Challenges to Proponents of Common Property Recourse Systems: Despairing Voices from the Social Forests of Zimbabwe

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Summary. — There is a fair degree of misplaced optimism about common property resource (CPR) management. In investigating common property issues for woodlands in communal areas in Zimbabwe, we are struck by the numerous case studies showing a breakdown of local institutions for CPR management, and the lack of any emerging alternative institutions for such management. There are a number of contributing economic, social and ecological factors to this phenomenon. We argue that the formal rule-based systems that form the cornerstones of the proposed CPR systems are far removed from the current institutional systems, rooted in norm-based controls. We suggest that advocacy of CPR systems has to be tempered with critical analysis. © 2001 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

Key words — Southern Africa, Zimbabwe, common property, local institutions, governance, woodlands

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1. INTRODUCTION

Common property resource (CPR) management is receiving much interest from the development community, for the management of a wide range of resources. Part of this interest is the current worldwide trend to devolve natural resource management to local communities (Agarwal & Gibson, 1999; Chambers & McBeth, 1992; Christofferson, Campbell, & du Toit, 1998; DFID, 1999; Getz et al., 1999; Heermans & Otto, 1999; Rhode, Hoffman, & Cousins, 1999; Western & Wright, 1994). CPR management is thought to be one of the institutional vehicles to realize such devolved management. The literature on the topic of CPR management or local management goes under the guise of many different terms. Thus Wollenberg (1998) identifies 20 commonly-used terms for local forest management, a number of which are based on CPR systems (e.g., community-based management, joint management, collaborative management). A significant and influential component of the CPR literature is that centered on identifying the set of variables that enhance the likelihood of users organizing themselves to avoid the social costs associated with open-access (this literature includes the delineation of “design principles”) (Arnold, 1998; Baland & Platteau, 1996; McKean, 1998; Ostrom, 1992, 1999). This literature and much of the literature on community-based natural-resource management (CBNRM) (especially that literature reaching the practitioners) is largely optimistic in outlook (e.g. Child, Ward, & Tavengwa, 1997; DFID, 1999; Fisher, 1995; Getz et al., 1999; Ostrom, 1994; Wollenberg, 1998). For instance, Ostrom (1994) in her article on self-governance and forest resources writes “The case-study literature now demonstrates without a doubt that it is possible for CPR appropriators to design, operate, monitor and enforce their own institutional arrangement.” Agarwal and Yadama (1997) note that according to researchers “local communities can create and sustain local institutions to manage their collectively owned resources quite successfully, often in the face of adverse pressures from the state, demographic changes and market forces.” Reading such literature, one could be excused if one emerged with the belief that the implementation of CPR management is a relatively simple task, or, at the very least, that with some effort, successful CPR management could be implemented.

The thesis in this essay is that this large body of literature displays a degree of optimism that does not appear relevant to the social forests of Zimbabwe, as there are numerous factors which make it difficult, if not impossible, to implement. We then ask why such optimism has developed.

2. CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTING CPR SYSTEMS

Our analysis is based largely on the Communal Areas of Zimbabwe. Portions of the landscapes in these areas consist of grazing areas, often containing woodlands, which are jointly used by households from a specific village or from households from neighboring villages. An array of rules applies to these grazing areas and woodlands (Figure 1), ranging from national to local, and from formal to informal (Mandondo, 1997; Nhira & Fortmann, 1993). In investigating common property issues for woodlands in the communal areas, we do not find many working examples of CPR management, despite the array of rules. There are a number of factors which we believe provide challenges to proponents of CPR management or CBNRM, including national policies and legislation which are not enabling, changing and differentiated household strategies, the lack of legitimacy of local organizations and various resource features. Each of these is briefly tackled below.

(a) National policies

The state policies governing control and use of woodlands are not enabling to sustainable management of resources at the local level (McGregor, 1991, 1995). Thus, for example, the Communal Lands Forest Products Act restricts use of woodland resources to own use by local people, while allowing outsiders to exploit the resources through obtaining permits from state agencies, bypassing village structures. It can be argued that the national legislation is of limited relevance to actions at local level, as local people do not uphold the laws and the level of enforcement is close to nonexistent (Sitole, 1999; Mukamuri & Kozanayi, 1999). Enabling legislation could, however, stimulate local management, by providing incentives for management, through spelling out paths to responsible devolution to local communities, by defining clear decision-making processes that...
are inclusive of all stakeholders etc. Choice of how resources can be used should lie with local communities, rather than with Acts that give powers to state bodies, such as the Natural Resources Board and the Forestry Commission, the current state agencies that control land and woodland use in Zimbabwe (McGregor, 1991).

