

Communal Tenure, Motivational Dynamics and Sustainable Wildlife Management in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

This article analyses distribution of wildlife revenues in the Bulilimangwe and Tsholotsho Districts' CAMPFIRE (Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources) programmes in South Western Zimbabwe. The issue is important for programmes that focus on wildlife as a land use option and source of income for those communities living with the natural resource. Wildlife in Zimbabwe's communal lands, unlike livestock or agricultural production, is based on ecological units that do not necessarily conform to the administrative boundaries of ward or district. In these communal areas, livestock and arable based production and income are privatised to the household even though they are under communal tenure. Consequently, this control of benefits influences the degree of tolerance of transactional and opportunity costs households are willing to bear in the production process¹. With such motivational dynamics at play, the fugitive nature of wildlife resources and communal land tenure, how should a wildlife producer community be defined?

Introduction

Community is a term that suggests several images. There is no consensus on the definition of the term (Hillery, 1955, Cousins, 1993). Community may be used as a unitary term for geographical units or sets of units, for example village, ward or district. In such cases, spatial boundaries are used to determine the extent of the community. In some cases, community is used as an analytical category, such as a hunting community, San community or wildlife producer community. Here the characteristics of the group define what the community is. With such different meanings, how do we define a wildlife producer community in a communal area setting? To answer this question, we need to analyse the 'community' in terms of wards and villages.

Communal areas are divided up into administrative units of villages. Six or seven villages will make a ward. These units have clear boundaries determined on the basis of land area or household number. The people in these units may be referred to as communities. This is regardless of other characteristics like resource endowment among the inhabitants, self sufficiency or effects of wildlife. In other words the term community as used here to refer to villages and wards, is not analogous to Redfield's (1955) ideal type of the 'little community'. Having noted that community is an administrative definition when one refers to a village or ward, let us look at wildlife as a natural resource in the communal areas.

I have mentioned that wildlife is a fugitive resource. Wildlife can be costly in the communal areas. These wildlife costs emerge in the form of damage to crops and livestock (Hawkes, 1992; Madzudzo, 1994). In Bulilimangwe and Tsholotsho elephants and hyaenas are the major problem animals. Hyaenas are nocturnal predators of cattle, donkeys and goats. Elephants destroy large quantities of crops in the fields. These are formidable problem animals. Costs from wildlife are not borne on a ward-wide or village-wide basis but as communities, i.e. as analytical categories, in villages and wards. The cost of living with, or close to, wildlife differs for households living in a spatially defined community, for example a ward. In this paper, I give examples of two communities identified on the basis of the costs they have suffered from wildlife. Opportunity costs arose where users were forced to forgo the use of their range in order for it to be used by wildlife. This range can be used for inter alia houseland, arable land, pastures, hunting or gathering. Those foregoing the use of such range are communities, but do not necessarily conform with the spatial boundaries of village or ward.

While wildlife can be a cost, it can also be a benefit. In those areas where CAMPFIRE is being implemented, benefits from wildlife are largely in monetary form². These include the revenues obtained from tourist activities like safari hunting or photographic safaris. The revenues can be distributed to households

or used to finance community projects. However, which definition of 'community' is considered when these benefits are distributed; and how effective is the current definition of 'producer community' in motivating communities to bear the costs of wildlife?

In this article, the problems of defining a wildlife producer community are discussed. I conclude that there is need for CAMPFIRE to go further and differentiate the villages and wards in terms of their relationship to wildlife. Although the ward may be a convenient administrative unit for other purposes, it does not seem to be very relevant when one is dealing with CAMPFIRE and wildlife as a resource. In other words, the term 'community' does not imply ward when one is dealing with wildlife issues in Bulilimangwe and Tsholotsho. It is by paying attention to those who actually pay the costs of living with the wildlife that CAMPFIRE can effectively establish a link between cost and benefit. By so doing, those who bear the cost appreciate the value of wildlife as a source of income equal to or better than arable agriculture or livestock production. A brief discussion of the goals of CAMPFIRE and the study area is put forward in the following section.

