. Under these regimes, the state retained full control over land management and it is alleged that the liberal reforms in the 1990s failed to dampen its influence in natural resource management as much as accommodate capitalism into stubbornly resistant state machinery (Kiondo, 1991; Shivji, 1998). In this set up, there exist very strong links, often characterized by clientelist relations,

between the state and the private sector, obscuring the democratic processes at the community-level.

In marked contrast to the relatively strong, transparent governments of Namibia and Botswana, Mozambique has been battered by decades of intermittent civil war and rapid neoliberal reform which has allowed the private sector to dominate CWM. This highlights the delicate balance needed for effective devolution: a willing yet strong state:

"The paradox of community conservation is that elsewhere in Africa a strong state has proved to be a critical pre-requisite for the decentralization and devolution required to empower local community institutions to manage and benefit from natural resources."

(Anstey, 2001; pp 76)

Malawi and Zambia are likewise thwarted by weak governments which jealously maintain statutory rights over wildlife and all managerial authority (Shackleton and Campbell, 2001; Gibson and Marks, 1995). Zambia follows Namibia and Botswana closely in terms of its ADMADE programme redistributing 100% of revenues to participating communities, but the buck stops there; the weak and corrupt government is simply not willing to devolve user rights. South Africa devolves statutory rights all the way down to private ownership, to the farm unit, but in doing so overlooks communal rights. CWM efforts in South Africa are generally restrained, characterized by a 'top-down corporatist approach', owing less to weak government and more to privatization priorities (Isaacs and Mohammad, 2000).

Ultimately, this unwillingness to fully devolve authority over wildlife to communities is, according to Sibanda (2004), the reason behind Zimbabwe's fall from CWM grace. Sibanda sees the recent farm invasions and land crises not as the undoing of CAMPFIRE but rather as a *sign* of its failure to give full power to the communities: *"The promised devolution of land and decision-making to local people never took place."* (ibid, pp 250). Sibanda blames a 'block' of rights over wildlife at district level which the rural population saw as CAMPFIRE's failure to devolve

successfully into a system of village-level democratic participation, instead implementing a system of passive redistribution of revenues.

Willingness to devolve rights over wildlife to communities is closely linked to the health of government, in terms of transparency, accountability and democratic confidence: it appears that if these indices are high, like in Botswana and Namibia – with the indigenization imperative at the forefront too – CWM really can be a means to empowerment. Weak government and low confidence in local-level management, on the other hand, gives more space for outsiders to influence policy (e.g. Kenya or Mozambique) and/or 'hog' user rights (Nelson and Agrawal, 2008).

The fact is that there are so many stakeholders in wildlife management throughout east and southern Africa – central governments, villagers, international conservation and develoment NGOs, donors, private tourism companies etc. – that devolution quickly becomes a very complicated proposition: *to whom should power be devolved?* The nation-state legitimizes its very existence to an extent by control over natural resources (cf. Frost and Wrangham, 2003); the international conservation and development organizations are extremely well funded and see themselves as morally obliged to watch over wildlife; and the private sector seeks control to assure profit... It seems none of the 'macro-actors' are likely to willingly secede. And should they secede there is yet another hypothetical hurdle for participatory wildlife management to overcome: *what exactly is the community?*

2.4 Who are the locals?

Neumann (1997), in his study of conservation-development projects in national park buffer zones across Africa, asks the question: 'who are the locals?'. There are pastoral migrants, do they count as the community? There are progressive farmers who don't do what the rest of the 'community' do, but should they be included? And what about ethnic minorities? The heterogeneity of African communities is a real thorn in the side of a development initiative such as CWM which is always seeking a solid unit to carry out its activities.

Development often yields to what is called 'betting on the strong', simply doing it through the village headman or similar figure-heads (Jodha, 1991), and sure enough it happens in CWM. One researcher to have investigated this issue in depth is Gillingham (1998) who observed the widespread ignorance of the purposes and processes of CWM at the poorer levels of society in East Africa, one respondent stating: *"...the people who know about those matters are the wakubwa [elite/'big people'] of the village, we small people don't get to know anything."* (ibid; pp 15). Attitudes to conservation itself were positive amongst her respondents but attitudes towards the way these new conservation management institutions were being run were negative; marked by suspicion, ignorance, and feelings of exclusion, particularly strongly felt by women whose role in wildlife management is practically nil (this must be put in the context of cultural divides between bush/village which is further examined in part 2). Men with good links to bureaucratic patrons 'do the democracy' in this case. This can lead to individual self-empowerment, as Shackleton et al (2002) saw in Zambia and Lesotho where village chiefs who sat in sub-district CWM committees diverted most benefits to building their own power base rather than using them for the good of the community. Even in Namibia, which has attained 'iconic status' as having the most people-first system of CWM in Africa, there are strong ethnic biases which have come to the fore in the process of devolution; particularly in the Kunune district where the Herero have benefitted far more than the Damara from the conservancy system (Sullivan, 2003).

It appears there are always the strong in the community – generally men and often belonging to the dominant ethnic group – which preside over decision-making in CWM. These act as political figures behind elected committees, controlling the flow of benefits and access to resources in their communities. It must be noted, however, that it can work the other way around with the strong figure-heads resisting not pandering to these new democratic institutions as Child (2004) observed in Zambia where village chiefs were 'especially predatory' in facing up to democratic processes and defending traditional leadership systems.

Decentralization and the creation of local wildlife management institutions undoubtedly opens a space for democratic participation and rights affirmation. The

complication to this is who fills this space, since CWM is a battle ground for a multitude of different actors, fighting for their rights to decide over the management of wildlife. Neoliberalism, however, assuages this worry by asserting the strength of the market in enabling participation. It sees less a political battle-ground, more a healthily competitive market-place which roots out bureaucratic corruption and brings local producers, artisans, and entrepreneurs to the fore. Indeed, *the true origin of democracy is the market itself*. In the case of wildlife management, this means utilization and enterprise in the market of wild animals, the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

COMMERCIAL USE AND ENTERPRISE IN AFRICAN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

3.1 The rational economics of new conservation

The Earth Summit in Rio, in 1992, stressed indigenous peoples' rights to use, sustainably, natural resources for their own development. This key feature of the sustainable development narrative, combining environmentalism with development goals, is integral to CWM. However, the neoliberal influence upon CWM has meant that the interpretation of resource 'use' has strayed from its original sense, use for the household, towards the realm of free-market economics. So much so that utilitarian conservation can be summed up as the 'commercialization of wildlife' (Rasker et. al, 1992).

Plate 2: Crop damage by elephants

Wild animals under this banner are seen as stock, to be consumed in any way - beyond photo-tourism and outright protection - that may give them value in the market place. Principally this translates as commercial hunting, but other uses have been found such as: 'live sales' between parks and reserves in need of de- or re-stocking, game ranching (supplying special species to game reserves), culling contracts, and product sales i.e. meat, horns, hides etc. The hope is that the African hunter, peasant or pastoralist will engage in these enterprises and profit from it, thereby incentivizing the careful management of wildlife. This commercial rationality is at the heart of CWM.

This rationality has been praised as a necessary break from sentimental preservationism which boldly perceives wildlife as having an inherent right to survive despite the conflicting right of poor African people to hunt wild animals and

feed themselves and their families (Pearce and Moran, 1994). Commercialization is the recognition that conservation in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world cannot be afforded for its own sake since poor people are not going to be willing to risk crop destruction, livestock depredation etc., without knowing that they are going to be economically compensated for it. This approach brings into focus rational actor decision-making with the concept of optimality: *benefit = profit – loss*. If the profit from conservation does not exceed the loss of livelihood assets then the African villager is not going to benefit, nor act positively towards conservation efforts. Wildlife economics in Africa is therefore about understanding the process of wildlife loss and rural poverty in 'real world contexts', of people making everyday decisions about whether or not to protect animals. It is a method un-trammelled by romantic visions of Africans willingly enduring wildlife *pro ipse*.

Commercialization of wildlife thus brings poor people, and the costs they bear in living alongside dangerous and destructive beasts, to the very centre of the conservation equation. This mundaneness is its moral strength in contrast to the arrogant armchair morality of preservationism which doesn't understand the relationship between poverty and conservation. It is also its applied strength because commercialization has the potential to complement rural livelihoods strategies.

3.2 Complementing diverse livelihoods

Recently, the 'sustainable livelihoods' framework has become an established tool for rural development analysis, and very much part of the sustainable development concept (Carney, 1998). The sustainable livelihoods perspective seeks to understand the way poor people negotiate risk through various different complementary strategies. It is assumed that a broad and flexible range of assets or 'capitals' (economic, natural, social and human) is harnessed at any one time to account for an unpredictable future (Scoones, 1998). For example, small-scale crop production can be complemented by other forms of household income such as livestock rearing, craft-work, wage- or kin-based labour etc. which could prove

critical in times of extreme stress. Spreading risk is thus a vital strategy used by poor people to avoid catastrophe.

Wildlife commercialization can be seen as one such livelihood strategy and a useful alternative form of income, as Boyd et al (1999) discovered in their study of integrated wildlife and livestock management (IWLM) in East Africa. During their fieldwork they discovered that some forms of wildlife utilization such as culling operations and game cropping which have recently been made legal in Kenya (albeit tentatively), and are already well established in Tanzania, are expanding the livelihood base of local participants. Through these enterprises, employment is being generated (game monitoring, anti-poaching and some management services) and cash and meat payments are compensating households for any damage done to crops and livestock. The authors argue that IWLM is best suited to the pastoralist herders of East Africa because it allows access to previously protected areas, increasing grazing possibilities for their cattle and access to water holes, especially crucial in times of drought which have been frequent in recent years in this part of Africa. What is more, safari tourism revenues continue even in times of such hardship, where other modes of production fail, as Talbot and Olindo (1990; pp 71) make clear:

"The traditional Maasai custom of maximizing the number of cattle kept has begun to change and local Maasai have been heard to say that wildlife has become as important to them as cattle, if not more so, because wildlife revenues continue to come in during times of drought or floods..."

It seems Robin Hurt's words are ringing true: wildlife *is* coming to be seen in the same way as livestock, as a 'reproductive asset', complementing crops and other modes of production – yet altogether more constant and durable since wild animals can bring income all year round (through hunting and tourism operations) and are generally more resistant to droughts and floods (Boyd et al, 1999).

The benefits of commercialization are not only seen to be more constant but also more democratically distributed because it stresses all manner of use, not just photo-tourism which is mostly limited to large pristine, game-filled, bushlands with

good access. How are people who live in smaller, rougher plots of land with less 'sightable' game and worse access expected to engage in photo-tourism as a livelihood option? Commercialization solves this by offering an array of options to rural-dwelling Africans in both pristine and less pristine land: trophy hunting; combining viewing and hunting; cropping for meat and products; cropping for live sale; combining hunting and live sales; combining livestock with wildlife use (Barbier and Swanson, 1992).

Not only is the full utilization of wild animals flexible but highly profitable too. In 1998, before the land invasions, Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE was contributing no less than US$22m a year to G.D.P; In Namibia, the trickle-down revenue (including tourist spending, employment in related services etc.) from commercial wildlife enterprise was recently estimated at US$19m (NASCO, 2006); and in Botswana the WMA system generated US$12.5m in 2000 (ULG, 2001). And likewise, Tanzania, the only east African country to have adopted a comparably strong use policy towards wildlife management (although this use policy does not extend effectively to the community level, as discussed in chapter 2), generates roughly US$30m /annum from its commercial operations (Baldus and Cauldwell, 2004).

Household cash dividends are usually quite low unless the human/wildlife population ratio is particularly favourable (i.e. low human/high wildlife populations; cf. IUCN 'Evaluating Eden series', 1997), but it is accepted that CWM can be a useful complementary form of household income, to top up agricultural and wage-labour returns (Rutten, 2002). Where the ratios are favourable the household incomes can be very favourable indeed, for example Jones (cited in Shackleton et al. 2002) learned that 45 families were sharing the tidy sum of US$ 125,000/annum from the Chobe Enclave Trust in Botswana. On the other hand, household incomes can drop to miniscule amounts such as less than $US 10/annum in more populated situations (cf. Arnzten et al. 2007). Even where household incomes are low, however, all CWM schemes redistribute the net profits at least to the district level which subsidizes infra-structure development such as healthcare, transport, utilities etc. sometimes dramatically improving the quality of life for residents (Walsh, 2000)

Meat from the commercial use of wildlife can also of great value to some rural communities. In fact, in and around the Selous Game Reserve, the biggest in Africa, there have been tsetse fly epidemics among cattle herds throughout the 20th century and game meat from the commercial hunting companies sold in the village is greatly valued as a source of protein since domestic stocking is low due to the risk of infection (Jusuf, interview, 05/08). Thakudu et al. (2005) reported a similar case in the village of Sankuyo, bordering the Okavango delta in Botswana, where bush meat donations were actually valued more than household cash dividends.

In such circumstances, rural communities value CWM principally for receiving benefits. And at this point we arrive at the crux of wildlife commercialization: does it fulfil the liberal promise of encouraging indigenous participation and market enterprise or merely redistribute the benefits accrued, reverting to the old type of passive, top-down development?

3.3 Contract conservation

In the same way as effective decentralization is dependent upon user rights being confidently devolved to the community level (as covered in the previous chapter), a call to enterprise can only be answered by the confident devolution of ownership rights over wildlife (Norton-Griffiths, 2007). The problem is that ownership rights over wildlife are still centrally maintained by *all* countries in southern and eastern Africa, seriously undermining the link between wild animals and personal profit, thereby making limp the suggestion that participants can get out of poverty through such enterprise (Murphree, 1990). This is what frustrates the neoliberal most because private ownership of resources is seen as the only way to ensure economic development, as Harvey (2005; pp 65) makes clear:

"Neoliberals are particularly assiduous in seeking the privatization of assets. The absence of clear private property rights – as in many developing countries – is seen as one of the greatest of all institutional barriers to economic development and the improvement of human welfare. Enclosure and the assignment of private property rights is seen as the best way to protect against the so-called tragedy of the commons."

There is, however, consolation for the neoliberal and that is that user rights over wildlife can be privatized and, even better, these rights are tradable in the form of leasing (and everything that is tradable is good!). The transferability of user rights over natural resources is seen as a way of allowing rural-dwelling communities to enter into lease contracts with sophisticated and well-connected businesses (bio-prospecting, scientific research and carbon off-setting companies etc.) and thereby profit from the business that follows. This is the lynchpin of neoliberal environmentalism (cf. Eisner, 1989).

The downside, of course, is that the leasing of village or communal lands, together with the user rights over wildlife, to outside tourism and hunting companies often severely curtails villagers' rights to use wildlife for their own purposes (for example, the village of Ngarambe, as this BBC report illustrates http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/4440375.stm; accessed 07/09). In this way, the transferability of user rights has meant that external commercial companies are the ones being allowed to use wildlife, whilst the local people stand to *receive* economic rewards from their leasing of village lands.

Now, the revenues from these externally-lead operations can be very large and indeed this is why they are so favoured in policy; foreign exchange is without doubt the emphasis in all current CWM schemes across sub-Saharan Africa as evidenced by the market domination of big game hunting companies which bring in the richest overseas clients and pay the heftiest fees to the state (Baldus and Cauldwell, 2004). But there is a more profound reason as to why this bias towards commercial leasing exists and why ownership rights are not being devolved: a lingering *distrust* of local ownership and use of

Plate 3: The commercial use of an elephant

natural resources, as was openly stated by a minister for the Tanzanian Wildlife Division during an interview in Dar-es-Salaam (Mwamwaja; interview, 05/08). He cited an example of community-based miombo woodland management in Tanzania suffering the fate of immediate consumption (tree cutting for trade) and highly unsustainable forms of management by the resident care-takers. There are other documented examples of malpractice too. Campbell and Hofer (1995) observed the opportunistic nature of resident hunters of a community bordering the Serengeti who were driven more by supply than demand and had little concept of game management. In the Congo, de Merode (2005; pp 49) accompanied hunters on trips into the Garamba national park and on no occasion did the hunters *"...show anything other than rate-maximizing",* so much so that *"...under current circumstances, consumption-based conservation approaches are unlikely to work at Garamba without external regulation."*

Economists know well that the 'discount rate' of resources - the rate at which they lose value - are higher amongst poor people who commonly consume in the present out of need rather than delay (Freese, 1997). This puts into question the ability for poor African peasants to sustainably manage their own wildlife. Sustainable use of natural resources is thus 'a double-edged sword' whereby markets can ensure the preservation of species through demand yet also their eradication through high discount rates (Taylor and Dunstone, 1996).