There are signs of change as a new Environmental Management Act is currently being discussed. In an early draft of the Act, it was implicit that the achievements of the wildlife policies behind CAMPFIRE\(^4\) had been acknowledged. CAMPFIRE is a relatively successful program (Child et al., 1997; Getz et al., 1999) that allows local communities to manage and derive incomes from wildlife. A problem remains that the authors of the Act appear to focus on the Rural District Councils (RDCs, the lowest level of local government) as the “appropriate authority”\(^5\) rather than on actual user communities. As discussed below RDCs may not be the appropriate level for management of natural resources.

The decentralization policy sweeping the country, and many other countries in the region, could bode well for empowering local people (Roe, 1995). Decentralization has been accommodated, however, by decreasing central government grants to local level. The grants from central government were supposed to be matched by increasing reliance on a local tax base, but the growing impoverishment of rural communities, and the on-going difficulty of tax collection has proved a serious obstacle. There has also been almost no government facilitation for the relocation of power to district level (Mukamuri, Campbell, & Kweroro, forthcoming). In addition, as Murphree (1990) noted “decentralization turns out to mean simply the
addition of another obstructive administrative layer to the bureaucratic hierarchy.” In Zimbabwe, decentralization has meant devolving power to the RDCs, which, to emphasize the point made above and discussed below, may not be the appropriate level to undertake CBNRM.

(b) Household strategies

It is believed that the declining national economy has had a negative impact on CPR institutions. The economic structural adjustment program (ESAP), which was implemented in the early 1990s, had some positive impacts on the national economy, but largely on the large-scale commercial farming sector (Addison, 1996; World Bank, 1996). In the smallholder sector, it appears that the farmers generally became less well-off, a result of rising farming input costs, reduced remittances from urban areas, higher costs of services (e.g., health, education) etc., without higher prices for outputs (Oni, 1997; Campbell, Mukamuri, & Kowero, 2000; Mukamuri et al., forthcoming). The higher prices for agricultural produce probably benefited a minority of wealthier smallholder farmers, thereby increasing differentiation within communities. Because of declining cash income, households have had to turn to a range of income-generating activities, which they themselves acknowledge to be sometimes socially or ecologically detrimental. For example, the widespread sale of forest products is regarded as socially unacceptable as it goes against the “traditional” rules prohibiting this activity (Mukamuri et al., forthcoming; Campbell et al., 2000; Cavendish, 1997; Scoones et al., 1996). There has been a rise in locally-illegal practices related to woodland use (e.g., the cutting of trees, which may be done under the cover of dark) and a rise in thefts (Campbell, Grundy, & Matose, 1993; McGregor, 1991; Nhira & Fortmann, 1993).

Woodland resources are an essential component of many of the emerging livelihood strategies, largely because they come as a “free” resource, needing only labor to ensure their extraction (Cavendish, 1997, 1999a; Gibson & Marks, 1995). Local “traditional” institutions have generally been unable to cope with the rapid pace of change. For instance, the 20-fold increase in marketing of woodcarvings within five years (Braedt & Standa-Gunda, 2000) has placed much stress on local institutions governing use of wood from the commons. Sithole (1999) has concluded that “on the whole, there is a breakdown of all types of [CPR] institutional arrangements” [in the face of market forces]. She was looking at common pool resources in wetland systems, including water sources, sacred woodlands and grazing resources. Mukamuri and Kozanayi (1999) write, in the context of the commercialization of baobab products, that “there is no evidence that the local rules are being adopted or that new rules are being developed to cater for the new situations.” Once again, we would stress that these trends do not result in an institutional vacuum: there are still a complex of customs and norms that impact on how resources are used. While most of the work cited above was based on changes in the early 1990s, we would hypothesize that the more recent decline in the Zimbabwean economy has had similar impacts on households and institutions.

