Participation: processes, problematics and Campfire

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by Andrew Newsham

Contents

Acknowledgements

For a paper so critical at various points of the dangers of reductionism, it would be odd not to point out that ‘authorship’ is a term which takes a narrow, purely linguistic view of how things get written. Even if only one name appears on the front cover, there is never really just one author. That is a myth of the copyright laws. Therefore, what I will take the credit for, and have gained an MSc out of, is the result of the contributions made by a wide variety of people in ways which should receive far more recognition than they will get.

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Contact details

Anyone reading this paper who would like to get in touch can email me at: A.J.Newsham@sms.ed.ac.uk

Glossary[1]

Campfire	Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CASS	Centre for Applied Social Sciences
CBNRM	Community Based Natural Resource Management
CCG	Campfire Collaborative Group
DC	District Council
KRPC	Kairezi River Private Committee
LTC	Land Tenure Commission
MLGRUD	Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PRA	Participatory Rural (or Rapid) Appraisal
RDC	Rural District Council
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
Safire	Southern Alliance for Indigenous Resources
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WADCO	Ward Development Committee
WWC	Ward Wildlife Committee
WWF	World-wide Fund for Nature
VIDCO	Village Development Committee
VWC	Village Wildlife Committee
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwean African National Union – Patriotic Front

[1] In an attempt to make the text a little less mystifying, I have tried to limit the use of abbreviations. Any abbreviations in the text given in parenthesis after the actual title they truncate, and thereinafter not repeated do not appear in the glossary.

1

Introduction

The intention of this piece of work is to explore and critique notions of participation, both by considering some of the literature written on the subject, and by examining ideas, arguments and observations thrown up within the empirical context of Zimbabwe's Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (Campfire). There are, aside from this one, four chapters, whose content is here briefly summarised. Arguments and problems brought up in the chapters are introduced here, too.

Chapter two is concerned with treating the bulky topic of participation itself. It starts by considering the origins of the notion, which have to be situated in the context out of which they emerged. By the 1980s, widespread dissatisfaction regarding the perceived lack of progress made in the ambit of international development had reached a crescendo. Discourses and arguments new and old in academic spheres had brought into question the development 'agenda' and the aims of those seen to have the most influence over its makeup. Such debates contributed to the generation of an increasing awareness that the people who were supposed to benefit from interventions often seemed to have little involvement in and influence over them. In great measure the emergence of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) was fuelled by a desire to make the processes of development a less exclusive set of activities, more responsive to the people who were the justification for their very existence

This historical exploration of the origins of participation is followed by a consideration of the events and projects in the field that it grew out of, and the ideological influences from which it draws its sustenance. Indeed, the discussion of participation breaks the notion down into its two fundamental characteristics, one methodological and the other ideological in nature. An examination in this light helps to put into perspective criticisms which have been levelled at participation on both methodological and ideological grounds. These are then expounded, and in the broadest of terms can be said to cluster around the themes of implementation and power. Various analyses of power, its effect on the process of participation, the data generated by participatory methods and action predicated on this data throw up difficult and troublesome questions. However, another theme investigated is that the explanatory power sometimes conferred upon these analyses is by no means unproblematic in itself. Aside from this, the claims of ethnocentrism and processes of (sometimes unacknowledged) translation on participation are considered at some length.

Given the enormous literature addressing this topic, what is covered here is inevitably incomplete. However, it includes and analyses some of the most recent articles to date at the time of writing, an important feature given the increasingly hostile positions that are being adopted by some commentators. It argues that even though participation is a severely problematic notion, there is a need for balance and constructive criticism, rather than disillusion and rejection.

Chapter three reviews participation within the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (Campfire). It draws on some of the large amounts of literature written on this topic, and also incorporates data from interviews with key individuals involved in various capacities in the Programme. Again, a historical overview initiates the chapter, with a brief introduction to debates about more recent conceptions of conservation which influenced the Programme, especially the idea of sustainable utilisation as preferable to notions of military-style regimes of preservation. What follows is a glance at the historical, political and

legislative contexts, out of which Campfire emerged is outlined, which makes clear the extent to which the Programme is a response to the 'land question', or, to be more accurate, the myriad questions and problems raised by the inequitable distribution of land between white settler farmers and the indigenous population in twentieth-century Rhodesia. With the thus scene set, Campfire's original conceptual framework is described, and attention is given to the extent to which it is participatory. A contrast is then set up between the Campfire envisaged by its conceptual beginnings and the Programme which came into being through a process of negotiation with a considerable amount of stakeholders. It is the subsequent compromise, along with the bureaucratic structures through which Campfire operates and certain key pieces of legislation that have shaped the type of participation that can be said to characterise to greater or lesser degrees most projects, which I call 'representative' participation. Subsequent to a discussion of the merits and limitations of representative participation, the chapter draws towards its conclusion with a broad brush-stroked sketch of Campfire within the broader context of the prevailing political and economic climate in Zimbabwe.

It concludes, in parallel with the previous chapter, that despite its failings, Campfire, as well as representative participation, should not be a subject solely of criticism; rather, efforts have to be made to recognise the advances it has made.

Chapter four attempts to draw together and review the various strands elaborated throughout the work, and apply arguments made in chapter two to the Campfire context. It concludes that what would be helpful at this stage in the debate about participation is not so much an outright rejection or a radical re-working of it, but rather a different perspective which allows the central issues to be kept in focus at the same time, which looks for ways to iron out some of the contradictions inherent in the idea of consensus, and which tempers disillusion with participation by being more realistic in its expectations of an overworked and oft-maligned term.

2

Participation: origins and spread, contestation and balance

"Participation [was] a warmly persuasive word which [seemed] never to be used unfavourably."[2]

Introduction

This chapter is divided into five sections, investigating a range of arguments, observations and criticisms associated with the broader aim of the section. The intention in section I is to focus briefly on the wider developmental context out of which notions of participation have emerged. In doing so, it touches on some of the themes which led to urgent calls for a rethink of development, what and whom it serves and for a repositioning of its protagonists. Section II seeks to examine the origins of, ideas behind and widespread adoption of participatory methods. Section III investigates what are for the sake of convenience called the 'first wave' of attacks on participatory methods (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). These are clustered around two core themes:

- implementation
- power

Section IV considers the 'second wave' of attacks (ibid.), characterised to some extent by attention given to some of the theoretical assumptions, ontological and epistemological, underlying participatory rhetoric, centred around four themes:

- ethnocentrism
- translation
- dichotomy
- power

Finally, section V puts the case for the need for balance in the light of what could be described as a backlash against participation, and the importance of attempting not to fall into the very traps whose existence we try to reveal. At various points throughout the chapter, I try to problematise the critique as much the object of criticism.

Section I

Discontent with development

The crumbling towers of modernisation and dependency theories

Over the past couple of decades there has been much disillusion and frustration with what development is perceived to have become, leading to calls for a thorough re-examination of what it is, where it is going and why. Much impetus for change has been generated from the discrediting of two theoretical blocks which were

[2] Slightly adapted from Williams 1976:76

traditionally relied on quite heavily by development studies: modernisation and dependency theories.

Modernisation theory envisages a process whereby 'traditional' societies, characterised by poverty, simplicity and primitive levels of technology are transformed into 'modern' societies, characterised by the nuclear family (Parsons, 1949) wealth, high living standards, and sophisticated technology (Hobart 1993, Gardner & Lewis, 1997). Through industrialisation and urbanisation, 'progress' would be made, and nations would travel through linear time lines until they reached the ultimate goal of "rational" political systems (Kerr *et al,* 1973) and took their place in a global system of free market economics (Rostow, 1960).

Dependency theory, meanwhile, arose in opposition to modernisation theory, de-throning the concept of 'undevelopment' and replacing it with 'underdevelopment'. The imperial North, in colonising the South, established relationships of dependency between what came to be known as the centre and the periphery, mediated through the global capitalist system (Wallerstein, 1974). This relationship ensured increasing economic prosperity for capital in centre countries, but locked periphery countries into an endless spiral of poverty (ibid.).

Both theories are subject to the same criticisms, which have come to deny them their credibility. First, both systems are hopelessly reductionist, and simply lack the requisite analytical tools to make sense of the vast empirical diversity which they clumsily refer to as the undeveloped/underdeveloped world (Gardner & Lewis, 1997). Secondly, they have difficulties in seeing large percentages of the world's human population as anything other than passive recipients of progress/oppression. Agency and resistance do not figure highly on the agendas of either (Hobart, 1993).

Bureaucracy, privileged knowledge, power

The inability of many development interventions to achieve their stated aims has also led to increasing dissatisfaction, and a search for answers to the questions which such inability poses. Examples of projects which have worked out badly are not difficult to find (i.e. George, 1986, Chambers, 1997). For instance, the building of Zimbabwe's Kariba dam caused terrible suffering and hardship for the people who had to be relocated (Scudder, 1980), in some cases to a location more than 160 kilometres away, the Lusita Plateau, where there was for some time no access to clean water (Mair, 1984:110-113).

One of the biggest problems identified has been the institutional and bureaucratic structures through which projects have been administered. Far too often, it is argued, fundamental decisions about the make-up and direction of projects have been taken by people who are geographically and ideologically distant from the locations in which they take place (George, 1986, Ferguson, 1990, Escobar, 1991, Chambers, 1983, 1991, 1997, Gardner & Lewis, 1997). The data used on which decisions are based has been unreliable (Dewees, 1989b, Mearns, 1995), and continued use of untrustworthy sources has led, for example, to an exaggeration of levels of deforestation across West Africa (Fairhead & Leach, 1998). The value of local practices and knowledge has been ignored or underestimated because the epistemological superiority of data offered by 'hard scientists' has with frequency been assumed (Escobar, 1991, Chambers 1997).

This presumption has been seen to be perpetuated through what Chambers calls "professional realities" (1997), arguing that the status and power that go with many professional positions make it easy to privilege one's own viewpoint. Vested interests in a project's success – or at least for it to be perceived as successful – may mean that even if gaping and potentially terminal flaws are spotted in good time, recommendations may still be ignored (Gardner & Lewis, 1997, Chambers 1997).

The circles in which development 'experts' move do not bring them into contact with perspectives and views formed outside of the tightly structured and quite

exclusive network to which they are accustomed. Ferguson notes the similarity of interventions from one country to the next and attributes it to the prevalence of a kind of free-standing 'development expertise', easily generalisable and seemingly independent of differing empirical contexts (Ferguson, 1990:258).

It is not entirely surprising to find that a reaction against such notions of how to 'do' development took the form of a re-examination of, and an engagement with, groups of people who were felt to have been excluded from the very processes which were supposed to 'develop' them.

Section II

PRA: origins, adoption and spread

Through the 1970s and 1980s, the idea that people were what were missing from the technical solutions posited, the economic calculations and the social cost benefit analyses, became increasingly prevalent. Another observation that dovetailed with this idea was that poor and marginalised groups were powerless, and that this was an issue which had to be addressed if their fortunes were to improve. These are the two driving motors behind the emergence of participatory rhetoric and methods, which surfaced partially through Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and then crystallised in the form of Participatory Rural (or Rapid) Appraisal (PRA), later to become known as Participatory Learning and Action (PLA)[3].

PRA consists of two component parts, the first ideological (although to consider PRA as a rounded ideology in itself would perhaps be overstating the case) and the second methodological.

PRA's ideological influences

What would come to be known as PRA was influenced by various movements and ideas that were establishing themselves throughout the 1970s and 1980s and which fed into its underlying tenets.

The first major touchstone were forms of research founded on the ideas of Paulo Freire, who argued that poor, exploited people across the world were capable of and should be encouraged to analyse the nature of their oppression. Change had to come from the 'bottom up', rather than the 'top down' if it was to be meaningful and lasting (Freire, 1974). This has come to be known as Participatory Research (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995) and Participatory Action Research (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991). If people were to be actively involved in the generation of knowledge, in order to bring about desired social and economic change, leading to their empowerment, then the place of the researcher in this process had to be carefully considered (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991). A major point was the renegotiation of the researcher's status. The teacher/pupil dichotomy was abandoned in favour of seeing researchers as needing to learn as much, if not more, from the 'objects' of research as they themselves could 'teach', and as in no position to take the lead in investigation, analysis and planning. Rather, they should be convenors, catalysts and facilitators, reflexive, and self-critically aware of the impact on the knowledge produced of their behaviour, methods and concepts as 'professionals' (Chambers, 1997:108).

