

“Partnerships Of Arrogance And Resistance: Whispering Contestations And Talking Claims In Privatizing The “Indigenous” Commons – A Case Study Of The Mahenye Ward Wildlife Management Initiative, Zimbabwe.”

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Abstract

The last decade has seen a rapid increase and growing interest in the communal areas management programme for indigenous resources (campfire) in Zimbabwe’s largely rural areas. Ostensibly the Campfire programme has allowed multiple resource use in the communal areas of the lowveld (wildlife, livestock and crops) and yet its driving philosophy appears to be a conservation one not a development and empowering one. Using newly collected longitudinal data on individuals, households and communities in Mahenye, together with findings from qualitative fieldwork, the study undertook policy-relevant research on the complexities and dynamics in relationships, roles, rights and partnerships between and within the indigenous people of Mahenye and the tourist operators. Preliminary findings indicate that Campfire is an explicitly non-redistributive development model which, notwithstanding its participatory rhetoric, legitimises the status quo with regard to land and resource ownership. Indeed it could even be argued to make way for the expansion of commercial wildlife interests into communal areas in the guise of public-private partnership. The study also reveals that by focusing on increasing flows of money under the guise of CBNRM partnerships, Campfire has not contributed to transforming the rural economy in Mahenye. If anything, it has successfully given legitimacy to minority interests that have extended their tourist investments into the very communal areas. The study concludes by noting

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that the unlocking of communal areas through the privatization and commercialization of wildlife resources, under the rhetoric of campfire, has not only widened the disparity between the poor and the rich within the community, but also brought with it mounting challenges for governing the commons at the local level by compelling powerful (largely external or strangers) people to increase their access to land and wildlife resources to the detriment of the indigenous people.

1. Introduction

In the past two decades there has been increasing recognition and growing interest in the role of community level institutions for the management of natural resources in Southern Africa guided by principles of collective action for common property resources management in pursuit of sustainability. The implementation of such projects under the rubric of community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) is changing and redefining accessibility, utilization and management of common property resources, with the ultimate aim of promoting participatory rural development and empowerment of local communities across Southern Africa. As Twyman (1998: 745-746) argues, governments are deliberately and ‘specifically targeting rural communities in an attempt to “re-establish” local management of natural resources. These community approaches are currently in vogue, as they are seen to empower those who use the resources’. Experience over the years in the brief history of CBNRM already suggest that it not only leads to greater appreciation of indigenous practices and local natural resource management initiatives, but may highlight that individuals, households, communities and other institutions as actors play vital roles in flexible resource use, bio-diversity preservation and sustainable management.

However, in some cases experience has also shown that ‘although the opportunity has been there for people to manage the resources, the necessary rights, control and power have been denied them and thus they have been deprived of the effective tools of management’ (Twyman 1998:753). In fact, it can be argued along with Alashi (1999:141), and Magaya (2005) that most communities in Southern Africa lack clearly defined strategies for partnership and institutional linkages for sustainable natural resources management. Moreover the people’s actual engagement in capacity building for CBNRM is either limited or in some cases, non-existent.

There is indeed an emerging critique (Cleaver 2000: 361) of such CBNRM approaches both from the theoretical and policy viewpoint that challenges the apolitical nature of such conceptions and the accumulated wisdom on community management. In the late 1990s, a major discussion theme in CBNRM focused on the legal, regulatory and politico-administrative aspects of common property governance and how these encourage/discourage best practice CBNRM initiatives. As Rukuni (1999b:2) asserts, optimal natural resources management is dependent on the political, legal and administrative capacities of rural communities to determine their own future and to protect their natural resources and other economic interests. Perhaps Murphree (1999: 2) poses the most pertinent question in this regard thus: To what degree do CBNRM projects and programmes confer authority and responsibility on localized regimes? The answer, Murphree responds to his question, lies in legislation, tenure status, bureaucratic culture, elite interest, project and programme implementation and local assertiveness. Evidently then, the nature, form and structure of partnership strategies between the community, government and private sector plays a pivotal role in CBNRM especially with regards to the allocation of rights, the delineation of responsibility and the regulation and control of the utilization of the resources.