Within a single Ward, of about 1,000 households, a case study by Cavendish (1997) shows that the richest 20% of the population have a total income (including subsistence) that is 4–5 times higher than the poorest 20% (Cavendish, 1997, 1999b). There is also evidence that differentiation is increasing (Cavendish, 1999c; Mukamuri et al., forthcoming). Different groups within villages have very different needs from the commons. For instance, while the wealthy 20% want the commons largely for cattle feed, the poor 20% are reliant on a range of woodland resources to sustain their incomes. While CPR institutions are possible in highly heterogeneous communities, it is generally acknowledged that they are less likely to work in such communities (Murphree, 1993; Ostrom, 1999; Saxena, 1997). Thus the rising differentiation could bode poorly for current and proposed institutions governing CPRs. In addition, it may be the richer members of the community that dominate local politics and local organizations, as found in some joint management systems in India. The results of this are systems that are designed to benefit certain sectors of the community (Saxena, 1989).

A new era of social relations is apparent—there is a demise of community values and a rise of individualism and household-centered behavior (Mukamuri, forthcoming; Mukamuri et al., forthcoming; Scoones et al., 1996). Scoones et al. (1996) write that “most [local] people observe that co-operation is on the
decline”. If there is any management of woodland resources it is usually directed at those components that are found in privately-controlled niches in the landscape (Campbell et al., 1993). Community activities such as work parties are less frequent, to be replaced by paid labor. Households flout many “traditional” rules governing woodland use in the face of household needs. Changing social situations have also resulted in much switching of roles, between male and female, and young and old, and a different suite of relations between rich and poor. Many of the changes lead to erosion of “traditional” values and behavior, a common theme in much writing (see next section).

(c) The legitimacy of local institutions

(i) Modern institutions

Local governance structures in Zimbabwe’s communal areas tend to be ineffectual. Rural District Councils are cash-strapped and often lack legitimacy. While the RDCs may propose by-laws or levies related to natural resources, inevitably the laws are not enforced and the levies are not collected (Braithwaite & Standa-Gunda, 2000; Hobane, 1995; Madzudzo & Hawkes, 1996; Mandondo, 2000a; Mukamuri & Kozanayi, 1999; Murombedzi, 1990).

A serious problem is the emerging competition between RDCs and the people they purport to represent (Campbell, Sithole, Cavendish, Frost, & Mukamuri, 1999a; Dzingirai, 1995; Madzudzo, 1999; Sithole, Hwenha, & Kozanayi, 1999). In CAMPFIRE schemes, where the RDCs are generally in firm control (through acquiring “appropriate authority” status), they are taking high proportions of the income. Early in the program some RDCs were congratulated for taking low overheads (10–33%—Child & Peterson, 1991; Child et al., 1997), but now a minimum of about 50% is usually retained by the RDC. In some areas, this may rise to 90%, leaving small amounts of money to be subdivided by the households in the project area or to be used for community-identified development projects (Madzudzo, 1999). Wildlife revenues are providing a powerful incentive to RDCs not to devolve proprietorship to lower levels in the bureaucratic hierarchy (Dzingirai, 1995; Murphree, 1990, 1993). Field results indicate that local people often see CAMPFIRE as a government program, rather than a community-based program (Dzingirai, 1995; Sithole et al., 1999).

Interviewees in Sengwe often expressed a number of reservations about the RDCs and the councilors elected from their area that make up the council (Sithole et al., 1999). As one person quipped “as soon as they become councilors they forget where they come from.”

The RDCs can be likened to the local government structures in India, the Panchayats, which were also assumed to represent the interests on the local communities, where in fact they often were seeking control of resources, and showed little evidence of any interest in the poor (Fish, 1995; Saxena, 1997). Saxena (1989) recorded that many of these village organizations were weak in their ability to manage joint forest management and were not trusted by local people.

One of the arms of the RDCs is the VIDCO.9 These elected village committees often lack legitimacy. In many areas households are uncertain as to which VIDCO they belong, where its boundaries are, and who is in the committee (Blench, 1998; Hot Springs Working Group, 1995). There were, and still are, conflicts between the VIDCOs and the “traditional” structures. The traditional structures were somewhat displaced by the post-independence government, especially in areas of in-migration (Campbell, Luckert, & Scoones, 1997; Scoones et al., 1996; Mukamuri, 1995).

Under other circumstances, the “traditional” leadership has become involved in these modern structures (Sithole, 1999; Sithole & Bradley, 1995; Scoones et al., 1996).

There are also user groups that have some rules and regulations about resources and their management. For instance, ZINATHA governs the affairs of the traditional healers (Mukamuri, 1999; Mukamuri & Kozanayi, 1999); the Binga Craft Centre has some 3,000 members who produce crafts for it (Mukamuri & Kozanayi, 1999); and, each woodcraft market has a market committee (Braithwaite & Standa-Gunda, 2000). In general, these kinds of committees are somewhat ineffective in governing resource use, as the above literature attests.