[3] For the sake of convenience, here, the term PRA will be used, although it is recognised that PRA and PLA are not 100% identical in their rhetoric and emphasis. Given, though, the interchangeability with which the two terms are used by academics and practitioners alike, though, they are here treated as synonymous.

Concerns and arguments raised by PAR, which was, after all, employed by only a minority of professionals, were reinforced by the professional legitimacy that was increasingly conferred, at least within the development arena, on applied anthropology. With increasing anthropological engagement came new assumptions about the value of 'local' knowledge, what was necessary to capture it, and the 'emic/etic' perspectives which had to be acknowledged when making judgements about what needs were important to address and who deemed them important/unimportant (Chambers, 1997). In conjunction with ideas about the richness of information produced by considered, unhurried anthropological methods such as participant observation, these values were to act as the base on which to ground new methods.

Another complementary source of inspiration was insights derived from the involvement of farmers in agricultural research. Richards (1985) and Bunch (1985) argued strongly for the recognition of the skills and capabilities of farmers, and the scope for a deeper understanding of agricultural diversity that research with farmers could offer into various farming systems. Associated with 'farmer first' research was the idea that reversals were needed, such as bottom up rather than top-down, and that the 'discovery' of farmers' abilities implied that their participation in projects initiated supposedly for their benefit should be extended to the level of decision-making and implementation. This was the only way to ensure sustainable success, as it would give them a real stake in the outcome.

PRA as methodology

Methodologically, PRA to a considerable degree takes its lead from its predecessor, Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). RRA was in great part a reaction against slow, painstaking and awkward conventional research methods such as long-winded questionnaire surveys (Campbell et al, 1979). Many were by the late 1970s inventing quicker, more cost-effective methods which, they argued, produced data which was as reliable as that produced by more formal methods (Bunch, 1995). Rapid Rural Appraisal was also a result of a growing recognition among development professionals that the people who lived in the area under study often knew a great deal about the subjects that were under investigation, and that tapping that knowledge could produce more relevant, higher quality data. RRA gained currency in the 1980s, and, in its ideal guise was described by Chambers as

> a better way for outsiders to learn. In answering the question, 'Whose knowledge counts?' it sought, and continues to seek, to enable outsiders to gain information and insight from rural people and about rural conditions, and to do this in a more cost-effective and timely manner (Chambers, 1997:113).

RRA methods have included: use of secondary data in initial stages; seeking out the 'experts' in a community, semi-structured interviews, key probes and transect walks, amongst other techniques (Chambers 1997).

PRA shares much with RRA but changed the focus somewhat of the objectives and positioning of participants within a project. Whereas the primary goal of RRA was to elicit information, and the main actors were project staff, usually not from the project site, PRA posited the primary goal as empowerment and sought to put local people centre-stage by making them the analysts, diagramers, planners etc. Information generated would stay with the people who would most be affected by the outcome of the project, and would be generated for their benefit (Chambers, 1997:115). Whilst RRA stresses the importance of semi-structured interviews and focus groups PRA gives prominence to methods and tools which allow visual analysis, such as mapping, modelling, card sorting or Venn diagramming (Ibid:117). These methods were seen to be less exclusive, as they could be used by literate and

non-literate people alike, and were (arguably) less grounded in Western epistemological notions surrounding the representation and transfer of knowledge.

It could be said that PRA, then, serves two purposes: first, it sets out an agenda on how development initiatives should respond to and incorporate local people; and second, it tries to provide an interface or medium through which this can be achieved, serving to reorient the overall direction of development by correcting mistakes of the past. Thus, with methods as medium, there is an acknowledgement of the need to establish the kind of interaction that is going to take place between, say, local people and visiting project staff. Put simply, there is the need to create a common understanding between the two.

As the words 'participation' and 'participatory' came to be used with increasing frequency, so too did the demand for PRA increase, to the point where many of the large donor organisations and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), North and South, and thousands of smaller organisations had adopted PRA approaches and methods by the mid 1990s (Chambers, 1995:57). In the space of fifteen to twenty years, it had become a global phenomenon, and to date seems to be showing few signs of slowing down.

Section III

Implementation and power

After the initial period of euphoria and eagerness associated with participatory methods, discussion of the topic became somewhat more sober, ushering in what has been described as the 'first wave' of criticism (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). In this section, I have grouped a variety of arguments and observations under the two broad headings of implementation and power, which most commentators would recognise as the common factors central to any debate about participation. Nevertheless, a complete separation is not the intention, for it is not always possible to talk about one without making reference to the other.

Implementation

Perhaps the most obvious criticism that has been made is with respect to bad practice and implementation. Concerns have been voiced that there are many cases in which what passes for PRA is not actually very participatory. Concentration merely on the methods of PRA can lead to routines which have little to do with local involvement at the level of key decisions, and is unlikely to lead to empowerment (Chambers, 1995, 1997, Gardner & Lewis, 1997, Nelson & Wright, 1995, Hailey, 2001). There is, moreover, the danger that methods can simply be assimilated into top-down packages, and used to legitimise certain projects which, having been planned out long before any contact with the people living in the project area is made, are in direct conflict with the ideological aims behind the application of PRA techniques (Chambers, 1995, 1997, Guijt & Cornwall, 1995, Gardner & Lewis, 1997). The fear of this outcome may well be at the root of Hildyard *et al*'s (perhaps needlessly caustic) observation that "Few of the institutions that are now pushing participation…have a history of taking [it] very seriously" (Hildeyard *et al*, 2001:57). In this respect, the World Bank has attracted a great deal of angry censure for its ostensible commitment to participation on the one hand (Nelson & Wright, 1995) and failure to make its programmes participatory on the other (For an example of this duality which is compelling for horrific reasons see Larry Lohman, 1994, cited here from Hildeyard *et al,* 2001:58-59).

The problem of bad implementation (or lack of) is compounded by the difficulties thrown up by the wide variety of uses to which the term 'participation' has been put by different institutions, organisations, groups and individuals. Scales of participation have been compiled which try to describe the different actions and processes to which the label 'participatory' has been applied. To pick one which is comprehensive and widely accepted, consider Pretty's typology of participation, in which, in the context of conservation, he identifies seven different types. These range from 'passive participation' in which "people participate by being told what is going to happen or what has already happened", right through to 'self-mobilisation', in which "People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems." (Pretty, 1994). Crudely speaking, the typology works along a continuum characterised by distance from key decision-making processes and powerlessness to ownership of all change-related processes and empowerment. It is implied throughout that the greater the access to decision making, and level of ownership, the more participatory the project is.

The typology is very useful for negotiating the contradiction between the meaning of the word in terms of its empirical and theoretical origins and the divergences and reinterpretations that have occurred as a result of what Chambers has called 'going to scale' (Chambers, 1995). However, in working its way towards one definition that is more valid than others, it arguably runs into Guijt & Cornwall's "paradox of participation". In their words,

> If PRA is intended to be a flexible, adaptive approach to learning and action, then static definitions which systematise its use may lead us back into the very situation that PRA arose in reaction to: established dogma and routinised practice. (Guijt & Cornwall, 1995:4)

Even in the context of considered use of PRA methods which are more in accordance with PRA's ideological influences, limitations to their scope have been identified. Woodhouse has pointed out that village diagrams, models, ranking exercises, plans and other PRA activities offer findings which are meaningless in the absence of "an understanding of the context and process" in which they emerged (Woodhouse, 1998:144). Such a statement may seem embarrassingly obvious, but it has to be made in order to put the explanatory potential of PRA methods into perspective. In the myopic rush to 'do' participation, it is not one that has always been taken on board.

Mosse argues that PRA exercises are good for generating agro-ecological and some economic information, but are inappropriate for providing data essential to the analysis of social relationships (Mosse, 1995:27). Further, he highlights the unhelpful dichotomy that has set up participatory methods in opposition to 'extractive' research methods which, he maintains,

> overlooks the fact that certain types of knowledge employed in participatory projects is *necessarily* external and analytical. Indeed, knowledge of social relationships which helps project workers identify the conditions of participation itself, to bargain with villagers on issues of equity, gender, or cost recovery…is of this kind" (ibid:32, emphasis in original).

Power

It is through this analytical limitation of PRA methods that the question of power emerges. What is often gained through them is some sort of public consensus, the occurrence of which can serve to support vague, empirically inaccurate assumptions about seemingly homogenous local 'communities' (Mosse, 1994, 1995, 2001, Gardner & Lewis, 1997, Woodhouse, 1998, Crewe and Harrison, 1998). To a team of project workers starting up in a village they have never been to before, and about which they know little, it is all too easy to remain unaware of the ways in which social

relations and public settings can pre-determine and shape the opinions offered (Mosse, 1995:28). Indeed, the way in which key village leaders, elders, local government or religious figures, among others, are able control the outcome of PRA exercises can restrict the space in which the views of various other members of the community already considered marginalised, such as women, young men, children etc (for examples see Mosse 1994, 1995, Hildeyard *et al*, 2001, Kothari, 2001).

The irony of such an outcome, given that participatory methods are often deployed at local community level in an attempt to cope with the difficulties posed by political hierarchies, is not lost on Brown, who also severely problematises the notion of 'community' in the context of Joint or Participatory Forest Management (Brown, 1999). He argues that PRA techniques "tend to privilege the view that the underlying problems are knowledge-based, not power-based" (ibid.:11). Even if PRA can allow practitioners to 'know' what poor and marginalised groups want or need, it does not always address what is often the fundamental cause of those needs in the first place: inequitable access to a resource. For instance, local communities may be prohibited the use of timber and non timber forest products alike, despite residing close to the resource base. A timber company, on the other hand, may profit from a government-granted concession which gives it exclusive access to the same resource base. If the government and the timber concessionaire, the two stakeholders with the most 'power over' the resource, have arrived at a mutually beneficial agreement which would be threatened by the inclusion of another user group, there is little that a ranking exercise establishing community needs can do to alter the situation (ibid).

Just as PRA approaches can be co-opted at the local level, so too can they be within development organisations and agencies. Arturo Escobar has argued that PRA's more radical agenda has been neutralised within the setting of international development (Escobar, 1995). After all, organisations with political and financial muscle have the power of definition, which exacerbates the tendency to conflate the differences between fact and interpretation, and can have a depoliticising effect on policy (Escobar, 1991:667). However, Escobar has come in for strong criticism on various counts: Gasper has made a strong case against him on grounds of essentialism (Gasper, 1996); Crewe & Harrison have added to this the observation that his arguments are often dichotomous, casting the debate in terms of 'us' and 'them' (Crewe & Harrison, 1998). On this, score, though, it is Lehman who is pithiest:

> The bias is evident: whereas he dissects the discourse and ideology of establishment development practice with ruthlessness and ill-disguised hostility, he treats the equivalent ideological statements on 'the other side' as innocent statements of intention and pure reflections of motive. (Lehman, 1997:575)

As Lehman also notes, if one recognises the difficulties involved in making any statements about the 'other', be that in reference to women in Afghanistan or street children in Accra, Escobar's anthropological credentials are undermined by a failure to recognise the same difficulties in making statements about 'Western' development practitioners who may also have been shoved into categories which are equally inappropriate for comprehending and demonstrating heterogeneity.

Section IV

Ethnocentrism, translation, dichotomy, and further analyses of power

The 'second wave' of criticism follows on in many ways from the first, in the sense that a keen awareness of the relationship between participatory approaches and power is evident in many of the arguments considered here. It is also characterised

to some extent by disillusion arising from doubts regarding the epistemological and ontological soundness of some of the (unacknowledged) assumptions underlying PRA. Another theme pertinent to this section is the prevalence of unhelpful and over-simplifying dichotomies (Crewe & Harrison, 1998) in the positions of some of PRA's advocates. However, I attempt to show that it is not a trap that some of the authors critiquing PRA have managed to evade.

Ethnocentrism and translation

Woodhouse has observed that casting project staff in the light of 'neutral' facilitators is somewhat at odds with the empowering agenda that participation entails (Woodhouse, 1998:145). This is a contradiction which highlights the fact that, for all its concentration on allowing 'local people' to speak for themselves, PRA is in some ways based on assumptions about desirable outcomes which are not necessarily shared by those who are supposed to benefit from such outcomes. In other words, it leaves itself open to the charge of ethnocentrism.

