

Chapter 8

Community Governance of Wildlife Resources: Implications for Conservation, Livelihood, and Improvement in Democratic Space



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Abstract The past three decades have seen increased involvement of communities in the governance of wildlife resources. In northern Tanzania, communities have been involved in wildlife conservation in a variety of ways, from the establishment of Community Wildlife Management Areas, establishment of conservation easements in village lands, to the establishment of land trusts and setting aside areas for wildlife based investments in villages. This chapter presents findings from a number of studies on community involvement in protected area governance in Northern Tanzania. The chapter adopts a V³ leadership model in analyzing data from key informant interviews, focused group discussions, and a review of relevant documents in villages, districts, and community-based organizations (CBOs). The outcome of these initiatives, although not very impressive, does indicate a gradual change in some key aspects. In conservation, there have been increases in the sizes of land under conservation estate and a notable improvement in populations of key species. With regard to livelihood improvement, there are notable changes as some community members access both direct and indirect employment from wildlife-based organizations and enterprises, as well as the involvement of community members in micro-finance enterprises and wildlife based entrepreneurship. With regard to social benefits, there is more empowerment for community members and more involvement in advocacy and voicing their concerns. This is highly attributed to the involvement and training they received in the establishment of wildlife conservation areas from land use planning to governance and leadership training. There are great achievements, but there are also some notable setbacks. Some notable setbacks include possibilities of power capture by elite groups, recentralization tendency, and inadequate financial management by community-based organizations that give room for corrupt practices and embezzlement.

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8.1 Historical Perspectives of Conservation in Tanzania

Conservation in Tanzania dates back to the pre-colonial period (before the eighteenth century) when traditional leaders controlled access to wildlife resources for their people. During this period, wildlife use was mainly done to provide meat to communities and some traditional objects like skins for chiefs and traditional dancers. Thus, things changed with the establishment of the “modern protected area concept,” mainly during Germany colonial times. Like anywhere else in the global south, past establishment of PAs aimed at the perpetual preservation of the fauna without undue interference from natives’ rights or their economic development (Hingston 1931). This approach has negatively impacted livelihoods of the people through forced displacement and denial of access to natural resources that are vital to human needs (McShane et al. 2011). It is estimated that over 85% of PAs establishments in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa were associated with state expropriation of customary tribal lands, which involved dismantling of villages and exiling communities (Lockwood 2010; Veit et al. 2008; Hess 2001). In many areas of eastern and southern Africa, communities were excluded from their traditional ancestral lands and resources to pave way for establishment of wildlife protected areas to serve the needs and aspiration of white populations. In East Africa, pastoralists were disempowered, marginalized, denied their needs, and received unwelcome attention from wildlife management institutions (Sachedina 2008; Borrini-Feyaraband and Tarnowski 2005). In many areas, this disempowerment has resulted in many threats to the survival of wildlife and their habitats, including loss of support to conservation from communities, large-scale environmental degradation, encroachment, and poaching (Kisingo 2013). In addition to threats to conservation, this disempowerment resulted in many injustices to local communities that include loss of rights to ownership of wildlife resources and widespread poverty. It is these past histories that have resulted in PAs being associated with poverty among neighboring communities (Kisingo 2013).

8.2 Protected Areas and Community Governance of Wildlife

Protected areas establishment and management are considered a cornerstone of biodiversity conservation strategies (Gurung 2010). However, even with the establishment of protected areas in Africa, it is apparent that these areas cannot hold the entire resources required for wildlife, and therefore most wildlife resources are still located outside formal protected areas. With increased human population around

these areas, there are more and more challenges in managing wildlife outside protected areas with greater degrees of human wildlife conflicts in place. Tanzania has experienced challenges in managing wildlife resources outside formal protected areas as a result of dwindling capacity to finance the conservation sector, and increased human population, in particular close to wildlife rich areas. Such challenges led to the emergence of community-based natural resources management (CBNRM). CBNRM in Tanzania's wildlife sector took the form of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) aimed at conserving wildlife and deriving economic opportunities to neighboring communities. Today, scholars are debating on the success of the WMA concept in three main fronts, i.e., conservation, social empowerment, and socioeconomic development (Kisingo 2013). Establishment of WMAs and the fundamental shift in philosophy and perspective that this represents in Tanzania is a significant achievement (USAID 2013). However, according to TNRF (2011), the WMAs have fallen below expectations of many stakeholders where sufficient realization of promised socioeconomic benefits, democratic governance, and conservation outcomes are still far-fetched.