Perhaps understandably then, governments are not willing to fully devolve ownership rights to communities for fear of misuse. For some this mistrust is what is holding back natural resource management in Africa (Nguiffo, 1998). It is certainly holding back local enterprise as any market cannot work properly if ownership rights are denied, as explained now. In markets there are positive and negative externalities (the good and bad by-products of consumption) which impact upon 'society at large'. The problem in the case of the wildlife market in Africa is that the 'producers' (villagers) do not own wildlife like they do crops and livestock and as a result they are not being *directly* rewarded for the good they are providing to society at large, namely tolerating wildlife. Instead, the 'servicers' - the hunting and tourism cartels, together with the state which earns tax revenues - are being

rewarded. In other words, the local people are not the ones directly benefitting from the market, the service sector benefits and then redistributes. DeGeorges and Reilly (2009; pp 751) explain the problem of indirect reward well, comparing the white-owned privately run ranches, especially numerous in South Africa, to communal wildlife management areas in the rest of southern Africa:

"Ultimately, a big difference between the wildlife "revolution" on the private ranches of Southern Africa and "devolution" to date in communal areas is that the landowner on a private ranch pretty much controls, but most importantly is the direct beneficiary of the daily rates and trophy fees from hunting, unless he/she chooses otherwise (sub-contract marketing to safari operator). In the communal areas where CBNRM is practiced, on the other hand, communities are imposed upon and dictated to over what resources can be harvested and required to take on all kinds of middlemen partners (e.g., central and local government, safari/tourism operators and NGOs) to the point that little value accrues to the local level."

As a result, the old cycle of negative local attitudes and poor conservation returns. For example, Western (1994) witnessed an incident at Namelok swamp, a Maasai community-managed buffer zone outside the Amboseli park in Kenya, where wildlife was driven out and swamps drained as soon as title was granted. These are costs to society at large but seen as benefits to the Maasai since the wild animals and swamps, not being owned, had no direct, tangible economic value: getting rid of them was actually seen as more beneficial. Villagers are thus seen to switch off to the idea of wildlife-orientated enterprise – to *dis*engage from the market - in favour of passive reception of benefits, as Ashley et al (2002, pp 26) observed in the Selous game reserve buffer zones:

"The most noticeable absence of impact is in market opportunities, a sense of local economic change. Actual diversification of the economy or livelihoods is minimal...committee members and some village leaders focussed more on the fact that they can earn tourist hunting fees as soon as they are gazetted and registered, rather than on enterprise development."

3.4 A difficult market

Added to these policy and market constraints on local enterprise there is a mixture of geographical and social obstacles for communities to overcome. The wildlife 'market', in its institutionalized CWM form, as opposed to the informal 'poaching for the pot', is difficult for local entry because it is so new compared to established cattle, crop and other markets, thus having less stable local trade networks (Barnes, 2002). It often suffers from the remoteness of its operations, especially in the high costs of transport of products and live game which, combined with the scarcity of rural credit in such areas, make for tremendously uncompromising financial circumstances. These are things large commercial businesses can far more easily overcome. Added to this is the lack of support local people get in involving themselves in CWM enterprises: Norton-Griffiths (2007) compares Kenya's agricultural sector which receives so much state-subsidized research, development, training, loans etc. to the wildlife management sector which provides practically none of the sort.

If access to the market is eventually achieved, it is inevitably on an unequal basis. As West (interview, 07/10) observed in Mozambique, where there is involvement in commercial enterprise (catering, transport, game tracking etc.) it is done by commercially-savvy, urban-connected, well-skilled labourers or entrepreneurs who are often migrants from across borders, in this case South Africa and Zimbabwe, and who speak better English and have gained officially recognized skills at colleges. Similarly, Jones (1999) observed the dominance of a few powerful entrepreneurs in Twyfelfontein Conservancy in Namibia who had close relationships with the conservancy's private sector partners and kept business amongst themselves. At the other end of the spectrum lie women and ethnic minorities who are commonly the most underactive in gaining access to new forms of market enterprise. It is clear that this neoliberal call to enterprise can only be heard and acted upon by certain influential and well-connected people.

The market in wildlife, it seems, is far more accommodating to big commercial businesses with a base of knowledge, networks and capital than it is to rural African

comunities. The irony is that by accommodating principally commercial enterprise CWM is actually severely constraining local *de facto* enterprise which had gone unfettered before the introduction of such schemes. With the gazettement of communal lands for expressly commercial purposes, domestic use of miscellaneous wild resources - fuelwood, wild foods (game, honey etc.), medicines, building, tool and fencing materials etc. - is all of a sudden severely constrained or banned (Botswana is the only country which allows for such use alongside commercial operations, at the discretion of the community; Barnett and Patterson, 2006). This is having a significant impact upon rural livelihoods. The worst to suffer are the poor households for whom these resources are absolutely essential and the women who normally fulfil the role of procuring and processing them, as Shackleton and Shackleton (2004) noted in South Africa's contractual parks. Parry and Campbell (1992) likewise learned how the provision of employment and meat donations in Botswana's WMA system is not viewed by villagers as adequate compensation for the sacrifice of access to these resources and the damage done by wildlife, both of which impact majorly upon their livelihoods. It appears that the opportunity costs of CWM outweigh those redistributed benefits to livelihoods mentioned earlier, so Infield and Adams (1999) express:

"...the benefits experienced by participants [in Uganda's community-based conservation system]... the construction of schools, roads, water ways and some employment do not outweigh the perceived costs of lost agricultural production, lost grazing and natural resources (bamboo, water, thatching grass, medicinal plants and sites for beehives)"

(ibid; pp 311)

Across southern Africa, the collectors of thatch grass, wild foods and medicines, together with the charcoal makers, sawyers, fishermen et al. - those who are the real grass-roots entrepreneurs - are being denied their business through CBNRM land use restrictions in favour of token household dividends and infrastructure at the community level (DeGeorges and Reilly, 2009). Many such resources have cultural significance too, which will be explored in part 2.

A key component in rural livelihood strategies is diversity in enterprise and CWM is seen by its faithful as offering this much (Ellis and Mdoe, 2002). At present, however, diversity and enterprise is being entertained by the private sector and will continue to be so long as there are policy conditions favouring commercial contracts which include sanctions on local use. A vicious cycle could be beginning whereby access to resources crucial to rural livelihoods is curtailed, exacerbating household poverty, which in turn increases the discount rates upon wild resources (more likely to be consumed immediately) with catastrophic effects for both animal and human populations (Bodmer et al. 1997).

The solution, for utilitarian conservation at least, is a positive cycle of further devolving ownership rights towards the rural dwelling people which would forge stronger cognitive links between animals and direct economic rewards - the kind of which characterize livestock husbandry and crop cultivation - and inject much needed trust into the system. Perhaps this trust should be tempered by a degree of external assistance to prevent malpractice but it would nevertheless rebalance the market in favour of local-level enterprise (and effective conservation stewardship) and undo the strong servicer bias which exists throughout the African savannah lands. In this scenario those neoliberal aspirations could be fulfilled to far better effect.

The next chapter investigates the third cornerstone of neoliberal conservation in sub-Saharan Africa: the partnerships between NGO, private and community sectors. It takes a closer look at the nature of the relationships between these servicers and producers of African wildlife and demonstrates the internationality of CWM.

CHAPTER 4

SUSTAINABILITY AND FOREIGN PARTNERSHIP IN CWM

4.1 Hybrid environmental governance

Sustainability is fundamental to the idea that wildlife be used for conservation and development ends. CWM was, after all, born out of the sustainable development narrative, amongst others. To ensure this sustainability and to guide the communities in their new-found management responsibilities, international donors, NGOs and businesses are joining up with African communities - to the consent of weakened yet participating central governments - to carry out what might be called 'hybrid environmental governance' (Frank et al, 2000). This is seen by the neoliberal as more democratic, efficient, equitable and profitable than what preceded it (Lemos and Agrawal, 2006), part of globalization's good service to the world's poor, linking them to western free-market democracy (Harvey, 2005). This chapter seeks to discover how such partnerships work and to what extent sustainability is achieved in CWM projects.

There are two measures of sustainability in CWM: in terms of biodiversity and in terms of project durability. In general, data for biodiversity sustainability in CWM are weak (Wunder, 2000). This is because there are many factors involved which often go unaccounted for. A good example is Waithaka's (2002) study of Il Ngwesi eco-tourism project, set up on a Maasai group ranch in Kenya in 1996. Using vegetation sampling and animal sightings across transects, Waithaka and his team reported higher numbers and densities of tree and herbaceous species, and 93% more sightings of wildlife inside the sanctuary compared to similar ranch-land outside - a triumph of biodiversity, in other words. But what if the higher density of tree and herbaceous species was unwanted bush encroachment (something which traditional Maasai pastoralism actually prevents)? What if the area had been deliberately chosen for its pre-existing abundance of flora and fauna compared to the neighbouring ranch-lands? And could an increase in wildlife sightings be down

to the fact that animals were concentrating inside the ranch, as opposed to any increase in numbers? (Kiss, 2004).

The complexity of recording biodiversity sustainability is therefore great, even when it is bounded in biology, disregarding human-wildlife conflict. It is far beyond the scope of this essay to present detailed analyses of biodiversity sustainability in CWM, although this does feature occasionally. The concern here is rather how CWM is maintained as a form of community development. Following this, two indices for the sustainability of CWM projects have been identified: i) enterprise as an ongoing process and ii) partnership with external corporations.

Here, enterprise is seen as the means to ensuring sustainability of projects since it demands do-it-yourself, grass-roots initiative, planning and dedication, all the requirements of project continuity – in contrast to direct reward payments (remember the Robin Hurt bribery to the Macao villagers) for externally-led operations which is short-term and top-down (Salafsky et al. 2001). As was touched upon in the previous chapter, however, there are numerous obstacles for communities to overcome in their approach to a market of wild animals and products and this is where the foreign players come in: to *facilitate* free-market enterprise and ensure sustainability.

These partnerships, as they are realized in CWM today, typically consist of global conservation organizations such as IUCN and WWF, bi-lateral development donors like GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit), USAID and the Ford Foundation, and multi-lateral development banks such as the World Bank Group. Attached to these global organizations is a broad array of local and foreign private sector companies with interests in the wildlife industry. Overseeing these partnerships, meanwhile, are the steadfast state wildlife departments, although overseeing may not be quite the right word. Barrow and Murphree (2001, pp 29) convey the international origins and nature of CWM in its present form:

"The institutionalization of community conservation in Africa today is largely a product of initiatives by international conservation agencies, endorsed by state governments, shaped by conservation professionals and funded by international environmental grant sources"

Indeed, the mushrooming of CWM schemes which followed CAMPFIRE in the early 1990s was as much a result of massive donor funding as a lack of alternatives in conservation and rural development. For a community the advantage of committing to CWM is that it generates a surge in donor interest and all the benefits which follow. In their study of JUKUMU, a collaboration of CWM participating villages in Tanzania, Ashley et al. (2002; pp 2) convey some of these advantages:

"...its [JUKUMU's] creation has enabled donors and government to channel support, resources and limited wildlife use rights to local level... contribution to administrative costs [from the Selous conservation programme (SCP)], a great deal of policy attention, access to information and training..."

As soon as a community, or as above, group of communities, subscribes to CWM it is immediately put in the benevolent gaze of government and these international organizations, thereby standing to receive benefits from this. These benefits commonly include improvements in electricity, water supply, agricultural technology, communications, roadways etc. all of which donors like to do as part of their portfolios.

There is a hypothetical time frame to these international partnerships which is accompanied by a set of expectations: first, the donors arrive bringing policy attention, information and start up capital; and then the private sector takes over bringing fresh ideas, business acumen, skills and networks; and finally the community learns from these experiences and assumes all project responsibility (Ferraro and Kiss, 2002). The locals provide the land, the labour and the local knowledge as their stake in the partnership.

After the donors then, typically a mass of private sector companies (in tourism jargon, 'outfitters') seeking business in wildlife photo-/hunting-tourism and related bush services approach the communities. Like the donors, these private companies are endorsed by the state, entering into so called 'community-public-private partnerships' (CPPPs) and 'joint-venture agreements' (JVAs) with their new-found partners, the rural communities. The main advantage of these joint ventures for the community is assistance in market entry. Aylward (2003) notes how tourism is a fiercely competitive and demanding industry, hardly an ideal entry level business for indigenous peoples, in the case of this study the Zulus of Natal, to engage in without prior experience. Okello et al (2003, pp 74) likewise tells how the Maasai of Kenya's rangelands grudgingly accept outfitters' expertise:

"Despite strong dislike for foreign investors (because of fears of exploitation, disrespect to cultural values or hinderance to resource access), the elders acknowledge that the investors bring capital, skills and marketing contacts necessary to make the community sanctuaries economically profitable."

Poor people in rural areas tend to value tourism operations and the like for the improved linkages they form with the world beyond and the exposure to information and markets previously out of reach (Braman, 2001). These linkages are said to boost social capital which helps poor people negotiate a risky world, and an especially risky market in the case of wildlife tourism. The skills these companies have are to be transferred to the community, eventually enabling the latter to actively and independently engage in business. For example, the communities bordering the Okavango national park in Botswana have entered into 15 year contracts with commercial tourism outfitters in order to *"...enable immediate revenue generation, capacity-building and transfer of skills to the local community",* anticipating that within the duration of the contract the community would own and operate a successful company (Boggs, 2004, pp 150). In this way, outfitters can teach the trade and then depart knowing that the community is skilled and competent:

"The formation of such entrepreneurial partnerships [JVAs] plays a major role in moving such initiatives towards some level of financial and institutional sustainability."

(Johnson, 2004; pp 221)

So, a typically rosy picture has been painted where everybody gains from these partnerships: communities gather knowledge, contacts and skills; the private sector gains access to land and resources previously inaccessible; and the state wildlife arm is reconciled to its old enemies, the park-adjacent villagers, now partners not poachers (Bergin, 2001).

4.2 Unhappy partnerships

The question that has to be asked, however, is how well balanced are these partnerships? Baldus and Cauldwell (2004) studied the appropriateness of big game hunting as a WMA mode of enterprise in Tanzania and discovered that the scales were tipped heavily towards the Wildlife Division and the hunting outfitters which left the third party, the community, in the dark when it came to business. Both the outfitters and the WD were shown to be generally wary of the democratic change and the multitude of stakeholders which the WMA system was introducing and, as a result, forged especially close ties together. This partnership preferred a paternalistic approach towards community development, 'window-dressing' the humanitarian side of their operations by building a token school or similar and then excluding the community from the real business of wildlife management. A few locals were accepted into this dyadic partnership but these answered to their patron/partners in all business affairs.

A feature of the two-way, not three-way, partnerships in CWM is the outflow of revenues from tourism and hunting operations, bypassing the community in a stream towards urban cores (treasury or company office) and beyond to off-shore bank accounts (Homewood et al. 2001). Commercial use of wildlife is here seen as a poor 'growth pole' as proceeds fail to filter effectively to the participating local

people; this harks back to the market failures of uncaptured benefits as explained in the previous chapter.

Yet it is not always the community that gets a raw deal in CWM partnerships; the scales can swing the other way, as Boggs (2004) conveyed in the case of Sankuyo village, in Botswana. In 1996 the village was 'awarded' 860 sq km of land and advised by natural resource management programme (NRMP) experts to enter into a JVA with a photo-tourism company in order to make best use of the land. Within a year the relationship between villagers and the company had deteriorated with factions forming, bitter in-fighting, and confidence in the joint council hitting rock bottom: the contract was terminated the following year. Soon afterwards, another commercial operator arrived to join in on a similar venture. Its expectations, however, turned out to be too high. Whereas the outfitter hoped that the community would fully engage in the business, take responsibility and incur risk, the community simply waited for training, financial and social benefits – all the things that they saw as accompanying yet another one of the development projects which came their way. All the energies thereafter were concentrated on conflict resolution instead of good management and skills transfer. Within three years this contract had likewise been prematurely ended.

