

FINDING THE COMMUNITY IN COMMUNITY-BASE NATURAL RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT: THE CASE OF NDUMO GAME RESERVE, SOUTH AFRICA

by

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DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

In South Africa Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) has recently gained popularity as the dominant approach to conservation due to its perceived environmental and social benefits and as a form of restitution for communities that were forcibly evicted from their land during apartheid. This dissertation investigates the disconnect between the rhetoric and reality of CBNRM in South Africa, by focusing on the case of Ndumo Game Reserve. It aims to critically evaluate the social justice and economic impacts of CBNRM on the neighbouring Mbangweni and Mathenjwa communities. It argues that there are significant tensions between the community focused rhetoric of CBNRM, the predominantly fortress-style of conservation, and the neo-liberal eco-tourism venture at Ndumo Game Reserve. I conclude that CBNRM at Ndumo is largely guided by western conservation and economic ideologies and driven by the support of state and private interests while alienating local people from their land and its management.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

AFRA	Association for Rural Advancement
ANC	Africa National Congress
CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CBNRM	Community-based Natural Resource Management
CC	Community conservation
DAERD	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Development (Provincial Government)
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (National Government)
DLA	Department of Land Affairs
EKZN/W	Ezemvelo KwaZulu Natal/Wildlife
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KZN	KwaZulu Natal
KZNNCS	KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Services
KZNDC	KwaZulu – Natal Department of Conservation
LCB	Local Conservation Board
LCC	Land Claims Commission
LPP	Lubombo Peace Park
NCB	National Conservation Board

RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RLCC	Regional Lands Claim Commission
SA	South Africa
SANParks	South African National Parks
TA	Traditional Authority
TFCA	Trans-frontier Conservation Area
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A consensus is emerging among scholars and activists that advocacy for nature and for individuals cannot be separated from one another. As a result, the inter-relationships between environmental degradation, social justice, rural poverty, and indigenous rights are key to successfully understanding and intervening in rural development. Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) has become the new standard for addressing these complexities within the realm of protected areas. In South Africa, CBNRM has been embraced wholeheartedly as a means of simultaneously facilitating biodiversity conservation, spurring economic growth in rural areas, and providing compensation to communities who were evicted from their traditional land by the apartheid government to create conservation areas.

The reality of CBNRM in South Africa is fraught with contradictions. Community stakeholders generally have a complex dependence on natural landscapes, and are resultantly more vulnerable to conservation management than other government or NGO stakeholders, or the wider public that may frequent these landscapes for tourism (Davenport et al, 2007: 356), making co-management by communities an attractive option. Yet, CBNRM is underpinned by predominantly western conservation ideologies, driven by the support of state and private interests at both national and international levels. Such interests favour the preservation of nature, envisaged as uniquely unspoiled and sublime, through its commodification as a tourist venue (Igoe and Brockington, 2007), which necessarily excludes local people from these wildernesses on which they depend for livelihoods resources. Such an approach is continuous with the history of conservation, which has been based on the recreational and psychospiritual needs of a privileged few, and the general exclusion of a local majority (Beinart, 2000). Ownership in CBNRM is defined by legal title to a property, without corresponding access, use or

exchange rights. This formulation excludes various potential land uses, and minimises the space available for negotiation and effective demands, limiting the value of CBNRM as just recompense for apartheid era land-theft. CBNRM does not address the various fault lines within and between communities and other stakeholders (notably the conservation agency), created by the dislocation of local communities during apartheid, and in fact often exacerbates these lines of friction. Furthermore, the financial benefits of CBNRM to local communities remain ambiguous, both because of the tempestuous nature of the international nature tourism market, and the fact that most of the financial benefits of such ventures rarely trickle down to local communities (Barkin, 1997: 4). For these reasons, the legitimacy of CBNRM programs has come under increasing criticism from the very communities that are their intended beneficiaries.

This dissertation investigates the disconnect between the rhetoric and reality of CBNRM in South Africa. I focus on the case of Ndumo Game Reserve, located in the far north of the eastern province of KwaZulu Natal, just below the border with Mozambique. My goal is to critically evaluate the social justice and economic impacts of CBNRM on the Mbangweni and Mathenjwa communities that neighbour this reserve, and to frame current tensions within the evolution of regional conservation practices, which highlight a long-term process of marginalisation and dispossession. This study is based primarily on fieldwork undertaken from June to August 2009, which included semi-structured interviews with *izinduna* (headmen)¹ and elders in these communities, local and provincial government personnel, and game reserve officials.

Such a diverse and complex range of issues highlights the need to understand and incorporate broader history, epistemologies, land-use paradigms, and local perspectives in order to elucidate the complexities of this case study (Jones, 2006: 23). I begin with a review of the literature pertinent to this study, and an elaboration of the concepts and

¹ According to customary law, only men are able to occupy these positions.

theories that have framed my research, which constitute the remainder of this initial chapter. Chapter Two provides an introduction to the case study: the physical and historical characteristics of the Ndumo Game Reserve, the policy framework for land reform and CBNRM in South Africa, and the reality of co-management today. Chapter Three presents my research findings, which are divided into the two broad categories of Social Justice and Economic Development. Finally, Chapter Four provides a brief synthesis and analysis of these findings with some of the main themes in the conceptual framework, as well as more general conclusions.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Three separate, but complementary, streams of literature will help to elucidate the contours of this case study: the history of South African conservation efforts, the emergence of sustainable development and the concomitant emphasis on community conservation and livelihoods, and critiques that reject community conservation as an attempt to ‘neoliberalise’ nature. While there is considerable overlap between these three bodies of literature, each one helps to contextualise community conservation in Ndumo Game Reserve, within the broader themes, trends and events relevant to conservation and development, and thus aids in providing a framework within which to conceptualise and examine its performance and impacts.

1.2.1 A History of Conservation

Environmental historians such as Roderick Nash (1967), Richard Grove (1994), and William Cronon (1996) have filled many pages recounting the varied natural and cultural histories of conservation. Contemporary ideals of wilderness emerged from romanticised European visions of a sublime and spiritual nature. These cultural ideals of wilderness as

a benign, even sacred space provided the first political imperative for preserving nature unspoiled by human contact (Clover, 2005:78).

In the United States, these romanticised views translated into an emphasis on preserving the frontier, which symbolized American ideals of masculinity, strength, and simplicity in the face of the emasculating forces of industrialization and urbanization. In his seminal work *Wilderness and the American Mind*, Roderick Nash argues that this movement is best understood as part of an American effort to develop a distinctive non-European culture, in the face of Europe's superior literary and artistic traditions. The American preservationist movement was founded on the idea that the frontier experience must be maintained through the preservation of wildness (Cronon, 1996: 78). Concurrently, there was a somewhat different formulation of nature conservation based on the 'wise use' of natural resources². This strand of conservation was based on utilitarian ideas about maximising benefits from available resources. It gained influence through European colonialism and capitalist expansion, which suited its extractive and exploitative nature (Adams, 2004: 169).

These distinctive and somewhat contradictory traditions coalesced into the American preservationist movement in the mid-19th century.³ This movement culminated in the passing of the Yosemite Act in 1864 and the establishment of the world's first national park at Yellowstone in 1872, with the express aim of protecting its unique landscapes, and significantly the psychospiritual and aesthetic value thereof, from humans (Adams, 2003: 40). On this basis, human occupation and resource usage was precluded from the outset, despite the fact that the area had been inhabited and subject to human influence

² Under the Roosevelt administration, Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of the U.S. Forest Service, pioneered the controlled exploitation of natural resources within reasonable (scientifically determined) limits (Kalamandeen & Gillson, 2007: 160).

³ Luminaries such as George Perkins Marsh and John Muir argued forcefully for the preservation of natural spaces unblemished by human contact: "where [man] plants his foot, the harmonies of nature are turned to discords" (1864: 36, cited in Kalamandeen & Gillson, 2007: 167).

for about 6000 years (Kalamandeen & Gillson, 2007: 167). The site was commonly utilized by small bands of hunters and gatherers, and seasonally accommodated larger Native American communities from the slopes from the Rocky Mountains (Spence 1999: 43).⁴

Fears that indigenous groups posed a threat to wilderness through hunting, fire-setting and grazing precipitated their forced displacement. Instead of preserving a pristine wilderness, elite and powerful proponents of Yellowstone National Park actively imagined wilderness, and concomitantly realised their vision through policies that discredited the history and legitimacy of local people's use and access to valuable land, a strategy that would repeatedly be employed across the globe to devastating effect.⁵

Despite the different philosophical and political origins of the wilderness and wise-use movements, the means and ends of these two distinct approaches to conservation ultimately converged into what is commonly known as Fortress Conservation (Adams 2003). Premised on the idea that human interaction with nature is harmful, the paradigm of Fortress Conservation posits that in order to protect nature's aesthetic, psychospiritual, and economic value, human interaction must be prohibited or strictly controlled. The establishment of Yellowstone as the world's first national park entrenched this approach as the principal conservation model worldwide. The result has been a 'fines and fences' approach that insulates wilderness from the ignorant and greedy masses, where a small scientifically-enabled elite is responsible for its exploitation and control within confined geographical and ecological limits. Across the globe the tourism industry has added a strong economic imperative to this equation, as enlightened tourists are sanctioned by the

⁴ These were primarily Shoshone people, along with smaller groups of Bannock and Crow, (Spence, 1999: 43-49)

⁵ In 1970 the Washburn exploring party encountered various abandoned Shoshone camps while making use of a number of well trodden paths, but when reporting to Congress it flatly stated that Yellowstone was wilderness untouched by man (Spence 1999: 43). Thus, it came to be widely believed that Native Americans only hunted 'illegally' in the park due to lack of food on reservations.

guardians of nature to responsibly partake in the wilderness experience (Kalamandeen & Gillson, 2007: 168).