The paper is organized into six sections. Section 1 is the introduction, while section 2 gives a synopsis and overview of community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) initiatives in Southern Africa. The section also highlights some of the notable reasons why the campfire programme in Zimbabwe has been the trend-setter for CBNRM initiatives in other southern African countries. Section three provides an overview and characterizes the study area, the Mahenye community; while section four illustrates, through case histories and historical narratives, the preliminary findings on the opinions, interpretation and understanding of campfire in Mahenye through the lens of community leaders and ordinary villagers. Section five is a discussion, critique and analysis of campfire with inferences drawn from Mahenye and other campfire projects in Zimbabwe. Section 6 concludes the main issues raised in the paper.

2. CAMPFIRE: The Inspiration Behind CBNRM Initiatives in Southern Africa

For more than nearly 15 years, a process of evolution in thinking and practice concerning community managed resources and community conserved areas has been taking place in southern Africa. A number of lessons have been learnt during this evolutionary process of what has come to be known within the region as Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). A number of statements and principles have been developed concerning CBNRM in Southern Africa (e.g. Murphree 1993, Steiner and Rihoy 1995, Bond 2001). These can be distilled into the central hypothesis that if a resource is valuable and landholders have the rights to use, benefit from and manage the resource, then sustainable use is likely. The benefits from management must exceed the perceived costs and must be secure over time.

There are three main conceptual foundations to this hypothesis:

1) Economic instrumentalism

The assumption is that the most critical decisions regarding the allocation of land, resources and management investments are based primarily on economics rather than conservation considerations (Jones and Murphree 2001). It is therefore necessary to give wildlife a focused value that can be realised by the landholder.

2) Devolutionism

In all Southern African states, authority over wildlife was centralised by colonial governments, and this centralisation was maintained by most post-colonial governments. In order to create positive conditions for landholders to manage wildlife sustainably, the ability to take crucial management decisions needed to be devolved from the state to the landholders.

3) Collective proprietorship

Murphree (1994) defines proprietorship as “sanctioned use rights, including the right to determine the mode and extent of management and use, rights of access and inclusion, and the right to benefit fully from use and management.” The term tenure includes a temporal dimension and relates to the period of proprietorship. Secure tenure is important for resource users to be confident that they can invest time and effort in management and reap the benefits.

Within the broader Southern African region, the drive towards CBNRM has derived its inspiration from Zimbabwe’s (once?) famous Community Area Management

Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) initiatives. According to Alexander and McGregor (2000: 605) 'Campfire programmes have been hailed internationally for the innovative ways in which they have sought to confront the challenges of some of Africa's most marginal regions through promotion of local control over wildlife management'. In fact, Campfire has been cast as an antidote to the colonial legacy of technocratic and authoritarian development that had undermined people's control over their environment and even criminalized their use of mega fauna and other game.

Most countries in Southern Africa have adopted campfire tenets and adjusted them to suit their specific country requirements to the extent that CBNRM has taken root throughout the region. Legislative changes have been effected to accommodate these shifting paradigms and priorities. Thus as Baker (1997) points out, in Zambia, the concept of community-based conservation was formally established in 1988 when the Administrative Design for Game Management Areas (ADMAGE) programme was introduced. According to Phiri and Butler (1998:7) the government of Zambia fully embraced the CBNRM philosophy when it passed the Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) Act No. 12 of 1998 as a way forward to involve local communities in the management of natural resources. However, the real issue remains whether the government fully empower communities to manage their own resources. There are promising indications in this direction in the Karumbi Natural Resources Management Business (KNRMB) under the Luangwa Integrated Resources Development Project (LIRDPA) Area incorporating the South Luangwa National Park and the Lupande Game Management Area. This area includes Zambia's most important tourist destination.

Botswana enacted the 1992 Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act to accommodate CBNRM, while the Namibian legislature approved the Conservancy Policy in 1996 to achieve similar objectives. In Namibia, there is a deliberate policy shift to try and resolve the issue of secure and exclusive group land tenure as it is crucial for the success of CBNRM (Jones 1998:2). South Africa is also consolidating its CBNRM programmes closely tied to the country's vibrant tourism sector. Hence, at regional level it can be concluded that policies across Southern Africa are increasingly aiming to promote participatory rural development and the empowerment

of local populations (Twyman 1998: 745) following the trend set by the campfire initiative in Zimbabwe. Campfire itself is an improvement of the mid-70s Wildlife Industries For All (WINDFALL) project implemented prior to Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.