In my view, participation is ethnocentric *to the extent that* it relies on notions which depend for their credibility and justification on local and context-specific beliefs, which may not have arisen and may not hold in the empirical context to which they are being applied[4]. In the absence of context-transcendent criteria which would permit the ranking of the validity of conflicting beliefs, and hence the establishment of a clear and unproblematic use of terms such as 'right' and 'wrong', it is difficult to see how interventions deployed on the basis of such notions can be universally appropriate.

To put these remarks into a more tangible context, we can reconsider Mosse's observation that power relations shape the knowledge and consensus that PRA techniques capture (Mosse, 1994, 1995, 2001), which does not always allow all the people who could participate to do so. However, even if it were possible to contrive the situation so as to fundamentally change its power dynamics and make it easier for marginalised people to air their views, then the contrivance would be based on an attempt to make the political space in which they were operating more equitable and egalitarian. Both equity and egalitarianism are staple tenets of democracy, or at least certain formulations of it. Therefore, it is ethnocentric to assume that the idea of democracy, which emerged in a particular empirical context and is sustained by beliefs local and specific to that context, are universally applicable to any other empirical context, regardless of difference and diversity. What constitutes participation is already pre-defined, which limits the extent to which participants can define the process for themselves. Take the case of women, for instance. Would it be possible to call a project 'participatory' which did not involve women? Or rather, would this be participation in the accepted sense as offered by Pretty's typology? What if female participation involved a significant renegotiation of the accepted gender roles, with little local incentive to change from either women or men? In this light, definitions of empowerment can start to seem somewhat inflexible.

If such an argument is to be maintained, though, it is necessary to exercise some caution in its use, and to be aware of the implications it can have if it is accepted without caveat. From this position, it could be inferred that beliefs derived from one empirical setting cannot in any way be compatible or comparable with those derived from another. In other words there can be no consensus between members of different cultural groups. Such reasoning, though, has sometimes been predicated on notions of cultures as entities clearly separate from each other in space and static in time, which have little in the way of empirical evidence in their favour, and have

[4] Based on the formulation of relativism constructed in Barnes, B & D. Bloor (1982), 'Rationalism, Relativism and the Sociology of Knowledge,' in *Rationality and Relativism,* M. Hollis and S. Lukes (eds), Oxford, Blackwell, pp.21-47

been discredited on the grounds that they are hopelessly reductionist (i.e. Kanneh, 1999, Mohan, 2001). However, a more careful formulation which does not insist on absolutes but which does leave space for cross-cultural agreement through consensus, is a fundamental for responsible uses of PRA in three ways:

1. it serves to highlight the crucial observation that if PRA practitioners wish to make serious attempts to escape from charges of ethnocentrism, then *all* beliefs and definitions, including and perhaps especially those which seem most admirable and altruistic, must be questioned.
2. it brings out the contradiction inherent in a methodology which on the one hand wants to access 'local knowledge', whilst evaluating it in terms of a framework which has arisen in a different context on the other.
3. it draws into sharp focus the function of participatory methods as a means to express knowledge generated in a specific empirical setting in an idiom which is intelligible not just to the project staff but also to other actors in more distanced contexts, such as project donors.

Following on from the third point, it is important to realise that there is a process of translation intrinsic to PRA; but the distinction between what is being translated and the translation itself has sometimes been collapsed. An example of this conflation is provided by Chambers, who, in a section on methodological innovations in field research on farming systems mentions "Clive Lightfoot and his colleagues [who] pioneered analytical and flow diagramming *by* farmers" (Chambers, 1997:110, my emphasis). The sentence, in trying to imply that authorship of these methods rests at once with Lightfoot *et al* and the farmers, seems unaware of the logical contradiction entailed in the idea of being the pioneer of an invention and then attributing that invention to someone else. It thus obscures the fact that they are not an example of harnessing 'indigenous technical knowledge', but rather a system devised by someone else that farmers learned to use. Whereas the non-local origin of these methods is not *ipso facto* unsanctionable or even ethnocentric, it is at odds with the claims of PRA to extract and use local systems of knowledge, and, on the contrary, may even reinforce the validity of the non-local, which in this case farmers are subscribing to, over the local.

Kothari formulates the paradox of participatory research as follows: "while the flexibility of the tools and techniques is stressed, there is simultaneously a desire to fix people's lives through processes of identification and framing of social interaction and activities, revealing the rigidity of the methodology" (Kothari, 2001:148). I would argue that this rigidity is a result of the need to translate into an idiom generated in a different empirical setting, and is a consequence of collapsing the distinction between what is being translated and the translation itself.

Another question which arises from a consideration of the claims of translation upon the use of PRA is, of course, what can and what cannot be translated. It is in relation to this concern that Kothari's remarks about the inability of participatory approaches to register varying forms of resistance become very pertinent. She draws the distinction between the representation of reality created by PRA exercises and 'reality' itself, and notes that "The intentions of the performer and the reading of the performance may be different with unintended effects" (ibid.:150). There is potential for subversion in the performance, too, as participants can decide how they will represent their lives – and which facets – through PRA exercises (see Mosse, 2001, for participants expressing through PRA exercises not so much their needs as what they thought they could get). Moreover, participatory methods are incapable of describing non-participation; ways to translate this idea, perhaps, have not yet been devised.[5]

[5] Another note of caution must be sounded here, however. The idea of translation has been problematised to the extent of rendering it impossible to establish the meaning of anything. The claims

Power, dichotomy and ethnocentrism

Taylor has compared participatory approaches in managerialist and development contexts in an attempt to draw out some informative parallels and illustrate the ways in which they are mutually reinforcing (Taylor, 2001). After establishing basic similarities in the positions of employees and 'beneficiaries' in terms of "dependent relationships" (ibid.:125), he explores the history and implementation of Employee Involvement and Participation (EIP). He argues that there is little evidence that it has increased employee participation, despite the fact that it has long been part of mainstream Human Resource Management theory and despite its widespread application in the workplace. More importantly, "participatory discourses are utilized in both the development and managerial contexts because they…are an attempt to placate those without power and obscure the leavers of power inherent in the social relations of global capitalism" (ibid.:125). However, this reasoning comes up against Kothari's warning against perpetuating "the simplistic notion that the sites of social power and control are to be found solely at the macro- and central levels" (Kothari, 2001:140). Indeed, Taylor is guilty of an analysis predicated on the dichotomous categories of powerful, rich elites and powerless poor people. Moreover, the rich elite/powerless poor dichotomy is just one of many which characterise the way in which complex situations are described in terms of simple oppositions (Crewe & Harrison, 1998, Mohan, 2001), which it is the aim of participatory approaches to development to reverse (Kothari, 2001). Robert Chambers, too, as one of the main proponents of the need for reversals between 'Uppers' and 'Lowers', 'First' and 'Last', leaves himself wide open to the same charge of essentialism (Gasper, 1996, Crewe & Harrison, 1998, Kothari, 2001, Mohan, 2001). Mohan emphasises the difficulty of talking about and demonising homogenised, hegemonic knowledge of the 'West' as opposed to 'local' knowldege, and is keen that various observers, practitioners, commentators, consultants, academics, professionals, workers etc who all fall under the belief-beggingly indiscriminate category of 'Westerners' should not "behave as if 'we' do not have anything to offer" (Mohan, 2001:161).

In terms of Kothari's analysis of the workings of power within a participatory context, then, it is not enough to look exclusively at overt power structures; it is further necessary to consider the production of knowledge in terms of how the social norms people follow also replicate relations of power and oppression (Kothari, 2001). By evaluating the contributions people make in PRA exercises in terms of individual choice, the fact that what people actually say is a reflection of and are circumscribed by wider cultural norms passes without comment (ibid.). This observation leads Kothari to reformulate one of the ostensible goals of participatory rhetoric:

> If, as Foucault argues, individuals subject themselves to self-surveillance as they absorb wider notions of social control, the purpose of participatory research should be to uncover these more normalized articulations of power. (ibid.:145)

However, this analysis of power may not escape from the charge of essentialism, either. In examining how power resides in deep-rooted social practices which determine individual action, Foucault, upon whom Kothari bases her own argument, comes very close to a holistic view of society in which individuals are controlled by societal forces. Such an assumption, though, raises troublesome questions regarding volition and social change. What is made of individual agency and how does society change if people are influenced by society rather than vice versa?

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of Quine's 'radical translation' argument (Quine, 1960) are not considered here due to restrictions on the space and scope of this paper; nor are criteria for acceptable/unacceptable translation offered. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the implications translation processes have for PRA's ideological elements, even if the argument used does not in itself address, let alone resolve, the wider problems inherent in the notion of translation.

Moreover, the claims of ethnocentrism are pertinent here too. Is it justifiable to conceive of notions of power as some universal concept? Even if power does exist outside of language, our interpretation of it does not. What are the implications of applying it in contexts which offer alternative definitions sustained by a different belief system? If an analysis 'reveals' power dynamics, does it fall into the same trap of constructing and representing supposed truths about 'other' empirical contexts which that analysis necessarily represents on and through its own terms? These are questions which Kothari's Foucauldian take on power does not altogether dispel. Nevertheless, even if it cannot be assumed to be universally applicable, it would be a mistake to dismiss it out of hand as untenable or irrelevant. Rather, it is preferable simply to qualify the explanatory power which Kothari would perhaps wish to accord it.

Section V

Conclusion

I hope by this point that it is reasonably clear that whilst there are many problems associated with PRA, both from an ideological and a theoretical point of view, and whilst there are many good reasons to inform any sceptical and painstakingly careful application of it with the criticism, constructive or otherwise, that has emerged, it is equally necessary to maintain a sense of balance by recognising the limitations of such criticism. There are indeed huge difficulties with the implementation of participatory development, but it is only fair to acknowledge that there is great potential also both from the gains that can and have been made, and the potential for greater flexibility through lessons learned and applied.

It is of importance, too, to be clear on our expectations of PRA. Its biggest weakness may well be the difficulties brought up by the operation of power, although the strength of this criticism is sapped by the apparent flaws in current analyses of power. Even if the argument is allowed to stand, is there any other viable alternative which offers a more workable solution? In the context of South Asian development, Hailey suggests "informal, personal interaction" and "building personal relationships with groups and individuals in the community" (Hailey, 2001:88-90). Whilst these are no doubt valuable and worthwhile activities, they hardly constitute an overarching solution to development's woes. Moreover, their importance has been underscored many times over; indeed, they have, to my knowledge never been considered as anything other than a prerequisite for participatory success, and they are arguably just as open to co-option as participatory methods. Mohan views Schrijvers' transformative research perspective as the way forward (Mohan, 2001), and indeed it does present itself as one way of bridging the gap between participatory and various other methods, to offer a broader and perhaps more epistemologically satisfactory approach. Would it, though, be able to address situations in which well-placed groups benefiting from inequitable access to a resource were able to sustain that inequity, to the detriment of the group the transformative researcher identified with?

Participation cannot be separated from the wider context in which it takes place. As Brown notes, in the context of Joint Forest Management,

> problems arise in the application of participatory methods to complex issues of resource allocation which are not locality-specific and which are not amenable to purely local resolution. Such methods are likely to give results which are both superficial and misleading when applied to intercommunity, interregional and inter-class inequalities with deep historical roots (Brown, 1999:11).

If it is a mistake to concentrate solely on the macro-level, then it is equally erroneous to ignore it. However, rather than expecting all of the factors which act on and limit participation to be undermined by projects solely at grass roots level, and rather than abandoning all of the hard work that has gone into making participation an option for practitioners and people affected by interventions, it is perhaps more realistic and more just to revise expectations, and, hence, disillusion.

3

'Representative' Participation in the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (Campfire)

'When we are hungry, the elephant is food. When we are full, the elephant is beautiful.'[6]

Introduction

This chapter is divided into five sections. Section I summarises conservation debates which were precursors to the Campfire Programme. Section II outlines the land tenure system and legislative framework in Zimbabwe, out of which Campfire has emerged. Section III looks to the ideological platform underpinning the programme and at the ensuing negotiations which led to the implementation of the first Campfire initiatives. I argue that negotiation led to an undesirable compromise of fundamental principles governing the establishment of a common property resource regime and village-level institutions to manage and enforce that regime. This capitulation placed restrictions on the level of participation achievable in Campfire programmes even before they were initiated.