Some studies on WMAs have assessed their contribution to community livelihood (e.g., USAID 2013; Makupa 2013), while others have looked at different attributes of governance in some WMAs (e.g., Kisingo 2013; Robinson et al. 2012; Mwakaje et al. 2013). For instance, the nationwide evaluation of WMAs by USAID in 2013 found the main benefits of WMAs to include increased protection of ecologically important wildlife areas, increased financial benefits to central and local government authorities, more empowerment to communities through better frameworks to manage their lands, acquisition of legal user rights to wildlife resources, and some share of financial benefits being realized by villages from wildlife-based investments.

8.3 Governance Challenges in Community Wildlife Management Areas

Despite what is considered as benefits from establishment of WMAs, they are still faced with governance challenges. In a study by USAID 2013, some WMA leaders clung to power despite their poor governance practices, most WMAs lacked efficient recordkeeping, there was a lack of awareness on the part of villagers on issues on wildlife and WMAs, the establishment of WMA budgets were unrealistic and not based on planning or realistic analysis, and power was captured by elected community representatives rather than having it rest with the village councils. These findings support the findings by Kisingo (2013) that the establishment of a protected area as community based does not necessarily imply better governance outcomes.

When comparison was made for community perception of governance effectiveness in Wildlife Management Areas of Ikona and Makao, it was revealed that there was no difference to PAs under government agencies (Kisingo 2013). Community

perceptions on governance of a PA depend to a greater extent on their view of how their values and aspirations are realized, not just the governance model used. Some additional challenges identified by USAID (2013) include inadequate awareness of the WMA by villagers, and interference by government on issues at the jurisdiction of WMA leadership resulting in a setback in the devolution of wildlife-related decision-making authority. Other challenges include inadequate checks and balances for WMAs to prevent abuse of responsibilities and power by WMA leaders at the expense of communities; inadequate transparency and accountability among WMA stakeholders; incomplete devolution of responsibilities by government to WMA leadership, particularly for issues such as control of investments and allocation of hunting blocks within WMAs; co-optation by district governments; and lack of mechanisms for villages to withdraw from WMAs.

Despite the abundance of literature regarding WMAs, there is lack of studies that have holistically evaluated governance of WMAs with links to outcomes on social development, social empowerment, and conservation outcomes. Lack of such analysis makes it difficult to strongly identify the observed successes of WMA establishment and operations. It is a central point of proposition for this chapter that WMAs have improved community through social empowerment, such as the ability to deal with conflicts, promote understanding of basic rights, encourage understanding of roles and responsibilities of different actors, and support understanding of values and reason for conservation of wildlife and their habitats. This chapter employs a V³ model in unpacking the outcomes of WMAs through a comparative study of villages around three WMAs of Burunge, Makao, and Ikona in Northern Tanzania. This chapter assesses the WMA governance based on three outcomes, namely, (1) social empowerment or bargaining power, (2) conservation, and (3) socioeconomic development.

8.4 Introduction to V³ Framework

In analyzing the achievements of wildlife-based CBNRM in northern Tanzania, we adopted the use of a V³ framework as proposed by the African Leadership University. Under this framework, leadership and governance is viewed from three angles: the first component is *value* that focuses on creating significant opportunities for all. This aspect emphasizes the need to capitalize on human decision-making, having in place opportunity minded approaches in conservation; the second component is *virtue* that emphasizes doing right by self, others, and the world by engaging in ethical decision-making, empathy, and care to others, while leveraging the diversity of other actors; the third component is *Vision*. Under *vision*, one is expected to see and be inspired by a better future through such aspects as creativity, boldness and risk-taking, and networking. Using a V³ model, community involvement in conservation in the three Wildlife Management Areas has demonstrated mixed outcomes, particularly when one looks at conservation, livelihood, and democratic governance aspects.

