

# Reflections on ‘new’ (neoliberal) conservation (with case material from Namibia, southern Africa)<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

A so-called ‘new’ conservation of Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) attempts to address issues of equity and rural development by creating pathways whereby local ‘communities’ can benefit from, and ultimately hold decision-making power over, wildlife resources. As such, it is celebrated as a radical departure from the exclusive, centralised and alienating ‘fortress’ conservation practices of the past. In this paper, however, I suggest that ‘new’ conservation is severely constrained in terms of how qualitatively different – how ‘new’ - it is able to become regarding both ideology and practice in conservation. I argue further that this poses serious questions regarding the long-term sustainability of CBNRM as the route whereby environmental conservation can be integrated with meaningful economic redistribution and empowerment in the ‘global South’.

As a case study I focus on the emerging communal area ‘conservancies’ of Namibia’s CBNRM programme. Namibia is a country where I have several years’ fieldwork experience. Here, a national CBNRM programme has been funded primarily by USAID (the United States Agency for International Development), WWF (the World Wide Fund for Nature) and now the GEF (the Global Environment Facility of the World Bank). This programme has been internationally acclaimed as southern Africa’s most progressive, people-centred conservation initiative (Sutherland, 1998). My intention is not to single this programme out for critique, but to draw on its unfolding to explore some features of CBNRM schemes, highlight their relevance for broader concerns regarding social and political equity, and indicate some possible

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<sup>1</sup> This piece began as thoughts for speaking as a discussant at a workshop on ‘*Land, livelihoods, democracy and conservation: conflicting interests and emerging realities in southern Africa*’,

implications for the ‘sustainability’ of such initiatives.

### **A paradox**

When I reflect on CBNRM in southern Africa<sup>2</sup>, I find myself caught between two views or positions. I genuinely do not know what to make of the paradox that thereby arises. On the one hand, I am full of admiration for how the architects of CBNRM have successfully read and participated in the neoliberal zeitgeist of the post cold-war era. I celebrate the achievements in terms of capturing large amounts of donor funding for linking conservation and development agendas in ‘the south’<sup>3</sup>. I also appreciate that CBNRM-based initiatives have generated opportunities for rural people to access monetary, employment and other benefits, largely from increased wildlife-based tourism enterprises; whilst also building and enhancing local infrastructural and governance structures related to CBNRM. In Namibia these relate primarily to the establishment of communal-area conservancies, which are described in more detail in Inset 1.

### **[Inset 1 around here]**

On the other hand, I feel some frustration with the ways in which the CBNRM framework claims to be radically progressive, whilst maintaining a thoroughly modernist, and globalising - or even colonising - agenda in how people-environment relationships are conceived and structured. As such, it seems to me that existing *structural* patterns of inequality regarding winners and losers are little transformed, and may even be enhanced, within the contexts of these programmes.

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<sup>2</sup> In southern Africa USAID and other donors fund national CBNRM programmes in a number of countries including Botswana (Natural Resources Management Programme, NRMP), Zimbabwe (Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources, CAMPFIRE), Zambia (Administrative Management Design, ADMADe) and Namibia (Living In a Finite Environment, LIFE).

<sup>3</sup> For example, Namibia’s LIFE programme received some US\$25 million between 1993-2000. Of this, US\$14 million was channelled to the primary facilitating NGO Integrating Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) between 1992 and 1999 (Durbin *et al.*, 1997: 28; Callihan, 1999: 6-7). A further US\$12 million from USAID was approved to carry the Namibian CBNRM programme from late 1999-2004. IRDNC also received Swiss Francs 2,794,550 from WWF-Intern towards its work in Kunene Region, north-west Namibia, between 1996 and 2001 (Jones, 1999a: 76). Currently the programme has entered a new phase of funding via the Global Environment Facility (GEF) of the World Bank.

Let me clarify. Modernity, in simple terms, requires and builds on some key assumptions about the nature of reality. One of the most important and powerful of these is that the natural environment is distinct – is separate – from culture. This nature-culture split has made possible a conceptual separation or alienation from environment. ‘The environment’ and ‘its resources’ thereby are objectified. As an object, ‘the environment’s’ defining characteristics relate to the ways it is and can be used, measured, managed, governed, mapped, bounded and so on. Such assumed characteristics are key to the emergence of modern techno-military-industrial organisational forms, of which neoliberalism – a vesting of sovereignty in the structuring power of a global market (Hardt and Negri 2000) over which the ‘developed world’ and primarily the US has hegemony – is a current incarnation.