A similar process was repeated in colonial Africa a little over half a century later. Beinart & Coates (1995: 7) warn against the prevalence of American exceptionalism, and suggest that the battle to control nature and indigenous people in North America was quite similar to the story of white imperialism in Africa. The frontier myth gained purchase for European minorities in South Africa, where the game ranger came to be seen as “a mythical figure in the white South African psyche, a personage fulfilling perhaps similar functions to those of the cowboy in the white American imagination” (Brooks, 1998: 837). Here too, hardy white men came to represent ‘true’ masculinity. Whilst Draper (1998) argues that there cannot be a single simplistic view of the ideals, challenges and achievements of these men, these romantic machinations of masculinity and wilderness had significant implications for Africans across the continent. Anderson and Grove’s edited collection *Conservation in Africa* (1987) details how this paradigm has contributed to the continent's contemporary difficulties by imposing European-inspired conservation ideologies, while excluding Africans from all aspects of planning and management.

Game reserves were the predecessors to national parks in most African colonies. The idea of nature as wilderness may have been forged in the United States, but the spread of game preservation throughout the colonised world had distinctly British origins (Adams, 2003: 38). By the turn of the century almost all protected areas in Africa were game reserves, which were eventually consolidated into national parks in the 1940s and 50s.⁶ Due to the settlement of relatively large white minorities, the biggest and most popular parks were found in Eastern and Southern Africa (Carruthers, 1997). Such reserves were largely based on wise-use principles, which became popular in colonial territories

⁶ Notable exceptions include the gorilla sanctuary that was Parc National Albert’s predecessor in the Belgian Congo and the Kruger National Park in South Africa established in 1925 and 1926 respectively (Matheka, 2008).

because they tended to favour elite access and restricted use (Kalamandeen & Gillson, 2007: 160).

Hunting proved a powerful influence on colonial conservation planning. Ironically, game reserves were usually created at the insistence of hunting interests that aimed to protect game from African communities who were labeled as poachers using barbaric methods in contrast to their more sophisticated Western counterparts (Adams, 2003: 39). In Edward Steinhart's (2006) *Black Poachers, White Hunters*, the author discusses how this distinction came to influence both conservation and indigenous African livelihoods in Kenya, as African hunting was systematically denigrated in the colonial rhetoric in order to delegitimize Africans' claims to wildlife and wild-places. The author argues that hunting during the colonial era was a major element in the struggle for control of Kenya's resources of land, water and animals, wild and domesticated.

Colonists were also preoccupied with preserving the aesthetics of African wilderness, which they viewed as uniquely untouched and exotic. However, like their American counterparts these early conservations often categorized land as wild by ignoring the economic and cultural marks of indigenous peoples on the land. Land that had not yet been 'discovered' by colonial powers was often depicted in white on colonial-era maps, suggesting empty space, regardless of whether they were inhabited by indigenous people or not (Speirenborg & Wels, 2006: 195). In *Voices from the Rocks*, Terence Ranger (1999) describes how in Zimbabwe's Matopos Hills, conservators denied the contemporary cultural and agricultural activities of local communities⁷, and ultimately erased all traces of them after the site was proclaimed as a national park in 1926. Contrary to its past as a sacred site for Africans, the Rhodes Matopos National Park came to represent a white Rhodesian ideal of wilderness, patriotism, and the memory and burial site of Cecil Rhodes himself (Adams, 2003: 35).

⁷ Although they did acknowledge that the site had been inhabited by ancient hunter-gatherers, evidenced by extraordinary rock paintings in the area.

In other instances Africans were allowed to remain on the land as they were viewed as part of the wildness of the landscape, only to be forcibly removed later on when they came to be seen as a threat to nature conservation, especially as their populations and cattle holdings increased (Ramutsindela, 2003: 41). Schroeder (1999) recounts the legacy of conservation in Tanzania, where Africans were forcibly removed from conservation areas once the recreational needs of safari hunters were realised as a social and economic good. The land-use systems imposed by the colonial government served the dual purpose of confining Africans to the poorest agricultural land, preventing any direct economic competition between Africans and settler populations, and blocking Africans from disrupting hunting and game parks (Schroeder, 1999: 363).

Of all the colonial territories on the continent, none adhered more closely to the North American prototype than did South Africa: both were strongly characterized by the frontier experience, characterised by struggle and domination over nature and the unknown and unequal race relations (Beinart and Coates, 1995). South African wilderness areas were amongst the earliest to be established on the continent, usually first as conservancies or game reserves and later as national parks, establishing the model for other colonies. The oldest and most famous is Kruger National Park, founded first as the Sabie Game Reserve in 1892 (Adams, 2003: 40). Boer⁸ farmers, who feared the tsetse fly that the game might harbour, and the loss of their ability to hunt, provided strong opposition to its creation (Adams, 2004: 83). However, Voortrekker⁹ politicians saw the strategic value of the park as a rally point for ‘poor whites’, and appropriated the cause for the Afrikaner cultural tradition, representing it as the vision of Nationalist politician Paul Kruger (Carruthers, 1995), hence its renaming in his honour in 1926.

⁸ Farmers of Dutch descent.

⁹ Voortrekkers refer to emigrants who left the Cape Colony (founded by the Dutch but under British control at the time) and moved into the interior of South Africa during the 1830s and 1840s (Walker, 1970).

Kruger National Park was widely hailed as the “Yellowstone of the Transvaal” (Kalamandeen & Gillson, 2007: 167), because Kruger provided the pre-eminent example of conservation’s progress in Africa. The Union government sought to implement the Fortress Conservation model by excluding local inhabitants through the erection of fences and the creations of fines for activities such as grazing, fire-setting and wood collecting that threatened conservation goals (Ward, 1997: 1). Jane Carruthers (1995) details how evictions of African people from the Sabie Game Reserve began between 1903 and 1905, but was most vehemently executed under apartheid. All human activity, considered innately harmful, was controlled through the Union's conservation authorities (Turner, R. 2006: 2), initially appointed from the police service, but from 1926 represented by the first South African National Parks Board (SANParks, 2010). Such an approach relegated communities to the park’s periphery, while outside experts (usually Europeans) became the official guardians of nature (Naguran, 2002: 1). Kruger National Park further sought to emulate Yellowstone by billing itself as a haven for white tourists. Urban whites streamed in and “by 1954 Kruger was bulging with people, its 3000 places all filled, ... the abode of big business, managed with the visitor in mind” (Adams, 2004: 83).

With the genesis of the apartheid regime in 1948 South African conservation efforts took on its most pernicious dimension, as indigenous African populations were viewed as core threats to nationhood. Carruthers (2007: 206) refers to the change in conservation strategies in this era as a shift from a “custodial balance of nature to a manipulative command-and-control or management by intervention”. The apartheid government adopted, refined and intensified the land policies of its colonial predecessors, wherein local people were removed to designated African homelands or Bantustans. The central aim was to meet the residential and economic imperatives of white settlers by disenfranchising non-whites and alienating them from their land, in the process creating large reserves of cheap migrant labour.

National parks became the exclusive preserve of white tourists, while creating considerable social upheaval and trauma for the numerous displaced communities. At the site of Kruger National Park in 1969 alone some 1500 Makuleke people were forcibly removed (Magome and Murombedzi, 2003: 115). Where communities were already situated in homelands they were usually relocated to nearby villages and townships outside of the conserved land (Fabricius & De Wet, 2002: 142). This was often the case as conservation areas tended to be situated in remote regions, far from the centers of urbanization and modernization that were the exclusive domain of white South Africans.