2.1. Campfire in Zimbabwe: A synopsis of why the programme became a starting point for CBNRM initiatives in the region

In Zimbabwe the 1975 Parks and Wildlife Act aimed "to confer privileges on owners or occupiers of alienated land as custodians of wildlife, fish and plants" (Government of Zimbabwe, 1994 as amended). The Act designates these 'owners or occupiers of alienated land' as "appropriate authorities" over wildlife. Although the Act provides for landholders to be custodians of wildlife rather than "owners", it still effectively made farms and ranches into proprietorial units for wildlife management. Farmers were able to take nearly all of the significant management decisions over the use of wildlife. The Act allowed for the exemption of specially protected species and for Government to impose restriction orders in cases of flagrant abuse.

The Zimbabwean legislation is significant, because within southern Africa it went the furthest in allowing the landholder to take decisions about how wildlife should be used, without having to obtain permission from the state. It was based on a recognition that wildlife is an economic resource that can contribute to the country's overall development. It recognised that economic processes would determine whether wildlife would or could compete with domestic livestock as a form of land use (this thinking was consolidated into official policy in the 1989 Policy for Wildlife). This was an important leap forward in thinking concerning wildlife as it placed wildlife that was outside of protected areas into the realm of economics and land use rather than purely within the realm of conservation.

It is difficult for economic instrumentalism to be effective when large numbers of people have to share the income generated from wildlife and tourism activities. In the case of CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe, Bond (2001) found that in real terms the median benefit per household from wildlife was US\$4,49 in 1996. In most years the financial benefit per household from wildlife revenue is low and constitutes less than 10 per cent of gross agricultural production. "In terms of the proposed definitions of the

financial viability of wildlife it appears that in most wards wildlife is not financially viable at the household level. Consequently, in most wards, the current financial incentives for institutional change for sustainable management of wildlife and wildlife habitat are low” (Bond 2001:235). One of the reasons for the low household income is that a significant portion of wildlife income is retained at district government level in most CAMPFIRE areas.

Thirdly, Zimbabwe provides an example of what has been called “aborted devolution” (Murphree 2000). The Zimbabwe legislation provides for “appropriate authority” over wildlife to be given to Rural District Councils (RDCs), but the original intention of the CAMPFIRE policy planners was that this authority should be devolved by councils further to the ward level. Councils were encouraged by implementation guidelines to carry out this further devolution, but few have done this. Bond (2001 :236-237) concluded that the CAMPFIRE Guidelines have been largely ineffective at protecting sub-district organizations in the management of wildlife and wildlife-based revenues and that they are not a substitute for strong and well-defined legislation giving sub-district organisations control over wildlife revenue...Further, the failure to devolve legal authority over wildlife to sub-district levels has meant that most producer communities have remained largely passive recipients of revenue transferred to them by the RDCs. In Namibia there is a need for further devolution from conservancy level to smaller units within the community to promote more direct involvement in decision-making by conservancy members (Child *et al* 2001, Long *et al* 2002).

The problems surrounding devolution of authority over resources to local communities probably is one of the biggest problems facing CBNRM in the southern African region. In many respects the contestation between communities and government for power over wildlife as a resource and the income it can generate is likely to be an ongoing political struggle within CBNRM. The ability of communities and other stakeholders in Namibia and Botswana to resist government attempts to withdraw or hold on to power is a positive sign. Other positive developments in terms of devolution include the increasing attention being given to the need to devolve within existing community wildlife management entities. A model for such an approach exists within the Chobe Enclave in Botswana where decision-making over

the use of income has been devolved to village level trusts (Jones 2002a) which also develop their own community development plans. Another model exists in the Luangwa Valley in Zambia where local village institutions are the basic building block for decision-making (Child *pers. comm.*) In Zimbabwe, the most successful CAMPFIRE areas are those where the Rural District Council has devolved authority over wildlife to the ward level providing local control over income and management decision-making. The Mahenye ward wildlife management initiative has been classified and popularized as such an example.

3. The Mahenye Campfire Project: An Overview

Mahenye ward is situated at the Southern tip of Chipinge district and shares borders with Mozambique on the east and South Africa on the south and the Gonarezhou National park of Zimbabwe on the west and Mutandahwe ward to the North. The ward is sparsely populated with a density of 20 persons per square kilometer (Murphree 2001:179). The Mahenye people are Shangaan speaking and they occupied the land that straddles the borders between Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa. This community has kin in all the three countries. The formation of the Kruger and the Gonarezhou national Parks displaced these communities in South Africa and Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe this saw the Shangaan people being forced into Communal Lands in Chiredzi, and Mahenye in Chipinge Districts (ibid: 181) during the colonial period. According to Wright in Peterson (1991:6) for the people of Mahenye 'independence would mean the restoration of their right hunting rights and their land.'