Section IV considers the administrative structures through which Campfire operates. These, in combination with legislation which leaves control and legal authority over the use of natural resource management in the hands of Rural District Councils, shape the relationships between the various stakeholders involved in Campfire. This results in the type of participation whose presence or absence can be said, in general terms, to characterise to greater or lesser degrees most or perhaps even all Campfire programmes: the 'representative' participation of this chapter's title. The problems inherent in 'representative' participation are consequently examined.

Following this, in Section V, various factors, arising within a wider context, which influence success – both participatory and otherwise – in Campfire projects are brought into focus. These include:

- a wider review of legislation which has a bearing on Campfire, with regard in particular to the tension which arises between statutory and customary laws and institutions, and the questions it raises about who should participate, receive benefits and how.
- questions of equity in the distribution of Campfire revenues, and the politicisation of this debate
- the 'catch 22' of sustainable community based natural resource management (CBNRM) through economic incentives
- ZANU – PF and Campfire
- the effects of the current economic crisis and political instability on incentives for participation

Finally, it is contended that any suggestion of Campfire as inadequate in its provisions for participation must question the appropriateness to this context of the definition of participation used to make the charge. Great care must be taken not to obscure the benefits to producer communities, nor the generation of a solid consensus between a wide variety of often conflicting interests, both of which have

[6] Villager from Nyaminyami District. Source: Campfire website, www.campfire-zimbabwe.org/

derived from the existence of and strong commitment on the part of many to the Campfire programme.

Section I

Campfire and conservation (not preservation)

In order to establish the ideological origins of the Campfire philosophy, it is necessary to look at some of the wider issues and debates within conservation that have emerged strongly in recent decades.

For some time now, there has been intense questioning of some of the fundamental assumptions that have traditionally been made by conservationists. Perhaps the most central of these is the notion that Africa is or should be a wild continent, parts of which remain intact, unspoilt by the destructive tendencies of humans. Such an attitude has since been deconstructed and was almost a decade ago deemed the myth of wild Africa (Adams and McShane 1992). Adams and McShane point out that historically, African societies have sustainably used natural resources provided by their environment, and are embarrassed by the idea that Africa is something that has to be defended "even against the people who have lived there for thousands of years" (Ibid, xviii). That attempts to 'protect' Africa and other parts of the globe have frequently been made is clear in the proliferation of protected areas, which by 1994 covered about 7,734,900 square kilometres, an area twice the size of India (Pimbert & Pretty, 1995b:1). The creators of these areas largely seek to exclude human settlement, even to the point of expulsion. The Masai of the Serengeti or the Basarwa bushmen of the Kalahari have become the subject of an exhaustive anthropological literature, but there are countless other peoples who have been resettled in order to preserve in 'pristine' state the land and the natural resources out of which they make their living. In the words of Pretty, "Traditional conservationists see the aesthetic and biological value of, for example, a rainforest, but they do not see the people" (Ibid:3). There is, though, strong evidence to suggest that most parts of the world's landmass have at some point been host to or embroiled in human activity (Martin 1994a, Pimbert & Pretty 1995b)

Eviction of people from their land has frequently been justified with reference to the argument that the uses to which those people put that land and/or the natural resources it supports are environmentally damaging. Given the prevalence of this assumption among many 'traditional' conservationists, then, perhaps it is not so much that they do not see the people in the rainforest, as choose not to. However, the way in which this argument has been universally applied to so many diverse groups of people is brought severely into question by an abundance of evidence denoting sound use of land and other natural resources (i.e. Oldfield & Alcorn 1991, Scoones et al, 1992, Adams & McShane 1992, Pimbert & Pretty 1995, Murphree 1997, Fairhead & Leach 1998, Hulme & Murphree, eds, 2001, etc).

Moreover, although traditional African hunting practices have been blamed for dramatic reductions in the numbers of game, evidence from modern Zimbabwe, amongst other places, suggests otherwise. In pre-colonial times, a more holistic approach to the management of resources, based on the principles of a shared environment and common responsibilities, ensured sustainable use by the Ndebele people in the Nineteenth century (Thomas 1995b:4). Hunting was an annual activity, without serious effect on the elephant population, until European hunters arrived. They were both more efficient and far more active than Ndebele hunters, (Murombedzi 1992:4) and between 1850 and 1875 devastated the elephant population to the point that Ndebele leaders Mzilikazi and his successor Lobengula tried to restrict the entrance of European hunters to their kingdom (Thomas 1995b:4).

With colonisation came the destruction not only of more game, but also of traditional controls over wildlife access. These were discarded when, in order to make way for large tracts of agricultural land to attract white settlers, people were moved onto resource-poor Native Reserves. It was this upheaval and dumping onto agriculturally poor lands, creating the problems of open access, which in great part led to the over-exploitation of wildlife in twentieth-century Rhodesia and post Independence Zimbabwe (Ibid:5). Nor was it just "natives" who were killing off wildlife. Starting in the Nkayi and Lupane districts, the colonial government launched the tsetse fly clearance programme which set up a hunting zone later extended all around the periphery of the Zambezi tsetse belt, an area of 10,000 square kilometres. By 1961, this programme had resulted in the slaughter of 750,000 animals (Ford, 1971:322-3, in Alexander & McGregor, 2000:608).

Critiques of traditional conservation have sought variously to question the sustainability of interventions made in its name (Shaxson et al.,1989, Reij 1991, Chambers 1997, Fairhead & Leach, 1998), highlight environmental degradation caused by undermining livelihood security (Roy and Jackson 1993, Koch, 1994 in Pimbert & Pretty, 1995:6), illustrate its neglect of indigenous knowledge and management systems and the often high subsistence value attached by people to wild resources (ibid:6-11). A re-evaluation of the place of humans *within* ecosystems – as opposed to notions of their separation from them – has occurred, and the distinction between conservation and preservation has been brought into sharp focus.

Broadly speaking, preservation approaches sanction no kind of usage of a habitat, resource or animal, whilst conservation approaches seek to generate uses of finite resources which do not endanger their continued existence. Three premises in particular upon which preservationist arguments rest have come increasingly under attack are:

- wildlife conservation only works if there is absolutely no killing or use of wildlife, because any human use of wildlife populations drives them closer to extinction (Pimbert & Pretty 1995:15)
- wildlife conservation in developing countries can be achieved by military-style enforcement which denies the people who live with wildlife or own the land that supports it the opportunity to derive any benefits from it, be they economic or otherwise (ibid:15)
- the aims of conservation and development are mutually exclusive (Adams & McShane, 1992, Fairhead and Leach, 1998)

Objections to the first premise have been raised by much anthropological study, for example work on fishermen in the Marovo Lagoon in the Solomon Islands (Hviding and Baines, 1992) or on the Mbuti forest people in Democratic Republic of Congo DRC, which indicate that the practices of both make plenty of provision for the continued use of wildlife. The costs of preservationist conservation are much higher than most governments, (especially Western ones) are willing to pay, more than most can afford[7], and the enormous difficulty of effectively enforcing military-style measures without huge cash injections is the story of 'protected' areas all over Africa.

Quests for alternative solutions to over-exploitation of natural resources, which do not separate humans from their environment, which see local people and practices as capable of natural resource management, and which highlight the need to create conditions in which the conservation of resources is seen as something which can be beneficial – and even revenue generating – form the backbone of the approach to conservation out of which Campfire's philosophy has emerged: sustainable utilisation.

[7]Comment from Rowan Martin taken from an interview in Adams & McShane 1992, pp

Section II

The emergence of Campfire

Campfire is in great part a response to the 'land question' in Zimbabwe: the suitability of land for agricultural purposes, the use of land for income generation, and the ways in which the distribution of land, in conjunction with colonial legislation over access to wildlife, have determined land uses and attitudes towards natural resources which have been detrimental in particular to wildlife. Campfire is also, though, a logical and more effective extension of ideas that see wildlife conservation as a legitimate use of land which can compete with other uses, ideas which underpinned both the Parks & Wildlife Act of 1975 and Campfire's still-born predecessor, WINDFALL.

Land, distribution, (re)settlement and conservation

Land in Zimbabwe is classified according to five agro-ecological regions based on criteria of altitude, rainfall and temperature (Manjengwa, unpublished material). Regions I-III are, in a sliding scale, good for activities from diversified farming to relatively intensive livestock production, whilst the less fertile regions IV and V are only really suitable for livestock production (ibid).

The correlation between white settlers and the best agricultural land is no coincidence. Early colonisers were disappointed in their attempts to establish the 'Second Rand' in Rhodesia (Rotberg, 1988, in Duffy, 2000), so were encouraged instead to seek their fortunes through agriculture. However, unsurprisingly, the best land for cropping was already occupied by the Shona and Ndebele peoples. They had to be moved. In 1930, the Land Apportionment Act set as statutory the tendencies of the past thirty years by consolidating the expropriation of 198,539 square kilometres, 51% of the land, most of it in regions I-III, by the white settlers. They constituted 4% of the total population; the other 96% were forced onto more marginal lands, some of which seem to have been sparsely populated, let alone farmed, in pre-colonial times (Thomas 1995b:6). These areas were the Native Reserves, which these days are known as the Communal Lands or Areas, the focus of Campfire programmes.

As Murombedzi points out, "most of the resource management problems of the communal areas of Zimbabwe today are a direct result of colonial land policy" (Murombedzi 1992:5), in three broad ways.

1. The false assumption, as considered above, that African hunters had decimated wildlife populations, led to the hunting legislation which criminalised the ways in which wildlife had been managed, and the benefits that had been derived therein. As a consequence, it left no room for a positive appraisal of what had been a successful common property regime, and significantly underestimated the extent to which many – though not all – were dependent upon wildlife as a source of protein, medicine and ritual (ibid:2).
2. Concentrating people in Native Reserves sometimes had the effect of putting more pressure on resources than they could sustainably withstand (Ranger, 1989).
3. In destroying traditional forms of control over resource usage (Thomas, 1995b) and trying to enforce unpopular, alien notions regarding wildlife, no effort was made to create the necessary incentive to conserve. That such approaches are unacceptable and should be changed is an idea central to the Campfire philosophy.

A couple of examples suffice to illustrate the damage done and suffering caused by colonial legislation and resettlement. In the 1940s and 1950s thousands of

'evictees' made their way to the Nkayi and Lupane districts of Matabeleland North (Alexander & McGregor, 2000:610). They had been forced off what was redesignated 'white' farming land in Matabeleland South, and in the highveld around Bulawayo, favoured for their high levels of rainfall. Many of the evictees had been highly successful farmers producing grain and beef for the market. They were not hunters, were unaccustomed to living with game, and had no desire to do so. The Nkayi and Lupane districts, despite the huge tsetse clearance programme, still supported wildlife populations, and constituted a much wilder environment than that which the evictees were used to. With many dying from malaria, attacks from wild animals, whilst others watched their cattle taken off by predators or die from exposure to poisonous plants and new types of grass (ibid:611), it is hardly surprising to find that the evictees developed from the outset negative, hostile attitudes which were not at all favourable to the conservation of natural resources.

In Nyaminyami, in the north-eastern part of the Zambezi valley, in order to make way for construction of the Kariba dam, the Mola cultivators of the fertile Zambezi floodplain were resettled onto hinterland, which led to a huge drop in the levels of agricultural productivity to which they were accustomed (Murombedzi, 1992:7). Moreover, legislation prohibiting access to wildlife resources left them in a no-win situation with less resources and prohibited from trying to compensate for their losses by use of what was around them. Instances such as these have led to a recognition in a number of NGOs and in government, in particular in the Department of National Parks and Wild Life Management (DNPWLM, hereafter referred to by the friendlier and more commonly used title, the Parks Department), that the costs of living with wildlife and of legislation prohibiting its use, for people who have in colonial (and often post Independence) times been subject to traumatic experiences, are painfully high. That such situations are unacceptable and should be changed is an idea central to the Campfire philosophy.