From their inception in the United States to their proliferation in colonial Africa, and ultimately in their most malicious incarnation under South African apartheid, national parks have been a source of profound trauma and dislocation for indigenous people. In Africa, this model became “a symbol of colonial oppression and bureaucratized administration, reflecting the economic realities, needs, and values of the urban elite” (Klein et al, 2007: 453). The brief history of conservation laid out in these pages is instructive for a variety of reasons. First, the genesis of conservation theory and practice is vital to understanding the rationales, processes and events that have informed and shaped contemporary conservation, such as that experienced in Ndumo. Second, historicizing these processes allows me to delineate trends of marginalisation and exclusion within conservation practice and management, which remain prevalent but under-appreciated by contemporary practitioners. Understanding conservation’s history provides a lens through which to understand contemporary practices as part of a long political and economic tradition of elitism, exclusion and coercion.

1.2.2 Community Livelihoods and the Livelihoods of Communities

The idea and ideal of Sustainable Development have transformed the practice of conservation. Beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was increasing

opposition to local people being shut out of conservation programs and their associated financial benefits. The publication of *Our Common Future* by the Brundtland Commission in 1987 revolutionized the understanding of conservation and environmental issues more generally. No longer were natural and social components of environmental issues considered separate: *Our Common Future* emphasized that all dimensions – ecological, political, social, and economic – had to be considered simultaneously.

These perspectives gained currency at the very moment that South Africa threw off the shackles of apartheid and emerged as a multi-racial democracy. The convergence of social and environmental justice goals alongside economic ones offered an ideal framework to help facilitate the country's transition to true democracy (Munslow and Fitzgerald, 1994: 227). Sowman and Brown (2006) describe how South Africa was expected to pioneer sustainable development in Africa, because of its relatively superior infrastructure and the new opportunities presented by the democratisation process. The new ANC government was eager to prove itself a true multi-racial democracy and a serious international player, by incorporating the principles of sustainable development into its mandates at all levels of government. Environmental planning and management are especially illustrative of the convergence of the international sustainable development movement with South Africa's democratisation process. The twin values of environmental sustainability and social justice are both enshrined in the national constitution which promises to ensure "reasonable legislative and other measures that: prevent pollution and ecological degradation; promote conservation; and secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development" (Constitution of RSA , 1996: Section 24, Act 108). South Africa's commitment to the ideals of Sustainable Development culminated in 2002, when it hosted the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

Ironically, many leaders from the Global South used this platform to challenge the very concept of Sustainable Development, arguing that environmental protection was a luxury they could ill-afford. They also perceived the Northern position as one of double standards, as they contributed the most to current environmental degradation, but were the least willing to concede economic benefits to address them (Novelli et al, 2007: 63). These attitudes reflect a major tension within the Sustainable Development rhetoric: environmental and economic outcomes can be complementary, but they can also be contradictory.

This tension between environment and economy loomed large within the numerous cases of land restitution within South African conservation areas. Since 1994 the new dispensation has been hard-pressed to attend to the grievances of large segments of the South African population who were dispossessed of their land and livelihoods under the racist policies of colonialism and apartheid. A Land Claims Court was established in 1994 to deal with the land disputes related to apartheid forced removals (Naguran, 2002: 6). Since then, South Africa's Commission on Restitution of Land Rights has settled 74,808 out of 79,696 land claims lodged at a cost of R16-billion, and the Commission predicts that it will settle all outstanding claims by 2011 (Masinga, 2008). Land reform has been an important component of this process. Claims for redress have been made on land under numerous types of ownership and uses; claims on land protected as conservation sites have presented particular challenges (Ashley, 2006: 1). According to Ramutsindela (2003), the land claims process has catalysed South Africa's shift away from preservationist conservation to more inclusive, participatory approaches. But Cousins (2007) argues that land claims on communal land have exposed fundamental tensions between traditional land rights and market-based land rights as enshrined in South African law. Questions of community ownership, access and use are far more complicated than individual and private title agreements, but cannot be avoided where land is shared by numerous members of a tribe or clan. Further, there are on-going concerns that the assimilation of customary land rights into contemporary agreements

jeopardises the progressive nature of land reform because traditional rights are based in heredity, class and masculinity and thus disadvantage already marginalised groups, especially woman and youth (Cousins, 2007).

The ANC government is committed to simultaneously facilitating environmental conservation, driving economic growth in rural areas, and providing recompense for those communities who were evicted from their traditional land by the apartheid regime in order to create conservation areas. To accomplish all of these diverse imperatives, South Africa has embraced the paradigm of Community Conservation (CC). This has been enshrined in national policy through the Cabinet Memorandum for the Settlement of Restitution Claims on Protected Areas and State Forests under the National Government (2001), which actively espouses negotiation and cooperation between various stakeholders in order to facilitate land claim settlements and co-manage conservation areas over the long term. This document is discussed in greater detail in Section 2.5 of Chapter 2.

Among African conservation efforts, different initiatives reflect different ethical and pragmatic rationales for how to go about both the conservation of biodiversity and the reduction of poverty (Adams et al, 2004: 1147). Essentially the main question is how to weigh social and environmental objectives against each other. Geographer Bill Adams suggests that a continuum exists comprising various levels of community participation (Adams and Hulme, 2001: 194; Adams et al, 2004). On one end he identifies 'park outreach' projects, designed to maintain protected areas by providing support to local communities in the hope of easing tensions or disputes around the conservation area. Such projects have replaced traditional fences and fines approaches, in the hope that a softer touch will yield better results. In the middle are initiatives that include management partnerships between the state, local people, and the private sector. At the other extreme lies Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM), which aims to achieve rural development through the utilisation of natural resources, controlled

and managed, at least in part, by local communities (Adams & Hulme, 2001: 194; Turner, S. 2004: 2).

In southern Africa, and in the Global South more broadly, CBNRM has been the most popular of all CC models; as a result the discussion will focus on this particular style of CC. One of the earliest and most influential successes of this model was Zimbabwe's Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE), which has reached iconic status in both the popular media and academic literature (Jones, 2006). Founded in 1989, CAMPFIRE devolved partial management and financial control to district-level committees on the principle that benefits should flow to the lands from which they came. Within this programme communities are responsible for culling wildlife stocks, issuing visitation permits, distributing wildlife revenues to district residents, and compensating farmers and livestock holders for any damages suffered from wildlife encroachment (Schroeder, 1999: 368). CAMPFIRE constituted a major innovation in conservation management, by devolving responsibility to communities, and provided the model for CBNRM in Southern and Eastern Africa. Despite Zimbabwe's troubled political and economic situation, CAMPFIRE continues to function reasonably well today (Child, 2003: 16), although deepening poverty has put increasing pressure on natural resources, and eco-political instability has reduced levels of donor investment considerably (Frost & Bond, 2008: 786).

There is no commonly accepted or standard definition of CBNRM, and it may refer to a wide range of initiatives with varying degrees of community involvement and decision-making power. The Norwegian network, CBNRM Net (2010), defines the term as follows:

CBNRM is the management of natural resources under a detailed plan developed and agreed to by all concerned stakeholders. The approach is community-based in that the communities managing the resources have the legal rights, the local institutions, and the economic incentives to take substantial responsibility for sustained use of these resources. Under the

natural resource management plan, communities become the primary implementors, assisted and monitored by technical services.

In the South African context, however, CBNRM is only very loosely defined as “any utilization of indigenous biological resources by a community for sustainable harvesting, traditional use or commercial purposes” (South Africa, 2009: 6).

Although CBNRM can refer to sector-based initiatives as wide-ranging as pastoral or fisheries management, in the southern African context the resource in question is almost invariably wildlife. Ashley & Jones (2001: 1) identify the two most prominent strategies for CBNRM initiatives in southern Africa. The first is environmentally sustainable trophy hunting. Although highly profitable in larger parks such as Kruger, it has not been widely promoted as a means to alleviate rural poverty through conservation areas due to the limitation of scale, as it is profitable only in parks large enough to sustain significant populations of big game. The second alternative, environmental tourism, with combined public-private investment, has been the most popular model for achieving rural economic growth and biodiversity conservation simultaneously (Ashley & Jones, 2001:1; Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA), 2004:1).

Tourism has a long and intimate relationship with protected areas. Adams (2004: 95) notes that the “primacy of tourism ... dates from the very beginning of US national parks [when] tourists began to visit the Yosemite Valley”, as early as 1855. Tourism remains very much the *raison d'être* for national parks, maintaining the founding imperative of access to nature for aesthetic and psychospiritual reasons, as well as providing an important economic benefit (Kalamandeen & Gillson, 2007: 168). Recently nature tourism has assumed an ethical dimension in the wake of increasing concern over the lives of those who depend on the park for their survival (Simpson, 2007: 186). Initiatives that address these concerns are commonly referred to as ecotourism, pro-poor,

community or sustainable tourism. Proponents of this approach claim that eco-tourism ventures improve the livelihoods of poor people in three ways:

1. Economic gain through employment and micro-enterprise development;
2. Infrastructure: roads, water, electricity, telecommunication, waste treatment;
3. Empowerment through engagement in decision making (Goodwin, 2004: 3).