The private sector often carries too much risk in commons property co-management which is a major threat to project sustainability (Ostrom, 1990). As the case above illustrates, JVAs often end up 'front-loading', whereby funds pour in but the local recipients do little in terms of management or indeed any kind of participation, rather perceiving themselves as entitled to these benefits regardless of whether the enterprise is succeeding or not (McShane and Wells, 2004). In this situation the time-limited project itself comes to be seen as the end in itself not the means. Thus there is a delicate balance between assisting the community and letting them become dependent and irresponsible, in the sense of avoiding risk:

"On the one hand the lease arrangement has allowed community members to slowly adjust to a changing land tenure system and to the responsibility of being curators of the country's natural resources. On the other hand it has lead to

development stagnation and unhealthy power relations by allowing individuals and communities to exercise a type of extortion over their joint-venture partners."

(Boggs, 2004; pp 155)

This passivity and neglect of responsibility by the community could be seen as one of the strategies poor people take to resist unwanted development, so called 'weapons of the weak' (Scott, 1985). Undoubtedly the communities are the 'weak' partners, in need of education, training, capital etc. Their resources and means are in stark contrast to the BINGOS (big NGOS) and donors who control billions of dollars, employ tens of thousands of people worldwide and are becoming ever more like multi-national corporations (Chapin, 2004). CWM donors are giants of the development and conservation worlds and it is difficult to see how these partnerships with African villages could ever be equal. These BINGOS are seen by some to be serving their own interests, throwing their considerable political weight around and actually undermining local democratic procedures. Norton-Griffiths (2007) for example, has witnessed the way in which healthy democratic lobbying procedures by rural communities in Kenya which call for more political representation of local wildlife producers in the chain of authority and legislation to allow more uses of wildlife - and which are initially well received, gaining the attention of local steering committees and the like - are time and time again undermined by powerful NGOs such as IFAW which block any Acts being passed higher up the political ladder. Mobs are hired, media campaigns are paid for and the matter is closed in one fell swoop. In this view, NGOs in partnership with the state represent an 'unholy alliance' which shatters the potential for sound grass-roots democracy which CWM promises.

An even uglier side to the NGO – private – state partnerships in conservation is the actual displacement of communities. For example, the Africa Parks Foundation (APF) which is bank-rolled by Dutch SHV gas and American Walmart and which intends to restore national parks as viable businesses, was implicated in the eviction of residents of Nech Sar national park in Ethiopia (Pearce, 2005), as well as

the eviction of farm workers in park-adjacent lands in South Africa (Groenwold and Macleod, 2004).

There is a good body of Marxist and Foucauldian critique on the international presence in CWM which looks beyond the odd instance of conflict to argue that CWM is a vehicle for hidden neo-colonial agendas and such like. This is the subject of part 3. Now, however, it is worth seeing taking that 'step in' to see how CWM, by its international constitution, interferes with rural African cultures. The formalization of management systems, the rational actor emphasis in utilitarian conservation, the increased contact with foreign parties and other features of CWM all impact upon native ways of thinking about wild animals and carrying out resource management and this is the subject of part 2.

PART 2

‘FROM THE SHADOWS’: WILD ANIMALS AS CULTURAL SYMBOLS

Introducing part 2

The social sciences, especially sociology, have tended to present themselves as the sciences of discontinuity between humans and animals (Noske, 1990). Sociologists admit that they have, until recently, neglected animals as superfluous to urban studies but now realize their importance in forming socially constructed identities *"...as people try to make sense of them, understand them, use them or communicate with them..."* (Arluke and Sanders, 2009; pp XIII). Anthropology is far more advanced in factoring animals into studies of human societies simply due to the fact that it has traditionally sought exotic rural settings where animals feature more in the day-to-day life and social and mythical realms of the subjects compared to that of urban societies. Anthropology looks at human-animal relations 'from the shadows', by observing the imaginings, beliefs, myths and rituals surrounding these relations (Croll and Parkin, 1992).The aim of this part of the thesis is to harness anthropology's pedigree in this field, together with sociology's recent interest, and apply their theories to the case of CWM in sub-Saharan Africa.

Far from being an unnecessary distraction from the harder facts and findings such as those just surveyed in part 1, perceiving CWM 'from the shadows' actually elucidates some of the more fundamental obstacles which it must face if it is to be accepted by African communities. Sibanda (2004) for example, in his study of the Tonga peoples of the Zambezi valley in Zimbabwe, noted how CAMPFIRE suffered from its failure to acknowledge indigenous forms of wildlife management which are rooted in myth, such as the avoidance of killing taboo species and the culturally constructed conceptualization of protected areas and seasons. Drivjer (1992) likewise conveys how a lack of attention towards the symbolic importance of cattle and water holes in Maasai culture and an over-emphasis on material gain repeatedly undermined the success of cooperative conservation efforts in the Amboseli national park in Kenya.

It has to be said, however, that most of the studies of CWM in sub-Saharan Africa only mention culture in passing, if at all. Hence, at certain points, it is necessary to cast the literary net wider to incorporate ethnographies amongst sub-Saharan

peoples, and occasionally beyond, which are relevant to the subject of human/wild animal relationships but which do not explicitly cover community-based conservation.

Part 2 heads off at a somewhat dramatic tangent from the empiricism of part 1 but hopefully, by the end of it, the importance of culture in deciding the fate of CWM will have been made clear.

There are four chapters to part 2.

Chapter 5 briefly addresses the role of animal symbolism in human culture(s). It introduces the structuralist idea that animals are units which are ascribed meaning by their relative position in an overarching system, just as words are in a language and people are in society. Animals are thus shown to be part of the same process (a language) by which people conceive of themselves (identity), the social order (morality) and the world around them (cosmology).

Chapter 6 argues that CWM is a modern western creation, in origin and process. It examines the two salient features of contemporary western human-animal relations: an entrenched ethic of rational dominion and the late-modern blurring of the wild/tame dichotomy and suggests how these have influenced the composition of CWM.

Chapter 7 presents African cultural perceptions towards wild animals. Rural-dwelling Africans commonly imbue wild animals with magico-religious significance for their being opposite to the village, yet at the same time intimately linked with the human world. Wildlife will be shown to play an important symbolic role in the construction of self and society in African cultures.

Chapter 8 concludes by pinpointing instances of conflict between rural African and modern western cultural constructions of wild animals which surface in CWM. It raises the possibility of cultural damage and sets up the more belligerent critique which follows in the final part of the essay on discourse and power.

CHAPTER 5

ANIMAL AS SYMBOL, SELF AND SOCIETY

5.1 Wild structuralism

"Animals supply examples for the mind as well as food for the body; they carry not only loads but also principles. The first metaphor was animal."

(Berger, 1971; pp 1042)

The above quote, paraphrasing Levi-Strauss' famous statement that animals are *"good to think"* as much as to eat, neatly summarizes the theme which continues throughout part 2. It is assumed that, in contrast to inanimate objects, animals are especially poignant symbols for human interpretation*"...[because] the 'animal' is both within us, as part of our enduring biological heritage as human beings, and also, by definition, outside and beyond human society."* (Willis, 1974; pp 9).

The kind of cultural anthropology which is applied in the following chapters deals with the questions: How do different societies categorize the animal world? How do these categorizations create social and moral order in society? What are the differences between African and western ways of seeing wild animals? And in affecting knowledge systems and categorizations of wild animals, can CWM be a source of cultural change/damage?

To answer these questions structuralism is employed not only because category is its primary concern but also because its split from linguistics (and application to the social sciences) was marked by anthropological studies of animal categories, making it a particularly helpful methodology in this case. The likes of Levi-Strauss (1962), Leach (1964), Tambiah (1969) and Douglas (1975) were pioneers who sought to try to understand society in the same way as one might understand a language, as a system of boundaries, groupings and dichotomies which give meaning to the individual parts (words/people). Their studies and those which they inspired found

that animals were the most fertile of symbols which not only denoted Man's place in the universe but also played a part in the structuring of moral order in society.

For Levi-Strauss, structures in the material world help bring order to the mind. The world is full of infinite possibilities but neither the self nor society can operate in such a space, it must be structured (Bloch, 2002). He discovered amongst native American societies that animal totems are just such a structure: abstract concepts such as clanship and Man-in-nature were represented in totem metaphor. Douglas and Leach went on to apply this structuralism to concepts of purity, pollution and taboo in society. They argued that animal *anomalies* – those which could not easily be classified due to their physical aspect or behaviour – were held as either sacred or filthy by society. For example Douglas witnessed among the Lele of Zaire that the pangolin was sacred due to its strangeness: a scaly, shelled, tree-climbing creature did not fit easily into the schema of things and thus was accorded special sacred significance. On the other hand, strangeness can signify evil and pestilence: for example the fox and the hyena are invasive and commonly cross the boundary from wilderness to settlement which is viewed as polluting the natural order and worthy of the label 'pest' (Glickman, 1995). It is alleged that such animals reinforce boundaries in the human mind – such as that between sacred and profane - by their transgression of boundaries in the material world.

Besides anomaly, the *familiarity* of animals is another template for human moral order. Leach elaborated the idea that rules of consuming animals are reflected in the rules of sex in society. Incest avoidance is reflected by a conceptualization of the distance of different types of animal from the hearth, with the strength of taboo surrounding consumption/sex dissipating the further out the person or animal lies in a parallel spectrum:

Self----------Pet----------Livestock----------Game----------Wild animal

Self----------Sister-------Cousin----------Neighbour------Stranger

Self----------House-------Farm----------Field----------Far

(Leach, 1964; pp 36/7).

Zoning the material world in such a way helps maintain rules of love, consumption and sex in any given society. For these anthropologists, and for those who have since concerned themselves with animal structuralism, animals are special in their moral symbolism because they eat, defecate, mate and die just like us and therefore offer themselves as ready metaphors for human morality, as distinct from the inanimate material world (Tapper, 1988). Various ethnographies have revealed that animals, by their biological and behavioural intimacy with humans, come to stand for that society itself. Evans-Pritchard (1940; pp 19) famously recounted that *"the Nuer tend to define all social processes and relationships in terms of cattle. Their social idiom is a bovine idiom".* For the Nuer each cow had its place in the herd in the same way as each person was located in a system of patri-lineal descent. Douglas' study of the Lele similarly showed that animal symbolism was used to denote the structuring of society but in this case the structuring was horizontal, along age-set lines (as opposed to descent which is vertical). Fitting to their hunting existence, it was by dividing wild not domestic animals into horizontal strata that reflected the horizontal social organization of the Lele, along the lines of:

Sky-dwelling animals/

Land-dwelling animals/

Underground-dwelling animals/

Underwater-dwelling animals/

5.2 Monism

Thinking animals can thus be seen as a way of thinking society. However, in extreme cases metaphor is done away with entirely and wild animals are seen not as mirrors to human society but as *part of it*. Harrod (2000) conveys how North American plains Indians operate a kind of 'sacred ecology' whereby wild animals are treated with utmost respect not because they are categorical anomalies nor especially familiar but because they *are* human, specifically kin, in spirit form. This kind of 'fictive kinship' has far from fictive moral implications as Harrod observes the delicacy of consuming wild animals:

"The tensions were severe: one was eating the flesh of a being like oneself, a person with a kinship network, perhaps a wife and children, a being for whom relatives would grieve."

(Harrod, 2000; pp 76).

James (1994) argues that Douglas, Leach et al. are wrong in seeing animal symbolism as a separating structure which Man transcends because there are such cases of continuity and integration between human and animal worlds. She studied the Uduk of the Sudan-Ethiopia border who explicitly view antelope as kin. According to the Uduk, humans were once antelope in the evolutionary cycle and the different social groupings of Uduk society (along lines of clan, lineage) emerged out of different antelope species (hartebeest, waterbuck, etc.). This origin myth is similar to that of the plain Indians' and no less morally consequential:

"[The Uduk]... place their own existence as moral beings in a universe orientated to other living creatures... Their actions towards those creatures impinge upon themselves and upon their relations with each other."

(James, 1994; pp 203)

In these instances the distinction between culture and nature which is so strongly marked in our western minds fades to nothing: dualism becomes monism as people and nature are seen as one and the same. Howell (1996) observes how confusing this monism often seems to western conservationists and development workers. The Chewong people of Malaysia who she studied perceive moral consciousness in nature as well as society; natural entities such as the gibbon, frog, bamboo, rock etc. are 'personages' (*ruwai*) which relate to each other and the human world in exactly the same way as people relate to each other, as Howell (1996; pp 132) explains well:

"The jungle, in its totality as a material and spiritual world is, I shall argue, cultural space not natural... it is full of signs which they know how to interpret – historically, practically and cosmologically... Nothing in the forest is semantically neutral...[the Chewong] are engaged in a series of meaningful relationships with it."

This monism makes the task of implementing externally-led grass-roots conservation or land management programmes a semantic minefield. Campbell (2000) likewise shows the 'sociality of nature' among the Tamang people of Nepal to be a thorn in the side of conservationists whose vision of nature is disengaged and 'desocialized'.

This brings CWM back into focus. How may this conservation programme be at odds with African cultural constructions of animality/sociality? To answer this question it is first necessary to understand the cultural backdrop of CWM.

CHAPTER 6

THE CULTURAL BACKDROP OF CWM

6.1 A modern western creation

By its emphasis on the rational use and scientific management of resources CWM can be confidently bracketed as a modern western creation. As Goldman (2001) states, Africans are being encouraged to become 'eco-rational subjects', a quintessentially modern kind of subjectivity. In fact, the very idea behind CAMPFIRE, the prototype, had first been conceived not by Africans, as it is often thought, but by Fulbright economists who argued that protectionism averted investment into wildlife (Metcalfe, 1994). Since its conception, it has been debated and drafted within western conservation and economics think tanks and at global environmental summits.

For Suzuki (2007) CWM is the very embodiment of modernity in Zimbabwe. He discovered that for the white (Voortrekker origin) farmers in Mlilo, Western Zimbabwe, converting to wildlife management under the CAMPFIRE proviso was a sign of being 'modern', 'progressive' or 'enlightened'. Whereas lions, for example, once stood as symbols of adversity in Vortrekker mythico-history, as pests to be exterminated through noble endeavour, their careful management had come to be indicative of a new kind of modern Zimbabwean identity:

"... in a dramatic contrast to the cultural meanings of lions just three decades ago, the protection of lions in this context became an index of morality, modernity and Zimbabwean, as opposed to Rhodesian, citizenship"

(Suzuki, 2007; pp 241)

But this was a white man's modernity and Suzuki argues that the eradication of game on these ranches during the Mugabe-ordained land invasions were a *"manifestation of erasing, in one violent act, the moral and legal universes inscribed by white Zimbabweans"* (ibid, pp 245). From this point of view, Mugabe is seen to

have deliberately latched on to the fact that CWM has arrived in Africa from the west, just like previous conservation and development programmes, in order to attack it and to be seen to 'free up' the land for Africans.

Similarly, Marks (1984) claims that LIRDP in Zambia is a system rooted in western conservation ideology which has invaded local African culture. He imagines this ideology to be like an 'imperial lion', those feared by Zambians for their being sent by witches to do harm:

"It is the lion of assumed privilege, of unwarranted access to another society's life sustaining resources and of interference in their liberty. Its genesis and sustenance comes from outside the continent which it roams...Its natural enemy is the lion of African culture... the lion of identity, of self-respect, of autonomy."

(Marks, 1984; pp 3)

Sustenance is here referring to the sustained contact between African and western stakeholders (remember those CPPPs and JVAs) which reinforces western ideals in the processes of CWM.

Having settled on the matter of its western origination and sustenance, it is now important to explore the western ways of perceiving animals, in particular wild animals, in order to place CWM in a cultural context.

6.2 Western culture and the animal kingdom: dominion and rationality

An ethic of opposition and dominion over animals can be said to have emerged 12,000 years ago during the neolithic revolution when animals were first domesticated but in western culture it has been developed like no other on earth (Serpell, 1986).

Western philosophy has ordered nature separate to and *underneath* human society since Aristotle's *scala naturae* placed animals as 'lesser reasoning creatures' under human-beings (Sorabji, 1993). This informed western cosmology through to mediaeval feudalism (God-Man-beast, in that order) and was even elaborated by 19th century Enlightenment philosophers such as Descartes who reckoned them as

'soulless automata' without speech or soul, conveniently legitimizing their subordination, utilization and death at the hands of Man (Thomas, 1983). In fact, Enlightenment actually exacerbated the subjection of animals to Man's dominion through the reification of rationality and science; natural science was only valid as a science through collecting, dissecting, caging and observing plants and animals: all dependent upon mastery over the animal subjects.