(ii) “Traditional” institutions

Work has shown numerous stated local controls on woodland resources, which may be termed “traditional,” sacred, pragmatic and civil (Campbell et al., 1993; Mandondo, 1997; Nhira & Fortmann, 1993). These local controls have been assumed to be the building blocks for CPR institutions. For woodland resources,
common themes are the low observance of local controls, the all-but-absent local enforcement regime, the general breakdown of “traditional” institutions and the lack of any emerging alternative institutions for CPR management (Gwaai Working Group, 1997; Mandondo, forthcoming a, 2000a,b; Mukamuri, 1989, 1995, forthcoming; Mukamuri & Kozanayi, 1999; Mukamuri, Matose, & Campbell, 2000; Nhira & Fortmann, 1993; Scoones et al., 1996; Sithole, 1997, 1999). Sithole (1999) has demonstrated the rapid decrease of sacredness of landscape patches over the last decades, this trend indicating the weakening of “traditional” institutions. Mukamuri and Kozanayi (1999) record an extreme case of the breakdown of controls, where it was recorded that baobab bark stripping was being done within gravesites. The “traditional” leadership may be weak because of its history of being empowered and disempowered by government (Matose & Wily, 1996), the modernizing and economic forces that undermine “traditional” values (McGregor, 1991, 1995), the rapid expansion of modern religions (Goebel, 1997; Mukamuri et al., forthcoming), and the impacts of immigration (Dzingirai, 1998; Mukamuri & Kozanayi, 1999; Sithole, 1999). It is not perfectly clear whether the changes have accelerated rapidly in recent years. Speaking to farmers, the impression is that the changes are particularly noticeable in the 1990s (Mukamuri et al., forthcoming). It appears that “traditional” institutions are not adjusting to accommodate population growth, increasing resource scarcities and fluctuating market conditions (Dasgupta, 1993; Dasgupta & Maler, 1997).

The case study literature supporting the above contentions now comes from nearly 20 sites in Zimbabwe, from a range of districts, including Binga, Chipinge, Chivi, Lupane, Mutambara, Sengwe and Shurugwi. This is not to say there is a vacuum of institutions—a range of controls remain, many of them related to “good manners” (Mandondo, forthcoming a, forthcoming b). Compliance often relies mainly on cultural norms and mores, “laws of the heart” or moral texts, rather than on any formal disciplinary procedures. Nor is the above to say that the institutional change that is occurring is good or bad; the emerging institutional arrangements for woodlands (a key feature of which may be there lack of clarity regarding woodland use) could well be the most appropriate for the current conditions. Furthermore, the nature of the institutional controls can vary over short distances, from one village to the next (Campbell et al., 1997; Scoones et al., 1996).

(iii) Summing up

Given the weakness of Councils, VIDCOs and “traditional” leaders to effect management of natural resources, one wonders which governance structure would be able to effectively support CPR management. A number of authors have raised the problem of who is the “community” in community-based management (Agarwal & Gibson, 1999; Blench, 1998; Kepe, 1998; Leach, 1999; Mukamuri et al., 2000; Ribot, 1999).

(d) Resource features

The success of particular CAMPFIRE schemes can be largely ascribed to the very high economic value of the resource (particularly elephant for safari hunting) (Campbell et al., 1999b; Child et al., 1997). The theory predicts this: higher resource values can support the higher transactions costs associated with complex property rights arrangements (Pearse, 1988). Woodland resources have much lower values. Resource scarcity has been linked to a breakdown of “traditional” rules and regulations, and the rise of illegal practices (Campbell et al., 1993; McGregor, 1991; Nhira & Fortmann, 1993). As yet, we have still to see a new set of rules emerge to cater for the new situations. There has been some move to implement by-laws but this is still at a very early stage (see above). Given the poor soils and the low rainfall, the productivity of many of the woodlands is not high (Frost, 1996). Perhaps the returns to management of the woodland resources are just too low and the transaction costs of managing are just too high to stimulate the establishment of CPR institutions.

Another feature of the woodland resources is the lack of clear boundaries, and the lack of congruence between biophysical and social boundaries. Nemarundwe (2000) has shown that the modern administrative boundaries and the “traditional” village boundaries do not match with biophysical boundaries, and for each woodland resource there is a different spatial pattern of use. Boundaries are generally porous, are open to individual interpretation and contestation, and are changeable (Mandondo, forthcoming b, 2000b). In general, it is very difficult to see how boundaries can become more clearly defined. Any attempts to
harden the boundaries are likely to be frustrated by local people or user groups, as has occurred in some CAMPFIRE schemes (Madzudzo & Hawkes, 1996).