Legislative springboards and discrimination

In 1975, the Parks & Wildlife Act was introduced, partly as a result of concerns that wildlife was disappearing outside of state-protected areas (Thomas, 1995b:5), but mostly in response to new thinking in wildlife policy that emphasised the substantial economic benefits that could be derived from wildlife (Murphree 1997:4). Traditionally, all wildlife had belonged to the government, which was responsible for its upkeep. This was to change, as the Act conferred upon "owners or occupiers of alienated land" the status of "appropriate authority" over any wildlife on that land (Government of Zimbabwe, 1975). Landowners were given licence to manage wildlife on their properties and retain the benefits of so doing. As a result of the revenues generated, many landowners stopped seeing wild animals solely as a hindrance to livestock production, and efforts to conserve wildlife in order to use it for income-generating purposes has led to increases in wildlife populations on farms and ranches throughout Zimbabwe, and, until recently, a boom in the wildlife tourism industry (Campfire website, Murphree, 1997).

The Parks & Wildlife Act was, then, an attempt to make the conservation of wildlife economically competitive with other forms of land use, evident in the important recognition that the government would not privilege animals over other forms of land use. This attitude was to become a core Campfire value, an awareness that the costs of living with wildlife were high and that financial remuneration for those having to bear these costs was the only way to justify the necessary effort entailed by conservation. Positing wildlife in the light of a viable and potentially lucrative land use option thereby made the link between conservation and economic benefit. Conservation was clearly seen as a source of revenue rather than a drain on it, an important change of attitude, which served as a foundation for bringing conservation

and development together as two mutually reinforcing processes leading towards the same ultimate goal.

However, the confinement of these benefits to commercial – i.e. white – farmers highlights the inherently discriminatory nature of the Act, which was, after all, a product of the U.D.I. (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) era in which it was formulated. This discrimination was the focus of an amendment to the Act in 1982. The Amendment allowed District Councils in Communal Lands to apply for "appropriate authority" status. This was intended to extend the benefits already enjoyed by commercial farmers to black farmers on the state-owned Communal Lands. The vehicle through which attempts to achieve this would come to be Campfire, the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources. Campfire would not come into existence, however, until after the failure of its predecessor, WINDFALL (Wildlife Industries New Development For All). Furthermore, it is of vital importance to recognise that the amendment in one fundamental aspect perpetuated and institutionalised the discrimination between white and black farmers that it purported to tackle (Murphree 1997:6), a development that is explored in more detail later.

WINDFAIL

WINDFALL (Wildlife Industries New Development For All) was the first attempt to allow those inhabitants of the Communal Lands who had to live with the costs of wildlife to derive some benefits from income generated. The programme's stated intention was "to ensure that all revenues from wildlife utilization were returned to the District Councils from the areas concerned" (Parks Department, 1989:4), and to allow local communities meat from elephant culls in adjacent national parks (Murphree, 1997). One of its premises was to try and foster more positive attitudes regarding conservation in communities affected by wildlife (Ibid). Windfall failed, though, to do either of these two things in any lasting or significant way, as little meat was actually given to local communities and the money generated from operations such as safari hunting took a circumvented route through the central treasury, which certainly did not ensure that all the revenues were returned to the District Councils (Murombedzi, 1992:5). Even smaller amounts of this money were ever spent on the local communities, who were not provided with any significant incentive to conserve.

Section III

Campfire's initial conceptual framework

With the failure of WINDFALL, the Parks Department went back to the drawing board, seeking advice from social scientists and economists. Marshall Murphree has produced an excellent overview of the proceedings which took Campfire from the drawing board to international critical acclaim (Murphree, 1997:5-14). It is here summarised, perhaps regrettably, in insufficient detail. The highly participatory nature of the ideological framework is also considered.

In looking at how to transfer the success of wildlife utilisation on private farms to communal lands, the first step was the identification of the following major difficulties:

- the more vulnerable tenure system to which communal land farmers were subjected
- collective management meant negotiating differing interests and identifying suitable management structures

- in investing the District Councils with “appropriate authority” status, rather than local communities themselves, who had no institutions with a recognised standing in law, the 1982 amendment to the Parks & Wildlife Act left in place tenets that discriminated against communal land farmers, by not giving them the same direct rights of access and management as their white counterparts

This third problem of legal discrimination would prescribe limits to, and be instrumental in, shaping the nature of participation of local communities in the management of natural resources even before Campfire had an existence independent of preliminary discourse.

The solution of these difficulties was intended to be through the making of an institution underpinned by three fundamental assumptions:

1. conservation was best achieved by expropriating the economic value of wildlife sustainably.
2. the current tenure system, postulated on ideas of individual or state tenure, was inadequate; a new tenurial category, establishing use rights over a common property regime by an identifiable group, would need to be established.
3. Common property resources in this regime were *not* to be “*privately owned or managed by governments*” (Berkes and Favar, 1988:10, in Murphree, 1997:7, emphasis added).

In stipulating communal ownership of the revenue-generating resource, the second value is very participatory, entailing the involvement of resident communities from the beginning of the programme, and ‘power over’ the resources capable of producing the income. In tandem these two fundamentals informed the five abstract principles which were to govern the institution through which communities would manage their natural resources.

1. **Effective management of natural resources is best achieved by giving it focused value for those who live with them**
2. **Benefit must be directly related to input**
3. **There must be a positive correlation between the quality of management and the magnitude of benefit**
4. **The unit of proprietorship should be the unit of production, management and benefit**
5. **The unit of proprietorship should be as small as practicable, within ecological and socio-political constraints**

As Murphree notes, these principles embody the Park Department’s economic incentive-driven approach to conservation and seek to outline an institution suitable for harnessing it. What is evident, too, is that in terms of, say, Pretty’s seven-stranded typology of participation (Pretty 1994), they rank somewhere between the second highest and highest levels. The first three are predicated on the idea that greater local involvement in the management of natural resources is indispensable for successful conservation, and that this involvement needs to produce correspondingly greater benefits at the local level. The fourth principle, in stipulating that responsibility for production, management and benefit rested in the unit which owns the resource, lays the groundwork for communities to “take control over local decisions” and addresses the need for medium to long term sustainability by guaranteeing that “people have a stake in maintaining structures or practices” (ibid:26), because they own and have control over all stages in the revenue-generating process.

However, the document that the Parks Department produced on the Communal Areas Management Programme For Indigenous Resources (revised version, Martin, 1986) did not stipulate in key areas how to translate all five principles into practice. In the face of inadequate tenure arrangements, and pressed by

constrictions of time and expectations of publication, the document recommended that communities should form “Natural Resource Co-operatives with territorial rights over defined tracts of land called Communal Resource Areas within the Communal Lands” (ibid:17). It left open the definition of the “communities of collective interest” which were to run the institution, and it said nothing of how to confer upon these communities the status of “appropriate authority”, which by inference was to stay with the district councils. Because of these unresolved questions, it was not clear how local communities were to become the unit of proprietorship, management and production. This development raised questions of power, as having other actors involved in management decisions over the resources introduced doubts about how much control local communities would be allowed to have, and how much incentive to long term commitment would be created. Furthermore, with ownership over the resource clearly in the hands of the District Councils, there was a clear restriction on the extent of participation even before the document became approved policy.

Section IV

From principle to programme

Whatever its flaws, the Campfire document was impressive enough to gain the Parks Department the necessary approval to implement it as a programme. However, approval did not lead to more funding for the Parks Department, so help was enlisted from various groups, the foremost among which continue to constitute the greater part of the Campfire Collaborative Group (CCG). These were the Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS) of the University of Zimbabwe, the WWF Multispecies Animal Production System Project in Zimbabwe, and the Zimbabwe Trust, an indigenous NGO. Crucially, the formal objectives of each organisation were relatively complimentary and compatible. The WWF and the Parks Department shared a broad conservation brief, CASS could use Campfire as the context in which to conduct social science research into rural development and governance, and Zimbabwe Trust focused (and continues to focus) on rural economic and institutional development.

Between 1986-1988 the Parks Department and its partner agencies became heavily engaged in discussions with district councils and communities, in order to find good locations to start up the first Campfire Programmes. Wildlife was chosen primarily because of its capacity to generate high levels of income from safari hunting and photo tourism, activities which have negligible effects on wildlife populations and their environments. Unsurprisingly, given the suffering many had experienced owing to colonial conservation policy, there was much scepticism from some communal land farmers. In some places Campfire was rejected outright; in others it gained weary acceptance, after much debate. The Nyaminyami and Chipinge districts were chosen as pilot locations because of their considerable wildlife populations.

During this timeframe, adjustments were made to the Programme which met the demands of political and bureaucratic pressures. Two big alterations radically changed the nature of the Campfire Programme that would be put to communities for implementation from its original intentions. Firstly, the Natural Resource Co-operatives were abandoned. There was to be no change to the tenure system to accommodate a communal regime, as the District councils were firmly against relinquishing legal control over such a substantial potential or actual source of their revenue. In a compromise, they agreed to devolve *de facto* control over management and revenue, but given the lack of legal obligation this was more or less at their discretion. This refusal to give communal wildlife production units a *de jure* tenure status has led to Campfire’s most fundamental weakness. Murphree puts it best:

> It creates pervasive uncertainties in the perspectives of producer localities regarding the security of any of their investments in sustainability. It undermines the actualisation of one of Campfire's fundamental roots. It perpetuates the legal discrimination between access to farmers in the commercial sector and those accorded to communal land farmers (Murphree 1997:11).

The Programme would start, then, with local communities owning neither the land nor the natural resources to be managed. The functions of management, production and benefit would rest with the unit of proprietorship (as required by the fourth principle), but as far as the law was concerned this unit was effectively the District Council rather than the local communities to whom all such responsibilities were intended to be devolved. This development compromised the programme's highly participatory beginnings.

However, one point on which the Parks Department remained adamant was the allocation of benefits, although not without having to compromise. Revenues, their argument went, should be returned to the wards and villages, which after all comprised the people who bore the costs of production, despite the fact that the District Councils were the legal proprietors of wildlife resources. The Councils countered by arguing that they, too, bore some of the costs of production by providing administration, infrastructure etc, which prompted the Parks Department to attach guidelines to the conferment of "appropriate authority" status, which could be withdrawn if the guidelines were not followed. They stipulated that the District Councils could keep up to 15% of revenue as a tax and up to 35% for district management wildlife costs, but that at least 50% had to be returned to the producer communities. The desirability for some within local and national government spheres of appropriating Campfire revenues in their entirety was a threat to local participation in the Programme even before it started, and continues to be so to this day, for reasons which are explored in greater depth later.

Campfire's institutional structures and representative participation

The institutional and administrative structures that emerged from the drawing up of Campfire policy, negotiations and compromises were in a fundamental way to shape the nature of participation within the Programme.

Campfire operates through institutions at three different levels: national, district and sub-district. At the sub-district level are the Village Development Committees (VIDCOs), representing 100 households, or approximately 1000 people, and the Ward Development Committees (WADCOs), made up of six villages, approximately 6000 people (Thomas, 1995a:5). Both Village and Ward Development Committees are organs of local government. Each village with a Village Development Committee has a Campfire institution, the Village Wildlife Committee, which (in theory) works in tandem with the VIDCO. The Village Wildlife Committee has six members elected from the village who sit on the corresponding Ward Wildlife Committee.

The Ward Wildlife Committee is also the nexus between sub-district and district level, as the councillor who chairs it also sits on the District Wildlife Committee, which in itself is a sub-committee of the Rural District Council[8], and also includes the council chairman and the vice-chairman (Bird & Metcalfe 1995:7).

[8] For the sake of clarity, it is necessary to mention the changes subsequent to the Rural District Councils Act of 1988. Previous to the Act the Rural and District Councils had been separate administrative entities, the Rural Councils the units of local government for commercial areas and their service towns, the District Councils the units of local government for the Communal Lands. As is inferred from the name of the Act, the two were fused into one body, the Rural District Council (RDC), which had jurisdiction over all of the area previously divided between the two (Thomas 1995b:13). The use of the term 'District Council' in the text indicates that the timeframe being referred to is prior to the

At the national level, there are a range of 'service providers' involved in the Campfire Programme, who make up the Campfire Collaborative Group (CCG). The foremost among these are the Parks Department, Zimbabwe Trust, Africa Resources Trust, WWF and the Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS), whose roles have not significantly changed from those discussed above. There are, though, a number of other actors. The Africa Resources Trust, the sister organisation of Zimbabwe Trust, which manages Campfire's international profile and monitors policy and regulation that has a bearing on the Programme's brief. The Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (MLGRUD), is responsible for the overall administration of the District Councils. Finally, there is Campfire Association, which represents the Rural District Councils and, it is supposed, the interests of the rural communities involved in the Programme. The Campfire Association came into existence in 1992, in response to a perceived 'vacuum', or lack of local representation at the national level, in an attempt to stop the Government departments and NGOs becoming the 'gatekeepers' of the Programme[9]. The Campfire Association also co-ordinates the Programme and chairs the CCG.