As objects, ‘the environment and its resources’ can be commodified and thereby bought and sold, either for direct or indirect consumption, i.e. via tourism. Those ‘resources’ which are less amenable to commodification – less able to generate value-added in the form of monetary profit – tend to be less visible in environment and development initiatives, including CBNRM. In terms of research, an objectified environment becomes amenable to the measurement tools of the environmental sciences, as well as to social science approaches such as resource economics and livelihoods analyses. It is precisely these practices that tend to be used in conceptualising and assessing the costs and benefits of CBNRM schemes.

It seems to me that such a conceptual approach lends itself to inconsistencies and contradictions. For example, CBNRM focuses on a spectacular and internationally-valued animal wildlife over and above the multiple plants and invertebrates that constitute the core of peoples’ engagement with the landscape. The arenas of ‘environment and development’ are lodged within, and maintain, a commodification paradigm; somewhat ironically given that historically it is precisely the processes of commodification (of wildlife) that have created many of the problems that environment and development initiatives now attempt to address. It seems even more ironic that an approach rhetorically oriented towards environmental sustainability should advocate that the major way this is to be achieved is by selling consumptive experiences of ‘the environment’ to wealthy outsiders, i.e. those who are globally mobile and able to fly thousands of miles using just about the most environmentally

polluting mode of transport there is at global levels (e.g. Godoy, 2004) - not to mention the poor record that the petrochemical industry has regarding local and regional environments and human rights records, as well as its relationships with wars and conflict more generally.

At the same time, and despite the language of democratisation and rural empowerment accompanying donor-funded environment and development initiatives under neoliberalism, including CBNRM, rural Africans remain constructed predominantly as service-providers for the globally-mobile. Their possibilities for self-determination, autonomy and 'development' are constrained by broader structures that present few possibilities for genuine equity and empowerment. Clearly it is preferable that local people benefit in some terms from the animal-wildlife with which they live, instead of remaining alienated from these 'resources' in a 'fortress conservation' of the colonial past. Yet it might also be argued that CBNRM is inseparable from a northern modernising development discourse guided by the post-1989 'Washington consensus' of the World bank and International Monetary Fund, which asserts conformity and control through donor-funding to the countries of 'the south' (Escobar, 1996). Indeed, for Garland (1999: 93), '... the *habitus* of the Western liberal political field' has been extended to 'the south' through the 'ideological hegemony' of particular concepts of 'civil society', for which specific ideas of 'community' and governance' form an integral part. Through these processes 'communities', as depoliticised and undifferentiated entities, '... are finally recognized as the owners [or at least proprietors] of their territories (or what is left of them), but only to the extent that they accept seeing and treating territory and themselves as reservoirs of capital' (Escobar, 1996: 57). In the case of conservation in Africa, this means that support is available to 'communities' only to the extent that they agree to construct themselves as 'suitable' custodians (managers) of internationally-valued biodiversity, particularly animal-wildlife, and to provide the tourism services required by the global consumers of this wildlife.

### **What modernity/neoliberalism cannot see/hear**

I am interested, both conceptually and pragmatically, in what is occluded and excluded by these conventionally modern approaches to people-environment

relationships. A wealth of locally-embedded narratives, made available partly through anthropological work (despite the modernist and patriarchal structuring that infuses much anthropology), speaks of and affirm very different possibilities for people-environment inter-relationships (some recent key texts include: Merchant, 1990; Bell, 1993 (1983); Bender, 1993; Narby, 1999 (1995); Ingold, 2000; Jensen, 2000; Brody, 2001). Thus for people who dwell and are at home in, or more accurately *with*, a landscape, there is the conceptual possibility for both ‘the environment’ *and* human individual and social dynamics to be mutually constituted through processes of active, participative and affective relationship. Species and landscapes are experienced and related with as variously living and sentient, i.e. feeling and agential: as beings/becomings with whom people are in continuing processes of dynamic relationship that are felt and actively participated in. Listening to and participating in such relationships implies the maintenance of both society and nature as one community.