Western dominion over the natural world originates not only from philosophy but also Judeo-Christianity:

"The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hands they are delivered". (Genesis 9:2)

Upon these philosophical/religious foundations animals became subject (in all senses of the word) to Man's economic progression to modernity (modernity being an epoch of western culture marked by industrial capitalism). Tapper (1988) traces the advance of economic modes of production, from hunter-gatherer communism and reciprocal exchange, through to pastoralism, settled agriculture and finally urban-industry and argues that these various phases have attached certain human-human and human-animal sets of relations which reveal a dramatic incline of both human and animal exploitation. The contemporary phase, urban-industry, is characterized by factory/battery relations of mass production by which humans (the proletariat that is) are made into machine-like workers and animals into commodities, both to be managed by coldly rational means, devoid of sentiment. Using a Marxist terminology, Tapper asserts that humans and animals are as such 'disembedded' from natural relations and 'objectified'. For animals this means that the 'natural' in them is stripped away as they become 'supplies' to science laboratories and commodities, sold as food or entertainment (Arluke, 1994). This critique is a tragic portrayal of the severance of Man's connection with his neighbours and with the animal world alike at the hands of capitalism; in contrast to the kind of monism which was mentioned above, whereby traditional societies see themselves as part of nature, capitalism has irrevocably isolated Man from

nature, so the argument goes. In this context, new meanings are circulated in modern western society which denote this very isolation:

"The cultural processes of naming plant and animal sources of food depend on structures of meaning that have been created by advertising, agri-businesses and food distributors. Words such as 'meat', 'milk', 'carrots', 'lettuce' derive their meaning from images projected in supermarket advertisements and are almost totally disconnected from meanings that might derive from their natural contexts"

Harrod (2000; pp XXIV).

6.3 Constant paradox

This bleak portrait of western Man's severance from nature has, however, been necessarily contested by urban sociology in the last 20 years or so. We arrive at what Herzog (1993) calls the 'constant paradox' of western cultural attitudes to animals whereby they are not only viewed as objects to eat, serve or experiment upon but also as sentient, almost human-like beings. Whilst an ethic of dominion is accepted as deeply ingrained by religion, science, philosophy and capitalism, it is argued that emotional *empathy* towards animals is as vigorous as ever in western culture, indeed no less so than in traditional societies. This body of critique asserts that animals are *humanized* (anthropomorphized) as much as objectified in countless different ways and settings in western society.

Katcher and Beck (1991), for example, studied the position of pets in the American family and discovered that they were seen as family members, often surrogate children, with characters and histories bound up with the family itself. Wilkie (2005) likewise studied Scottish farmers' attitudes to livestock and found a pathetic ambivalence in their relationship: the animals at once 'stock' and at the same time 'companions' with whom the farmers would eventually have to send off to slaughter, having cared for them all their lives. And, in a setting where these contradictory forces of anthropomorphization and objectification are most acutely felt in the human conscience, the animal laboratory, Arluke and Sanders (1996)

found constant ambivalence in workers' attitudes to the animals, one moment 'data', the next sentient, loveable beings.

The anthropomorphization of animals is a proclivity which extends to wild animals as much as those under human control in western culture. Granfield and Colomy (2009) comment upon the 'murder' of Samson, a wild moose from a Colorado national park which/who was shot by a hunter and consequently grieved like a lost friend by the park workers and tourists who had before interacted peaceably with this famously inquisitive beast. Even a killer whale is ascribed a personality and emotions by its viewers in an aquarium (Davis, 1997). Wild animals are, therefore, very much included in this paradox of western culture; being as much loved/ascribed emotion as objectified/ controlled.

There seems here to be much continuity with traditional societies. In fact, as MacNaughten and Urry (1998) convey, wilderness is seen through western eyes as not only a field of scientific enquiry (dominion, opposition) but also as a *sacred* realm, full of spirituality. In extreme cases, this is evident in the quasi-religious soliciting of contact with wild animals (such as whales and dolphins) for the relief of chronic diseases. But more generally, the sacredness of wilderness is expressed by a longing for contact. The number of people visiting zoos on a daily basis in America outnumbers, unbelievably, all sporting events *combined*; the demand for wildlife media 'edu-tainment' is constant; and volunteer conservation efforts rise in volume year on year (Isenberg, 2002). It is hard to resist the assumption that this reappearance of wildlife in western mainstream conscience and the longing to spiritually reconnect with the wild is driven by guilt over its physical *dis*appearance (Lippit, 2000). And, as will now be shown, this reappearance in mainstream conscience has been facilitated by peculiarly modern forms of media representation.

6.4 The 'de-wilding' of the wild

Whilst there are elements of continuity between modern and traditional ways of perceiving wildlife, the ways of perceiving are entirely different. Whilst traditional societies have regular, tactile and direct experience with the natural world,

modernity is characterized by a *second-hand* experience which is channelled through media or staged display (Clarke, 1998). TV, film, advertisements, Disney, Zoos, safaris etc. all offer contact with nature but are nevertheless fundamentally *contrived* reproductions. As a result, Beardsworth and Bryman (2001) claim that people must harness 'virtual capital' to understand the natural world and to form expectations of what it must be like. And by its very nature virtual capital – sourced from media and performative 'live' experiences such as zoos and aquariums – is false and does not project wildness in its brutal reality but repackages it to suit the consumer. Wildness becomes sanitized, as these authors argue in a separate study of zoos:

"Once the wild has been commoditized in this way (perhaps most popularly in its African form) it becomes available for safe and easy consumption. By these means, even the dangerous and threatening aspects of 'wildness' are themselves sanitized and rendered harmless and entertaining. Zoos simultaneously commoditize wild animals and pander to public anxieties about the erosion of the natural world in the face of urbanization, industrialization and the spread of technology"

Beardsworth and Bryman (2009; pp 232)

Sax (1997) likewise criticizes the artificiality of zoos which display wild animals in paradisiacal enclosures and, by their design and monitoring, prevent the animals from being seen fighting, killing, eating other animals etc. because this is not suitable *entertainment.* And this is the point: wildlife has become a *theme,* stripped of its savagery and brought into consumer culture. These channels by which we experience wildness in modern society employ techniques of representation which help the viewers relate to wild animals; principally this means their thematic anthropomorphization. Zoos have clapping, kissing, waving, acting sealions and dolphins, as perhaps the most obvious example. Nature documentaries also

Plate 4: Commoditized African wildlife

humanize wildlife. For example, the editors of *Big Cat Diary* and *Meerkat Manor* are under pressure to make human characters and story-lines out of the wild animal families which they follow, not unlike the way soap operas do (Daston and Mitman, 2009). Whilst Disney and its ilk take this to a new level altogether, ingraining in children the fantastic humanness of wild animals in animated films.

The effect of this thematic anthropomorphization of wild animals is that the barrier between tame and wild has been rendered invalid. Sperling (1988) was the first to suggest this idea. She was an anthropologist who studied the social construction of wild animals, specifically the changing position of the great apes in the western 'socio-zoologic scale' (which shows how animals fit into a social, as opposed to phylogenetic, system). She found that powerful films such as *Gorillas in the Mist* (1988) and filmed scientific studies of chimp intelligence had dramatically shifted perceptions towards these animals so that instead of being wild and exotic they were all of a sudden tame and human-like. She stressed that this was a part of the wide-scale 'obliteration' of the boundary between wild and tame in western 20th century culture. Animals have been 'summoned' conceptually closer towards civilization/society/culture from their once distant post in the jungle/sea/ plains/mountains. Lawrence (1990) follows this lead and cites the prevalence of adopting wild animals as pets (in America today bears, big cats, pythons, alligators etc. are not uncommon pets) as a final act in the disintegration of the wild/tame dichotomy in western culture. This disintegration, it must be mentioned before going on, is part of a broader cultural phenomenon, characteristic of post-modernity, whereby meanings have become ever more fragmented, fluid and abstracted from their natural origin by the ubiquity and hegemony of imagery in contemporary western existence (cf. Baudrillard, 1983; Bauman, 1997).

6.5 CWM in the context of late modernity.

CWM can be seen as a product of these two paradoxical forces of modern cultural perceptions towards wild animals: the ethic of dominion and rationality and the late modern blurring of the wild/tame dichotomy.

The ethic of dominion and rationality is clear: wildlife is to be managed according to what are essentially agricultural best practice methods and marketed as commodities. Here is an arena where the logic of science and capitalism holds sway. The blurring of the wild/tame dichotomy is also evident in the way CWM uproots the wild animal from its post as truly wild and separate from the human domain - the rationale behind fortress conservation - and brings it into the sphere of human culture, specifically production and consumption. As Suzuki (2007; pp 229) refers to game ranching in Zimbabwe:

"[the concept of endangered wild] has been complicated by new forms of agrarian ranching that involve the production of wildlife. Seemingly contradictory by definition, the concept of 'producing wildlife' upsets traditionally understood boundaries between the wild and the domestic"

What can we read from this? Structuralism's underlying argument is that these traditionally understood semantic boundaries between things, people and animals compose culture. They inform how a people perceive the material world around them and contextualize themselves within it; essentially a language for the mind. In other words, interfering with the dichotomy of wild/tame is interfering with culture. And as will be shown in the following chapter, the significance of wild animals for Africans derives from their very wildness, as distinct from the domestic domain. Wild animals are also shown to be revered for their magic command *over* humans and their symbolic role in traditional forms of wildlife management which are intricately woven into broader social and belief systems.

CHAPTER 7

WILD ANIMALS IN AFRICAN CULTURES

7.1 The bush as a source of ontological origin and social identity

It is hard to overstate the symbolic power of the bush and all that live within it for rural-dwelling Africans. It is the polar opposite to the village or settlement, the domain of the un-human, of spirits and life-giving or life-taking powers which affect happenings in the human domain. By inhabiting this ghostly world, wild animals are viewed with special fear and reverence on account of their supernatural mystique as much as tooth and claw.

This reverence means that even the most practical tasks such as collecting wood, hunting for the pot, distributing meat etc. are commonly characterized by what Van Beek and Banga (1992) term a 'magico-religious ritual conversation'. Indeed, only the power of magic can allow for humans to negotiate, communicate with and interpret things and events from the wild. These anthropologists studied the Dogon of Mali and discovered that the bush was seen as at once spiritually dangerous and life-giving. The Dogon concept of 'oru' (wilderness) is sharply contrasted with '*ana*' (village) and is the source of all life, wisdom and power in the village. The daily flow of natural resources into the village, such as hunted game, collected wood and medicinal plants is perceived as part of *oru's* life-giving force. In fact, without this flow of things from the bush the Dogon believe that the village would disappear, starved of the invigorating power of *oru*. So, when the *Eaux et Forets* government officials arrive, fining the Dogon for what they perceive as improper exploitation of trees, they are received with patient

Plate 5: A minstrel-like 'hyena man' of Nigeria, especially feared for bringing the wild into the village

suffering and silent evasion; how can the Dogon avoid cutting the trees, how can they replenish the bush? *oru* is vital and it flows towards the village, not away. For this very reason the Dogon are naturally cautious about exploiting the bush:

"The Dogon may shape parts of it, enhancing their chances for survival and wealth but in changing things of the bush to things of men the truly fertile, life-giving aspects are lost. Whereas the bush means life, culture means entropy."

(Van Beek and Banga, 1992; pp 71).

This concept of the bush as a source of fertility and social reproduction is repeated in sub-Saharan cultures. For rural Malawians wild animals are said to confer upon the human world three life-generating powers: meat (*nyama*), activating medicines (*chizimba*) and *"by being closely identified with spirits of the dead and affinal males, as the essential source of fertility and thus the continuity of the kin group (village)"* (Morris, 2000; pp 121). Here the close association between men and the bush is evident: hunting, especially communal hunting (uzimba), is a cultural expression of 'the ideal of masculinity'. It is emphatically contrasted to horticulture, village life and women. In ceremonies men enact wild mammals, particularly Kudu, Roan and other antelope species, showing their wildness and opposition to women and the village which encapsulates a range of other dichotomies in Malawian rural culture:

Men (as affines)----------Women (blood)

Bush----------Village

Hunting----------Agriculture

Dry season----------Wet season

Ancestral Spirits----------Living people

Wild mammals----------Domestic mammals

Turner (1957) witnessed the same phenomenon amongst the Ndembu of Zambia. Their social system was 'pivoted upon the importance of hunting'. Men were embedded in highly ritualized relations with wild animals and the spirit world whilst

women carried the burden of agriculture and childcare. It is implied in such systems that men are somehow outside of society, supplying life to the matrilineal village from the wilderness – much in the same way as the *oru* life-force in Dogon cosmology.

If the act of traditional hunting symbolizes masculinity as a life-giving force, then its *organization* can be said to reflect the organization of more layered forms of social identity such as the lineage. Marks's (1984) study of the Bisa of the Luangwa valley in Zambia (incidentally where the LIRDP programme is now situated) revealed that the locus of traditional wildlife management was the descent group, as shown in this diagram and explained below.

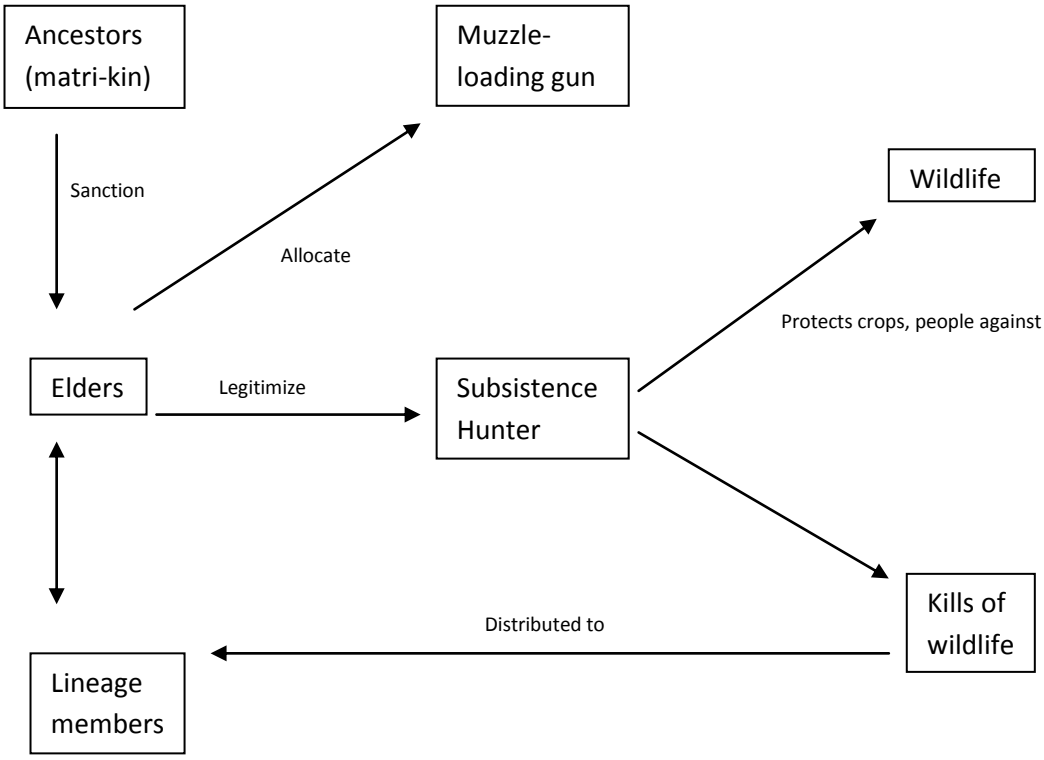

Diagram 1: The Bisa system of lineage-based wildlife management

With increasing state restrictions on communal hunting and the adoption of muzzle-loading guns early in the twentieth century, the guilds and fraternities which used to be the loci for Bisa wildlife management came to be replaced by individual hunters who were chosen by their matri-kin, specifically the elders of the

village. At first, these elders would interpret a hunter's dream about his future role as a hunter and through their knowledge of magic and their communication with deceased matri-kin they would then approve his status as a hunter and allocate the use of magically 'charmed' weapons and the type of quarry he was to hunt. The meat from the kill would then be distributed to lineage members. These formalities of recruitment to hunting were therefore the means by which Bisa society explicitly reaffirmed lineage norms and expectations.