However, Uddhammar (2006: 657) argues that such initiatives are driven by an economic rather than a moral imperative. Each protected area is part of a global commodity chain within the growing eco-tourism sector, which itself is part of the global market for international leisure travel. From this perspective, eco-tourism does not so much reflect development aims but the reality that ever-more conscientious western tourists are increasingly choosing conservation schemes that promise to include socio-economic development alongside ecological conservation, creating a market for eco-tourism.

There are various other critiques of eco-tourism based CBNRM, and CC more generally, which originate from two different camps. Strict environmentalists challenge the ability of CBNRM to satisfactorily maintain ecological integrity, whilst social activists contend that CBNRM is an ineffective or even regressive strategy for development (Adams, et al, 2004: 1146). Of course, environmentalists are not averse to poverty alleviation and development measures, but assert that the founding principles of national parks define conservation as entirely separate from the development of human communities, and that their assimilation into conservation goals can be detrimental to biodiversity and ecosystem integrity (Horwich & Lyon, 2007). Others suggest that the creation of protected areas is inherently at the expense of local people. The eviction of residents or right holders of land or resources can exacerbate poverty, and contravene legal or human rights in already vulnerable groups.

These two streams of critique share much in common. They both interrogate the concept of community in CC and CBNRM. The popular international narrative on conservation cites the community as the locus of new conservation endeavours. As Lapeyre (2006) observes, communities are romanticised as small groups of relatively homogeneous households, and are thus predisposed to socially equitable outcomes. However, there is surprising little interrogation of whom and what constitutes the community. Within the language of community conservation local people are termed ‘indigenous’ or ‘traditional’; broad glosses that ignore categories of intra-community division such as gender, ethnicity, class, and age (Neumann, 1997: 571, cited in Klein et al, 2007: 454). Purcell and Brown (2004) argue such scalar bias towards the community level constitutes a ‘local trap’ in which the micro-scale is idealized and romanticized, but is in reality no more inherently just or sustainable than any other. By using distribution mechanisms at the level of the community ignorant of divisions therein, CBNRM may in fact favour already empowered groups over marginalized ones. Elite capture is another potential hazard. Communities are susceptible to elite capture because inevitably some members are better positioned to interact with development or conservation personnel and articulate their objectives, or represent their own interests as community concerns (Platteau, 2004). If such unequal power relations are not recognised they cannot be addressed, to the detriment of traditionally marginalised groups such as women, illiterates, and the landless (Klein et al, 2007: 455).

Another critique levied against CBRNM programs by both conservation and development practitioners is that they rely on romanticized notions of local people living in harmony with nature. Scholars argue that such ecologically ‘noble savages’ are racist and archaic fabrications, founded upon erroneous colonial assumptions of ‘the other’ (Wilshusen, 2002: 21). Such romantic views of community also overlook how decision-making, organization, and governance institutions shape peoples’ motivations and abilities to act (Wilshusen et al, 2002: 21). The disjuncture between this image and reality is especially apparent in the South African context where during the colonial and apartheid eras,

almost all of South Africa's indigenous systems and structures of common property and community resource management were disrupted, distorted or destroyed (Fabricius & De Wet, 2002: 142).

However, conservation and development critiques diverge over the implications of these misconceptions. Environmental interests argue that CBNRM prioritizes human development concerns over the preservation of biodiversity. For instance, such conservation initiatives generally conform to political and human boundaries rather than biophysical ones, and are thus contained within a specific country or region thereof. Further, community-based ecotourism areas are typically small compared to what is probably needed for a viable conservation unit (Kiss, 2004: 233). Transfrontier conservation has widely been espoused as a way of moving beyond this. Furthermore, where management responsibility is vested with local people, environmentalists argue that it poses a grave danger to nature as natural resources are likely to be over-exploited and abused, and landscapes transformed by unwitting or indifferent local people who relate to the environment through its use-value (Sanderson & Redford, 2003).

In contrast development scholars and practitioners argue that CBNRM privileges outside interests over those of local people. Critics argue that communities are invariably marginalized within such management regimes. Despite the fact that "community members have a greater and more complex dependence on and thus vulnerability to management of nearby protected areas, their desire or ability to participate in decision-making processes may not correspond with their apparent need for having a voice in decisions" (Davenport et al, 2007: 356). The principle that all development within the conservation area must be congruent with the overarching aim of natural preservation makes significant demands on all parties involved, in terms of specific knowledge and technical expertise. This capacity is not equally distributed between the community stakeholders and their partners (Turner, 2006: 14). Conservation is a technical process, but communities often don't have that technical expertise, and are less likely to develop

viable initiatives than are other stakeholders. Thus, the community perspective within CBNRM is often marginalised.

This critique is particularly relevant in the South African context for two reasons. First, the process is still biased toward the expert conservation authority, holding western environmental science and conservation superior to local and indigenous knowledge and management techniques (Ward, 1997). Second, communities targeted for CBNRM in SA are not only previously disadvantaged, but historically marginalised ones, and their previous suppression and discrimination affects their ability to engage with their partners on an equal footing and assert their views (Turner, R. 2006: 3-4). Centuries of racist policies have considerable bearing on the individual and collective identities of non-white South Africans, which sets them at a psychological disadvantage from the outset. Further, the history of oppression and coercion by the state and its agencies during apartheid, makes it especially difficult for these communities to trust government conservation authorities.

The most stringent critics suggest that CBNRM programs do not represent a fundamental break from Fortress Conservation, but merely cloak these same power imbalances in the rhetoric of participation, inclusiveness and the like without creating the means and space for community autonomy or self-improvement (Fabricius & De Wet, 2002; Garland, 2008; Wilschusen et al, 2002). Dan Brockington (2002) carefully demonstrates this in his seminal work *Fortress Conservation: The Preservation of the Mkomazi Game Reserve, Tanzania*. He suggests that the ideal of conservation is premised on the belief that people pose a direct and consistent threat to the environment. This view is reinforced by scientific interpretations of environmental change, and driven the “emotive and mystical appeal of wilderness” (2002: 3). However, it is also grounded in a warped version of history that ignores the presence of people on these landscapes, and reconstructs them as separate from, foreign to, and devoid of human beings. Lastly, and most recently, this vision has incorporated a developmental dimension characterised by

the concern to provide for peoples around protected areas, in order to stave off any potential threats, and gain their support. Brockington argues that this vision is flawed, unjust, and deeply harmful to the rights and livelihoods of those people that are most proximal to these wildernesses. They bear the greatest burden of protected areas both in terms of historical and contemporary economic and cultural losses, and are rarely compensated fairly through CBNRM, which he views as the latest incarnation of Fortress Conservation.

This has become a popular critique of participatory approaches to development more generally, where buzzwords like empowerment, participation, and community are used to sell ideas and policies with little interrogation of what these ideas translate into in practice (Cornwall & Brock, 2005). While the rhetoric of CBNRM is highly progressive and inclusive, this may mask a very different reality. Like its predecessor, CBNRM is criticised for being socially insensitive, unjust (especially in SA where there is an overarching restitution element), and unable to meet the complex challenges of nature conservation. CBNRM in Madagascar has been criticized by Kull (2000) for transferring only responsibilities, not rights, to the local communities. This is a popular assessment of CBNRM projects in southern Africa (Hutton et al. 2005). In such instances CBNRM or community conservation becomes a buzzword: an attractive catch-all slogan that promises a win-win outcome, but that does not address the nitty-gritty and contradictory nature of development endeavours, ending most often in widespread disappointment.

This literature critically evaluates the degree to which community interests are integrated into CBNRM style community conservation, which is the central concern of this dissertation. Most critical development scholars agree that CBNRM is not a panacea for achieving goals of environmental conservations, economic development and community empowerment. My goal is to make use of this literature to critically evaluate the degree to which CBNRM in Ndumo meets these lofty aspirations.

1.2.3 Neoliberalism in action: The commodification of conservation

Many of the criticisms from development scholars have crystallised into a critique of CBNRM as the extension of neoliberalism into the realm nature. Neoliberalism is the dominant international political-economic system of our time (Burchill, 2001). It is defined as a pervasive and multifaceted ideology, with two particular effects: the ‘commercialisation of everything’ and the dominance of the Washington Consensus’ in international relations (Büscher & Whande, 2007:28). The commercialisation of everything implies that all segments of society can be, and should be, subject to market logic; that is, everything can be commodified. The Washington Consensus is best understood as the agreement that the three principles of privatisation, stabilisation and liberalisation are necessary conditions for continuous economic growth and progress (Büscher & Whande, 2007: 28).