Consider, for example, the cases of people who have a contemporary history and tradition of hunting for food. In the hunt, the process and act of hunting is not just about the consumption of meat at the end of it, although this, of course, is important. It also is about *moving* bodily through a landscape, which itself is the embodiment of multilayered meanings and sources of memory. A landscape of evocative sounds and smells; of plants that are known, used and familiar; of places associated with historical and familial events, and ancestors; of autonomy and autarky (i.e. self-sufficiency) in relation to procuring food; of a direct relationship with the animal – the being – that is hunted; and of the enacting of a craft – hunting - comprising multifaceted expertise and skills at every stage of the process of procuring, taking the life of and preparing an animal as food and other usable items.

It’s a matter of kinds of knowledge which tend to be unspoken, whose rules do not easily lend themselves to being formally articulated or even spoken aloud. Nobody learns how to be a connoisseur or a diagnostician simply by applying the rules. With this kind of knowledge there are factors in play which cannot be measured – a whiff, a glance, an intuition. ... The heritage ... of hunters, of

mariners, of women. It forms a tight link between the human animal and other animal species.

Ginzburg, 1988, quoted in Plant, 1999: 88-89

The receipt of a meat handout by a conservancy, i.e. as is a key component of conservancy benefits in the wildlife rich communal-area conservancies of Namibia, might satisfy a consumptive event, but cannot meet these other aspects that the *process* and *experience* of the hunt also satisfy. This suggests multiple reasons why people in Namibian communal-area conservancies are continuing to hunt, when legally this remains a criminal activity. Indeed, according to recent research (Long *et al.*, 2004) hunting for local consumption (constructed as ‘poaching’ under a modern drive that consistently withdraws peoples’ legitimate access to the species with which they live and which they find useful) remains widespread in Namibian conservancies. Further, frequently it is known about, and sometimes even perpetrated by, those charged with policing hunting activities within conservancy territories (i.e. the local Community Game Guards, see Inset 1). Such practices seem counter to claims for CBNRM ‘success’ that require both a reduction or cessation of local hunting/poaching activities and affirmation of local support for the extending of the illegality of hunting under conservancy governance regimes.

Hunting and other practices *vis á vis* environment are accompanied further by stories, songs, humour and joy: by a rich symbolic, metaphorical and affirmative language of relationship and conceptualisation (for some examples for Damara/≠Nū Khoen people in north-west Namibia see Sullivan 1999, 2000, 2002, forthcoming). A significant question thus raises itself: namely, can these sources of pleasure, meaning and mystery – these aspects of living that make it possible to be/become ‘fully human’ - be empowered by environment and development trajectories that are oriented towards commodification, cash income, service provision, governance and regulation? I would say no, since it seems to me that there is not much room for poetry – for joy and magic – in the business (and busyness) of neoliberalism and the commodification of everything. In raising this I might be considered a romantic and an idealist. But I also think that I am a realist because I have experienced, understood and witnessed peoples’ despair and depression regarding the inability of pragmatic development and

governance frames to articulate with these qualitative concerns and desires.

### **Sustainability?**

At the same time, there also is a need to interrogate the simple economic assumptions underlying CBNRM. CBNRM, including community-based tourism, generally are considered able to improve ‘livelihood sustainability’. It is thought that revenue from consumptive and non-consumptive uses of wildlife will enhance livelihoods by diversifying sources of income. And that this will be sustainable because tourism, worldwide and in Namibia, is a growth industry (Gaisford, 1997); and because ‘[o]nce income is derived by local communities from the use of wildlife, they develop a vested interest in conserving game animals’ (Jones, 1995: 9), whereby environmental degradation, framed as the erosion of biodiversity and habitat integrity, is reduced. CBNRM thus relies on an economising and commoditising framework to justify projects and policy aimed at the ‘sustainable use of natural resources’ to meet both development and conservation objectives (e.g. Ashley and Garland, 1994; Ashley *et al.*, 1994; Ashley, 1995, 1997; Callihan, 1999; Jones, 1999b following Murphree, 1993).