The formalities of the *prohibition* of hunting also construct social identity in sub-Saharan cultures. For example, the Khoe Bushmen of Botswana associate themselves with certain totemic animal species (hippo, crocodile, lion etc.) which are believed to be the ancestors of large exogamous human groups such as the clan, or larger still the cognatic group (Barnard, 1992). And by being representative of the social group these species are protected from hunting by taboo. This kind of fictive kinship and mythologically ordained taboo towards wild animals exists among the Samburu of northern Kenya too. Elephants are believed to be 'ancient relatives' who once lived in the homes of the Samburu and worked with the women in their daily chores (Kuriyan, 2004). Those who belong to an elephant clan must pay special attention in to elephants in the wild, for example to throw dirt at the elephant and get a similar reply means that he or she may pass the elephant - his ancestor - without fear. Even coming across a dead elephant in the bush requires the same mortuary rites as would be paid to a dead member of the clan.

In summary, it is clear that for many rural African societies traditional hunting, and the prohibition thereof, is steeped in mythology and normative formalities which reproduce constructs of ontological origin (bush as fertility), gender (bush as the domain of men) and social identity (belonging to lineage, clan or cognatic group). And by being so intrinsic to cosmological and social order wild animals are commonly viewed with great fear and awe. This is clearly demonstrated by the widespread belief in the *magical* faculties of wild animals, here explored in more depth.

7.2 Magic animals: morality and teleology

In his dealings with the bush and its wild animals, the hunter must contend with watchful spirits who judge him at every turn. This is a recurring theme among southern Africa's Bantu peoples. Richards (1939) recounted how the Bemba of northern Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) believe that the killing of bushpig, bushbuck, rhino, eland or antbear results in the release of haunting, vengeful spirits (*ifibanda*). Likewise, the Gwembe Tonga, of the Zimbabwe/Zambia border, associate the elephant, hippo, eland, kudu and pangolin with spirits (*mizimu*) which have to be placated by medicine in order to prevent harm coming to the hunter and his kin (Scudder, 1962). In Malawi too, the spilt blood of a wild animal is seen as 'hot', just like an act of sex or madness, and magic medicines are used to make the hunter 'cold', thereby allaying the wrath of the ancestral spirits (*chirope*) and avoiding misfortune (*zobvutika*) (Morris, 2000). The vengeful power of the spilt blood of a wild animal has also been well documented in East Africa (Bauman, 1950).

In all of these cases discord with the wild animal/spirit – through lack of magic/respect – is symbolic of discord in human society. For example, as Morris shows, a hunter is thought of as 'hot' not only if he has spilt the blood of a wild animal without the proper application of magic but also if he has been quarrelling with neighbours or kin before the hunt. As Douglas (1963; pp 71) explains, from her study of the Lele:

"When people quarrelled they said the forest 'went hard', no game came to the hunters' arrows or traps... Men liked to go hunting confident of their standing with one another, all grievances aired and settled."

Wild animals are thus widely perceived by Africans as possessing powers of perception and judgement towards humans. If the proper norms are not shown in the village or in the bush, during the hunt, they will not offer themselves to be caught and consumed. This is particularly strongly felt among the Bushmen of Namibia and Botswana who, like other aboriginals, see wild animals as ancestors who willingly give themselves up as food and materials for the social reproduction

of the group so long as social norms and religious laws are paid heed before and during the hunt (Isaacson, 2004).

The moral power of animals lies not only in their perceiving of human actions but in their *being perceived*. In Africa, the sighting of a wild animal is often understood as a sign of good or evil which has or is about to come upon the community, as Kesby (2003; pp 226) explains:

"When an individual Rangi [of Tanzania] sees a spotted hyena he sees not only a picture in a text book or a sequence from a natural history film but he also sees obscenity, evil, witchcraft and incest. Similarly snakes and chameleons detonate a whole set of moral metaphysical responses."

From their physical and conceptual habitat - polar opposite to the village or settlement - wild animals fascinate and terrify which makes them such powerful moral symbols. Most terrifying of all for Africans is their appearance as witches or messengers of witches. In Mozambique, the Makonde peoples of the Mueda plateau interpret marauding lions and leopards as fabricated by sorcerers (*mwavi*) and sent to do harm to those with whom the sorcerers have grievances (West, 2005). The Makonde distinguish between the physically dangerous 'bush lions' and the magically dangerous 'fabricated lions' (*vantumi va kuvapika*), with the latter 'used' by witches to settle social problems. West tells of one such incident when the people of Kilimani village, having suffered repeated cattle raids by lions, attributed these raids to the malevolence of one man, a new-comer to the village. It turned out that this man was from a different matri-lineage to the majority in the village yet had been granted good land, which was viewed with envy by the local people. The village chief was approached and advised that this man was a witch and responsible for the raids. He was duly exiled.

The influence of witchcraft in this corner of Africa is deeply ingrained:

"For as long as living Muedans can remember sorcerers have masked their actions by transforming themselves into animals or by making animals do their bidding."

(ibid; pp 45)

Indeed witchcraft has resisted the Mozambican government's attempts to crack down upon 'obscurantist beliefs and practices' in rural communities. It is a much relied upon way of explaining occurrences in day-to-day life, for which wild animals play a key symbolic role.

This brief sketch of some of the better documented cultural perceptions of wildlife among the hunters, pastoralists and horticulturalists of the African savannah lands brings to attention three over-arching symbolic functions of wild animals in particular: the construction of i) ontological origin, ii) social identity and iii) normative and moral codes of conduct. Now it is necessary to attempt to locate the instances of cultural conflict, whereby these symbolic functions are being threatened by the introduction of CWM.

CHAPTER 8

THE INTERFACE OF WESTERN AND AFRICAN CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE WILD

8.1 Rationality vs. magic

As argued in chapter 6, CWM is grounded in modern ideology, in particular its emphasis on controlling wild animals by bringing them into the sphere of rational economic and management systems. Whilst the rationality of commercial wildlife production may add a valuable degree of realism to conservation in Africa, in terms of factoring in human poverty, it will now be argued that it can be at odds with the African cultural perceptions towards wild animals outlined in the last chapter.

First, we turn our attention back to witchcraft. The witchcraft beliefs of the Shona peoples of Zimbabwe and Mozambique constrain individual ambition; excessive wealth, selfishness, boasting, deceit etc. are likely to invoke the curse of a witch and are thus avoided (Gelfand, 1965). These witches, as documented elsewhere, transform themselves into wild animals or endow them with magic capabilities to do their bidding. This is where the irony of CWM's aspirations to implement the rational use and marketing of wild animals becomes clear. Entrepreneurship and capital accumulation through the use of wild animals - a cornerstone of CWM – are the same activities which are cursed by witches who send those same wild animals, albeit this time magic or 'fabricated', to trample crops, take livestock or even kill the ambitious individual or his kin, as punishment for his desire to get ahead. This irony highlights the conflict between rationality and magic which is at the interface of western and African cultures, as they meet in CWM joint-ventures and partnerships.

The rational use of animals rests upon the ethic of dominion which is ingrained in western culture. This ethic of dominion is reversed in those African cultural beliefs which acknowledge the power of animals to exact moral judgement and retribution upon humankind, a power feared beyond all rational sense. The ritual which

surrounds hunting, for example, is clear evidence that Africans often see themselves as *subject to* the will and magical danger of wild animals. Witchcraft is another, equally ubiquitous, indication of this fear: wild animals, as witches or witches' messengers, influence human individuals, their livelihoods, their kin, their state of mind. This is an ethic of subservience and seriously complicates the concept of controlling animals by rational means.

Now, it is important to note that African wildlife management systems are rational/practical as much as ritualized. Indeed the use of wild products for household needs, new in the vocabulary of western conservation, is second nature to rural-dwelling Africans. The difference is that under western management systems the ritual which accompanies the pragmatism is done away with and secular rationality supplants the far more symbolically loaded African systems which went before (Adams and McShane, 1992).

8.2 Market exchange vs. the sociality of wildlife.

The significance of ritual in wildlife management is that it connects an otherwise mundane activity to the wider social systems of the group. Marks (1984; pp 15) understood this to be a central problem for CWM in Africa:

"Because the conventional approach specializes in the study and exploitation of wild animal populations within the context of Northern industrial culture it ignores the social malleability of wildlife resources within the cultural and cognitive frameworks in African societies... affecting the durability of management programmes."

What had once been a management process which linked men to ancestral spirits, elders and other lineage members – with wild animals the symbolic currency – had come to be replaced by strange western phenomena such as joint-venture partnerships, committees, workshops etc. Added to this, young hunters were being encouraged to engage in enterprise with wild animals and products and establish new networks of market exchange with towns and cities which undermined the traditional lineage-based social system and fuelled individualization:

"In recent years these transactions [cash exchanged between government employees and local hunters for meat or guided hunts] have meant that increasing numbers of animals killed locally are diverted from the exchange system of the lineage to the market for cash... benefitting a few while many receive nothing. Class formation begins with individuals enhancing and promoting the inequalities of new economic and political circumstances."

(Marks, 1984; pp 104)

This replacement of the lineage-based exchange of wild animals by that of the market is an emphatic sign of cultural disturbance. Take, for example, the zebra. The Bisa used to prohibit the hunting of zebra due to its anomalous position in a taxonomy of wild animals which was based upon distinct colours. Together with the eland and the kudu, the zebra was placed in a taxonomic category (*vizemba*) which ensured their protection by taboo. Sickness would fall to the hunter who killed a zebra. Under the new management systems however, young hunters would kill a zebra knowing that they could receive commission from a paying client or personally sell the hide for over $100 in outside markets.

This semantic re-positioning of the zebra epitomizes the cultural disturbance which is incurred by the introduction of modern wildlife management schemes. On that scale of wildness, the zebra has shifted towards game/livestock (tamed) from its post as a once mysterious wild creature. The zebra all of a sudden loses its symbolic value (taboo) and gains an economic value ($), contributing to 'normative collapse' in Bisa society.

Snyder (2005) witnessed a similar situation amongst the Iraqw of Tanzania. Whilst Agro-pastoralism and the subsistence economy were associated with tradition, producing for the market was seen by the Iraqw as distinctly modern. Cash crops such as coffee, wheat and exotic tree species, together with the market trade of cows and pigs represented 'things of the present' (*mambo ya kisasa*) whilst all other forms of production, such as that for the household, and informal intra-communal exchange were labelled 'things of the past' *(mambo ya zamani)*. Snyder argues that these modern forms of market exchange were fragmenting Iraqw

society not only by excluding those who are not willing/able to sign up to it (elders generally suspicious and women more obliged to traditional modes of production) but also by dismantling the system of informal exchange which symbolized Iraqw unity and identity. Loans of cows and black wattle trees and regular donations of milk between households used to denote kinship and neighbour relations between Iraqw settlements but these exchanges were seen to be dying out in lieu of formal trade. The Mbulu District Rural Development Programme (MRDP), funded by the Dutch government, was encouraging ownership of modern breeds of cows, to be controlled under modern systems of fencing and management, for trade with coastal buyers. This kind of market formalization undermined the *symbolic sociality* of natural resources - the expression of social relations and norms through use and exchange - and nurtured individualization and selfishness (*ubinafsi*).

8.3 Cultural decay

The idea that African cultures are being dismantled by new forms of natural resource management like CWM is a tempting one. Certainly the old fortress model of conservation had catastrophic effects for the social and cultural consistency of African rural communities. The pathological apathy and sense of doom among the Ik of Uganda is put down to their land being taken away from them for the creation of a national park and subsequent sense of cosmological disorientation (Turnbull, 1972). Similarly, the creation of the Tsavo national park in Kenya caused the decay of Waliangulu culture, once pivoted upon elephant hunting (Gomm, 1974).

CWM has vestiges of this 'fortress effect'. For instance, if we recall from chapter 3, it was noted that the bias towards commercial wildlife use over traditional use - most obvious in the leasing of village lands to tourism and hunting outfitters - severely limits the rights of villagers to hunt and gather for household or community. Whilst they stand to receive benefits in cash or infrastructure the villagers cannot connect like they used to with the bush. This is particularly poignant when one considers the symbolism of 'bush as fertile'. But CWM does more than that; it alters systems of meanings towards wild animals by their domestication and the rationalization of management. Wildlife and other natural

resource management is closely interwoven with the social and cultural fabric - the norms, beliefs, values, morals, myths and identities - of African rural peoples and the introduction of new, modern systems can rupture this fabric from the inside out.

Of course, culture is a dynamic process but if the change is so sudden and imposed by an external force, there is a very real risk of cultural decay:

"If, because of governmental intervention, foreign development policies or extended changes in weather patterns, the change happens very suddenly, people do not have time to make the changes in emotional response to symbols. They face a loss of meaningful denotational symbol... At worst, life can lose meaning for individuals and societies can lose the bonds that hold them together."

(Swantz, 1995; pp 59)

Traditional peoples' practical and mythical experiences towards nature are over all shared and homogenous and, consequently, the symbolic values of flora and fauna are relatively stable compared to those of urban industrial settings where there are many conflicting and fluid systems of meanings borne out of cultural diversity (Holzner, 1968). It makes sense, therefore, that if these experiences are rapidly altered, or indeed denied, in traditional societies then cultural transformation and possibly fragmentation will follow.

8.4 Resistance

The idea of CWM as culturally destructive has to be tempered by some important considerations. Firstly, the African peasant is famous for resisting such external initiatives if they do not comply with their way of doing things. Risk is lethal in poor parts of Africa and often externally conceived programmes fail because they are too far removed from previous modes of existence. Referring to two failed development schemes (irrigation and coconut-planting) in the Tanga region of Tanzania, Ingle (1972; pp 60) explains why:

"Gradually it was recognized that the central reason for low production in the rural areas and general rural under-development and poverty was not the colonial experience, not the whims of nature, not the will of God (shauri la mungu) but the unwillingness of the peasant farmer to alter his accustomed behaviour... In fairness to the African farmer, however, his stubbornness in the face of demands for change was more accurately laid to the fact that his survival was so close to basic existence that there was simply little or no room for risk."

African peasants are unique in that they largely remain owners of their own means of production - unlike the exploited peasantry of say Eastern Europe or Latin America - and this makes them remarkably independent and often successful in resisting state and donor efforts to 'modernize' them (Hyden, 1980). They are said to operate an 'economy of affection' whereby capitalist development may be shunned in favour of kinship and communal support networks. This could be another reason why enterprise in CWM is generally lagging (refer back to chapter 3) and must also be included as a caveat in this discussion of the possibility of cultural decay.

Another very important consideration here is the profound reverence shown by many rural African communities towards traditional modes of interacting with wildlife which express a sense of African solidarity and *defiance* against all manner of external impositions and threats. This is a major theme of Lan's (1990) *Guns and rain: guerrillas and spirit mediums in Zimbabwe* which conveys how, during the long post-Independence civil war in Rhodesia (1965-79), the ZANU-PF guerrillas saw victory against the white-run state as dependent upon their abiding by those strict taboos and moral guidelines of the bush:

"Whilst on active service within the borders of Zimbabwe, the guerrillas were not allowed to have sexual intercourse, they were not allowed to kill wild animals in the forest and they were not allowed to eat certain foods. These ritual prohibitions were imposed upon them by spirit mediums. It was believed that, by observing them, the guerrillas would protect themselves from the dangers of war and increase their chances of victory."

(ibid; pp 5)

As is common amongst the Shona peoples of southern Africa, wild animals are closely associated with ancestral spirits (*mhondoro*) and, through the use of magic by spirit mediums, are believed to assist the Shona in matters of war and other types of conflict. This kind of ritual interaction with wildlife is felt to be the quintessence of belonging to the Shona peoples and not belonging to the white state. These intimate links between the magico-religious beliefs in wild animals, a sense of African selfhood, and defiance against external upheaval, highlight the robust cultural barriers which may confront any damaging effects that the imposition of CWM brings.