With respect to the neoliberalisation of the environment itself, McCarthy and Prudham invoke Karl Polanyi (1994, cited in McCarthy & Prudham, 2004: 277) to describe this process as the detaching of nature from complex social constraints and placing it under the auspices of the self-regulating market. Critics argue that neoliberalism transforms natural landscapes into natural resources whereby the principal value of all non-human organisms is their exchange value, and their right to existence is based on what the market is willing to pay for them. This logic necessitates that nature's existence is only justified if there is a demand for it; in other words, nature has to pay its own way (McCarthy and Prudham, 2004: 277).

The logic of neoliberalism is embedded in CBNRM. First there is the neoliberal focus on efficiency and cost-effectiveness. CBNRM is based on the principle that biodiversity must pay for itself by generating economic benefits, particularly for local people. The premise is that “ecotourism depends on maintaining attractive natural landscapes and a rich flora and fauna; therefore, helping communities earn money from ecotourism

provides both an incentive for conservation and an economic alternative to destructive activities” (Kiss, 2004: 233). It is here that the logic of fortress and neoliberal conservation converge. The very notion that nature must be preserved in some idyllic state is based on early notions of sublime wilderness as expounded in Part I, and the exclusion of indigenous residents for this purpose is consistent with this past. Furthermore, the ideals of the wilderness movement have aligned with those of capital in that sublime nature is a valued good, a commodity that individuals, usually wealthy visitors from the global North, are willing to pay to enjoy.

Second is the widespread desire, or 'need', for private sector involvement in biodiversity conservation (Büscher & Whande, 2007: 31). As part of the advent of CBNRM the private sector has undergone an image makeover as eco-friendly and responsible, and, due to the development of the international eco-tourism market, as the suppliers of unspoiled natural areas for recreational use. As a result, private sector tourism operators have been consistently favoured over community partnerships throughout the Global South (Isaacs et al, 2000; AFRA, 2004: 1). Proponents claim that the private sector is in a unique position to offer both a means to efficiently facilitate environmental conservation and drive economic growth in rural areas.

In response to these trends, Jim Igoe and Dan Brockington presented a summation of various critiques of market-based conservation initiatives in 2007. They argued that CBNRM programs are best understood as the continuous extension of neoliberalism into the realm of nature, which serves to reinforce the power of corporate capital at the expense of already marginalised local people. CBNRM represents a symbiosis between local elite and international capital, whereby the former grants projects legitimacy and authority, and the latter provides skills, financial resources and technology (Igoe & Croucher, 2007: 553). The poor, predictably, remain excluded. Levine and Wandesforde-Smith (2004) concur that most decentralisation policies in African countries fail to give local people decision-making power and that given the neoliberal

drive to 'roll back the state', state agencies and their personnel are eager to appropriate the control and financial means afforded to them through CBNRM programmes. Rather than increasing community control, decentralisation in conservation management has placed disadvantaged rural communities in competition with the state in a contest that they are unlikely to win (Levine and Wandesforde-Smith, 2004: 139).

Furthermore, the financial arrangements governing CBNRM displace local people from the locus of power in another way. CBNRM has seen considerable investment in the programmes in the Global South from donors and financial institutions in the Global North. For example, Kiss (2004: 332) notes that by the mid 1990s, USAID had 105 projects, totaling US\$2 billion, with ecotourism components, and 32 of the 55 World Bank-financed projects that supported protected areas in Africa between 1988 and 2003 included a community-based eco-tourism component. This rouses questions about how much control is available to communities in CBNRM, given that budgets and agendas are often set from afar.

Robin Turner (2006: 2) identifies three major practical difficulties with the neoliberal approach to CBNRM. First, the decision to embark upon CBNRM coincided with broader transitions to liberalisation and democratization, which have “altered the regional landscape on which all conservation efforts, private, state, and community-based are situated” (Turner, R. 2006: 5). These liberal economic transformations at national and global levels have increased market competition, and may have set communities engaged in CBNRM at a distinct disadvantage to more competitive and experience private counterparts.

Second, conservation-based development is reliant on capitalist market strategies for success, as revenue generated from tourism and associated leisure spending is expected to provide the monetary gains for community benefit. But “unlike coral reefs and the African savannahs, many of the biologically richest ecosystems (e.g., closed tropical

forests, deserts and high mountains) are poorly suited to ecotourism development because of factors such as difficult access, elusive wildlife, uncomfortable climates and vulnerability to damage” (Kiss, 2004: 233). Enthusiasts who seek out rare birds at Ndumo might be willing to pay more than the average safari tourist, but they will rarely generate revenue on a scale to economically justify conservation in areas where there is strong pressure on land and biological resources. The nature of the tourism sector poses special challenges to CBNRM initiatives, and it is not clear that related tourism projects will produce substantial economic benefits, especially when divided between the numerous stakeholders (Turner, R. 2006: 18).

Finally, tourism is highly sensitive to international and national trends and events, and thus any success may be short-lived (Turner, R. 2006: 18). Whilst the South African tourism industry has grown enormously over the past decade (due in large part to the perception that country is an unlikely target for terrorism), the recent international economic crisis is likely to negatively affect tourist markets across the globe. Other factors such regional instability, high crime levels and, the recent spate of xenophobic violence could deter international tourists and stymie the economic benefits accruing to communities. For instance, in the wake of xenophobic riots in May 2008, the total number of tourists entering South Africa from Asia and Australasia decreased by 3.2% and those visiting from Europe decreased by 0.5% (SA Tourism Strategic Research Unit, 2008: 1), representing the most significant decline in tourist volumes from any country in the last ten years.

What’s more, tourism requires large amounts of investment, as the majority of tourism revenue derives not from access fees to sites of interest, but from associated spending on travel, tours and accommodation. In the interests of protecting the conservation site, however, large construction ventures are not usually allowed; such is the case in Ndumo. In such a situation, low-volume, high-cost accommodation may be most profitable, but will require substantial initial investment. Government may be unwilling to provide such

substantive funding, as indicated by their tendency to advocate for private sector participation (Turner, R. 2006: 19).

Kiss (2004: 233) notes a fourth difficulty with neoliberal conservation, “natural habitats in tourism areas are typically manipulated to enhance the tourism experience, in ways that disrupt the integrity of ecological communities and favor some species over others”. For example, Lindberg, James and Goodman (2003) discuss how controlled burning, clearing of vegetation, artificial water points, artificial feeding and other management tools have led to ecological changes and decreased ecological integrity in tourism-oriented protected areas in KwaZulu Natal. Trans-frontier Conservation (TFC) has been espoused as a solution to this problem, such that conservancies should follow more natural spatial arrangements instead of human and political boundaries. But Dressler and Büscher (2008) assert that the regional focus of Transfrontier Conservation in much of Southern Africa’s CBNRM - informed by the economic logic that expanding eco-tourism initiatives across national borders will generate greater benefits from economies of scale that will ultimately trickle down to the poor - completely bypasses the resource bases of poor rural households. By investing directly in the tertiary economy (service sector), it does nothing to support the consumptive land-based livelihoods on which the poor are dependent for cash or subsistence (Dressler and Büscher, 2008: 455).

This body of literature has largely developed in response to the emergence of CBNRM as the dominant approach to environmental conservation. Its critical insights allow this conservation approach to be understood as part of the expansion of neoliberalism into the realm of nature. It illustrates how focusing on the community as the locus and unit of operation detracts from the reality that such initiatives are still very much governed and directed by the private sector, who provide financial capital and reap most of the profits. Empirical findings in Ndumo support these assertions. In many ways, Ndumo is typical of a market-based CBNRM venture gone awry, although there are several anomalous components that make the site particularly unique and challenging.

1.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This case study aims to answer the following overarching research question: *How does Community-based Natural Resource Management in South Africa's Ndumo Game Reserve impact social justice and economic development in the neighbouring Mathenjwa and Mbangweni communities?* Three secondary research questions help to elucidate key issues and themes:

1. What is the history of the area now known as the Ndumo Game Reserve, and how do these historical legacies influence contemporary debates over conservation?
2. Who are the key stakeholders in CBNRM at Ndumo Game Reserve, and what is their relationship with each other and the reserve itself?
3. What are the key problems with CBNRM at Ndumo Game Reserve, and how do these impact neighbouring communities?

The three literatures surveyed above – the history of conservation, community conservation and critiques of neo-liberal conservation – offer useful analytical lenses to help understand the complexities of community-based conservation in Ndumo.