There is a general agreement that WMAs have brought about improvement in democratic governance in participating villages. Leadership in WMAs is commonly seen as an elected body of representatives referred to as an Authorized Association (AA). The AA consists of representatives elected from WMA member villages. This is the decision-making body for WMA matters on behalf of all the people in member villages. Elections for AA members are conducted for most WMAs every 5 years, and a minimum of 30% of members must be women.

Establishment of WMAs require a great deal of preparation including preparing a village land use plan for each prospective WMA village, and decisions on how land should be allocated for conservation in their village lands alongside settlements, farming, and livestock grazing areas. This is followed by an application to the director of Wildlife for permits to start engaging in wildlife management. Once the permits are granted, inventories of wildlife resources in their areas are conducted, and a Resource Management Zone Plan is prepared that will serve as an interim management guide until the preparation of the General Management Plan is accomplished. AAs will need to elect leaders and have a constitution in place. Once all the requirements are met, the AA may apply for a User Right from the Director of Wildlife to use and conduct business dealings in wildlife. For all these processes, community members and elected leaders go through a number of awareness raising and capacity-building programs. Furthermore, their attendance to various meetings and workshops enlighten them on various issues such as their land rights and the resources therein.

Throughout the WMA establishment process, community members and leaders are provided with a variety of training, particularly on governance and management of conservation areas, financial management, and accountability. Such trainings are offered to village governments, WMA AA representatives, WMA AA Board of Trustees, and District Natural Resources Advisory Boards. Interviews with key informants in the three WMAs attributed considerable impacts due to the training on the way natural resources were managed. In Ikona and Makao, WMAs provision of books of accounts increased financial discipline and transparency in record keeping. Key informants state that improvement in governance has made villagers to question various issues concerning the WMA, a significant result in terms of empowerment. There is also an agreement that even WMA member villages have become more accountable with income accrued from WMA. However, this improvement is still in the low levels as there are still instances where funds are used for unbudgeted activities, and some WMAs books of accounts have not been audited for several years. There are important achievements, but there are also some notable setbacks. Some of these additional setbacks include possibilities of power capture by elite groups, a recentralization tendency by the central government by taking the previously devolved ownership and rights to themselves, and inadequate financial management by community-based organizations that give room for corrupt practices and embezzlement.

With regard to *virtue*, WMAs made conservation empathetic to the needs of local communities who would otherwise remain locked away from opportunities arising from utilization of wildlife resources. Several WMA member villages have

established a number of services that provide relief to local community members. Such services include construction of social infrastructures such as schools and health facilities, establishment of supporting funds for sponsoring students from member villages at various levels of education, and supporting burial services. These contributions, particularly in building social infrastructure, mean that community members were no longer required to contribute family income to social projects, allowing those funds to be used for other basic needs and investments at family levels. A lack of revenue reinvestment accrued from WMAs in economic enterprises remains a concern. This is an area that needs to be explored so as to bring about a multiplier for the funds accrued from conservation. Investing in economic enterprises that generate more income and employment for local communities is in line with the V³ component of value because investment creates tangible benefits to the people by tuning into the markets and working to satisfy people's needs, wants, pains, and beliefs in order to begin creating value for them (www.alusb.com).