Methods

Data for this article were collected by the author³ in the two districts over a period of five years. Focus was on the community based wildlife program, CAMPFIRE. A combination of methods was employed including participant and direct observation, and unstructured interviews with key informants. Secondary data on revenues from wildlife safari hunting was also used.

Background to CAMPFIRE and the study area

CAMPFIRE is a community based natural resource management programme. It seeks to demonstrate that, with appropriate incentives, wildlife is a viable land use option in ecologically marginal areas. In communal areas, those living with or close to the wildlife, and thus paying the costs of doing so, will benefit from wildlife use (DNPWLM, 1984, 1990). These are the "relevant populations" that are the target of CAMPFIRE.

' The "relevant populations" are those who live within the micro-environments which sustain the natural resources concerned, who pay the price for their sustained maintenance, who must reap the benefits of this investment, and who at the smallest viable operational level, have the capacity to manage the resources. (This) reflects ... a recognition of the dynamics of economic motivation which necessarily impose themselves on rural populations under subsistence conditions and seeks to restore a localised custodianship which can give scope to the fusion of ecological responsibility and community interest which characterises traditional African cultures.' (Murphree, 1990 p.3)

Bulilimamangwe and Tsholotsho districts are in South Western Zimbabwe. Both districts share their western boundaries with the Hwange National Park. The districts are separated by the Nata River. Elephants and other wildlife move between the two districts and the Hwange National Park (Murphree, 1989: p.4). In 1990, at the inception of the CAMPFIRE project in this area, these two districts ran a joint hunting programme and shared the revenues equally. In 1992, Tsholotsho Rural District Council felt that sharing revenues equally with Bulilimamangwe District did not reflect its greater endowment in wildlife resources. Tsholotsho argued that it had more wildlife resources, a consequence of superior range management such as the canal system supplying water to the wildlife area from Gariya dam. Therefore, sharing the revenues equally did not reflect the difference of effort invested. As a result Tsholotsho seceded from the joint venture to begin its own separate safari operations in the southern part of the district. Tsholotsho's withdrawal from the joint venture is significant for the argument of this article. Wildlife production is not uniform across the environments suggested by physical boundaries. Those who perceive that they are contributing more to wildlife production expect to be rewarded accordingly. This argument is central when we deal with the populations within the micro environments.

Seven wards have been selected for the CAMPFIRE programme in Bulilimamangwe. These are Makhulela, Ndolwane, Huwana, Gala, Bambadzi, Hingwe and Madlambudzi. The wards were selected on the basis of their claims to dry season grazing in the area designated for wildlife⁴. These wards are dominated by the Ndebele and Kalanga ethnic groups, who are agro-pastoralists (Madzudzo and Dzingirai, 1995 pp.28-35). Conspicuously absent in this selection was the mention of the minority San Bakwa group as major users of the area.

Prior to the introduction of the CAMPFIRE programme in Bulilimamangwe in 1990, an ethnic group, the San, led a nomadic lifestyle with hunting and gathering in the proposed wildlife project area. To facilitate safari hunting, a major component of CAMPFIRE, the Rural District Council requested the San to keep out of the project area. They were told by council and project officials that the area where they had been living was to be a CAMPFIRE area. Also, they were prohibited from hunting wildlife. A San settlement was set up at the fringes of Makhulela ward. The San were encouraged to adopt a sedentary life style based on agriculture. They lacked, however, even the basic pre-requisites for a life based on agriculture, such as draught power, ploughs or seed. A non-governmental organisation, Redd Barna, assisted the San to begin a life based on agriculture by providing them with access to a tractor. San fields were away from the area where the rest of the village had fields (Madzudzo and Dzingirai, 28-35). Notably San fields were closest to areas of wildlife incursion.