The broader historical development of conservation helps to provide the contextual background crucial to understanding the evolution of the Ndumo Game reserve from its inception in 1924. Unravelling the history of conservation in Ndumo allows me to draw out the particular economic and political forces that have shaped the reserve, and evaluate the degree to which these endeavours reflected the political and economic motivations of the ruling class or elite, at the expense of indigenous or local populations (Klein et al, 2007: 453). In the case of Ndumo these power-dynamics were particularly pronounced during colonial period and apartheid (Carruthers, 1995). I argue that the recent shift

towards CBNRM in Ndumo represents a continuation of these models, which privilege outside elite interests at the expense of local communities.

The body of literature on CC and CBNRM specifically, elucidates core conceptual contradictions and practical problems within these models, and goes some way towards accounting for the troubled operation of CBNRM ventures in South Africa despite the generally positive rhetoric. In the wake of the multitude of criticisms levied against community conservation, Adams and Hulme (2001) have developed a set of specific criteria that can be used to assess the successfulness of community conservation based on various inputs and influencing factors. It incorporates a wide variety of factors at the community, national and international levels. These range from the size of the wildlife resource base, to the levels of trust between stakeholders, and the extent to which power is shared by authorities and local people. These criteria are vital in informing my study of Ndumo Game Reserve. I rely on Adams and Hulme’s (2008) criteria for a successful CC to evaluate the power dynamics and outcomes of CBNRM in Ndumo Game Reserve, and hence answer research questions 2 and 3. There are a number of factors that bear on CBNRM initiatives and this framework allows for the inclusion of all of these, with particular emphasis on how they interrelate. This framework is illuminated in **Table 1**.

Table 1 Conditions for effective community conservation (CC) initiatives
(Adapted from Adams and Hulme, 2001: 195)

CONTEXT	CC likely to achieve both Developmental & Conservation objectives	CC unlikely to achieve both Developmental & Conservation objectives
1) Loss of rights by local people	Outweighed by economic benefits and/or other incentives	Not outweighed by economic benefits and/or other incentives
2) Influence of CC rhetoric on conservation agency-power sharing	Ideology and practice of conservation authority change- Genuine power-sharing	Ideology and practice of conservation authority change- Token power-sharing

3) Extent to which expectations are met	CC delivers benefits as planned	CC promises are not delivered
4) Non-monetary value of nature	Shared by local people	Not shared by local people

This framework has been modified from that designed by Adams and Hulme (2001) in order to fit the scope of this study¹⁰. Hence, this dissertation will mainly focus on the social elements of CBNRM in Ndumo, characterised by conditions one to four. These conditions relate to the social and economic factors that impact upon the relations between various stakeholders in CC initiatives and resultantly contribute to the initiative's success or failure. The framework is sensitive to the complex and controversial history of conservation in places like South Africa, and to the need for transformation, hence factors 1) and 2). Just as significantly, economic conditions for successful community conservation are outlined in the framework in factor 3). Lastly, 4) the attitude that local people have toward conservation is an important, but often overlooked, condition for community conservation to succeed. This framework can help evaluate the social justice and developmental (economic) (dis)abilities of community conservation, and thus also attend to research question 3.

Igoe and Brockington's (2007) critique of market-based conservation initiatives, and Robin Turner's (2006) evaluation of CBNRM in the South African context will also help to answer question 3. This perspective "[places] conservation policies, and the communities and livelihoods they affect, in the context of broader social and economic changes that define neoliberalism" (Igoe and Brockington, 2007: 432). Dressler and Büscher (2008) explain how such market-based initiatives favour private sector investment in tertiary economies, such as eco-tourism, that are both too specialized and too sophisticated to support the land-based livelihoods of the rural poor; and also create

¹⁰ The first four conditions in their framework related to specific ecological variables that are outside of the scope of this study, and hence have been omitted from **Table 1**.

offshoots in various remote, and equally inaccessible, economic nodes. As a result, local communities involved in CBNRM often continue to independently diversify and exploit their natural resource base for both their subsistence and cash requirements (Dressler & Büscher, 2008). Further, resources made available to these communities through CBNRM may be subverted or utilized in ways unexpected or undesired by its other stakeholders, but beneficial to local people. This may go a long way toward explaining the lack of success of CBNRM in Ndumo, and the behavior of local people, and their relationship with the game reserve and its apparent benefits.

CHAPTER 2 PLACE, POLICY AND PRESENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was carried out in Maputaland, tucked away in the north-east part of the province of KwaZulu Natal, just south of the border with Mozambique. Most of this area is communally owned by Traditional Authorities (TAs), under the leadership of patriarchal chiefs (*amakhosi*).¹¹ Specifically, this study focuses on Ndumo Game Reserve and its surrounding communities, the Mathenjwa, and the Mbangweni (under the Mathenjwa and Tembe Traditional Authorities, respectively). The game reserve straddles both municipal and traditional government jurisdictions, and lies directly along the border with Mozambique. As a result governance of the reserve straddles the divide between traditional and modern bureaucratic orders, as well as local, district, provincial, national and transnational jurisdictions. This has created a complex, and often confused, political, social and cultural milieu within which CBNRM has had to operate.

This chapter introduces the context of CBRNM in Ndumo. First, I delineate the geographical, ecological and demographic features of the Maputaland area, and I delve into some of significant historical events that have shaped the area from the 19th century onwards, in order to situate conservation at Ndumo within the broader history of Maputaland. Second, I turn to the current situation in Ndumo and try to explain how these contextual factors have shaped the status quo in Ndumo. Third, I describe the particular policy climate within which the land claim on Ndumo has unfolded, and that governs negotiations today. Finally, I delineate the research methods employed in the research for this dissertation, the findings of which are expounded in the following chapter.

¹¹ TAs were part of the former semi-autonomous KwaZulu *Bantustan* during apartheid. They were created by the apartheid government in communal areas, and governed in an authoritarian manner, without the elements of popular representation and accountability, which had existed within pre-colonial political systems (Cousins, 2007: 305).

2.2 MAPUTALAND: THE AREA AND ITS PEOPLE

2.2.1 The 'Natural' Landscape

The region known as greater Maputaland stretches from the Mozambican capital, Maputo, across the border all the way south to the St Lucia wetlands in eastern South Africa. From east to west it spans from the Indian Ocean to the Lubombo Mountain range. The area is known for its rich biodiversity and beautiful landscapes, and is an integral part of the Maputaland Coastal Forest Mosaic, a subtropical forest eco-region, which spans more than 30,200 square kilometers and extends through southern Mozambique, Swaziland and KwaZulu Natal (Kirkwood, 2001).

This study focuses primarily on the South African section of Maputaland, henceforth referred to simply as Maputaland, which lies in the northern-most reaches of the province of KwaZulu Natal. Subsequent to the study *Biodiversity hotspots for conservation priorities* by Myers, Mittermeier, Mittermeier, da Fonseca and Kent (2000), Conservation International, has designated the area a conservation “hotspot” because of its high biodiversity value and fears over potential degradation (Jones, 2006: 6). About 80% of the land in the region falls under the jurisdiction of Traditional Authorities,¹² while 27% of the landscape is formally protected in fenced reserves managed by the provincial conservation agency (UDM, 2009: 7-12).

Geographically, Maputaland is a low-lying coastal plain, delimited by South Africa's northern boundary with Mozambique and by the Lake St Lucia in the south. The area is generally flat, sloping out from the Lubombo Mountain Range in the west to the Indian Ocean in the east. The topography of the region is characterised by ancient sand dunes

¹² Each Tribal Authority consists of a chief or *inkhosi* who delegates power, with the consent of the people, to an *Induna*, who in turn is in charge of a ward within the Tribal Authority.

and low-lying plains in the north and a series of rugged terraces carved into river valleys in the central and southern parts (Conservation International, 2007).

The climate is moist subtropical along the coast where rainfall is over 1000 mm per annum, becoming dry subtropical a short distance inland with less than 600 mm per annum. The mean annual temperature varies from 21°C to 23°C, with hot summers and cool dry winters (Watkeys et al, 1993). Most of the Maputaland coastal plain is covered in recent, infertile, wind distributed sands (Matthews, 2007: 9). In his study of Maputaland in the 1960s, Walter Felgate identifies three broad ecological regions in South African Maputaland: the Pongola River zone, the Muzi Swamp zone, and the coastal zone (Felgate & Krige, 1982). Ndumo Game Reserve falls in the first of these regions. From the Lubombo mountains, which reach peaks of over 600 metres, flow four large inland rivers which form the lifeblood of the area: the Pongola, the Ngwavuma, the Usuthu and the Mkhuze Rivers. The soils of western Maputaland are fertile, especially along the west bank of the Pongola River (Maud, 1980). On the east bank, the river feeds the floodplain and extensive pan system, which are vital to the area's ecology and agriculture.