Typologising the Mahenye Case

Mahenye is a collection of villages extending over about 600 km² on the border of the Gonarezhou National Park in the south-east of Zimbabwe. Most of the people were relocated there to make room for the national park. At Independence in 1980, rural people were desperately poor, poached as often as they dared, and were extremely hostile to the wildlife, particularly elephants which raided their fields. To counter this situation, in 1984 the government permitted safari hunting of elephant and buffalo

migrating out of the park. The dividends of this hunting were channelled into the local community which was given security of tenure and the right to manage its wildlife resources in the long term. Today, the people have their own committees and other internal government structures and they make responsible decisions. Ten years after the scheme was initiated, there is a welcome resident population of over 300 elephants in Mahenye.

At a meeting of the Mahenye community in 1995, attention was drawn to the fact that a man from the neighbouring community, a successful entrepreneur who owned 500 head of cattle, was in the habit of grazing his cattle on Mahenye land that had not been used for anything else. What were they to do? They could charge him a nominal rent, or ask him to take his cattle elsewhere and put that land under wildlife. They decided unanimously to put it under wildlife. Mahenye is an example of how decision-making by consensus can lead to the sustainable use of wildlife resources to alleviate rural poverty.

Source: Murphree (1995)

At independence however the incumbent government did not return the Land within the Gonarezhou to the people of Mahenye but rather consolidated their hold on the land through intensification of anti poaching drive on Mahenye ward. This further alienated the people of Mahenye and they intensified poaching activities within the Park. The reasoning at government level was that Gonarezhou should benefit the nation rather than a minority group. The government followed the colonial systems of mining resources for capital gains to the state coffers without much consideration for the communities that live with these resources (Magaya W., and Mandivengerei S., 2003:4)

In 1982 the Mahenye councilor called the Gonarezhou warden to come and meet the Mahenye community and discuss the problems between them. Clive Stockil, a local farmer, facilitated this meeting. It was at this meeting that the Mahenye views of the issues were articulated and an innovative way forward was charted by the community, the Gonarezhou warden and Clive Stockil. This meeting in Mahenye started a process that saw National Parks approving a one-year trial whereby responsibility and accountability over wildlife would be granted to the community. Over the next 22 years the Mahenye community has developed, not without problems, into one of the

success stories of the infamous CAMPFIRE Programme of Zimbabwe. To show their commitment over one hundred families living on Ngwachumene Island moved to pave way for wildlife. In the years that followed Mahenye grow step by step starting with the building of a school and culminating in the building of two lodges at Mahenye and Chilo gorge in collaboration with Zimbabwe Sun Limited.

The Zimbabwe Sun entered into a 10-year lease agreement with the community, where the CRDC represented the community. The community entered into a formal agreement with Zimbabwe Sun Limited (ZSL). The document entitled 'Memorandum of a Lease Agreement for communal Land for trading or other purposes made and entered into and between CHIPINGE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL and ZIMBABWE SUN LIMITED' came into being as a result of extensive negotiations (Murphree 2001). However it is important to note that due to the legal and institutional arrangements in place the community could not enter into the agreement directly. Formal authority over resources is vested in the RDC.

4. Historical Narratives and Case Histories - Mahenye Initiative: Perspectives and Interpretations from community elders and ordinary villagers

This section sketches and outlines some preliminary findings² from the qualitative study conducted with key stakeholders and actors. It is largely a historical narrative with some notable inferences on case histories of notable events and actions through the lens of community leaders and ordinary beneficiaries.

² Results presented here are not an exhaustive analysis of all the research done between 2004 to date. A more elaborate and detailed presentation of results is expected in the third quarter of 2006. However, these preliminary results will help our understanding of how local/community leaders and villagers understand and interpret the relationships and partnerships with (local) government (through Rural District Councils) and private sector (in the form of tourism business).

4.1. How It All Began: An Account From Committee Members And Village Elders

As part of the data gathering technique, I set up meetings with the Mahenye Campfire Association Committee members. Two members of the committee attended the meeting i.e. the vice-chairman of the committee and the bookkeeper³. Responding to why there has been such an emphasis on campfire in Mahenye, the vice-chairman started by chronicling how it all started. He stated that campfire started in the 1950s where and when the hunting of big game⁴ was not allowed without the permission of the traditional leadership, particularly the chief and headmen. For one to hunt such big game, the chief would normally invite a renowned hunter especially one with a rifle to do the hunting of big game. Mr. Simbini elaborated that soon after the war in the 1980s, there was abundant wildlife (big and small) in the Mahenye ward and the adjacent Gonarezhou National Park.