In Tsholotsho, the lowest unit of settlement is a line. A line is made up of a

number of households. There is no fixed number of households that make a line neither is there a fixed number of lines to make a village. Availability of resources like grazing, arable land, and water determine the limit to the number of households belonging to a line. Each line has its sabuku (kraalhead). Six villages make up a ward. Each village has a village development committee and each ward, a ward development committee (wadco). The chairman of the wadco is the councillor. Eight wards were selected for the CAMPFIRE programme in Tsholotsho on the basis of perceived wildlife presence and activity. Four of these wards make the Northern section, namely wards 2, 3, 4 and later 9. The Southern section includes wards 1, 7, 8, and 10. This southern section was the one previously run as a joint project with Bulilimamangwe.

As part of the CAMPFIRE programme in Tsholotsho, an electric fence is being erected on most sections parallel to boundary fence of the Hwange National Park. The fence will create a buffer zone between the communal area and the Hwange National Park to facilitate safari hunting operations. It is also expected that the fence will protect livestock and arable lands from wildlife predation and crop damage.

Wildlife benefit distribution in Bulilimamangwe

Revenue from wildlife, mainly from safari hunting, is distributed as follows: 15% to council as a levy, 35% to council for project management and 50% to CAMPFIRE wards. Each ward receives an equal amount of money from the 50% of the revenues allocated to the beneficiary wards. Ward committees decide on how the revenues are going to be used. The revenues from wildlife are not large enough to be shared as household dividends. The highest single disbursement each ward received was Z\$20 000 in 1991. This was revenue from realised from the 1990 and 1991 safari hunting activities of Z\$63 166 and Z\$84 764 respectively⁵. Household population in the CAMPFIRE wards ranges from 713 to 1022 and an average of 866 households per ward. Therefore this defeats the possibility of household dividends. Instead the money has been used for 'community' projects. Below a brief account is given of how Makhulela ward used its revenues in 1993.

In Makhulela ward, the councillor bought fences for each village. After erection, the fencing in one village was stolen. A wildlife committee member was asked why people were destroying a fence that would help them protect their crops. In reply he said that, 'You know that government property is always stolen.' He did not see the difference between other government projects and CAMPFIRE. The fact that the revenues from the use of wildlife are distributed to every ward regardless of cost, has weakened the link between wildlife management and benefit in this ward.

When Makhulela village received its allocation of fencing, this was used to

fence fields of the Kalanga and Ndebele. No fencing was used to protect the fields of the San. The San, in covert protest, refused to participate in the erection of the fence as requested by the councillor. They argued that the fence was not going to benefit them. The councillor felt that the San were not co-operating in community projects. He said that this was a symptom of a dependence syndrome among the San. They were used to receiving handouts from donors without putting in any effort.

Later, the San kraalhead approached the councillor demanding a share of the ward revenues for his people. They needed the money to purchase some donkeys for draught power. This was opposed by the councillor and other Kalanga and Ndebele present at the meeting. They argued that the revenues were for the ward that included the San. It was said that the San should come to meetings and lobby for projects for their area. The San rejected this saying that they were not given opportunities to air their views at meetings. They further alleged that when a San stood up to talk at a meeting, people would oppose any ideas he or she were trying to put across. Consequently, no projects selected benefited the San. They further complained that there were no San members on the wildlife committee because the people did not select them.

Although the San had given up their use of the wildlife area for the sake of CAMPFIRE, they were not getting the benefits of the project. Although the area had previously been used by San households for their continued subsistence, interests of the village at large were now being considered to their disadvantage. As one respondent commented:

'(In the past) The San were not serious about ploughing since there was abundant wildlife for meat. The meat would be exchanged for grain from the Kalanga people. The San are not showing signs of changing from their old ways although hunting has been restricted. They are beggars without the meat. Some try to carve stools but their lives are now worse than before'.

Distribution of wildlife benefits in Tsholotsho

It is my intention to show that, as in Bulilimangwe, the distribution of revenues from wildlife in Tsholotsho does not adequately consider who pays more for living with wildlife. Unlike in Bulilimangwe, revenues are not uniformly distributed to the participating wards in Tsholotsho. The ward where an animal is shot is regarded as the ward which produced the animal. It therefore gets the a larger share of the wildlife revenue (see Table 1). However, although Tsholotsho district rewards each ward differently - on the basis of who has produced the wildlife - this is not adequate. When the money gets to the ward there is no attempt to share the benefits in terms of incurred costs of living with wildlife. This is because the benefits from wildlife are being consumed collectively at ward level. I show this by way of a case study of the relocation

of Lubanji line.