A variety of crops are grown commercially along the Pongola River and within the floodplain, including maize, cotton, sugar cane and pineapples. Subsistence agriculture is prevalent throughout Maputaland and is characterised by small fields growing maize and vegetables, as well as by grazing areas for cattle and goats (Smith, 2005: 4-5). The Muzi Swamp zone is less habitable, with sparse settlement and agriculture until one reaches the coastal zone (Felgate & Krige, 1982), where high dune ridges¹³ boarder the sea. On the whole, Jones (2006: 96) found that areas under traditional authority (communal land) had higher population densities than private or state land, with median densities of 100 persons per square kilometer and 59 persons per square kilometer, respectively.

¹³ These are amongst the highest vegetated dunes in the world (van Eeden, 2006: 13).

The flora of Maputaland is incredibly diverse. There are 15 major categories of vegetation (Maud, 1980), and although the tendencies for species to change rapidly along this part of the Indian Ocean coast contribute to high levels of diversity in this locale, this region is also exceptional for its high levels of endemism. The same holds true for fauna (van Wyk, A E. 1994). More than 470 bird species are found here and 4 species are endemic. Species richness in mammals, amphibians, reptiles and fish is also high. Elephants are of particular importance in this eco-region because they would have once moved freely over large distances. Today they occur only in reserves, notably Tembe Elephant Park, created to protect and confine the last free-ranging herds in South Africa in the 1980's (Kirkwood, 2001).¹⁴

2.2.2 A Story of People and Place

As Maputaland has long been dismissed by ruling governments as a rural backwater, scholarly accounts have tended to focus exclusively on issues of agricultural production and rural development. As a result, this account of Maputaland's history relies heavily on a few crucial contributions that have taken a broader view of the region and its people, notably Felgate and Krige's (1982) ethnographic study of the area, and Dr Roelie Klopper's (2003) historical account of the Tembe people. I also make use of individual oral histories provided by interviewees to bolster these descriptions.

Maputaland is comprised primarily of people ethnically related to the Tonga, who occupied vast areas across South Eastern Africa in what was known as Tongaland until 1926.¹⁵ The specific clan that inhabited the greater Maputaland area, the Tembe or Tembe-Tonga, takes their name from the founder of the clan, chief Mthembu. However, it was a later chief Mabudu who is associated with the rise of the Tembe people. Hence

¹⁴ The land was enclosed for conservation in 1983, but only declared a national park in 1991.

¹⁵ Tonga refers to the sun, although more recently it has taken on a more pejorative meaning also, as it was used by the Zulu to denote 'slave' (Matthews, 2007).

Dr Kloppers (2003) refers to them as the Mabudu-Tembe. Mabudu's sphere of influence encompassed the lands south of the Mozambican capital to the Mkhuze River in present day South Africa between the Pongola River and the eastern seaboard (Kloppers, 2003). The Tembe was the strongest political and economic unit in south-east Africa from the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century, after which state formation amongst the Swazi and Zulu began to erode their power in the area (Kloppers 2003). The Tembe practiced a combination of gathering and subsistence farming, shifting agriculture frequently to help mitigate against the nutrient poor soils (Felgate & Krige, 1982: 47).¹⁶ The area used to be so fever-ridden and infested with Tsetse fly that keeping cattle was impossible; as a result the Swazi and Zulu (for whom cattle is both economically and culturally indispensable) were loathe to live there (Kloppers, 2003: 14).¹⁷

The first Europeans to make contact with the Tembe were the Portuguese. By the latter part of the nineteenth century Britain, Portugal and the Afrikaners who controlled the Transvaal all coveted Maputaland. In 1875 the French President Patrice de Mac-Mahone arbitrated the matter, striking the first significant blow to the integrity and cohesion of the Tembe chiefdom. In order to divide the British and Portuguese domains in south-east Africa he drew a straight line, known as the Mac-Mahone line, along the 26° 30' S, which physically divided the Mabudu Chiefdom (Kloppers, 2003: 68). In 1888, the British delineated the lower limits of Tongaland with respect to Zululand, moving the Southern boundary of Tongaland from the Mkhuze River to Lake Sibaya, a considerable distance North (Kloppers, 2004: 42), which extended Zulu territory by about 50km into Tembe land. When Britain and Portugal finally arrived at a permanent solution in 1891, they set the international border some 40km south of the MacMahone line, on the confluence of the Usuthu and the Pongola to the sea, further shrinking Maputaland. This remains the border to this day.

¹⁶ They did not keep cattle, and for many fish is the main source of protein, making them unique amongst the tribes of South Africa.

¹⁷ However, as Webster (1986: 615) points out, there have always been small pockets of Nguni people (related to Swazi and Zulu) in Maputaland, especially on its western border, where the climate is more hospitable.

Schreuder (2009) asserts that as the last independent royal house in South Africa, the Tembe represented a “gap in [the] imperial equation” (298). Control of their domain might have provided the South African Republic with its own port at Kosi Bay, independent of the British-controlled Cape and Natal harbours, where they were subject to exorbitant charges (Van Wyk, J. 1983: 2-3). Fears that Bismark’s Germany would lend support to the Transvaal Republic's pursuit of the area escalated in the 1880s. When Zambili, regent queen of the Tembe, requested British protection, both from the Boers Republics and Portuguese incursions, Britain formally annexed what was then called Tongaland in 1887 (Kloppers, 2001). Within three years of annexation, the South African portion of the Tembe kingdom became known as British AmaThongaland and was unceremoniously handed over to the settler administration of Natal, along with the rest of Zululand, in 1897 (Schreuder, 2009: 300).

In an effort to contest British annexation at the time, President Paul Kruger argued vehemently that Tongaland did not extend all the way west to Swaziland, but rather ended at the Pongola River. This small tract sandwiched between the Pongola and the Swazi border was home to the communities, of Umbegeza, Sambana and Umdhlalini, which were not affiliated with either the Swazi or the Zulu nation, but rather contained a rich mix of people with fluid ethnic identities (Great Britain, 1890). Refer to **Fig. 2**. Little is known about these small chiefdoms. The Umbegeza territory roughly corresponds with what is now the Mathenjwa area, under the Mathenjwa Traditional Authority.¹⁸ Situated at the intersection of Swaziland, Mozambique and South African Maputaland, this community has always been a rich hybrid of ethnic, linguistic and cultural strands. Their founders were likely of early Swazi decent; however they continue to share a deep affiliation with the Tembe.¹⁹ Presently, the Mathenjwa are

¹⁸ And Sambana and Umdhlalini correspond with the contemporary Nyawo Traditional Authority.

¹⁹ In fact, the Tembe and Swazi themselves share a contested, but deeply intertwined past. Webster (1986: 614) notes that 19th century Swazi royal traditions suggested that their ancestors lived near the foothills of the Lubombo Mountains, in close proximity to the Tembe, and even that, according to the

separated from the Swazi by the Lubombo Mountains, in the west, from the Tembe's South African constituency by the Usuthu Rover in the north, and from their Mozambican counterparts by the Pongola River to the east.

well-respected historian David Hedges, the Swazi may be an offshoot of the Tembe people (Hedges, 1978, 138-139).

In 1910 Natal joined the other three South African colonies to form the Union of South Africa. The Ndumo Game Reserve was proclaimed in 1924, and in 1926 what was British AmaThongaland became known as the Ingwavuma district of Natal Province. Within the Union the policy of separate development for Europeans and Africans was implemented (Kloppers, 2004: 44). Very few white South Africans settled in the area, as they saw little value in Maputaland due to its high incidence of malaria, lack of mineral resources, and minimal agricultural potential. The area demarcated as the Ndumo Game Reserve continued to be inhabited by Mathenjwa and Tembe communities, long after proclamation in 1924.

In 1947, the Natal Parks Board was established to enforce laws relating to wildlife in Natal Province, which included Maputaland. The National Party came to power in the 1948 general elections on the strength of their promise of apartheid (literally ‘separatedness’). Under this government the pillars of separate development - spatial segregation, control of movement and production, and utilisation of traditional governance systems - were cemented and entrenched. During the height of the apartheid regime’s forced removals in the 1940s and 50s concerted efforts were made to rid the Ndumo reserve of its human inhabitants (Xingwana, 2008: 2) and maintain it as a recreational area for white South Africans, although authorities maintained that such dislocation was in the name of conservation. The apartheid government displaced the African communities living in the reserve area (Ashley, 2006) on the pretext that they would be allowed to return shortly, once the authorities had rid the area of tsetse-fly. Those that did not comply were forcibly removed, through the provisions of the Illegal Squatters Act (Xingwana, 2008: 2), and the community was never permitted to return to their land. Whilst the exact numbers of displaced peoples are unknown, the contemporary democratic land claims process suggests that about 700 households were removed. There was a great degree of inter-tribe settlement, although Tembe families that were displaced predominantly settled in the narrow Mbangweni Corridor, while most of the Mathenjwa families who were evicted settled amongst their tribesmen in various communities that bordered the reserve.