3. WHY THEN THE OPTIMISM

There are hundreds of articles about forest CPRs, community-based natural resource management, joint forest management, cooperative management etc. There is a lack of congruence between the optimism displayed by the literature and the realities on the ground (Mukamuri et al., 2000). The emphasis in the literature is on the possible positive outcomes rather than on the field complexities. Much of the theoretical literature is thought to have strong practical implications, as, for example, summarized in the design principles of Ostrom (1994, 1999).

In Zimbabwe there is only one example of joint forest management, and it is too early to say whether it will endure or be successful. Zimbabwe does have CAMPFIRE, which is often presented as a successful example of community-based management (e.g., Child et al., 1997; Getz et al., 1999). 10 CAMPFIRE is highly peculiar, however, in that (a) it is based on a resource with a very high economic value (Campbell et al., 1999b), (b) some US$45 million has been spent on CAMPFIRE by donors, and (c) there are some concerns as to whether local people are doing the managing and benefiting vis-à-vis the Rural District Councils (Campbell et al., 1999a; Madzudzo, 1999; Campbell & Shackleton, 2000).

A challenge for us is to understand why there is such a large difference between the optimism of much of the literature and the empirical world of the social forest in Zimbabwe. We have a number of suggestions, outlined below.

—Is the difference due to the CPR literature being derived from fundamentally different systems from those that we have studied (e.g., much of the CPR literature appears to be derived from other resource types—irrigation systems feature prominently, Ostrom, 1999, Uphoff, 1986)?

—Is the pessimism emerging from our studies of woodland resources in the Zimbabwean social forest due to one or more of the following factors?

The low biological productivity in many of the woodlands (Frost, 1996).

A less supportive state in Zimbabwe (e.g., Village Forest Councils were formed in Asia as far back as the 1930s, Agarwal & Yadama, 1997).

Higher transaction costs in establishing CPR institutions in Zimbabwe.

A lower degree of forest dependence in Zimbabwe (and thus lower values) than in areas where joint forest management has been implemented in Asia (but see Campbell et al., 1997).

A lesser amount of social capital (Bebbington, 1997) in Zimbabwe.

—Alternatively is the optimism in the CPR literature an artifact of particular ideologies or to an overstatement of the successes? Thus, are the optimists tending “to reconstruct traditional social organizations, viewing them as relatively harmonious ideals” (Agarwal & Yadama, 1997), or are the successes that we read of “islands of sustainability in seas of unsustainable development”? (Bebbington, 1997; see also Saxena, 1997). Is too much of the current literature in the functionalist developmental tradition rather being informed by critical insights into institutions? (Leach, 1999).

—Perhaps the optimism in some of the literature is based on the acceptance that formal rule-based systems, as epitomized in “design principles,” have widespread applicability. (Mandondo, forthcoming a, 2000b) and Sithole (1999) have argued strongly that design principles and formal rule-based systems are far removed from the current local control systems in the communal areas. The controls that exist and are operative are largely those that are deeply rooted in traditions, culture and norms. The formulation and enforcement of these controls is steeped in subtle and often complex processes (Mandondo, forthcoming a). People or groups of people are situated agents who react to the informal rules, and the manner which they are enforced, according to how these influence their various interests. Implementing formal rule-based systems comes with considerable transaction costs—perhaps the resources we are dealing with have insufficient value to support such systems.

Given the lack of congruence between the optimism of the literature and the realities on the ground, we suggest that much of the literature has limited applicability to on-going research and development on community-based or common property systems.
4. WHERE ARE THE VOICES FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES?

One possible reason for what we would regard as false optimism is that the international debate has few contributors from developing countries (especially from Africa), while the subject matter is predominantly about developing countries. Four of the five Zimbabwean authors of this essay grew up in the rural areas of Zimbabwe. One of them was born and grew up in the site where he did his PhD! Thesis authors are very familiar with their study topics; they are immersed in the experience and socio-cultural-economic milieu of the communal areas. Given that we believe that the control systems in the social forests of Zimbabwe (and the region) are steeped in traditions and culture, such experience can make a significant contribution to the international debate.

How can we ensure that such voices are heard? Developing country scientists will have to become more aggressive in their marketing of their work—all too many studies end as reports with minimal circulation.