Table 1 Wildlife Revenues

Ward

Revenues received in 1992 (Z\$)

Revenues received in 1994 (Z\$)

Revenues received in 1996 (Z\$)

1

91 250 (50)*

42 179 (31)

124 750 (47)

2

48 750 (29)

4 375 (8)

22 500 (16)

3

85 631 (51)

39 375 (75)

70 755 (51)

4

32 500 (20)

4 375 (8)

22 500 (16)

7

56 667 (32)

42 934 (32)

	93 096	(35)
8	16 666	(9)
	24 679	(18)
	24 000	(9)
9	-----6	(0)
	4 375	(8)
	22 500	(16)
10	16 666	(9)
	24 679	(18)
	24 000	(9)

Source: Adapted from Tsholotsho Rural District Council, CAMPFIRE Manager's Annual Reports, 1992, 1994, and 1996.

* Numbers in parentheses are percentages of revenues received by the respective ward. The northern or southern wards are considered separately. Percentages do not always add to 100 because of rounding error.

In Tsholotsho it has always been wards 1, 3 and 7 that earn the highest revenues. These wards share a common boundary with Hwange National Park (see map). Therefore, there is a greater amount of wildlife movement into the wards from the national park. Consequently, most of the hunting operations in the area have taken place in these wards. Ward 2 is an interior ward in relation to the Hwange National Park boundary. In a desire to have a bigger place where the animals can move freely, and thus attract more hunting activity, the councillor for the ward requested the diversion of the electric fence trace line to take up more land at the points it passes through the ward. This has necessitated relocating the people of Lubanji line who were now enclosed in the buffer area.

To the programme planners, Lubanji line would threaten the CAMPFIRE project because of human and livestock populations which would discourage the wildlife from residing in the area. Therefore, the line had to be relocated. It is interesting to see how the residents of Lubanji line viewed this relocation.

Individual cost versus ward benefit in the relocation of Lubanji Line

Lubanji line inhabitants in Zamazama village, Ward 2, were asked to move to Vusani line in the interior of the ward to make way for the wildlife buffer area in Tsholotsho North area. Officials from the Rural District Council, Ward 2 Wildlife Committee, a non-governmental organisation (Zimbabwe Trust) and the ward councillor, approached the people of Lubanji in July, 1993 to inform them that their line had been enclosed in the proposed wildlife area. The inclusion of the line in the wildlife area meant that the area would be enclosed by the electric fence. At this time, clearing of the trace line for the electric fence was already in progress. It was pointed out that the people of Lubanji line were free to continue staying in the line. It was also pointed out that there would be increased wildlife presence in the area which would be a threat to the local inhabitants, their livestock and crops. Problem animal control would not be guaranteed. However, those who wished to be moved had to choose a place of their choice where a borehole, for domestic and livestock water supplies, would be sunk.

The residents of Lubanji agreed to move out of the area. They made a request to the officials to be allowed to remain in Lubanji for the next cropping season as it was too late to clear new fields in the area of their relocation. However, the people later went to the headman of the area, umlisa to question why, after independence, they were asked to vacate their area when they were living in a communal area, where forced removals were not supposed to take place⁷. The headman indicated that he had no knowledge of the relocation. Furthermore, he pointed out that headmen were no longer in control of settling people, as the role had been taken up by the councillors and the village development committees. The headman then referred the people from Lubanji to the chief nduna of the area, Muswigana. The chief also pointed out to the people that he was not aware of the relocation and that he had no powers over land and settlement in the area.

It is clear that the people of Lubanji did not make a request to move out of their line to make way for a wildlife area. Of the people interviewed, only one person clearly stated that the relocation was a welcome move and that she was glad to go to Vusani. Two others did not like the idea of moving but saw some advantages in it. However, these persons did not give CAMPFIRE related advantages for the move. Among the reasons given were that children would be travelling a shorter distance to school, and the line would be close enough for the councillor to come and give details of food assistance. Furthermore, some felt that they would be under their chief Mswigana and not Siposo as was the case at the present moment (apparently, a consequence of administrative aloofness shown by a failure to take into account allegiance to chiefs when marking out the ward boundaries).