The vice-chairman pointed out that there was a ‘tag of war’ between the local community and the authorities from the department of National Parks. Locals would go and hunt (poach) in the national park since the Shangaan were and still are predominantly meat-eating community. The ensuing scuffle led to deaths both on the local people and national park’s sides. There was bad blood between the local people and the national parks authorities.

Mr. Simbini explained that in 1982 a local rancher, Clive Stockil, intervened and mediated between the community and the National Parks authorities. It was Mr. Stockil who facilitated dialogue between the two parties. As part of the negotiation dialogue, it was agreed that game that cross the Save River from the national park would belong to the local community. The negotiation process and meetings took a long time, from 1982 through to 1987. The vice-chairman pointed out that information started filtering through in 1988 about the possibility for the formation of campfire in Mahenye ward. As the information trickled through the village about the campfire initiative, the chief, the ward chairman and councilor were blamed by the community members for selling out the land, “*vakatengesa nyika*”.

³ The vice-chairman is Mr. Simbini and the Bookkeeper is Mr. Hlongwane.

⁴ Big Game is used here to refer to elephant, lion, buffalo, giraffe, kudu, eland, impala, rhino and similar sized animals

In 1982 several elephants were slaughtered as trophies but there was no immediate tangible benefits for the community. Proceeds from the elephants' sale came seven years later in 1989, and the money was used to build a classroom block in Chisuma. The resultant tangible benefits enlightened the community about the potential success of campfire in developing their local community, hence the villagers started to appreciate the programme.

4.2. Leadership And Succession In Grassroots CBNRM Initiatives: The Mahenye Ward Campfire Committee

When the campfire programme started in Mahenye, the community realized that they needed a few people to oversee the day-to-day operation and guidance of the programme. The position that mattered most was that of 'chairman' of the committee.

The first chairman of the Mahenye campfire programme was Mr. D, P. Chauke and his secretary was Mr. Masango a local teacher. Their mandate started in 1989 and ended in 1990. In 1991, Mr. Masango became the chairman and Mr. Cephass Chauke was the vice-chairman. The committee drew a budget in 1993 and organized the erection of a grinding mill at the community shopping centre. The excess revenue was equally distributed amongst all the households in the ward. It was under Mr. Masango's chairmanship that the local people realized and appreciated the utility of campfire at household level. As a result of the benefits accrual there were yearly hunting budgets from 1993 onwards.

The people started complaining about the chairmanship of Mr. Masango. As a result, Mr. Masango was ousted from the chairmanship in 2000. Mr. John Feleni became the chairman and was deputized by Mr. Cephass Chauke⁵. Mr. Feleni's chairmanship was short-lived and within six months he was removed from office. People realized that Mr. Masango was a lot better during his tenure as chairman. Mr. Cephass Chauke the incumbent chairman was elected to office. His deputy is Mr. Simbini while Mr. Wilson Hlongwane is the bookkeeper.

⁵ Mr. Cephass Chauke is now the current chairman of Mahenye Campfire Committee

Mr. Simbini and Mr. Hlongwane pointed out that the 2000 – 2004 budgets were done and implemented successfully; credit is due to Mr. Stockil for his efforts in facilitating dialogue and informing the villagers about the importance of wildlife management.

4.3. Cutting The Deal: Business Partnerships Between The Private Sector, Rural District Council And Community

In 1994, Mr. Stockil again intervened and engaged the community to consider forming partnerships with private business operators in the hotel and tourism sector given that relying on trophy hunts was a risky business and hence the need to spread the risk and diversify. Negotiations and meetings were undertaken and Zimbabwe Sun⁶ entered into a partnership with the community and built the Mahenye Lodge. The partnership agreement was not done directly with the community; rather the Chipinge Rural District Council (CRDC) represented the community interests.

Zimsun employed local Shangaan people from the Mahenye ward for all the jobs that did not require specialized skills and or training. The offer of employment for the locals served as a big boost in reducing poaching activities.

The partnership between Mahenye community and Zimsun started in 1994. The agreement with Zimsun was that the Mahenye community gets 8% of annual gross revenue from the lodges. The Chipinge Rural District Council will then get 25% of the 8% while the Campfire Association gets 4%. That means the Mahenye community effectively gets 71% of the 8% from the lodges.