This brings us on to the durability of indigenous beliefs towards wild animals in the face of external social and political change. Rural China offers a very helpful comparison here. Coggins (2003; pp 247) traces the history of conflict between traditional Chinese animal mythology and state utilitarian conservation ideologies and discovers that the former had largely withstood the latter:

"Communist party propaganda has promoted science and industry and debunked the supernatural. My discussions with hunters in Meihuashan indicated that although wild animals have been trapped, hunted, denounced as enemies, butchered and sold in markets and pharmacies, they have yet to be de-mythologized"

In China the process of 'desacralization' of wild animals began in the late 19th century when western missionaries arrived and sought to eradicate the 'childish superstitions' of rural Chinese communities and show them how controllable wildlife was (see here the dominion effect). Villagers' felt a 'deep cosmological affinity' with tigers especially and there were tiger cults and beliefs in were-tigers which impinged upon the management of the forests. This was an obstacle for both the work of missionaries (-hunters-naturalists) and later, in the mid twentieth century, the CCP (China Communist Party) 'pest-control mandate', a grand Maoist doctrine which stipulated ruthless control over nature to serve the needs of The People. However, despite these ideological offensives, the myths surrounding wild

animals and forests have largely been held in place. On Fengshui, a way of regarding the natural world which promotes harmony between it and society, Coggins (pp 205) writes:

"Contrary to expectation, Fengshui is still part of daily life. Trees, the living symbols of communal Fengshui ideology have largely withstood the barrage of political movements... The forests and groves still hold tremendous aesthetic and symbolic power in village identity and collective memory."

The profound mythical reverence which the Chinese continue to show towards nature is such that it overshadows global, secular conservation efforts. In fact, these two forces, secular conservation and supernatural Chinese beliefs, are fighting a battle on the plains of Africa ('Horns, claws and the bottom line'; *The Economist,* September 4-10, 2010). Seven kilos of African rhino horn is now worth $250,000 in Guangzhou. This is because, for the Chinese, the ingestion of animal parts such as rhino horn, tiger teeth, shark fin etc. is symbolic of 'natural power in its purest form' and a means of connecting to the cosmos. Considering that the symbolic value of wildlife is here the nemesis of western conservation efforts in Africa, it is all the more perplexing that African symbolism towards wild animals is often overlooked in the implementation and study of management schemes.

This is where anthropology, by perceiving natural resource management 'from the shadows' (the symbolic facets, as opposed to ecological or economic) and alerting conservation and development practitioners to the potency of indigenous cultural perceptions towards the natural world, may be the strongest arm of resistance against cultural decay within environmental programmes such as CWM. For instance, the anthropologist advises environmentalists that the symbolism and collective ritual of indigenous natural resource management can be a *tool* for development, rather than an obstacle or triviality.

8.5 Culture as a tool

Despite most decisions being made at the individual or household level, there is an over-arching unity in Maasai society which brings individuals together for important

communal decisions on grazing, ceremonial events, raids etc. which is borne out of the shared demands of pastoralism (Spencer, 1988). This cultural trait complements community-based conservation since it too demands effective communal decision-making, as has been demonstrated during their participation in the cooperative management of the Amboseli national park:

"...to an important degree, the cohesiveness of traditional Maasai society made and continues to make consensus possible and binding. The collective memory and obligation of the Maasai was far greater than that of government officers... As these officers came and went, the Maasai collective commitment endured."

(Western, 1994; pp 47)

Added to this, numerous studies have revealed that Maasai pastoralist economy does not damage the ecology of the plains (desertification) as it was once believed (cf. Homewood and Rodgers, 1991). Pastoralism may even *improve* biological diversity (Scholes and Walker, 1993).

Such is the congruence between Masaai culture and conservation. To the anthropologist this is no surprise; like other indigenous peoples the Maasai have been practising conservation - limiting the access to and exploitation of resources – by practical and ritual means for many thousands of years (Croll and Parkin, 1992). Whereas conservation has risen relatively recently in mainstream western conscience, as a knee-jerk survival impulse responding to a dwindling natural world, in these aboriginal societies conservation *is* survival. And over these thousands of years the practical origins of conservation have become ever more embedded in the broader cultural context. Here Stoffle's et al. (2003) diachronic model of human resource adaptation is helpful. These authors imagine a small group of people settling to live in a particular environment. At first, mistakes are made and resources over- or under-exploited but by the 5th generation a relatively successful mode of existence has been found through trial and error. As time goes on, sustainable forms of natural resource use become accepted as efficient for the purposes of group reproduction and normalized into 'tradition'. By the

15th generation, or thereabouts, the *raison d'etre* of these forms of natural resource use - survival - becomes hazy but is nevertheless represented in faith:

"The rules for engaging with the environment are now well tested and those rules which have repeatedly proven useful for maintaining and improving the productivity of the environment are increasingly defined as sacred and not subject to debate."

(Stoffle et al. 2003; pp 104)

By the 50th generation (~1250 years), a plethora of super-natural beliefs towards the environment constitute a religious system which is indistinguishable from the system of practical management of resources, a kind of 'confluence of science and religion'. Although this is highly deterministic, it is nevertheless a useful explanation as to how sustainable natural resource use becomes so culturally embedded and ritualized in indigenous societies.

In the last two decades there has been a growing consensus that Northern conservation must tap into indigenous peoples' unparalleled harmony with and knowledge of the natural world by learning from their near perfect models of sustainable natural resource use (Durning, 1992). Part of this consensus is the ideal of harnessing indigenous culture for development and conservation means: *"culture itself should be considered a resource, to be preserved and sustained, transferred and used"* (Kleymeyer, 1994; pp 324). Thus, culture becomes a tool to work *with* not against, much like in the Amboseli example above.

This is the hope for CWM. And where decision-making is effectively devolved and the indigenization imperative strong, as in Botswana and Namibia, this hope is more likely to be realized since traditional cultural beliefs and practices have more sway than in the more externally-driven, top-heavy schemes. This *might* be one of the reasons why CWM is generally running more effectively in these pace-setter countries.

The problem with this idea that traditional culture should be a tool for CWM is that it must contend with the bare market rationality which is so embedded within this particular neoliberal project. It is hard to see how the sociality and magic

significance of wild animals can sit alongside the idea that they are to be used for profit. Surely one side must give; magic or market. Now, of course, African rural cultures are 'syncretic constructions of old and new' (Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2004) and I am in no way suggesting that magic is *better* than market or vice versa, only that is essential to acknowledge the tension between the two and the possibility of damage to the old at the hands of the new.

At this stage it is necessary to investigate how the market approach is generated and maintained as a discourse. By doing this we expose the processes of knowledge/power inherent within CWM and generally raise the critical bar.

PART 3

DISCIPLINING AFRICA: A FOUCAULDIAN CRITIQUE OF CWM

Introducing part 3

Post-structuralism, the philosophy which underpins this final part of the essay, is altogether more polemical than its predecessor, structuralism. Indeed, it is explicitly political in its purpose. Whereas structuralism pays attention to the fixed structures of meaning within a text or culture, post-structuralism is concerned with the fluidity of signification and the manipulation of meanings by powerful factions in society. Late modernity is seen as an era in which signifiers - words and connotations – float free from and reign over their referents in reality (signified/denotations) and this has spawned new forms of power which post-structuralism seeks to identify.

French philosophers have been at the forefront of post-Structuralism; Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes all contributed greatly, in their own particular ways, during the post-War era. But the works of Michel Foucault, in particular *Discipline and Punish* (1977), are perhaps the most celebrated and influential of all. Despite the fact that he didn't like the tag of 'post-structuralist' at all (preferring to associate himself with Kant and Nietzsche), Foucault is acknowledged as inspirational to contemporary post-structuralism (Rouse, 1994). For Foucault, just as there are systems and rules which are necessary to make a text readable (alphabet, syntax etc.) or culture navigable (language, norms, myths etc.) - here the debt to structuralism is clear - so too are there systems and rules which govern any particular *discourse*.

What is a discourse? The moment many parties begin to comment on, analyze, argue over, conclude about a particular thing, concept or event, a discourse has emerged (or re-emerged if it existed in another historical setting). It is a dynamic process of *representation* whereby the meaning of the thing, concept or event is fought over by many different parties. This contest (re)creates statuses, roles and hierarchies in society and is said to be the negotiation of power. People are *situated* within a discourse by virtue of their socio-economic standing, their curriculum vitae, their belonging to an institution, their conformity to certain codes of communication and practice, and their skilful expression and use of knowledge. These are the rules of the discourse which constrain individual agency. Take for

example, as Foucault did, the discourse of madness. Whilst doctors, judges, politicians, priests et al. contribute effectively to the discourse through their pertaining institutions and professional qualifications, the lunatic has little or no say. He is therefore situated below the 'experts' who *discipline* by knowledge and the expression thereof.

The aim of part 3 is to understand CWM as a discourse which situates its subjects. Reflecting the definition above, it concentrates on i) the processes of representation in neoliberal conservation and ii) how these processes create, and are created by, a global environmental hierarchy. To do this, a range of Marxist and Foucauldian post-structuralist critique on conservation and development in Africa, and from across the world, is applied.

Accordingly, part 3 is split into two chapters.

Chapter 9 examines western representations of the African savannah lands and how these influence the course of development and conservation programmes. The CWM discourse is shown to mark a dramatic turn-around in the representation of rural Africa but this is as far as it goes; reality remains the same for rural communities and wildlife populations, if not worse.

Chapter 10 is an exploration into how knowledge/power manifests itself in the politics of 'enviro-governance'. These new forms of governance are shown to damage the bonds between the African citizen and state and, ultimately, to serve the interests of a new international environmental elite.

CHAPTER 9

THE SEMIOTIC CONQUEST OF AFRICA

9.1 From crisis to opportunity: a U-turn in the representation of rural Africa

In the western imagination, Africa is a 'spoiled Eden', ravaged by human and environmental tragedies, ranging from famine and genocide, to desertification and poaching (Leach and Mearns, 1996). The leitmotif for the entire continent is one of crisis and decay (Watts, 1989). This powerful, despairing image, fuelled by academic and media reports from the continent, has had two effects upon rural development in Africa. The first is that human and environmental problems are quickly exaggerated into full-blown crises and the second is that the blame falls readily upon African people. These two effects have precipitated disastrously misguided interventions. In the case of environmental 'crises', the examples are not hard to find.

Nash and Luttrell (2006), for example, cite the 'wood fuel crises' of the 1970s and '80s in East Africa as being just such a case. Disparate reports of the decline of wood resources on village lands were eventually consolidated into a 'crisis' of over-exploitation by rural African communities which received frenzied attention from international NGOs, donors, scientists, conservation planners etc. It turned out that there was no such crisis – or at least nowhere near to the scale feared - and Africans were surprisingly adept at managing woodlands sustainably. Not only this, the large-scale response was ineffectual; the introduction of formal woodlot programmes ignored household requirements and were themselves largely ignored as a result. Hoben (1996) likewise points out that Ethiopia has suffered droughts since time immemorial, yet repeatedly the blame falls on backward farming practices and, once again, the subsequent programmes established to improve these practices have utterly failed. As a final example, Brockington and Homewood, (1996) have shown how African pastoralists have been stigmatized in conservation

circles by an image of them as 'acting out a tragedy of the commons' by over-grazing the land, causing soil erosion and thicket encroachment, over-breeding their precious cows etc. It turns out that this is mostly wrong and that the schemes to halt traditional pastoralist practices tend to do more harm than good for both the land and the people.

Adams and McShane (1992) argue that fortress conservation was haunted by this same 'romantic European myth' that the African savannah is a primeval wilderness that has to be protected from being spoiled by rural-dwelling Africans. This myth hid the reality that Africans have managed their wildlife for millennia and, in the exactly the same way as those examples above, precipitated a top-heavy conservation strategy which had disastrous consequences for both African communities and wildlife.

As CWM usurped the old fortress model, however, it shot down this myth to place the African in Eden, not as its spoiler but as its guardian. This principle, together with the boundless optimism of neoliberalism, set in motion an astonishing reversal in the representation of rural Africa. The imagery of tragedies and crises which has historically shackled Africa and shaped development strategy has slipped from environmental and development discourses (McAfee, 1999). CWM has heralded a new era, one of optimism and faith in Africans to manage well their resources. Now Eden is not so much spoiled as democratically managed. There is no longer crisis, only economic *opportunity*, embodied in the representational shift of the commercialization of wildlife from 'poaching' to 'entrepreneurship'.

This representational u-turn must surely be seen as a sea-change in African rural development? Not only does it release the African hunter, peasant or pastoralist from those negative associations of resource exploitation to celebrate instead his proactive role in resource management but it also puts an end to the gross exaggerations of crises and the subsequent top-heavy interferences which have historically plagued African livelihoods.

Unfortunately, however, empirical studies reveal that these representations of opportunity deceive just as those of crisis used to. Indeed, this was the recurring theme in part 1 which showed how the promises of CWM often fail to materialize at ground level, be it for reasons of mistrust, greed or incompetence by the private and/or state sectors. Here is an extract from a study by Igoe and Croucher (2007; pp 2) of the Tanzanian WMA system which helps to remind ourselves of this mismatch between the 'vision' and reality of neoliberal conservation in Africa:

> *"The idea that WMAs give communities ownership of natural resources, along with the legal authority to manage them, resonates with the current priorities and discourses of global governance and human rights agendas... This vision is also consistent with large landscape conservation which emphasises the importance of conserving entire eco-systems as opposed to patches of protected areas... And finally, making communities business partners resonates with neoliberal development models which hold that the key to poverty alleviation is the global spread of free-markets. When viewed in this way the vision of WMAs is indeed an appealing one. It presents a scenario in which there are many winners and no apparent losers... Unfortunately, our research revealed a very different reality, in which simultaneously presenting nature conservation, economic growth and community prosperity does not lead to the types of exciting synergies outlined above. Almost all the local people we interviewed held that the Burunge WMA was planned and implemented behind their back and against their will. Moreover, they saw it as part of a suite of conservation interventions that exacerbated their poverty through direct alienation of the natural resources upon which they depend."*

For these authors the rhetoric of opportunity within the CWM discourse blinds casual observers to its reality of confusion, conflict and oppression. The positive images of enterprise and democracy shroud the continuing distrust of local-level management and, as will be examined more closely in the next chapter, the expropriation of village lands by a conservation elite. In fact, this study revealed

that Africans are being excluded from wildlife management to the same degree as happened under the fortress conservation model.

Similarly, from his studies in the rainforests of west Africa, Oates (1999) argues that the images of sustainable and equitable use of wildlife which are evoked in the CWM discourse betray the reality that rural 'communities' exist in a state of flux, composed of migrant labourers and opportunistic hunters who do not have any emotional ties to the land (such as are imagined by the proponents of CWM) but rather exploit wildlife as and when it is available. Interestingly, he argues that CWM itself owes much to another European myth, one which contradicts that of a spoiled Eden to idealize the African community in harmony with itself and the surrounding wild animals*. This myth of Arcadian harmony is seen to have been stirred up by the CWM discourse in order to legitimize economic development alongside conservation and allow those who 'relish administration and politics', as much as the aesthetic value of nature, to involve themselves in conservation programmes. And in being stirred up this myth inevitably conceals the reality that wildlife may suffer terribly for being included in the market-place:

"...there are serious flaws to the theory that wildlife can best be conserved through promoting human economic development. It is a powerful myth that has made all those involved in its formulation feel good...It seems to provide the best of several worlds: both wildlife and people would benefit. In reality though, the approach has had disastrous consequences for many wildlife populations. Most important, it has led all concerned to assign low priority to basic protection efforts that might be considered 'anti-people."

(ibid; pp xv)

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*Norton (1996) discovered this same myth in the realm of safari tourism in East Africa, where the Maasai are perceived by tourists to be part of the wild, a kind of 'cultural adjunct' to the entertainment of safari.

9.2 What the post-structuralist reads

For the post-structuralist, this u-turn in the representation of Africa is notable only because it highlights the 'hegemony of image over reality', to use Gramsci's (1991) expression. There has been no sea-change in African development, the only change is those who are doing the *representing* and how they are doing it. The technocrats and preservationists used to represent Africa as a spoiled Eden in order to legitimize their interference in her resources:

"Crisis narratives are the primary means whereby development experts and the institutions for which they work claim rights to stewardship over land and resources they do not own. By generating and appealing to crisis narratives technical experts and managers assert rights as 'stake-holders' in the land and resources they say are under crisis."

(Roe, 1995; pp 1066).

Now it is the neoliberals who represent Africa as a bounty of opportunity in order to legitimize their interference in her resources (Abrahamsen, 2000). Exactly how the neoliberals are interfering is the subject of the next chapter.