The implications for local level participation of so many different actors, structures and levels should be clear. The idea of 'mass' participation, in which communities come together, are all involved in PRA exercises, revealing priorities for decision-making which are then executed at the local level through a societally accepted, highly participatory institution, is a complete misnomer in this context. Decisions are arrived at through a series of processes which are more accurately described by the term 'representative participation'. To the extent that these decisions are made by the District Wildlife Committee on the basis of the recommendations by the Village and Ward Wildlife Committees which accurately capture the needs and demands of the producer communities that they are supposed to represent, representative participation can be said to occur. Although it may not be the ideal form of participation, and is not very high up in the Adnan or Pretty participatory scales, this system of representative participation does seem, at least in some cases, to allow the meaningful involvement and input of producer communities in decisions over how to spend revenue and even over aspect of land and natural resource management. The degree to which such involvement is encouraged does, too, have a substantial bearing on success in Campfire projects. It is useful, then, at this point to examine a project which has been used as a Campfire 'success story', to illustrate the workings of representative participation.

Masoka

Masoka, a wildlife rich area, is the local name for the administrative sub-unit the government refers to as the Kanyurira Ward, part of the wider unit of the Communal Land of the Guruve District. The people of Masoka, who live along a six kilometre stretch of the River Angwa, have in the past relied on, but had poor returns on, cotton as a cash crop and a main source of revenue. Before the initiation of Campfire in 1988, they supplemented their protein intake with game meat which was illegally 'poached' (Murphree, 1996:12). Crop raiding by and personal injury from wildlife in the three years previous had been endemic. There was little incentive to conserve the wildlife resources. Infrastructure, in the form of roads, clinics and schools, was absent.

The situation changed dramatically, however, when the Guruve Rural District Council, having recently been granted "appropriate authority" status, decided to give the revenue earned from a safari hunting lease to the people of Masoka. In March 1989, at a ceremony in Masoka, a member of each of the sixty-four households

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introduction of the RDC Act. The use of the term 'Rural District Council' similarly indicates a timeframe subsequent to it.

[9] From interview, 20.8.2001, with Champion Chinoyi, Executive Director, Zimbabwe Trust

(comprising a little over 500 people) was given Z$200, which worked out as a 56% increase in gross income from cotton (*Murphree* 1996:14). This hefty economic incentive was enough to forge new attitudes towards wildlife, which equated it with livestock that could be farmed. Even more importantly, the people of Masoka came to see it as a resource which was theirs to be used sustainably (Murphree, 1997:17).

Now that they had *de facto* – though not *de jure* – ownership over the wildlife resources, they devised a land use plan, which involved electrically fencing off an area for cropping. Funds were secured for the fence by WWF, which, when installed, rendered crop raiding insignificant (Murphree 1996:13)

Masoka quickly became a success story in large measure due to the participation of the residents themselves. They had been allowed to choose how to spend the initial revenue (only part of which had been paid out in the form of dividends; the balance had gone towards a fund for the construction of a school), and they would continue to do so, distributing the revenue sometimes in large part through dividends in times of drought, at other times putting it into collective development projects when basic subsistence needs were not so pressing. By 1997, they had a six-room school and a clinic planned and paid for entirely by themselves, and had still reserved funds to invest into wildlife management (Murphree, 1997:19-20).

However, the fact that this success was dependent upon the Rural District Council continuing to allow the people of Masoka to manage their natural resources underlines their central and powerful role in the Campfire Programme. It could easily be argued that the Masoka residents were lucky to have councillors who were willing to entrust them with the responsibilities that are part and parcel of natural resource management (NRM). Other Rural District Councils have been much less eager to involve resident communities in decisions regarding NRM, which brings into sharp relief one of the biggest problems with representative participation, and perhaps the greatest shortcoming in the design of the Programme.

Representative of what and whom? “Appropriate authority” as painfully inappropriate

As has been elaborated already, investing “appropriate authority” status in the District Councils has shaped the nature of participation in Campfire projects. The use – and abuse – of the powers conferred therein has on numerous occasions served to undermine and even wholly negate participatory approaches to Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). Certainly, it cannot be assumed that the system currently in place which is intended to ensure the participation of all stakeholders in Campfire functions well for all projects.

It is expedient to draw a distinction between two forms of public institution: local administration and local government. Local administration is characterised by its accountability to superiors in wider bureaucratic structures linked to government ministries (Thomas 1995b:15). It can function like a branch of central government if it has little financial or operational autonomy (Ibid:15). Local government, though, is accountable to its constituency, at least in theory. If these two are put at either end of a continuum, it is somewhat difficult to decide where to place Rural District Councils. Examples such as Masoka would seem to be closer to local government, but Masoka is by no means representative. Murombedzi has argued that the 1982 Amendment to the Parks & Wildlife Act which allowed District Councils to apply for “appropriate authority” status did not so much decentralise powers over NRM as ‘recentralise’ them (Murombedzi 1992:15) precisely because District councils “are not accountable to lower administrative levels [such as VIDCOs or WADCOs] but rather to central government through the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (MLGRUD)” (ibid:14). He has also criticised the Park Department’s notion of “appropriate authority” for reinforcing “the positions of dominant interest”

with respect to wildlife usage (i.e. safari operators) (ibid:15). Indeed, he was led to conclude that the implementation of Campfire in Nyaminyami failed because it did not tackle the issue of accountability, therein failing to "create the necessary conditions for the development of local associational skills" (ibid:16).[10]

In fairness, though, it has to be pointed out that if Rural District Councils do not always make the most strenuous efforts to make Campfire projects as participatory as possible or try to keep more than their share of the revenues, as has been known (Duffy, 2000, Murombedzi, 1992, 1997, 1999), it is often in response to pressures put on them from above. For a little over ten years, and in line with IMF recommendations, the Government of Zimbabwe has been putting the onus firmly on Rural District Councils to try to become economically self-sufficient, which has not helped these typically cash-strapped organisations with weak tax bases, who have more responsibilities than their income allows them to fulfil (Owen & Maponga, 1996). Moreover, the MLGRUD has its own agenda for appropriating Campfire-generated revenues, a topic which is explored in greater detail later on.

Merely to consider the potential difficulties and threats to representative participation that can and have been caused by Rural District Councils gives a somewhat unbalanced picture of events, and casting local communities in the light of homogenous groups of people who would create coherent positions for action based on a platform of equitable consensus if only they were given the opportunity is a complacency to be guarded against, too. Power dynamics have also to be negotiated at the grass-roots level. There are local elite groupings, businessmen, chiefs and other actors who may have an influence over proceedings that is not always easy to detect. Champion Chinoyi gives the example of a cattle baron.

> I'm the cattle baron…..at the end of the day you're relying on me, and when it comes to participatory decision-making processes, you are very careful not to disappoint me, otherwise you lose your benefits. There are lots of small things which make a big difference to participation[11]

Another important group of actors is the members of the Wildlife Committees. Indeed, one weakness particular to representative participation is its dependence upon the levels of motivation of members of the Wildlife Committees, a factor which has been identified in Campfire projects in the Hurungwe district. Bird & Metcalfe point out that it is up to these individuals to spread ideas about conservation to the rest of their respective communities, and are expected to become trainers in themselves (Bird & Metcalfe, 1995:9). However, that this has not always happened means that not everyone is aware of the benefits of conserving their resources. Ironically, too, the training that has been given to Wildlife Committee members and resource monitors has in some cases led to the formation of another type of elite, (ibid:10) as these do not always want to share their knowledge with others in case it leads to relinquishing their position of power; much in accordance with 'Murphree's Law'[12].

[10]For more examples of RDC actions which have limited or negated the functioning of representative participation, see Bird, Clarke, Moyo, Moyo, Nyakunu, and Thomas, 1995, Murombedzi, 1997, Mandondo, 2000 or McGregor & Alexander, 2000.

[11] From interview, 20.8.2001, with Champion Chinoyi, Executive Director, Zimbabwe Trust

[12] 'Murphree's Law' (1989,1995) states that every level in an organisation attempts to gain more power from the levels above it and tries to resist passing that power down to levels below it

Section V

Campfire within the wider context

Of course, Campfire does not exist in a vacuum. Rather, it has to operate within and negotiate its objectives – and its existence – through a broader framework. Factors both to some extent within and beyond its control can have a huge impact on participation and must be taken into consideration. Among these, this section focuses on: the contradictions and tensions arising from customary and statutory legislation; questions of equity over income distribution; the dilemma presented by a focus on the economic incentive-driven approach; ZANU-PF and Campfire; and finally, implications for the Programme of the current political and economic instability.

Legislative Disarray

Campfire is supposed to work in tandem with sub-district institutions such as Village or Ward Development Committees (VIDCOs and WADCOs respectively), as mentioned before. Yet this is not easy, as these institutions have not been altogether well-received by the local communities they are supposed to empower. The VIDCOs and WADCOs were set up as part of the Transitional National Development Plan (Thomas, 1995b:9), and at first ran alongside the traditional institutions of chief, headman and kraalhead. The two systems depended for their legitimacy on parallel political regimes: the State for the Village and Ward Development Committees, and custom for traditional villages (Mandondo, 2000). A seeming attempt to tip the balance of power in favour of the State came in the form of the Communal Land Act 1982 and its Amendment Act of 1985. The 1982 legislation took legal authority over land allocation away from 'traditional' leaders and conferred it upon the District Councils, and the 1985 Amendment empowered District Councils to charge communities for services and amenities provided (Thomas, 1995b:13). It has been suggested that the new government was, at least in part, punishing chiefs for their pre-Independence links with the previous U.D.I. government (Makumbe, 1998). Furthermore, the jurisdictional boundaries of VIDCOs and WADCOs did not coincide with locally recognised boundaries. In according no part in the Development Plan to the 'traditional' leaders and in failing to recognise territorial limits to which rural communities were accustomed, it is no surprise to find that Villages and Ward Development Committees came quickly to be perceived as "instruments of local administration" (Thomas 1995b:10) as opposed to local government. Nor is it a surprise to find that many chiefs simply continued to go about the business of allocating land (Bird & Metcalfe, 1995, Mandondo, 2000). Rights over land and gaining the co-operation of the ostensible owners of it are a prerequisite to even initiating a Campfire project, and a contested situation like that to be found in Zimbabwe has proved far from helpful. It also raises questions of equity which are addressed below.

A change in attitude from the government was prompted by the Land Tenure Commission (Government of Zimbabwe, 1994), which made recommendations that would essentially allow a natural resource management unit at village level with legal authority over all natural resources within its jurisdiction. Evidently, the implications for the Campfire Programme were immense. If this report's recommendations were to be translated into policy, then enabling legislation would be put into place which would allow the unit of ownership to be unit of production, management and benefit as well, in line with the fourth principle of Campfire's initial ideological framework. Finally, it seemed that the question of local ownership was to be addressed.

In 1998, based on the findings of the Land Tenure Commission, the Traditional Leaders Act was passed. It recognised the 'traditional' village as the

lowest organisation, and made provision for the drawing up of village assemblies, presided over by a village head appointed by a chief, which would share, with the ward assembly, responsibilities over, amongst other things, the management of local resources (Government of Zimbabwe, 1998). This would seem to be all that anyone involved with Campfire could have hoped for, and indeed it is potentially a very exciting piece of legislation. Nevertheless, it has come under criticism on various counts. Another responsibility of traditional leaders is to enforce rules and exact fines, the proceeds of which go to the RDCs, which, it could be argued, is "a typical case of higher level authorities decentralising costs but retaining control of benefits" (Mandondo, 2000:12). In return for their services, traditional leaders become paid employees of government, which may strengthen patron-client relationships between the two groups[13], and given the Government's rather sorry-looking political fortunes at present, such a move is disquietingly plausible.

Even more fundamental, however, is the fact that in one vital aspect the Act falls far short of the LTC recommendations. Village assemblies have to prove to their corresponding RDC their capacity to manage resources, and all of their plans are subject to the RDC's approval. As Murphree has noted, "It doesn't empower a village assembly to be an economic enterprise, to be a legal persona, to enter into contracts"[14]. And finally, "it's a legislation which has never been implemented. If you go up to Campfire communities and ask them about the Traditional Leaders Act, you get a blank stare"[15].