However, the rest of the respondents expressed negative sentiments about relocation, expressed in such common statements as, 'you prefer wild animals to people...' or 'you have moved us to let your wildlife in...' and 'what can we do, who can fight the government...' . The option to remain in Lubanji was given by the officials and the use of direct force was not overtly mentioned. No advantages of continuing to stay in the wildlife area were mentioned. However, the disadvantages of a continued stay in Lubanji were correctly pointed out, that is the likelihood of increasing problems with wildlife. Given the fact that there is no special benefit for living with or close to wildlife, the people agreed to move out of the area to avoid these dangers.

Over the past two years, the people of Ward 2 (where Lubanji line is) had received revenues from wildlife use of \$30 and \$17 per household. The people of Lubanji were aware that the people of neighbouring Ward 3 had received household revenues of \$100 each. When we asked those in Lubanji line whether they did not feel that their relocation would give their ward greater potential for realising higher incomes, they contested the idea. One of the points the people raised was that the increased incomes would benefit the ward as a whole not that particular line. ' Even those who have never seen an elephant will also benefit because they are members of the ward . . .', said some of the respondents. This example impinges on the empowerment rhetoric associated with CAMPFIRE, but it is a subject beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice to say that this demonstrated the unwillingness of the line to sacrifice on behalf of the rest of the ward because they were aware that the benefit from such a sacrifice would be equally shared by the whole ward.⁸

Conclusion

At present the producer community in Bulilimangwe and Tsholotsho is defined in terms of wards. Consequently, the benefits deriving from the utilisation of wildlife are shared equally among the villages within the ward. However, wards have been criticised as more of an administrative convenience than a reflection of social relationships. The above discussion then illustrates the need for CAMPFIRE to go further and differentiate beneficiaries in terms of the costs they undergo in wildlife management. While the spatial conception of the ward may be convenient for other purposes, it does not seem to be entirely useful for identifying CAMPFIRE's "relevant populations" regarding the devolution of revenues. In other words, the term community does not imply ward when one is dealing with wildlife issues in Bulilimangwe and Tsholotsho. It is by a differentiation between producing and non-producing villages and lines that those living with the wildlife might readily understand the concept of CAMPFIRE and wish to protect their natural resource. Such an effort will be successful in establishing a clear link between producer (defined by cost) and benefit.

Having said the foregoing, a caveat needs to be pointed out. One is aware of the problems which might be encountered in an attempt to define the concept of a producer community appropriately, especially in Tsholotsho district. For one thing, this means denying those interior villages or households of revenues which they are now used to. This might provoke resentment and lead to other villages or lines taking retaliatory measures to destroy the resource.

The article points out that, in Bulilimamangwe and Tsholotsho districts, the distribution of benefits from wildlife is undertaken on a, geographically defined, community wide basis. However, this procedure neglects those particular groups who bear the costs of living with or close to wildlife. Consequently, the viability of wildlife management in the communal lands is negatively affected.

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1 Owners of land held under private tenure have readily taken up wildlife as a land use option because they are the deemed producers and therefore the sole appropriators of wildlife benefits.

2 For a discussion of other benefits see Nabane et al (1996) pp 5

3 K.Khuphe assisted the author do some of the field work

4 However, our research on grazing has demonstrated that only a few large herd owning households in far less than the mentioned wards normally use the area (See: Madzudzo and Hawkes, 1996)

5 Income received per ward for both 1992 and 1993 was \$13 928 per year.

6 Ward 9 only became a CAMPFIRE ward in 1993 after a stray elephant was shot in the area.

7 Some of the people in this line came to Lubanji before independence, in 1970, having been evicted from Nyamandlovu because that area was a commercial farming area.

8 One is tempted to read a relationship between this experience and the problems of co-operative production in Zimbabwe's model B resettlement schemes.