Mr. Hlongwane explained that the agreement stipulated that after the lapse of 10 years, there was room for negotiation of the percentage that goes to the community to be increased from 8 to 12%. The bookkeeper explained that there was an understanding on part of the lease agreement that after the 10-years or should the leasee vacate the lodges, the infrastructure (immovable property) would then belong to the community. When we asked if we could get a copy of the lease agreement, we were informed that copies are available at CRDC and the Lodges.

⁶ Zimbabwe Sun (Zimsun) is a hotel and tourism leisure group, and is one of the biggest players in the tourism sector in Zimbabwe

Zimsun ended its operation of the lodges before the expiry of their ten-year lease. A second lease agreement was signed between River Lodges and CRDC. Since then, River Lodges has been operating under a “new” lease agreement. The vice-chairman and bookkeeper of the Mahenye committee said that they did not know the detailed contents of the lease. The vice-chairman indicated that if River Lodges were paying rentals for the use of the infrastructure, it was most likely that the CRDC were the beneficiary.

Mr. Hlongwane pointed out that the partnership has been operating from top-down instead of operating vice-versa. He explained that the 8% annual revenue dividend from lodge operators is paid directly to the CRDC, where the deductions for the CRDC and Campfire association are made. From the CRDC, the Mahenye community will then get its share of 71% from the gross 8%. He elaborated that if the community were to realize a true sense of resource ownership and benefits accrual, the 8% is suppose to be paid directly to the community whereupon the 25% and 4% deductions would be paid out to the CRDC and campfire association directly. In that same order, he added, the rentals for use of facilities should be paid out directly to the Mahenye community.

When asked why Zimsun left before the end of their lease, the bookkeeper responded that the economic and political situation from 2000 to 2002 affected the tourism industry badly, and Zimsun was no exception. As a result, Zimsun opted out of the lease agreement. The respondents were also asked whether the new leasee operate under the same conditions as Zimsun. The vice-chairman responded with an analogy. He stated that “*we are a team, but the team is composed of different players and each player does not know exactly what the other is doing*”⁷.

The respondents were also asked whether they would say the lease agreement/partnership with the private sector was fair? After a long pause, the bookkeeper responded that under the current economic situation he would say the

⁷ Personal communication. The *team* here refers to: the community, the CRDC and the leasee

partnership is fair. He however was quick to point out that there is urgent need for improvements and/or modifications in the contracts and negotiations.

Responding to what they would do if they were asked to re-design campfire, the vice-chairman pointed out that it was difficult to say without a full caucus meeting of the committee. He highlighted that the role of the committee was to make sure that information about the programme activities is passed down to the people. He also emphasized that it was the prerogative of the committee to filter information considered not to be in good taste with the political leadership, the government and the CRDC. Such kind of information would not be relayed to the people.

Mr. Hlongwane added that the sticking point is how best can campfire keep its people locally? He reiterated that in order to answer the question, one needs to consider how to increase the number of shops and grinding mills as well as providing decent accommodation for teachers and nurses. The bookkeeper added that the revenue earned be used on community projects rather than paying dividends to each household. This was in direct contradiction to the sentiments passed by ordinary villagers who reported that they are comfortable with dividend payouts to each household because they will have something to hold on to rather than to romanticize about community projects which might not bear direct benefits.

4.4. Partnerships Of Arrogance And Resistance: Contractual Relations And Obligations - The CRDC and Mahenye Community vis-à-vis The Concession Holder

Beyond the partnership agreements between and among the local community, the CRDC and the lodge operator, the community also has (through the CRDC) some form of arrangement/understanding with the concession holder, a Mr. Dudley Rogers. The concession holder is the legitimate hunter within the Mahenye catchment. The hunter/concession holder gets a quota guiding the number of animals that could go off as trophies. Under the existing partnership arrangement, the hunter pays a concession rate to the community (through the CRDC) four times per year or after every two months during the hunting season. The proposed concession rate contained in the pending contract is pegged at 30%. The payment due will be for whatever trophy that would have been hunted. His initial contract ended on 31st December 2002. Tenders

were floated and bidders invited to submit their bids. Zambezi Hunters company won the tender and Mr. Rogers came second. The CRDC asked Mr. Rogers if he could match the winning bidder's competitive bid.