Equity in Campfire

The distribution of revenue in districts with Campfire projects brings up the issue of equity. Should the revenues generated from wildlife be returned to the specific villages or areas which put up with the brunt of the costs of living with it, or should they be spread across the district? Should the money be put into collective projects or should it be given out in the form of dividends? Evidently, the level at which decisions about these questions are taken is central to the notion of representative participation. The Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (MLGRUD) has more often than not taken the district rather than the specific area view, ostensibly on the grounds that individual dividends do not make best use of the income, and that areas without game should not be excluded from the benefits[16]. It should be clarified at this point that it is politically expedient for the MLGRUD to maintain this position. As with all other government departments, it has seen its budget steadily reduced, and has therefore been tempted to appropriate Campfire revenues to spend on development projects (Duffy 2000:110). This would have the distinct advantage of ensuring that the Ministry did not have to pay for such projects but would be able to take the credit for them (ibid). Thus, the debate over equity has been politicised. The MLGRUD's argument, though, is in opposition to the principle that differential inputs must result in differential benefits (the second principle in Campfire's initial conceptual framework, Martin, 1986), as not all of the people in a district have the same 'input' into living with dangerous animals that raid crops, injure and kill people. Moreover, making choices over revenue at district level wholly negates one of the fundamental conceptual roots, in that producer communities do not get to choose what the revenues they 'produce' are spent on, because they own neither the revenue-generating resource nor the processes through which decisions are made over what form benefits are to take.

[13] From interview, 4.9.2001, with Professor Marshall Murphree, CASS, University of Zimbabwe
[14] From interview, 4.9.2001, with Professor Marshall Murphree, CASS, University of Zimbabwe
[15] From interview, 27.8.2001, with Ivan Bond, Resource Economist, WWF
[16] Based on the view of a senior official in the MLGRUD quoted in Thomas, (1995a:8)

The limitations to and of participation through economic incentive

For all its potential to provide income, stimulate levels of participation and motivate people to conserve their natural resources, the economic incentive-focused approach, the engine which pushes Campfire along, is risky and highly contingent. From an economic standpoint, institutional change occurs when the net benefits of new institutions outweigh those of the institutions they are set up to replace, and that incentives from economic factors are foremost in effecting institutional change (Ostrom, 1998, in Bond, 2001:227). It can be deduced, therefore, that insufficient economic incentive leads to insufficient institutional change. While one would hope that this argument is not expected to apply with equal weight to all institutions, it does appear to be relevant in the context of Campfire, such as agriculture.

Bond analyses the revenues raised by Campfire projects between 1989-1996, and finds that the median benefit per household from wildlife dropped from US$19.40 to US$4.49 (Bond 2001:233). Furthermore, in 1990, 1992 and 1993, as a percentage of gross agricultural income, the median of wildlife benefit constituted less than 10 per cent (ibid:235). Although these statistics do not reflect the enormous amounts of variation between different districts, wards and villages, they do still infer that for many of the 250,000 people involved in Campfire projects, as a source of income, it does not compete significantly with other forms of land use which are often in conflict with Campfire's conservation brief.

Two factors which Bond identifies as constraints to realising optimum financial incentives for change are: considerable variation between RDCs as to the percentages of revenue devolved to local communities; and reductions in wildlife revenue generated as a consequence of increases in certain areas of human population densities (ibid 236-7). In terms of the first, if many villages are receiving less than the 50% of wildlife revenues recommended by Parks Department guidelines, then primarily there is less financial incentive to participate in collective decision-making and management, but it also suggests a lack of sufficient enforcement of those guidelines. Most importantly, it means that there is not full proprietorship of the revenues produced from wildlife, let alone over the wildlife itself. In terms of the second, Bond's (1999) model predicts that even marginal increases in human population density in areas where it is low and wildlife population density is high can result in a substantial reduction in income derived. In part this is because the money has to be disbursed between more people, but Bond also argues for the need to distinguish between wards which are "genuine wildlife producers" and others which opportunistically use wildlife resources in unsustainable ways which reduce their revenue-generating potential.

Murombedzi has also highlighted the dangers to Campfire programmes of in-migration to an area, highlighting the sharp increase in the population of Masoka in recent years (Murombedzi, 1999). This tendency threatens the success of conservation efforts by undermining the financial incentives and by endangering the resource base itself. Whilst one might think that long-term residents would be trying to discourage new settlement, Murombedzi argues that, on the contrary, they are in favour, because only by increasing the size of the community do they think that they have any chance of attracting government investment in a secondary school, transport services, and a road that is passable in the wet season (ibid). Murphree, though, has qualified this explanation, countering that whilst there has been an increase in the amount of households in Masoka, there are many reasons why this might be so, amongst them the influx of long term farm labourers who have been pushed off farms during the land resettlement programme, and for whom returning home seemed the likeliest option[17].

[17] From interview, 4.9.2001, with Professor Marshall Murphree, CASS, University of Zimbabwe

Murphree has also outlined what would appear to be the 'catch 22' of conservation through economic incentives:

> Any programme that seeks to move towards that objective, and does so on the basis of a very heavy dose of economic incentive, is very vulnerable to the national and international economic climate[18]

Given Zimbabwe's current economic and political difficulties, explored briefly below, this is an extremely pertinent remark. On the other hand, though, unless wildlife is made economically competitive with other forms of land use, then more often than not the land will be used for other purposes detrimental to the conservation of that wildlife resource.[19]

ZANU-PF and Campfire

When asked whether he thought ZANU-PF (Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front) might be using Campfire for its own political gain, Ivan Bond replied, "Every facet of life in this country has been politicised ever since ZANU-PF have been in power."[20] He also pointed out that at the Campfire AGM (21-25.8.2001), three government ministers attended, citing it as evidence for the importance attached to Campfire by ZANU-PF. This dovetails with claims that ZANU-PF have been squeezing as much political mileage as possible out of Campfire, claiming it as their own invention (Murphree 1997, 2001) and taking credit for its success in the rural areas.[21]

Campfire's relationship with central government has from the beginning been difficult; indeed the idea of devolving responsibilities over natural resource management sits awkwardly with an ostensibly 'Marxist' government which openly professes its beliefs about the desirability of centralisation (Duffy, 2000:111). This has to some extent been reflected in the criticisms made by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural and Urban Development (MLGRUD) of payments made at local rather than district level, and its attempts to appropriate Campfire revenues, mentioned above. It would be unfair at this point, however, not to highlight the enthusiasm for Campfire within ZANU-PF, or indeed to imply that every member of the party responded unthinkingly like drones to one inflexible discourse.

It is not easy to know, nevertheless, whether elements within ZANU-PF might be manipulating Campfire institutions in such a way as to limit the representative participatory process. Primarily, districts are not homogenous, and to concentrate solely on ZANU-PF influence is to miss the vast range of factors which can all shape the nature of participation within specific empirical contexts. Yet to discount the idea altogether is not very satisfactory, either. It could be argued that, given the Party's centralised structure, it is advantageous for them "to be in control of the leavers of power in the whole of the administrative hierarchy"[22]. But it could equally be argued that it would be a political coup with an enormous pay-off for any party to formulate a policy which offered to fully empower people at ward and village level to control their natural resources, to implement without qualification the recommendations of the 1994 Land Tenure Commission.[23]

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Murphree takes the example of the possibilities for land use open to the Mara people of Kenya. One would be to keep surrounding lands which support a large population of wildebeest as a tourist attraction, another would be to use them for growing wheat. But "unless KWS [Kenyan Wildlife Service], the Kenyan Government, the Narok District Council, make tourism competitive with wheat, it's going to go to wheat." From interview, 4.9.2001.

[20] From interview, 27.8.2001, with Ivan Bond, Resource Economist, WWF

[21] This point was made by a Campfire stakeholder who preferred to remain anonymous

[22] From interview, 4.9.2001, with Professor Marshall Murphree, CASS, University of Zimbabwe

[23] Ibid.

The current political and economic situation

As referred to before, Campfire is caught in a 'catch 22' situation, given its economically motivated approach to conservation in the context of a country which at present is experiencing economic and political turmoil on a grand scale. The 'Fast Track Land Reform Programme' may have been a key component in ZANU-PF's quest to hold on to power in the run up to the 2002 presidential elections, but it has had disastrous effects upon the Zimbabwean tourism industry. In Britain, media coverage appears to have focused almost exclusively on the unconstitutional and often violent manner in which commercial farm land owned by white farmers has been seized, and demands have been made by many governments across Europe, the USA and Africa to restore the rule of law and return resettled land to its 'owners'. Reports of marauding 'war veterans', police involvement in farmhouse lootings and state-sponsored attempts to restrict freedom of speech do not exactly encourage people to forsake the three star hotel in Ibiza for something a little more exotic.

Within the Campfire Programme, a huge worry is that there are at present difficulties in attracting the hunters from Europe and the US that provide so large a proportion of income for so many districts. The fact that United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which has provided funding for the Programme since its inception, decided not to continue its involvement after 2001 has been a cause for concern.[24] Despite the critical acclaim Campfire has received for some years now in international development circles, the Government of Zimbabwe's recent expulsion of various NGOs for speaking out against it does not bode at all well for the Programme's prospects of attracting international assistance.

Although no figures are available, at the time of writing, for the downturn in hunting and photo tourists visiting Zimbabwe, it has been estimated at 25 per cent[25]. Inflation levels for August 2001 were already approaching 100% with few signs of dropping[26]. Less government revenue is going to be available to RDCs, which may well find themselves increasingly obliged to decrease the amounts of revenue from wildlife given to producer communities as they grow more dependent upon it.[27] This will further reduce the incentives to accommodate and conserve wildlife, and may well increase dependency on natural resource capital, especially if food prices continue to rise so sharply with little or no corresponding rise in wages.

Aside from the international censure it has attracted, the land resettlement programme is yet to have any demonstrable, direct effect on Campfire Programmes, although it is too early to tell. Zimbabwe Trust, in conjunction with USAID, has been studying the potential impact, although an evaluation has yet to be released. It can be inferred, though, that if resettlement of commercial farmlands leads to a reduction in population levels in the Communal Lands, then Campfire revenues will be divided between fewer people (of course, Campfire applies only to state-owned, not privately-owned, land), a potentially positive, though wholly inadvertent, consequence.[28]

[24] This information was kindly provided by a Campfire stakeholder who preferred to remain anonymous
[25] From interview, 27.8.2001, with Ivan Bond, Resource Economist, WWF
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] From interview, 20.8.2001, with Champion Chinoyi, Executive Director, Zimbabwe Trust

Section VI

Conclusion

Campfire, as is by now (hopefully) clear, has some embedded, intrinsic flaws, some painfully regrettable failures and faces potentially fatal difficulties from a highly unfavourable political and economic climate. Given the current legislative and political constraints, representative participation is all the Programme can aspire to. Fundamental questions of ownership of natural resources and the legal right to make decisions over every aspect of the use of that resource to provide economic benefit have not been fully addressed. As it is, many producer communities can only make some limited choices over how to spend the revenues; and even this level of involvement is subject to the standpoint their RDC takes on whether they should be allowed to spend it, or whether it should be spent for them.

However, there is also a need to be fair, and a danger of unjustly underestimating the achievements, worth and enormous differences that have been effected by the Campfire Programme. To come up with an evaluation using solely criteria laid down by some accepted definition of participation is in some ways to miss the point. There still does not exist a local institution with a standing in law which produces, owns, manages and receives the benefits from natural resources. Yet since the introduction of Campfire the position of producer communities has been strengthened considerably. Previously, the State was the ultimate arbiter over natural resource management (NRM) and they bore all the costs of living with wildlife. In contrast, nowadays they are an internationally recognised stakeholder in the process of NRM in Zimbabwe, and have many committed people fighting to further improve their situation. There is some parallel here with Mosse's argument (2001), that warns against devaluing a project from a participatory standpoint which is unable to assess its tangibly positive virtues, and is at risk of ignoring the hard work that has been put in. In the context of Campfire a good example of this might be the consensus which has been generated between a wide range of actors whose interests cannot exactly be described as compatible. Perhaps a suitable indicator for the relative coherence of this consensus is the revenue that has been generated by Campfire since it started and the ways in which it has been spent, on the following page.