A first problem here is that it is unlikely that revenue from wildlife and/or tourism can constitute a particularly large source of income for all members of a ‘community’ at household and individual levels (Hackel, 1999). In the last few years incomes for communal area conservancies, and particularly wages from tourism-related activities, have risen substantially (e.g. Long *et al.*, 2004: xiv-xv). Nevertheless a number of observations are pertinent. First, *per capita* conservancy income, while growing in some cases, tends to be rather low. The highest payouts have been for Torra conservancy, a longstanding conservancy that has benefited from long-term facilitating assistance by IRDNC and a particularly lucrative arrangement with a tourism lodge. These were of a recent one-off payment of N\$630<sup>4</sup> per individual member (Long *et al.*, 2004: xviii). Second, and as Callihan (1999: 10) states, most of the cash benefits received by members of communal area conservancies are ‘... in the form of employment income from tourism lodges and hunting contracts, or from an

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<sup>4</sup> The current rate of exchange is £1: Namibian \$11.78 (<http://www.x-rates.com/>, visited 19<sup>th</sup> May 2005).

increased level of economic activity in the area, ... rather than as a result of the distribution of net conservancy income'. However, employment opportunities in the tourism sector remain limited. For example, in a recent survey of the wildlife- and conservancy-rich Kunene Region, only some 3.6% of adults between 16 and 65 years listed CBNRM-related activities, including tourism, as their main occupation, and employees tended to be concentrated in families already distinguished by their relative wealth and education attainments (Long *et al.*, 2004: xvii).

Nevertheless, CBNRM discourse often goes further than simply arguing that incomes from wildlife and tourism can diversify livelihoods. For example, it has been suggested that returns on wildlife will encourage people to disinvest in other means of livelihood, particularly livestock and cultivation, thereby reducing the 'degrading' effects of these forms of land-use while sustaining incomes (Ashley, 1995, 1997; references in Powell, 1998: 121; Callihan, 1999). For north-west Namibia Hulme and Murphree (1999 after Jones 1999c) maintain that '... the economic incentives created by devolving proprietorship over wildlife and tourism have led to people in this area re-evaluating the relative roles of wildlife and agriculture (domestic livestock and crops) in local development'. However, if per capita incomes from community-based wildlife and tourism initiatives remain low, and even without culturally-informed desires relating to lifeworld choices with implications for subsistence and income-generating practices, it is unlikely that people will view wildlife as an alternative to their usual means of livelihood. Instead, it might be anticipated that people will direct income and decision-making power deriving from CBNRM related activities towards enhancing and investing in sources of income and sustenance over which they have direct control and ownership (e.g. livestock), and via which they are more likely to enhance livelihoods (as observed in Nabane, 1995; Jones, 1999b: 31; Murombedzi, 1999). Indeed, such practices would be fully in keeping with the otherwise individualising and profit-maximising ideology of neoliberalism. Confusingly and conveniently, this seems to endorse and transmit a communalising rhetoric when interested in persuading the rural poor of the world to conserve resources of international value, while otherwise promoting privatisation and competition, particularly with regard to public utilities and global trade.

Further, while some communal areas of Namibia appear ideal for enhancing livelihood opportunities through capitalising on animal-wildlife this is by no means evenly distributed. Kunene Region in north-west Namibia, for example, is characterised by diverse landscapes, a spectacular wildlife of large mammals, and relatively low human population densities. These constitute perfect conditions for the evolution of so-called ‘5-star conservancies’ (Durbin *et al.*, 1997; Jones, 1999b). Not surprisingly, therefore, this area has been a focus for NGO and donor support for the establishment of conservancies. Critique is particularly unwelcome in this context because these circumstances appear so ripe for ‘success’. At the same time, widely publicised elaborations of success based on these situations present a rather unrealistic picture of the possibilities for the national conservancy policy to structurally improve livelihoods in the country’s communal areas as a whole.

Also obscured by the rhetorics of empowerment, participation and livelihood diversification associated with CBNRM are concerns at national level to increase user-*accountability* for the costs of maintaining public sector services in remote and difficult environments. This is clear in the context of water provision for which a community-based system of water-point committees has been advocated: ostensibly as a means of empowering communal area farmers, but basically by encouraging their participation in funding and maintaining boreholes (Africare, 1993; Tarr, 1998). CBNRM similarly involves the shifting of costs and responsibilities for wildlife to local levels: in the policing of people’s activities in relation to wildlife; in the funding of community institutions designed to manage wildlife and related revenues; and in the day-to-day experience of living with large and sometimes dangerous mammals. MET and IRDNC employees also have argued that revenue accruing to conservancies from wildlife could be mobilised to fund other sectoral developments such as school-building (see statements in Gaisford, 1997: 124). This implies a vision that conservancies could carry the costs of public-sector development beyond the costs of running conservancies as new wildlife management institutions.