While all the discussions and negotiations were going on between the CRDC and Mr. Rogers, the community was not happy and willing to have Mr. Rogers retained as the concession holder. The major reason for the community's reservation and resentment of Mr. Rogers continuation was the alleged inability to respond to and mitigate problem animal control (PAC). The community members reported that at a meeting held in September, 2005, Mr. Rogers indicated that there were clauses he was not happy with. In the end, he was reportedly arrogant to the locals and hence, the community leaders pointed out that if it were not for the CRDC, they would not want to see the concession holder again. The vice-chairperson of the committee reported that a commission was set up to look into the dispute between the hunter and the community. The commission comprised of Mr. Jonga from the Campfire Association, a Parks and Wildlife Authority representative and a member of the CRDC. Members of the commission interviewed and consulted with the hunter, the local committee and ordinary villagers.

The vice-chairperson and the bookkeeper concurred that because of the on-going wrangle between the community and the concession holder/hunter the Mahenye people did not get any revenue for the past two years. They argued that there was increasing fatigue amongst the villagers. The fatigue has manifested itself in form of increased poaching by some men from the village.

When asked if the trophy hunting business has fluctuated because of the politico-economic situation prevailing in the country, the respondents pointed out that it was a viable and booming venture that would not run short of clientele especially during the peak of the hunting season. The respondents were asked whether and if the community can have a business agreement with a local/indigenous (black) business person just like they have agreements with the hunter and the lodge operator, they pointed out that procrastination has been indeed the thief of time. Negotiations were under way to have locals entering into business ventures with the community. For that to happen, the vice-chairman reiterated there was need for persistent negotiations.

This does not mean the hunter did not do anything for the community. In 2003, the hunter donated a Mazda B2500 truck to the community in addition to eight million Zimbabwean dollars.

5. Campfire and CBNRM - The Community Empowerment Myth?

The Mahenye community's alliance with the private sector has tended to shift the balance of power away from the community, hence alienating the communities from the Natural Resource Management process. This ultimately can act as a dis-incentive for community participation in resource management. In most cases the private sector is the stronger partner and initiator of joint ventures with communities. This sees communities relegated to the role of landowner and employee (Wolmer W., and Ashley C. 2003). The alliance between the private sector and communities can have positive or negative impacts depending on the institutional arrangements in place (Campbell B., and Shackleton S., 2001: 1). Although the lodge operator has managed to employ some local people as general hands/staff, this does not seem to be an incentive well appreciated by the majority of villagers especially because of the widening gap between the families benefiting and those that do not have a member employed at the lodge. Besides the foregoing, there has been little effort by both the lodge operator and the concession holder to groom, mentor and coach locals to become budding entrepreneurs. Therefore the seemingly noble gesture of employing locals as general staff can be easily dismissed as a gesture of patronage by the private sector especially given that more than eleven years passed by without a single local Mahenye person graduating and/or progressing into a licensed professional hunter, entrepreneur, or professional guide.

This study confirm and concur with Katerere (2002:7) that community empowerment within campfire is largely tokenism and a seemingly unending myth. This was well illustrated in this study by the fatigue the community is expressing about campfire as an empowerment and development option to improve their livelihoods. The fatigue manifested itself in increased poaching activities within the national park by some village members and yet the campfire committee and the local chief are aware this is happening but seem to turn a blind eye. From the informal discussions with the villagers, we established that some of the poachers are well known in the community

and yet no one has taken any action to report them to the police or Parks and Wildlife authority staff. The vice-chairman of the committee and the chief, in their respective responses, expressed that the Shangaan people are a meat eating tribe and hence, hunting is a way of life. This might explain, in a way, their reluctance to take action against the poachers. A classical example is that of the late poacher, Shadreck, who was considered a villain by the national parks authorities, the police and the lodge operators and yet in a big way he was (and is still) considered a hero within the Mahenye community.

All the community has to show as the tangible benefits from the partnership with the private sector is a run-down building housing the grinding mill, and an under-stocked shop. Probably the benefit worth noting is that of the grinding mill in that it reduced the walking distance from around 47km to less than a kilometre for some villagers. This, in a small way, has helped a lot in reducing the burden on women and the girl child. A few classroom blocks were also constructed with contributions from the revenue generated through campfire. The grinding mill, classroom blocks and the clinic can all be considered as public assets in the community. Thus the presence of such facilities does not automatically imply access to all (Di Grigorio et al 2004). Some people, especially the poor (and women) within the community are excluded from access by virtue of being unable to pay for the services i.e. school fees and medical expenses.