Of course, it is not only the land that is represented but the people and animals too. It is helpful here to imagine the CWM discourse as a play in which these plots of crisis and opportunity have a set of characters, each with their own statuses and obligations (being a form of representation, a play is actually a very good analogy). Again, there is nothing in the representational formula that has changed here, it is still the African villager who is *being labelled* by a group of conservation and

development experts; whereas his role used to be poacher/villain, now it is participant/hero. Like the creation of narratives, labelling works to simplify the infinitely complex and varied reality of natural resource management across sub-Saharan Africa. The 'community', the 'villager', the 'pastoralist' etc. are labels which reduce the panoply of statuses and livelihood strategies on the ground into manageable units of representation. These labels are what Hirschman (1968) calls 'enabling assumptions' which get development done quicker and easier. But of greater significance to the post-structuralist, this simple act of labelling *"reveals the relationship of power between the giver and the bearer of the label*" (Wood, 1985; pp 11). Despite the fact that the African's role in the opportunity narrative of CWM is a pro-active one, it is still he who is being assigned it whether he likes it or not. The same can be said of the animals; they have become subject to the new market parlance of 'commodities' or 'assets', to suffer whatever the consequences of that may be.

Continuing with this play analogy, it is argued by perhaps the most outspoken Foucauldian critic of development, Escobar (1995), that these forms of representation – the images, myths, narratives and labelling – do not simply obscure the social and environmental reality of the third world but actually *produce* the third world for the consumption/contemplation of the first world. CWM, in this light, could be described as what Escobar calls a 'semiotic conquest of social life by expert discourse'. Following previous rural development discourses, it has produced Africa by these techniques of representation in order to situate it below and therefore *dependent* upon the first world. Here is the nub of Escobar's dependency theory which sees the world's poor not as undeveloped, but rather *under*developed by the North which vindicates its interference in the social, economic, political and ecological systems of the South by projecting certain images. This echoes Said's (1979) famous argument that the Orient has been produced by strangely uniform and repetitive representations in western media, literature and art in such a way that i) obscures and distorts its reality and ii) allows for the Orient to be *managed* by the west:

"Without examining orientalism as a discourse we cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – even produce – the orient politically, sociologically, idealogically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period"

(Said, 1979; pp 3)

If the Foucauldian critiques of Escobar and Said are anything to go by, it can be argued that CWM is an expert discourse which *manages* Africans, both semiotically and politically. The next chapter examines the new forms of political governance which the CWM discourse has enabled but there is one last feature of a semiotic conquest that is of interest before moving on.

9.3 Decontextualization and the disqualification of local knowledge

There is more to a semiotic conquest than deception; it is not only reality that is conquered but other smaller knowledge systems, a phenomenon known as 'decontextualization'. Decontextualization is a Marxist term which was first adopted in anthropology by Rappaport (1968) in his seminal *Pigs for the ancestors*. It refers to the subordination or subsumption of local, implicit meanings by a grand over-arching knowledge system, typically capitalism and/or science.

Neoliberal conservation relies upon the rationality of capitalism and science and as such decontextualizes "*by eclipsing the non-objectifiable, implicit local meanings and replacing them with an over-arching logic such as utility... [which] dissolves local codifications and practices in resource management"* (Hornborg 1992, quoted in Hornborg, 1996; pp 53). According to Ellis (2003), conservation-development projects are a form of neo-colonialism in the way they arrogantly ride roughshod over myths, religions and other types of tacit knowledge which are the bedrock of traditional cultures to assert the legitimacy of western science and capitalism. Nadasdy (2005) agrees having witnessed how local knowledge gets overlooked even in the most democratic of CWM schemes. From his observations of the co-management of Dall Sheep shared between the Kluane First Peoples and the

Canadian state, Nadasdy found that the former always had to succumb to the Euro-Canadian way of thinking about the mountains and the sheep. Kluane knowledge was, on the other hand, debunked as superstition:

"When First Nation people make arguments based on their conception of animals as intelligent, social and spiritual beings they get nowhere because government biologists and resource managers simply cannot implement management decisions based on such alternate conceptions of animals"

(ibid; pp 226)

For example, the Kluane peoples believe that old Dall rams were 'teachers' to the younger Dall sheep in exactly the same way as elders are in Kluane society. For this reason the Kluane argued that they were to be protected. But Canadian biologists and hunters argued that these rams were ready to cull and that the claims of the Kluane were not 'truly scientific'. It is not difficult to guess which side won this debate and had their way with the Dall rams.

As Dubois (1991) comments, co-management conservation discourses not only disqualify 'other knowledges' but, to use Foucault's expression, *discipline* indigenous societies by forcing upon them new vocabulary and techniques for communicating with the natural world. Novellino (2003), in his study of regional conservation programmes in the Phillipines, witnessed how the Batak people were disciplined in this way. The Batak believe that humans and non-humans share 'kiaruwa', roughly translated as will or agency, and as a result understand environmental problems as social problems (another example of monism, as mentioned in part 2). But western conservationists weighed in and wanted the Batak to understand that nature was separate from society and that it was poor technology and practice which were the causes behind environmental degradation. By 'rationalizing the landscape' western conservation, Novellino argues, enacts a kind of 'idealogical disempowerment' upon the Batak, conquering indigenous knowledge in the process. This is in line with Henkel's and Stirrat's (2001) theory

that ‘empowerment’ in development can be read as the ‘subjection’ of the world’s poor to ‘the great project of the modern’, persuading them to become rational, global consumers and leave their cultures behind.

So how do these examples of decontextualization apply to CWM in Africa? They help us predict what the effects of neoliberal conservation ideology - with its foundations in science and capitalism - might have upon all those traditional sub-Saharan African beliefs in wild animals which were presented in part 2. Surely these beliefs will suffer the same fate as those of the Batak? Surely the community-public-private partnerships (CPPPs) will suffer from the same biases and arrogant assumptions that the Kluane peoples found in their dealings with their ‘partners’, the Canadian state? This has yet to be explored, at least from the readings covered, and would be an interesting case for further study.

Despite its inadequacies, fortress conservation did not intend to interfere with traditional knowledge systems; they were pushed aside and left alone, together with the park-adjacent communities. CWM, on the other hand, pushes science and capitalism towards the soft cores of rural African cultures which hold those implicit, locally understood meanings of the land and wild animals. In other words, CWM can be said to be an extremely effective form of decontextualization.

But if CWM really is a discourse that produces and manages the African savannah lands whilst conquering indigenous knowledge, then it must be asked, *to what ends*? The next and final chapter will attempt to answer this, exploring CWM as a form of ‘enviro-governance’.

CHAPTER 10

CWM AS GEOPOWER

10.1 The rise of an ecocracy

'New conservation' in Africa, in which CWM plays the lead role, has distanced itself from amenity recreation – entertaining the first world – by focusing instead on the restructuring of societies (Singh and Houtum, 2002). This restructuring goes even further than democratic empowerment and economic liberalization, to include peace between nations and cultural renaissance even, as promised by the recent trans-frontier conservation areas (TFCAs) in southern Africa (Griffen, 1999). In fact, it could reasonably be argued that conservation has become distracted from its own priorities in its excitement towards developing African communities and nations. This chapter exposes who is doing the restructuring and what lies beneath the rhetoric of 'good governance' which envelops CWM.

At the time when CWM was growing into a global force, Sachs (1993; pp XV) observed the appearance of a new kind of politician, the ecocrat:

"In recent years a discourse on global ecology has developed that is largely devoid of any consideration of power relations, cultural authenticity and moral choice, instead it rather promotes the aspirations of a ruling ecocracy to manage nature and regulate people worldwide."

The ecocracy is an international elite who collect, produce and advertise scientific information on the environment and with this information discipline third world states and communities (Singh, 2001). It is composed of self professed 'new resource economists' and global scientists who carry out a form of 'enviro-

governance' or, as Luke (1995) puts it, 'geo-power' which operates by new forms of representation of the natural world. For example, terms such as 'natural resources', normalised in the fallout of the Rio Summit in 1992, have served to bring nature into a market and management paradigm and ultimately into the hands the ecocracy, so it is argued.

In the blur of the sustainable development discourse, environmentalism *is* development and environmental experts have gained unprecedented access to the political structures of third world societies (Kottak, 1999). Yet this entry to Southern politics is disguised under the depoliticized banner of environmentalism. Remember that the environment is strictly separated from Man in western cosmology and trees, rivers and wild animals are conceptually detached from politics. At least that is how the environment is represented by the ecocracy.

10.2 The anti-politics machine

This critique is influenced by Ferguson (1994) and his idea of development as an 'anti-politics machine'. Anti-politics here describes the way development puts itself forward itself in explicitly apolitical terminology which hides its intensely political manoeuvring in the South. It is argued by these critics of new conservation that the seeming political neutrality of conservation obfuscates the exertion of political control by the ecocracy (Bebbington, 2005; Mosse, 2004). Conservation is an easy way to do politics because practically everybody supports the idea. To use Büscher's (2010) expression, conservation 'lubricates' politics yet is off the political radar, which explains how the ecocracy operate such a shady yet effective form of it. The irony of course is that new conservation now has more stakeholders than ever before – each with their own interests, agendas, principles, livelihoods and cultures - and is, as a result, politically charged like never before, as Büscher (2010) explains in his study of the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier project (MDTP), a conservation-development programme which straddles Lesotho and South Africa:

"Politicization has arguably reached new heights: the increase of scale means that even more actors, institutions, cultures and ambitions etc. have to be taken into

account. Consequently the pressure on implementers to satisfy all human and environmental needs and demands has also been ratcheted up."

(ibid; pp 48)

This political charge is nevertheless defused by the putative sanctity of conservation which extracts the project from mainstream politics where class struggle, inequality, clientelism, neo-colonialism and other vices are fought out. These conservation-development projects are constituted of such enigmatic and omni-benefient purposes that the political motives are very hard to spot, if at all possible, underneath what Büscher and Dressler (2007) call the 'discursive blur'. Anstey (2001) found this in Mozambique where such projects are 'necessarily vague' to confuse and divert attention away from the corrupt deals made between private outfitters and state wildlife departments. This brings us on to the questions of what lies beneath the discursive blur and how are the ecocracy doing politics in Africa by saying they are not?

10.3 Reregulation and disenfranchisement

Igoe and Brockington (2007) argue that ecocratic governance in sub-Saharan Africa entails what they call 'reregulation'. Reregulation is the use of states by the ecocracy to liberalize land management with the express purpose of transforming previously untradeable things into tradeable commodities. The ecocracy does not do away with the state altogether (deregulation) so much as work with it to set up new forms of communal governance (such as CWM), and ultimately capture profit from bigger and better commercial enterprises. Together, the ecocracy and African states are disenfranchizing rural communities by various forms of 'territorialisation'. These include privatization from which the state collects tax etc. (this is what happened to the lands surrounding Ngarambe, the village where I conducted a brief reconnaissance trip); the sub-division of communal lands in pockets which can be bought and sold, as is happening at an unprecedented rate in Kenya; or finally, by the leasing of state-owned lands to private investors, as occurs in the establishment of Trans-Frontier Conservation Areas in southern Africa. These forms of territorialisation are seen as enclosures, the means by which this strange new

alliance between the neoliberal ecocracy and the African state captures profits, land, resources and subjects rural populations to its authority. This theory enlightens us as to why the international private sector has become, in recent years, so excited by conservation and why African states have welcomed with open arms the same neoliberals who once ruined them with SAP shock treatments in the 1980s.

As Garland (2006) documents, Africa made good progress in undoing colonial controls over conservation and other forms of resource management during the period of state-centred development (roughly 1967 to 1985) but the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s allowed the white outsider to regain the control he enjoyed before independence. Nevertheless, this white outsider is bringing to the African state new hybrid conservation-development schemes which not only generate foreign exchange and do the hard work of rural development like building infrastructure and so on, but also open up rural areas to new forms of governance which the state sees as an opportunity to reclaim authority over the famously independent and 'intractable' African peasantry. Whereas socialism tried and failed to spread its influence into the remotest parts of the bush during the villagization programmes of the 1970s in countries like Tanzania and Mozambique (Ingle, 1972), now it seems like capitalism and ecocratic governance are trying the same thing, only with more emphasis on profit than *gemeinschaft*.

Neoliberal governance, however, has damaged African state-society relations by its pitiless deconstruction, and reconstruction on its terms, of southern African states in the last twenty or thirty years (Saul, 2005). The state has been hollowed out, fragmented and destabilized, severely hindering any welfare progress that was made in the post-independence era and exacerbating clientelism. Enviro-governance sees the internationalization of politics as a good thing, as building networks and facilitating free markets but it appears that its puppet treatment of weak states is further undermining the effectiveness of national and local politics. In spite of this, of all the capabilities that the African state has lost in this era of neoliberal enviro-governance, the control over its natural resources has if anything

increased. Murphree (2002) notes how wildlife management throughout southern Africa is burdened by this last but vehemently defended right of state authority:

"...most initiatives lacked the critical ingredient for success: the devolution of authority and responsibility through societally sanctioned entitlements. Government and agency implementation retained ultimate power to shape objectives and control benefits; involvement became compliance and participation became co-option. Robust devolution requires significant allocative transfers in access and power which bureaucratic establishments are reluctant to surrender. Thus many of these initiatives have become case studies in aborted devolution."

(ibid; pp 1-2)

Nelson et al. (2007) agree, asserting that CWM has allowed the state to feign devolution whilst actually tightening its hold over wildlife management.

10.4 The politics of disposability

The pains felt by the rural-dwelling African under neoliberal enviro-governance do not stop at the appropriation of village lands by reregulation, nor the distancing of decision-making powers further towards central government; they include displacement and neglect.

By denigrating state welfare and relying solely on market democracy, neoliberal eco-governance conceals what Giroux (2006) has called the 'politics of disposability', which refers to the way in which those who cannot participate in the market, nor have a say in the new political structures, are simply left behind and abandoned to the void that the welfare state once filled. In this void, swathes of rural society wander as 'conservation refugees' who find their old livelihoods criminalized, no

Plate 6: Botswana's Bushmen: conservation refugees

longer able to hunt, fish, farm or collect in the ways they used to (Dowie, 2009). They have sold or leased their land in contracts which they did not understand or it has simply been taken away by the state (the mass resettlement of Botswana's Bushmen for game reserves is perhaps the most well publicized case of this; New York Times [4/11/10] 'For some Bushmen, a homeland worth a fight'). These conservation refugees feel as though they are no longer citizens in their own country, whilst the international ecocracy make themselves at home.

The politics of disposability is happening across the globe and is not limited to large landscape conservation. The state-aided hand-over of communal lands to agri-businesses, traders of 'ecological services' such as pollution credits and debt-for-nature swaps or bio-prospectors, is rampant. These are efforts to bring biodiversity into the market and give it a value so that it can compete with other forms of land use - a noble cause at first sight - but one which disposes of the local people who depend upon the natural resources which are being traded. Hayden's (2003) study of bio-prospecting in Mexico is a telling example of this, and one which can be compared directly with what is happening under African neoliberal conservation. The INE (National Institute of Ecology) in Mexico has drawn up plans to unitarize rural Mexico by creating Units of Sustainable Management (UMAs) which allow communities to join up with foreign private partners and scientists to engage in a range of sustainable practices such as organic farming, bio-prospecting for medicines, forestry, hunting reserves etc. These partnerships are expected to strengthen local participation in the market at the same time as building democratic apparatus so that rural Mexicans are empowered to engage in business and politics. However, it is the big businesses that profit most from these ventures by gaining user rights over what was previously communal land and extracting or protecting what needs be to serve their interests. Meanwhile, Mexican peasants lose out by being denied traditional land practices and exploited by their private sector partners. Again, the supposed sanctity of bio-prospecting 'launders' the colonial imagery out of the discourse. The fact that it is exploiting third world resources and conditioning peasants to become eco-producers or making them landless is simply washed away by the rhetoric. Those who have examined bio-

prospecting closely come to the same pitiful conclusion: that in reality it is 'bio-piracy' and the pillaging of indigenous knowledge and resources for the good of the first world (Shiva, 1993).

The prerogatives of Mexico's UMAs are almost indistinguishable from those of the WMAs and conservancies in sub-Saharan Africa. This should be no surprise because the neoliberal environmental project is a pan-global doctrine. Hayden's study is a useful comparison because it provides a template for how the ecocracy manages the global commons; it is development on its terms or what can be referred to as 'eco-modernization'. Irony of ironies, neoliberalism up close is just the same old top-down, command type of rural development which it claims to have superceded. But far worse than the mistakes and failures of modernization-era development, neoliberal conservation, under the cover of its utopian imagery, actively colonizes the land and resources which rightfully belong to rural communities. As Nygren (2003) discovered in Nicaragua, neoliberal conservation 'trades land loss for development'. Here, an Indian peasant living in the Rajasthan desert sums this up well in his address to a cooperative water management committee:

"What's the point of a water user association when all the water decisions have already been made? You just want us to fight amongst ourselves for the little water you deliver. You take away our desert and give us a water outlet."