Significantly, figures for the income that is or might be received from wildlife and tourism via conservancies also tend to make no provision for the costs involved in running conservancies. As Durbin *et al.* (1997: 17) state, however, the ‘... expectation is that conservancies, once financially viable, will take on the payment of the game

guards, some of the staff and equipment such as vehicles and/or radios required to support them'. To date, these have been paid for by NGOs via the major donor-funded national CBNRM programme (LIFE). It is envisaged that the running costs of conservancies will be transferred to the new conservancy institutions as communities are able to 'wean' themselves off NGO support (Jones, 1999a:300; see also Durbin *et al.*, 1997). It seems probable, however, that for the foreseeable future very little income will remain after the running costs of the conservancies have been covered. Logically this amounts to a situation whereby the conservancy finances the costs of conserving an animal-wildlife accessed and enjoyed by predominantly white conservationists, tourists and trophy-hunters, while receiving very little additional income for its efforts. The phasing out of donor-funding thus raises significant questions regarding the 'sustainability' and, importantly, the development claims, of these conservation ventures.

### **Concluding remarks**

So, to return to the opening of this piece, I iterate that I genuinely do not know whether to celebrate CBNRM for its pragmatic achievements in the context of neoliberalism: or to decry it for upholding a global situation of structural inequality; and for participating in a globalising project that fetishises commodification, while simultaneously desacralising and disenchanting the affective possibility pregnant in all natureculture relationship. Despite both the emancipatory rhetoric of current environment and development discourse, and the specific context of a 'successful' community-based conservation initiative, I suggest, therefore, that a more realistic (and honest) understanding of 'new' conservation is required: as the fine-tuning of an existing *status quo* of inequality in the global and national distribution of capital; as a shifting of the costs of conservation onto communal area residents in line with neoliberal policies more generally; and as driven by a preservationist concern for saving a spectacular fauna of 'the south'.

The overriding issue, of course, is that 'natural resources' with conservation and other values (e.g. I am thinking here of minerals and petrochemicals) frequently occur in low-income countries but are desired by those in high-income countries. Nevertheless, neoliberal approaches to conservation, including CBNRM, expect a structurally-

entrenched rural poor to protect wildlife and wild areas *and* increasingly to shoulder the costs of providing these services. At the same time, the primary beneficiaries and consumers of wildlife often are those from high-income countries, as well as an emergent ‘southern’ elite able to capitalise on neoliberalism’s market opportunities. In the absence of a seismic shift in epistemology and ontology regarding interrelationships between people and non-human worlds, this suggests to me that meaningful (i.e. longer-term) ‘sustainability’ in wildlife conservation might be attainable only if accompanied by a serious ‘consumer pays’ approach: amounting to economically realistic and long-term subsidies directly to African land-users in recognition of the manipulation of land use and livelihoods that is required to satisfy national and global conservation desires (cf. Simpson and Sedjo 1996). In other words, perhaps it is time for those living with valuable natural resources to be treated as equal partners in recognition of the *power* they potentially hold over these resources. Otherwise I feel that we will see increasing resistance to donor-led programmes – initiatives which proscribe uses of resources while speaking of empowering users; and via which only small financial benefits accrue to those conserving resources, even though large sums of money clearly are available both for, and from, wildlife conservation endeavours.

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**Inset 1. Namibian conservancies: a history (adapted from Sullivan, 2002a: 162-165)**

The term ‘conservancy’ emerged in the 1970s in an apartheid-structured South Africa to describe the consolidation of exclusive rights over animal-wildlife among co-operating white settler farmers, largely through the employment of game guards to militate against ‘poaching’ by black African ‘neighbours’ (Wels, 1999). Furthering the ‘ecological apartheid’ of the protected area system, conservancies were seen in this context as the only ‘... viable alternative for the *salvation* of wildlife on private land’ in a context where it was considered that ‘[f]ailure to provide security and management for wildlife on private land must, inevitably, lead to its demise’ (Collinson, 1983: 167, in Wels, 1999: 12).