Much like other CBNRM programmes in the region, (the Mahenye) campfire itself has not evolved without controversy. Researchers have been at pains to explore and explain why such a potentially positive programme went so badly wrong in its implementation throughout Zimbabwe. Nowhere has campfire's failures been more dramatic than in the Zambezi Valley and the dry regions of rural Matabeleland's two administrative provinces, especially Nkayi and Lupane districts (Alexander and McGregor 2000; Dzingirai 2000; Gibson 1999; Hulme and Murphree 2000; Mavheneke, et al. 1999; Muir, et al. 1999). Preliminary results from this study are not so encouraging for Mahenye either. Ironically, though the emphasis in CBNRM is towards empowerment and community control, there are often undertones of subordination and manipulation. Hence as Twyman (1998: 752), Di Grigorio et al. (2004) suggest, community approaches to common property management present new

mechanisms by which people in authority can 'officialize' private interests by endorsing and putting them on record as dominant and consensus views. Thus, although the opportunities are there for people to manage their resources, they have been denied the requisite rights, control and power, and associated effective resource management tools. Given such revelations as the Mahenye case, one is bound to question whether or not CBNRM projects as currently designed are concerned with empowerment or compliance, participation or dictation. Indicators to date, and for the Mahenye case, are not very promising for community empowerment.

Ongoing research appears to challenge the very foundations of CBNRM, especially assumptions that communities are likely to be the most effective agents for resource management and devolution to this level is supposedly taking place. What is significant, argues Twyman 1998:766) is that 'community-based' projects are being viewed by governments and donor agencies as the panacea to good governance and rural development policy: formula-written frameworks for the devolution of resource management. Given the obvious diversity of individuals, households, groups, livelihoods and communities, let alone power relations, it is unlikely that such blanket/straitjacket approaches to resource management will be successful, even if presented behind the façade of participatory and empowering language. In fact, fears are that the coercive conservation efforts, in this case through forced and unequal partnerships, may undermine rural people's individual and collective actions to manage resources sustainably.

Research has questioned the 'empowerment' aspect of campfire. It is increasingly being argued that campfire 'has the potential to re-centralize state authority, and to extend state power to remote and marginal areas' (Alexander and McGregor 2000:608; Murindagomo 1997; Murombedzi 1994; Murphree 1995). A further complicating factor in campfire is the fact that Rural District Councils (RDCs) view the programme as a way to raise revenue regardless of the overall impact on producer communities such as the Mahenye. Numerous studies have documented the resistance and sometimes reluctance of RDCs to disburse wildlife revenue to sub-district levels (Hasler 1993; Hulme and Murphree 2000; Murphree 1999; Murphree 1995).

Thus, it can be surmised that such events have transformed campfire from its stated goals of giving people a stake in managing and benefiting from their own resources, from development and empowerment rhetoric to become associated with dispossession and impoverishment, leading to its resentment in the form of increased poaching and over-harvesting of resources. Evidently, effective CBNRM requires nothing short of a genuine transfer of resource ownership from the state to the community. This is because for communities to commit themselves and make investments in CBNRM, the state must provide them with strong legal rights to their wildlife, wildlife revenues and other natural resources with which their communities are endowed.

6. Conclusion

From the foregoing discussion, it is apparent that the granting of tenure over wildlife to people bearing the cost of living with wildlife in the communal sector has been much more difficult than perhaps initially anticipated. There has been some devolution of responsibility from central to local government, but the latter has been reluctant to complete the process by further devolving power to the grassroots communities.

Notwithstanding the various critiques of campfire and other CBNRM programmes in Zimbabwe, it is worth noting that campfire has been remarkably successful in its rapid expansion and it has had positive effects on community attitudes towards wildlife, mega fauna, forest and forest resources. It has also set the platform for the granting of tenurial rights to local communities, and a lever for collective action. This points to a need to work with the political process to promote the call for decentralization and tenurial empowerment for local communities over all their resources including land. Until that is achieved, it is less likely that campfire can continue to be an effective lever for sustainable CBNRM, and a viable livelihood option.

A crucial challenge for the community institutions is to gain internal legitimacy. This is problematic where community wildlife management units are pre-determined by existing state administrative units as noted above. Internal legitimacy will be greater if social units are relatively cohesive and collaboration is voluntary. However, internal legitimacy will also be promoted if the new institutions can deliver benefits that are

important to members (whether these are financial, or intangible). Long enduring common property resource management institutions have evolved over time (Ostrom 1990) and few of the new CBNRM institutions in southern Africa have been in existence for more than a few years. Time is required for these institutions to be tested, reviewed and adapted by their members before internal legitimacy is to be achieved.

7. References