Allocation By Year (US$)

Year	Disbursed to comm-unities	Wildlife manage-ment	Council Levy	Other	Amount unallo-cated	Total	% annual change
1989	$186,268	$81,458	$28,404	$12,032	$41,651	$349, 811	
1990	$206,308	$121,485	$52,530$	$22,501	$153,609	$556,433	59%
1991	$320,894	$219,526	$120,444	$56,930	$56,884	$774,678	39%
1992	$601,385	$207,291	$115,398	$17,837	$274,767	$1,216,678	57%
1993	$851,732	$357,055	$251,082	$32,172	$(14,216)	$1,477,824	21%
1994	$949,138	$314,572	$148,517	$42,514	$187,889	$1,642,621	11%
1995	$946,777	$353,772	$193,080	$26,214	$71,723	$1,591,565	-3%
1996	$833,025	$405,755	$301,091	$7,796	$191,792	$1,739,458	9%
1997	$858,357	$29,661	$26,746	$12,415	$915,884	$1,849,063	6%
1998	$910,200	$521,373	$70,666	$82,939	$306,589	$1,891,766	3%
1999*	$1,341,853	$608,678	$253,252	$29,477	$520,698	$2,753,958	46%
Total	**8,005,936**	**3,220,625**	**1,561,209**	**342,827**	**2,707,268**	**15,837,865**	

*The figures for 1999 are artificially inflated by the proceeds raised from the sale of ivory stockpile subsequent to the change in the status of the elephant within the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in 1997

Table taken from Campfire Association 2000-2001 Annual Report

Given the enormous difficulties, threats to its revenue base, and factors over which it has little or no control, passing so much money down to sub-district levels is not something that should be overlooked. Nor indeed is the very existence of Campfire. In the words of Ivan Bond, "given the stresses and strains that this economy has gone through and the political system of the last ten years, to me, it's quite encouraging that there's still something called Campfire out there."[29]

[29] From interview, 27.8.2001, with Ivan Bond, Resource Economist, WWF

4

Conclusion

The aim of this brief synopsis is to draw out some of the wider points made in previous chapters which the debates about participation and Campfire have generated. The focus is on three issues, all examined within the context of Campfire:

- participation and power
- power and ethnocentrism
- participation and recognition of achievement

Questions of power and ethnocentrism both have deep-seated implications for consensus, which in itself is perhaps the central tenet of participatory approaches to development. These questions are explored, and a way to respond to their claims upon the feasibility and acceptability of consensus is suggested, which in essence is as follows. Even though the effects of power relations on consensus are not well-addressed by PRA exercises and have frequently undermined projects which employ them, it is unhelpful to assume that they always render any attempt to foster participation pointless; indeed their impact is best assessed on a case by case basis. Moreover, although considerations of ethnocentrism make very clear the need for intellectual honesty with respect to any claims for the neutrality of participatory approaches, taking them to their logical conclusions and allowing them to take precedence over all other considerations can lead one into a position where no action is sanctionable. Such a position is clearly unacceptable to the vast majority of development practitioners, and does not cope very well with the vast amounts of empirical variation which do not make it at all easy to generalise about the success or failure of interventions made in the name of development.

Leading on from this, I argue that there is still a need to locate participation within a wider perspective, and ask questions about commonly held expectations in relation to participatory approaches and how helpful they are.

Participation and power

Perhaps the most often-cited weakness of participatory approaches is their failure to uncover relations of power which can and often do determine who participates, how and why in ways that are, at least in the public arena in which PRA exercises often take place, not always immediately obvious. This dangerous tendency is compounded by the unhelpful brandishing of any research method which does not utilise participatory techniques or has some tenets which are ideologically at odds with participatory research as ‘extractive’, as Mosse, among others, has pointed out. It has been argued time and again, that the need for the consensus that participation in projects from all stakeholders is supposed to bring about may not encourage diversity of opinion. It may favour, too, those who are in a better position to protect their interests as opposed to those whose interests are marginalised precisely because they are not in a position to defend them very well. This argument is not contradicted by the experience of many in the Campfire Programme. People who live with wild animals, for instance, which they are not allowed to hunt, have in some projects found that their interests suffer, whilst their RDC, in lieu of its status as “appropriate authority”, has been, in a twist of fate, empowered to protect its interests, in the form of revenue from trophy hunting or other Campfire-sponsored activities. However, it would be irresponsibly unbalanced not to qualify this by stressing that generalisation about RDCs is not straightforward, that some have

consistently exceeded the 50% average revenue disbursed to communities, and have allowed 'representative' participation to function quite well.

Power and ethnocentrism

As has been explored in chapter 2, the problem with criticising participation firstly on grounds of consolidating existing power arrangements and secondly for failing to comprehend adherence to social norms as a function of power is that they both obscure their own inescapably ethnocentric roots and both may be characterised by reductionist logic. The claims both of Foucauldian explanations of power and those of ethnocentrism upon the workings of participation within Campfire and within any other project predicated on a participatory approach are areas I would identify for further research.

Casting project staff in the light of 'neutral facilitators' obscures the fact that consensus does not merely arise of its own accord. It is not just waiting to be discovered by those who learn that they have to seek it. It is socially constructed, is influenced by beliefs and assumptions pertaining to an agenda shaped by the notion of altering oppressive power relations in order to improve the fortunes of marginalised and disadvantaged groups, the 'objects' of development at large. It could even be argued that the empowerment agenda, with its aims of changing power relationships and dynamics within various empirical contexts across many countries and regions smacks of the kind of social engineering for which notions of development predicated on modernisation theory have come in for so much criticism (and not least from advocates of participation). No amount of good intentions makes the idea of consensus impervious to the claims of ethnocentrism, but there is little in participatory ideology or methodology which acknowledges them.

However, as discussed in chapter two, concerns about ethnocentrism can lead a commentator to adopt a position which most people working in development initiatives could not accept without undermining their reason for involvement. If intervention is inescapably ethnocentric, then is it not unsanctionable to be involved? It seems to me unclear as to whether there is a straightforward and unambiguous answer to this question. However, I would reformulate the dilemma as follows. To support the sort of social change envisaged at an ideological level in participatory approaches to development is inescapably ethnocentric, if it is maintained that there are no context-transcendent criteria which permit one to proclaim one belief 'better' than another (and I do maintain this to be the case). However, this does not mean that ideas that have arisen in one specific empirical context cannot be applied to another. The way in which they are applied, though, is the nub of the matter. If, through a process of dialogue which included all the people who would be party to the change, it was established through an inclusive consensus that the application of the idea could be to everyone's satisfaction, would it be unsanctionable to then apply that idea?

It is helpful at this juncture to consider Schrijvers' transformative perspective. It is more intellectually honest than conventional participatory research, in that its aim is still social change, but it recognises that the desire for social change arises through a process of partial identification with one group, as opposed to others. Whilst it is not my intention here either to accept or reject the transformative perspective, I would point out that it negotiates the demands of ethnocentrism by simply accepting them as inescapable. But such acceptance does not render untenable any attempt to participate. In worrying about privileging 'scientific' knowledge over 'local' knowledge about enforcing our own views on people who may not feel they have the space to express their own, it can be easy to forget that common ground can still in some circumstances be established and provide a firm basis for agreement; that there are ideas from one context that can be incorporated into or adapted for another without necessarily constituting some subtle form of neo-colonialism. A good example would

be the idea that substantial revenues could be earned from conserving wildlife, which when adopted by the residents of Masoka, led to a change of attitude and subsequent behaviour patterns which managed to satisfy and draw into consensus a variety of groups of people with differing interests.

However, although Schrijvers does well to counter theoretical objections to consensus, practical ones of a political nature, such as obstacles thrown up by power relations, are not so easily dismissed. Establishing a consensus on changing power dynamics to favour people who are not in an ideal position to protect and further their interests runs straight back into the problems highlighted by Mosse, amongst others. How does one keep from creating a consensus which consolidates rather than alters the status quo, which merely reflects the influence of cattle barons in Zimbabwe or timber concessionaires in Ghana? Even if this is achievable, it is potentially irresponsible and dangerous to encourage relatively powerless groups to come into conflict with other groups who could well threaten their interests (Brown, 1999), or even their physical wellbeing (see Shah & Shah, 1995, for a sobering example of participation leading to violence and death).

Nevertheless, if we are to avoid falling into the trap of determinism, even after recognising how severely problematic the notion of consensus can be, an awareness of the difficulties of generalisation is very pertinent, especially if our aim is to be realistic about the chances of implementing initiatives based on consensus. Therefore, an assessment of the possibilities for consensus, I would argue, is best conducted on a case by case basis, especially if we are not to lose sight of the occasions when consensus is possible, and has formed the basis for action which has been deemed desirable by those performing and subject to the consequences of that action.

Participation and recognition of achievement

A problem with insisting on the application of participatory criteria in the evaluation of a project's success is what it may devalue or simply fail to take into account (Mosse, 2001). Among the critics of participation, such as John Hailey, Bill Cooke or Giles Mohan, there is a noticeable questioning of a universal application of participatory methods, regardless of context or project. They raise legitimate concerns regarding whether it is always necessary and helpful to accept this assumption in the way that some donor agencies seem to have done. Certainly, Campfire is a perfect example of the care and systematic, vigorous analysis that is needed if the Programme's worth is to be fully appreciated. From one point of view, Campfire could be slammed as a miserable failure. One might question how the adjective 'participatory' could be used in connection with an ostensible example of community based natural resource management in which the community did not own the resources, had no institution with a standing in law through which to manage and produce them, and sometimes were not even allowed to decide how revenues generated from them would be spent. But this rather narrow view which, given the variety and heterogeneity of projects that comprise the Campfire Programme, is at best only partially applicable, also fails to take into account the advances that have been made. Take the revenues that have been channelled down to sub-district level; the decentralisation to district level of all decisions concerning natural resource management, giving 250,000 people a reason to consider conservation objectives, even if that reason is not always as convincing as it could be; consider the fact that wildlife outside of state-protected areas continues to exist. Furthermore, all of these gains have been achieved in the political and economic climate of the 1990s, which could hardly be described as ideal.

Perspective

These days, it is not particularly controversial to argue that there are some fundamental problems with current notions of participation, which need to address

gaping questions thrown up by analyses of power, whilst at the same time coming to terms with ethnocentrism and avoiding essentialism. Or, the problem could be turned on its head by observing that this is a highly unrealistic demand, along with many others that are made of participatory approaches. Concentrating on the local level can deflect attention away from problems that occur within a wider arena and whose solution is not to be found solely at the micro level (Brown, 1999). It is perhaps overburdening the term to expect it to eradicate difficulties that may well be entrenched in social interaction, and which have long and well-documented histories for which many solutions have been sought and have failed. Perhaps, then, a revision of expectations might also be helpful, in the interests of balance, and especially in view of the over-estimation of the importance of many development interventions (Crewe & Harrison, 1998), participatory or otherwise.

There is here, I would argue, need for a perspective, to address concerns on four levels:

1. how to react to the problems identified. How can expectations of what can be achieved through participation be realistically tempered by considerations of just how excruciatingly difficult the central notion of consensus can be?
2. how and what to value in participatory approaches, despite their flaws; after all, in their name the epistemological superiority of 'expert' scientific knowledge has been challenged; the concept of reflexivity is more prevalent now within development circles; they can have a politicising, as well as a depoliticising effect.
3. how and what to value in 'non-participatory' approaches. It appears regrettable that long term research programmes have been somewhat downgraded in their importance. It is worrying, too, that as a consequence they have sometimes experienced difficulties in attracting funding, in the face of research initiatives that, by dint of concentrating on more politically correct participatory methods, have presented themselves as the more ethically sound choice for donors keen to leave behind charges of neo-colonialism.
4. how to take into consideration other factors which affect the outcome of projects and are possibly even more important than ensuring participation.

The plight of Campfire programmes all over Zimbabwe illustrate this fourth point painfully well. At present, the sharp drop in the number of tourists visiting as a consequence of spiralling political and economic stability is a far more pressing concern than ensuring participation, given the subsequent drop in revenues and especially the worry over whether funding can be secured for next year. Of course, there is another possibility: abandon participatory methods and start again with something new. However, given the lack of viable alternatives, not to mention the improbability of achieving such an about-face on a grand scale, a reformulation of perspective is a little more palatable.

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