In Namibia, the conservancy concept also emerged in the context of freehold farmland. Here, since 1968 and subject to certain conditions set by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) (particularly with regard to fencing), European farmers have had legal rights to consumptively and otherwise utilise animal-wildlife on their farms (Jones, 1995: 4). Under these circumstances landowners ‘... realised that it is advantageous to pool their land and financial resources to make available a larger unit on which integrated management practices can be carried out’ (Jones, 1995: 4; also see Barnes and de Jager, 1995). In 1999, some twelve conservancies existed on freehold land which, while acknowledged and supported by the MET, were without legal status (Jones, 1999b: 11).

Alongside this strengthening of wildlife access and management by settler farmers on freehold land, conservationists were voicing increasing concern regarding the future of animal-wildlife in Namibia’s communally-managed indigenous ‘homelands’. A particular focus of this anxiety was the Kaokoveld of north-west Namibia; the imagined ‘last wilderness’ of South African environmentalists (Reardon, 1986; Hall-Martin *et al.*, 1988; see critique by Bollig, 1998), and the world-famous birthplace of Namibian community-based conservation (e.g. Jacobsohn, 1992). Here, large-scale losses in the 1970s and 1980s of internationally-valuable large mammal species, particularly desert-dwelling elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) and black rhino (*Diceros bicornis bicornis*), provided an impetus to enlist local support for conservation (Owen-Smith, 1995). Initially, this was led by individuals spearheading a privately-funded conservation charity the Namibian Wildlife Trust (NWT), including a co-Director and Project Executant of a current major facilitating NGO, IRDNC (Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation). The primary activity was the creation of a network of paid male ‘community game guards’ (CGGs, formerly auxiliary game guards), selected with the help of local headmen and oriented towards protecting the region’s threatened large mammal species.

Following independence in 1990, the north-west Namibian CGG system was invoked by then Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism (MWCT, now MET) and IRDNC in reworking the concept of conservancies for a ‘conservancy policy’ to include communal areas (MWCT, 1992; Jones, 1999c). The Nature Conservation Amendment Act of 1996 thus significantly alters the 1975 Nature Conservation

Ordinance by devolving *proprietorship* over wildlife, and concessionary rights over commercial tourism incomes, to people on communal land (MET, 1995 a and b). I emphasise the term ‘proprietorship’ because, as elsewhere (cf. Neuman, 1997; Madzudzo, 1999; Matenga, 1999), the ultimate ownership of wildlife remains with the state (MET, n.d.: 9; The Namibian, 1999).

As with CBNRM programmes throughout southern Africa, Namibia’s ‘conservancy policy’ for communal areas thus has been developed as the basis for community-based conservation through devolved management of wildlife without moving people from the land (Nujoma, 1998). The conservancy policy enables communal area residents, as conservancy members, to benefit from, and have management responsibilities for, animal wildlife. To be registered as a wildlife management institution, a conservancy requires a defined boundary and membership, a representative management committee, a legal constitution and a plan for the equitable distribution of benefits (MET, 1995 a and b). In early 2004 there were 31 registered communal area conservancies with more than 50 involved with the registration process (Long *et al.*, 2004: xv). Like the much publicised Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) initiative in Zimbabwe - the blueprint for other United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) programmes throughout southern Africa – the assumption informing conservancy policy is that ‘... conservation and development goals can be achieved by creating strong collective tenure over wildlife resources in communal lands’ (Murombedzi, 1999: 288).

This ‘new’ conservation thus is driven by: acknowledgement of the costs experienced by farmers living alongside wildlife in these areas; a need to counter the alienating effects of past exclusionary conservation policies; realisation of the lack of economic incentives for local people to maintain a benign relationship to animal-wildlife; and recognition of the economic development needs of rural populations. The primary ‘facilitators’ of CBNRM tend to NGOs with international donor-funding. In the Namibian case, a key player has been the NGO IRDNC, considered by its donors, in this case the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), to have ‘... a particular onus ... to facilitate conservancy registration and development’ (Durbin *et al.*, 1997: 5). The employment of male CGGs – for wildlife monitoring, policing and anti-poaching – continues to be an integral part of the running conservancies in Namibia’s wildlife-rich communal areas. Conservancy establishment in communal areas thus remains ‘... *land acquisition for conservation* in the non-formal sense’ (Jones, 1999a: 47 emphasis added), with a focus on effective protection and policing of an internationally-valuable animal wildlife of large and dangerous mammals.