5. THE WAY FORWARD

The term property carries with it the notion of a secure claim to a resource. Going by the strict technical definition of common property resource (e.g., Ostrom, 1990; Berkes & Farvar, 1989) not many researchers will be worried if one shows skepticism about working examples of CPR systems in woodlands. Common property may be a theoretical ideal—in real life we have common property-like and open access-like scenarios. But the degree to which the optimism reflected in much of the literature is not in line with the vast amount of case study work is striking.

There are many reasons why CPR systems will be difficult to put in place or to maintain in the social forests of Southern Africa. As researchers, we need a more nuanced understanding of the resources of the commons and the users thereof, if we are to understand the paradox between our reality and the optimism expressed in much of the literature. In particular, we need a more detailed description of property rights, where we move away from simplistic classifications (e.g., common property, private property, open access, state property) to an in-depth understanding of each landscape unit or resource, in terms of such characteristics as excludability, comprehensiveness, use designation, duration of use, allotment type, size, transferability, fees, operational requirements, operational control and security (Kundhlande & Luckert, 1998). We also need a nuanced understanding of “communities,” namely the interests and processes within communities, and between communities and other stakeholders (Agarwal & Gibson, 1999).

Our CPR research needs to pay more attention to spatial contexts, temporal contexts, including history, the micro-politics of resource use and transaction costs. Above all, we need more interdisciplinary perspectives, so that the economics of the household and the socio-cultural dynamics can be understood as a whole. We also need more ecological results on the state of the commons (not just perceived condition of the forest, as used by Agarwal & Yadama, 1997).

We would argue that much of the literature that displays optimism about CPR management is derived from a focus on formal rule-based systems. The systems currently in place are largely built on controls derived from traditions, culture and norms (Mandondo, 2000a). The controls are constantly contested, changeable and individually interpreted. More political and social ecology needs to be brought into the debates (Agarwal & Gibson, 1999; Berry, 1985, 1988, 1989; Li, 1996; Mosse, 1997). The literature taking a “design principles” approach implies an interest in social engineering. Without the in-depth understanding of the processes involved in the evolution and dynamics of institutions, social engineering will be a dangerous direction.

Mandondo (forthcoming a) notes that the literature generally portrays two extremes on CPR management: a pessimistic view implying avarice and chaos, and an optimistic outlook implying bliss and harmony! While our essay may be viewed as pessimistic, our intention is not to promote pessimism. We hope that this work will result in CPR management being approached with in-depth analysis and careful consideration (see also Leach, 1999; Sithole, 1995; Saxena, 1997). As Saxena (1997) concludes: “At the outset it is important to be able to persuade key actors of the merits of [CPR management], but it eventually becomes important to temper this with critical appraisal...” We hope this current paper contributes to this goal.
NOTES

1. We use the term “CPR management” to imply a property regime in which resources are jointly used by a user group, with a set of rules (formal or informal) defining rights and duties to access, withdrawal, management, exclusion and alienation (Schlager & Ostrom, 1992).

2. As a short-hand for such approaches we have used the term “community-based natural resource management” (CBNRM), implying some collective action with respect to resource management.

3. The “social forest” is any aggregation of trees, however spaced and wherever located, from which local people obtain a variety of products (Nhira & Fortmann, 1993).


5. The term was introduced in CAMPFIRE—the Ministry of Mines, Environment and Tourism can enable Councils to acquire “appropriate authority” status, effectively giving them rights to manage wildlife.

6. A devastating drought in 1991–92 makes it difficult to separate out the impacts of ESAP from those of drought. In addition, the structural adjustment program cannot be criticized per se, as there were many problems with the implementation of the program in Zimbabwe (World Bank, 1996). Furthermore, the comparison should be “with” versus “without ESAP” rather than before and after ESAP, as longer term economic trends could be at the heart of the current economic problems.

7. The term “traditional” has to be used with care, as many of the “traditions” have been shaped by the century of colonialism, to the point where it is difficult to separate colonial constructs from traditions (Cheater, 1990).

8. A Ward is a geographical unit below a District. Each Ward has about 1,000 households and elects a Councillor to head the Ward Development Committee (WADCO) and to represent the Ward at the RDC.

9. Village Development Committees (VIDCOs) are the smallest unit of governance, introduced by the state in the early 1980s. They fall under WADCOs (see previous footnote), with VIDCO chairpersons representing the village at the WADCO.


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