Furthermore, in the case of *value*, villages that are a part of WMAs are increasingly involved in livelihood improvement programs. WMA facilitating NGOs (e.g., FZS, Chemchem Foundation, Honey Guide Foundation, Nature Conservancy), investors, and local government authorities have invested a great deal of effort in improving income standards of community members. In the case of Ikona and Makao villages, involvement in micro-financing enterprises through Community Conservation Banks (COCOBA) has greatly increased the financial capacity of community members. In Robanda and Bonchugu villages, community members have over six groups per village with an average membership of 30. Such groups had in their circulation a capital of about 70 million TZS (equivalent to 30,000US\$) by June 2018. This is a great support to community livelihood, as group members are able to get soft loans without the numerous bureaucratic procedures required from conventional banks. Financial empowerment is a tremendous asset in value creation for communities living with wildlife. Community-based conservation works well when villages and landowners are given rights over wildlife resources, thus potentially maximizing the value of wildlife in comparison to other land uses and ensuring that those people at the base of the pyramid (village level 100%) also benefit (Kideghesho et al. [in press](#)).

With regard to *vision*, many of the achievements are seen as long-term benefits to conservation and community livelihood. Much has been written about livelihood in previous sections, including involvement in micro-financing enterprises and wildlife-based entrepreneurship ventures and access to employment opportunities and availability of markets for local produce. With regard to conservation, the long-term vision is to maintain the integrity of particular ecosystems sustainably. With pending future WMAs, more areas have been set aside for conservation, thereby increasing the size of land under conservation (Kisingo 2013). Furthermore, WMAs have helped to reclaim areas that were previously used as dispersal areas and migratory corridors in particular ecosystems. For instance, there was a great concern that the Tarangire–Manyara Ecosystem was becoming fragmented as more and more human activities were blocking the migratory corridor for wildlife between the two

core protected areas in the ecosystem (i.e., Tarangire and Lake Manyara National Parks). However, establishment of the Burunge WMA has to a greater extent revived the corridor, and already there are more animals observed crossing between the two protected areas (Eustace et al. 2018). In the Serengeti ecosystem, areas that were previously used for livestock grazing are currently harboring sizeable wildlife populations that are already attracting investment in tourism-related business. This is a long-term vision achievement. In areas where wildlife was already decimated, we see increased populations of key species such as elephants, giraffes, buffalo, and lions (Kisingo 2013). Despite some challenges that include encroachment, poaching, spread of invasive species, and increased human–wildlife conflicts (Eustace et al. 2018), the involvement of communities in WMAs has greatly improved conservation outcomes.

In summary, the outcomes of WMA initiatives, although not particularly impressive, do indicate a gradual change in some key aspects:

- In conservation, there has been an increase in the sizes of land under conservation estate and a notable improvement in populations of key species.
- With regard to livelihood improvement, there are notable changes as some community members access both direct and indirect employment from wildlife-based organizations and enterprises, as well as community member involvement in micro-finance enterprises and wildlife-based entrepreneurship.
- With regard to social benefits, there is more empowerment for community members and more involvement in advocacy and voicing their concerns in various settings. This is highly attributed to the participation and training they received in the establishment of wildlife conservation areas from land use planning to governance to leadership training.

8.5 Conclusion

Success in community governance of wildlife resources is highly dependent on ensuring decision-making over these resources is vested within the communities. Success should ensure achievement of the three leadership facets of vision, value, and virtue in decision-making. Communities need to be involved in plotting the future of their areas and resources therein. This sort of involvement in northern Tanzania, despite various challenges encountered, has managed to improve aspects within these three facets: first, improved contribution of income accrued from wildlife to the livelihood of communities; second, the contribution it has had in reducing threats to wildlife, especially by adding on the size of land area under wildlife conservation; and third, improvement in democratic governance for communities participating in CBNRM.

CBNRM works well when villages and landowners are given rights over wildlife resources and potentially maximize the value of wildlife in comparison to other land uses, and also it ensures that this value reaches the people at the base of the pyramid

(village level 100%) (Kideghesho et al. [in press](#)). What must accompany this ownership is the proper governance of these rights to ensure that all those affected by conservation decisions make them appropriately, and therefore, avoiding a top-down approach to decision-making that comes from the past colonial era.

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