Goldman (1998; pp 20)

10.5 A reprieve

These critiques are ruthless in portraying the ecocracy as a kind of evil empire, a new colonial ruling class which disciplines the third world to its knowledge and practices. But there is dispute as to the accountability of the ecocracy. Hajer (1995), for example, notes how it is a mistake to think that there is such a clear-cut coalition of actors who construct these global environmental discourses to further their own pre-conceived goals. After all, Foucault – who inspired these very theories - made clear that no one individual or group is ever in charge of a

discourse, rather it is continually contested by all those who are aligned to it. If anything, the discourse is in charge.

Environmental discourses such as CWM or bio-prospecting are loud cacophonies of different opinions which are ruinously fragmented and contradictory, even within coalitions such that might be the ecocracy. They are "*jamborees of claims and concerns"* and often opinions are voiced with the best of intentions (Hajer, 1995; pp 1-2). From this view, it is ludicrous to think that all the hard work and dedication of conservation and development professionals is some sort of conspiracy to control the third world.

What is more, these diatribes against new conservation all too easily envision one big discourse smothering human agency. As Gardner and Lewis (1996) point out, referring to the flawed assumptions of dependency theory:

"We must also recognize the ways in which individuals and societies strategise to maximize opportunities, how they resist structures which subordinate them."

(ibid; pp 18)

This is where post-modernism strays from its close relative, post-structuralism, by further emphasizing agency, choice, rebellion, fragmentation and the 'multiplicity of voices' which break up any supposedly monolithic, linear discourse. In this light, resistance to the dominant discourse of CWM is mostly manifest in the form of silence or, as Boggs (2004) witnessed in Botswana, deliberate apathy. In rare cases rebellion is overt, such as that incident at Namelok in Kenya when Maasai warriors deliberately killed game and drained swamps to move their herds into a new community wildlife sanctuary (Western, 1994). Added to these forms of resistance, and at an entirely more abstract level, we could include those magico-religious beliefs in wild animals which constitute a sense of African solidarity and defiance *against* western forms of regulation, as Lan (1990) revealed in his study amongst the ZANU-PF guerrillas. Although in this case magic was an act of defiance against white colonial rule, we might infer that the same processes could be at work in local

resistance against the white man's unwanted conservation and development initiatives.

Here, it is also worth remembering the development of village-level wildlife management institutions (as discussed in chapter 2) which, in theory at least, give greater voice to rural-dwelling Africans. After all, belonging to an institution is one of the prerequisites of effective participation in a discourse (see pp 68).

This is all very well, but the resounding message coming from the more intrepid analyses of CWM is that it is juggernaut of a discourse which suppresses local resistance by its win-win rhetoric and its near universal support in the higher ranks of the conservation and development industries. The unequal standings in this discourse are all too clear: often poor rural African populations do not even know what CWM is and, in any case, only a well-connected few in the communities are able to voice their opinions effectively (Gillingham, 1998). Meanwhile the multilateral donors, BINGOs, think tanks and bureaucracies release the white papers, construct the policies and implement the plans. These institutions are the 'macro-actors' (cf. Callon and Latour, 1981) who dominate proceedings by reputation, resources and expertise. It follows that poor rural African communities struggle to compete along these lines. One doesn't have to be a cynic to see the workings of geo-power on the savannah lands.

CONCLUSIONS

A damning report

In the course of this essay the more salient empirical, cultural and discursive elements of community-based wildlife management in sub-Saharan Africa have been recovered from the literature to reveal a programme which fails and deceives as much as it inspires hope. In part 1, the cornerstones of democratic empowerment, enterprise and partnership were shown to be riddled with inequalities; part 2 presented the inevitability of cultural damage or decay at the hands of CWM; whilst part 3 dismantled its rhetoric to uncover political manoeuvring by an international elite.

There was no preconceived intention to give such a damning report, this is simply what came through from the literature. There were studies which had only good things to say about CWM (cf. Junge, 2002; for a good example) but these were invariably sponsored by the big multi- and bi-lateral donors. On the opposite end of the critical spectrum were the Marxist and Foucauldian exposés which lambasted CWM for being a vehicle for new forms of power and control over rural populations. Perhaps too easily, the essay tended towards this latter end of the critical spectrum and it must be noted that these critics have their own interests and power to boot. Yet, I sensed an integrity to their critiques which was lacking in the donor-sponsored white papers; an integrity borne of the realization that there are greater things at stake in conservation and development than mere technical issues. By escaping the limitations of empiricism and instead concentrating on *meanings,* both stable in culture and fluid in discourse, these critiques can be said to get closer to the human experience of CWM, we being symbolic animals.

It has to be said that by erring towards critique and away from advocacy, this essay is guilty of what Anderson and Bergland (2003) perceive as the self-inflicted marginalization of anthropology from environmental discourses. These authors argue that anthropologists' contributions to environmental discourses in the 21st century are limited to cultural and political critiques which are swatted aside by the more action-orientated environmentalists, biologists, development experts et al. Whilst anthropology has come to be shaped by the politics of ecology as it once was by the decline of colonial empires in the 20th century, this new phase in the discipline's history is marked by a lack of action and a

glut of theory. This, in turn, has led to the neglect of its responsibility to actively support traditional societies, being so wrapped up in its own texts.

Making cultural critique useful

There is, however, a chance of redemption for anthropology; a way in which it may be applied to mainstream environmental practice in an altogether less cynical and more pro-active way. This chance comes in the form of TEK or traditional ecological knowledge. TEK is part of the IK (indigenous knowledge) movement, as put forward by the likes of Sillitoe (1998) and Berkes (1999), which seeks to undermine top-down rural development by incorporating locally-informed perspectives and understandings of the environment into externally-led programmes (Dudgeon and Berkes, 2003). TEK is explicitly critical of the capitalist mode of development and feeds off the kind of combative critiques submitted in the latter half of this essay. But, crucially, it has a practical outlet. Its aim is to bring indigenous subjectivities into an 'adaptive management' paradigm, thereby making useful those softer meanings of animals and lands which usually stifle development and conservation practioners' plans. Far from being redundant, anthropologists must act as 'knowledge brokers', bridging the chasm between western and traditional knowledge systems and improving the performance of environmental development programmes (Cajete, 2000).

In fact, by bringing indigenous subjectivities and the substantive back to the forefront of environmental discourse, TEK may just be able to relieve community-based natural resource management from its own current crisis of identity and purpose. This is the opinion of Dressler et al. (2010) who argue that CBNRM, in becoming a global force, now suffers from a dearth of substantivism which threatens its very existence:

"In the process of moving from being a diverse grass-roots practice unfolding in specific social and environmental contexts, where funds were low but perspective clear, to being scaled up as a global pre-packaged solution to local problems, CBNRM's near universality may lead to its demise."

(ibid; pp 12)

In other words, CBNRM has become a victim of its own ideological success; it has grown into something which actually smothers 'the local' and, in doing so, defeats itself. CWM, as

a form of CBNRM, could certainly be accused of being a 'pre-packaged solution to local problems', especially taking into account the spread of the CAMPFIRE template across Africa (and indeed the world) in the 1980s and the standardizing effects of neoliberal enviro-governance (remember the close parallels between the UMAs of Mexico and the WMAs of Africa). As a result, it can be seen as unreflexive to local social, political and cultural idiosyncrasies. The sound application of TEK to CWM would, however, bring the local sharply back to focus and possibly improve its success rate.

The problem with TEK is that it can be compartmentalized from its social context and made into 'data' which is merely added or discarded depending on its worth to western development practices (Nadasdy, 1999). In this scenario it can be crudely fitted into any culturally insensitive programme as a peripheral attachment and its original purpose and sense becomes lost. Under the rubric of neoliberal environmentalism, TEK is commonly interpreted as an 'eco-liberal approach' which *"aims at helping to integrate people into the capitalist market on their terms"* (Purcell, 1998; pp 267). Thus, in the same way as neoliberalism altered the meaning of 'sustainable use of natural resources' from procurement for the household to commercial enterprise, so too may it distort the original meaning of TEK to fit into its free-market manifesto.

It appears then, that anthropology faces an impasse: it can either resign itself to backroom critique (such as this essay) or join the neoliberal march upon the world's wild lands and traditional societies by reproducing indigenous knowledge to validate large programmes such as CWM. The former renders it unsolicited and therefore impracticable; the latter surrenders it to the global logic of neoliberalism which eradicates the very life blood of the discipline itself, indigenous culture.

The future of CWM in Africa

It is hard to predict the future of CWM in Africa. Its fleeting successes are far outnumbered by its failures and lack of response from African communities, yet its support networks extend to some of the world's most powerful institutions which are not likely to renege on their commitment (Hulme and Murphree, 2001).

Perhaps the neoliberal tenets of CWM may lose sway since global capitalism has been rocked by the credit crunch and Keynesian principles have returned, to an extent, to national and international economics. Should this be the case, then two things would happen. The first is that the free-market approach would slip from the CWM protocol. The

second is that African states would tighten their control over the programmes and possibly oust the international ecocracy (the donors, development specialists, private-sector outfitters etc.). The likelihood of these things happening will now be briefly looked at.

As was made clear in part 1, the effectiveness of the free-market approach to CWM depends on i) low human populations and high wildlife populations, ii) fully devolved user and ownership rights which generate a true sense of stewardship, iii) access to and skills within the wildlife market-place, and iv) strong participatory management institutions. Rarely do all these factors align in CWM in Africa. Botswana and Namibia are blessed with low human and high wildlife populations and relatively open and democratic systems of rural governance but the same cannot be said of their East African neighbours (anon. interview; 08/10). The biggest concern of critics of the free-market approach is that, where these factors do not align, burgeoning local populations receive paltry rewards from formal wildlife markets and so revert to 'poaching for the pot'. The success of this approach, therefore, rests on tenterhooks and catastrophe seems always to be lurking close by. Indeed, even if it does succeed and all these factors align, a perfect wildlife market may create what might be called 'bio-uniformity' and undermine the founding principles of conservation which celebrate biodiversity. The more perspicacious supporters of the use-it-or-lose-it approach to conservation admit that there are very real risks of reducing the savannah lands to 'non-diverse agri-scapes' where only the valued big game thrive, at the cost of the eco-systems at large (Pearce and Moran, 1994).

The protectionist lobby in conservation will continue to question the effectiveness and morality of the free-market approach along these lines and where it has presence in the upper echelons of African bureaucracies (as it does in Kenya, for example) CWM will likely become less and less utilitarian. The Catch-22, however, is that if the free-market approach slips from the CWM programmes in Africa, there is consequently little scope for community involvement other than the peripheral employment of game scouts which once characterized the fortress programmes. The neoliberals will argue, perhaps correctly, that outright protection cannot involve African communities to the same extent as utilitarian wildlife management models. As shown in chapter 3, the call to enterprise in the use of wild animals opens up encouraging possibilities for rural livelihood diversification. Sadly, these possibilities are currently being quashed by the persistent policy bias towards big externally-funded commercial operations which is unlikely to be addressed because these operations bring far greater revenues to treasuries than indigenous enterprises ever could.

It would follow that if the market approach slips, CWM will be bound to the history annals just as the fortress type was. If it remains, then the only way in which the management of wildlife will truly profit African rural communities will be for policy makers to fully devolve ownership and user rights over wildlife and to rein in the external parties who currently engage in the lion's share of enterprise.

This brings us to the next possibility: the sovereignization of wildlife management. In recent years, African 'resource nationalism' has grown, especially evident in the mining sector (Reuters News [11/03/10] 'Miners grapple with resource nationalism'). This can be seen as a reaction to the unequal distribution of profits from resource extraction and what is seen as the neo-colonial domination by foreign business in African political economy. Now, CWM in its current form could justifiably be put in the same category as mining in that it involves the exploitation of African resources predominantly by international organizations. Why shouldn't resource nationalism extend to CWM? Why shouldn't African wildlife bureaucracies decide to follow their industrial counterparts and increase domestic control over resources, at the cost of international conservation and development institutions? This may re-forge those important bonds between African citizen and state and prevent further acculturation by Northern resource management ideology and practice, as discussed in part 2. On the other hand, the sovereignization of wildlife management may also increase centralized control and further curtail African communities' involvement in the process. Wildlife is such an important source of foreign exchange for African states with large budget deficits and, as long as this remains, communities will likely lose out to national economic demands. In fact, in countries where political and economic systems are highly unstable, the presence of international conservation and development institutions in African resource management may be crucial for maintaining a focus on the equitable redistribution of benefits and for infrastructural support (Johnson, 2004). There are certainly no guarantees that the expulsion of the international ecocracy from CWM would leave rural African communities any better off than they are in their current state. Besides, the sovereignization of wildlife management in Africa seems highly unlikely considering the ascendancy of neoliberal environmentalism today. Green technologies such as wind farms, solar energy or bio-fuels embody the globalization and marketization of natural resource management. The environment has, in effect, become a global industry regulated by immensely powerful international corporations (for example, http://www.abb.com/windpower) and the future of CWM must be put in this broader context.

Some final thoughts

This essay is already out of date as any commentary of this kind tends to be soon after it is written (anon. interview; 08/10). In its ambition to cover so many aspects of CWM in Africa, it may also be accused of having sacrificed focus. Indeed, the only regret I have is not having been able to apply all this reading to one particular village in the Tanzanian Selous Game Reserve in 2009. And at times, it felt as if I was skimming over subjects which merited 'deep dives'. This was perhaps most sharply felt during the writing of part 2 when rural African cultures were rather briskly portrayed which possibly gave the unintended effect of homogenizing them. But to have dived deeper into one particular culture would have a) lost the thread of the argument and b) upset the weighting of the chapters.

Besides, it is hoped that by its very ambition this essay has successfully put forward some thought-provoking ideas for possible further study. If one topic of further study had to be suggested above all else, it would be the treatment of indigenous African knowledge systems within the CWM partnerships. This is well confined, would be of great interest to the anthropologist, and may have very helpful practical effects in the future implementation of CWM.

I have found it a real challenge to write this essay but it has been a pleasure to cover a subject which holds so much subtlety and breadth; to dally from African politics, to magic animals, to Foucault, has been no less than fascinating. Anthropology has a duty to be more than interesting, however. It must somehow carry itself into environmental practice. How it does this in the coming decades will shape the discipline itself.

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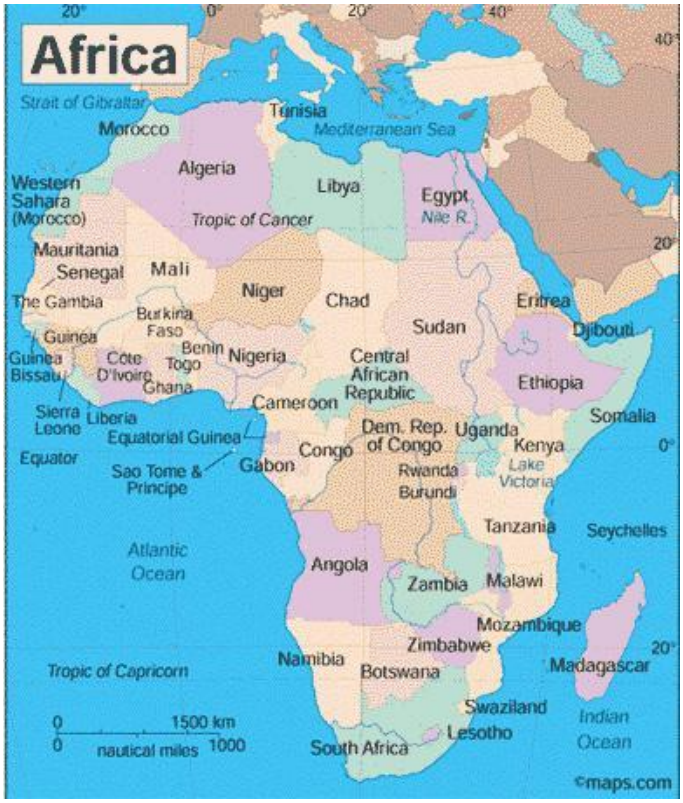
APPENDIX

The village of Ngarambe; part of the Tapika Wildlife Management Area



Map of Africa