A series of national policies resulted in the creation of eight ‘Bantu nations’ who would live in nine ‘nation-states’, according to the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act (Act 46 of 1959) (King, 2007). In 1960 the Ingwavuma Regional Authority (roughly geographically congruent with colonial AmaThongaland) was instituted, comprising three tribal authorities: The Tembe Tribal Authority, the Mathenjwa Tribal Authority and the neighbouring Nyawo Tribal Authority.²⁰ In 1976, Maputaland (what was formerly Thongaland) was incorporated into the KwaZulu Homeland; all of its inhabitants were classified as Zulu (Kloppers, 2004: 48-9).²¹ There was virtually no infrastructure development in Maputaland over the next few decades, which led to economic stagnation.²² The area was primarily managed as army bases for the apartheid government (Jury et al, 2009: 1363). The region’s ecological and social integrity began to disintegrate during Mozambique’s long civil war (Impey, 2006). For example, the Tembe Elephant Park was created in 1983 in part, to protect and contain traumatised elephant displaced from Mozambique that were terrorising local villagers (Roger, 2009).²³ The national borders became intensely militarised, and Ndumo Game Reserve, strategically situated right on the border of Mozambique, quickly became overrun by poachers, refugees, smugglers and RENAMO rebels. It was only once a peace accord was signed in 1990 that effective conservation was able to resume (Honey, 2008:375).

In the 1980s the KwaZulu government began to recognise the strategic importance of its conservation areas. Control over national parks and their resources, as well as the ability to proclaim new parks, represented greater autonomy for the KwaZulu homeland.

²⁰ The Nyawo area shares a similar ethno-linguistic composition to the Mathenjwa, although there maybe be a stronger Zulu influence due to its proximity to Zulu heartland.

²¹ This despite the fact that the Tembe were well-known to be Tonga and that the Mathenjwa area was inhabited by people of a diverse mix of Swazi, Thonga and, to a lesser extent, Zulu lineage.

²² Jury, Guyot and Mthembu (2009) suggest that this may have been due to the large Tonga population in the era, which conflicted with the aspirations of the party to govern the Zulu nation under the Zulu king.

²³ For this reason, the park was only considered safe, and opened to the public in 1991 (Kirkwood, 2001).

Control of the Ndumo Game Reserve, and the new neighbouring Tembe Elephant Park²⁴, passed from the Natal Parks Board to the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation (KDNC) in 1982. However, there was no consultation between the KDNC and local people on the use of the natural resources within the conservation area (Jury et al, 2009: 1364).

A number of factors, including the fragmentation of the Tembe tribe, its increasing subjection to provincial authority, Zulu cultural hegemony, and incorporation into the labour market, have contributed to the erosion of Tonga identity and culture. Zulu is almost universally spoken across Maputaland, at least in public, and Tonga clan names have been adapted to sound like Zulu ones (Adam, 2009). However, as late as 1969, Felgate & Krige (1982: 17) remarked that in the coastal area, more than 50% of the clan names were identifiably Tonga, whereas, in the Pongola region, they appeared to be equally proportioned between Tonga, Zulu and Swazi. Still, the legacy of a more prestigious Tembe past is manifested today in the existence of the Tembe Traditional Authority, the largest communal area in South Africa, in the strong social and economic ties that bind families in South African Maputaland with their kin in Mozambique, in those who still speak Tonga, the language of the Mabudu-Tembe, however privately or quietly, in their homes and with their families.²⁵

Despite the factors that have been working against them, the Tongas today still make up a very vibrant and coherent cultural identity, and remain the largest ethnic group in the Maputaland area. Their complicated history is crucial to understanding the history of the

²⁴ Officially the area was 'willingly' given to conservation by the chief, Mzimba, in return for a portion of park revenue, although it displaced several communities from the area. However, the Tembe TA has recently challenged the agreement, on the basis that it was made during apartheid when the TA was at a clear disadvantage. A moratorium has been placed on development in the park whilst the TA negotiates for increased decision-making powers and benefits (Jones, 2006: 50).

²⁵ In addition, in the Mathenjwa TA, tribal council is held at eManyiseni, on hilltops that overlook the neighbouring Kingdom of Swaziland, Swazi and Tonga are occasionally spoken and people have a strong sense affiliation, and direct familial ties, both with their neighbours over the Lubombo Mountains and across the Usuthu River (Felgate & Krige, 1982).

area currently known as Ndumo Game Reserve, and to further analysis of conservation in the region.

2.3 THE STUDY SITE: NDUMO GAME RESERVE

Situated in the most north western corner of Maputaland, the Ndumo Game Reserve is a biologically-rich wetland covering 11 000 hectares. It contains two major semi-permanent floodplain pans, Banzi and Nyamithi, and many smaller transient pans within the reserve, such that water covers between 15% and 40% of the park depending on the time of year. The reserve is famous for its astounding floral and faunal diversity, especially its unparalleled birdlife. It was officially recognised as a wetland of global importance in 1997 by its inclusion in the RAMSAR convention, the only intergovernmental treaty that provides a framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation of wetlands and their resources (RAMSAR Organisation, 2010). Ndumo is also home to a variety of animals, including rhino, giraffe, warthog, zebra, kudu, nyala and impala; as well as smaller mammals like klipspringer, mountain reedbuck and red rock hare; reptiles and freshwater fish (Tinley & van Riet, 1981). Six major plant communities occur in the reserve and in the wider region: aquatic, grassland, rockface plants, tree savannah, thicket and forest (Smith, 2001).

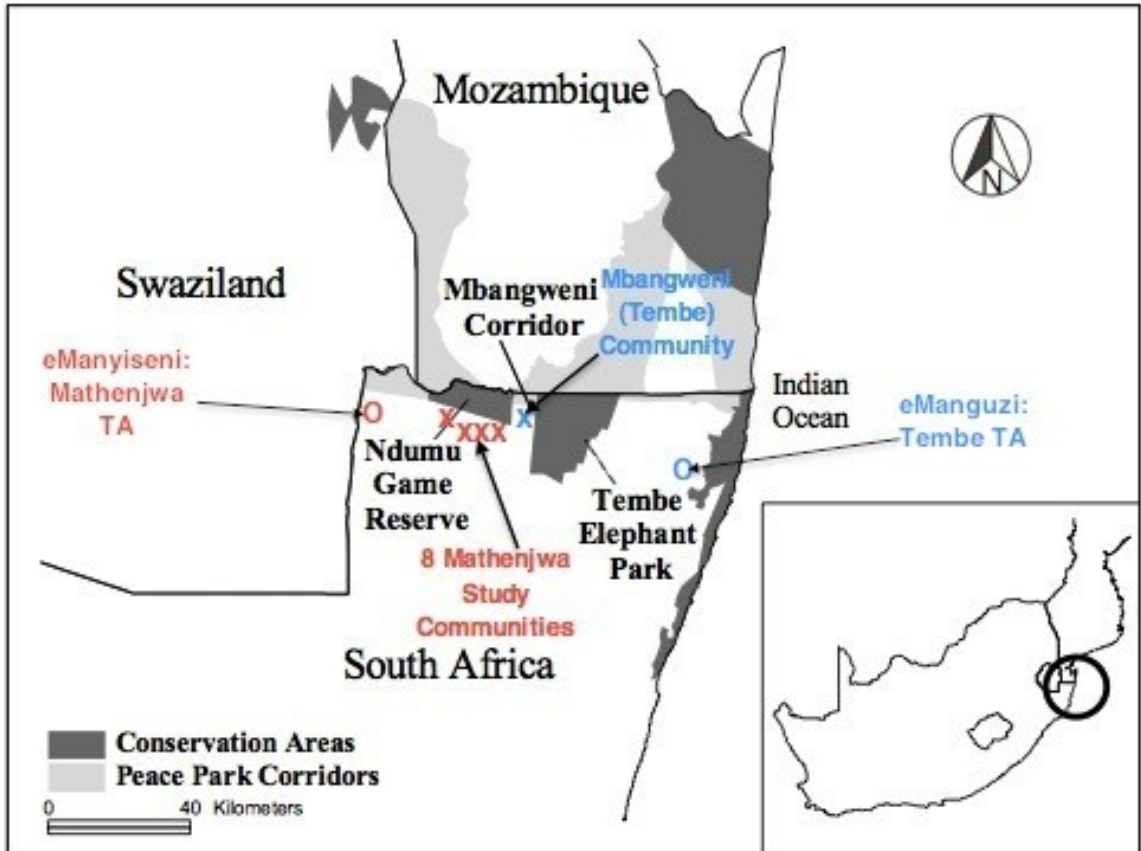
Since its inception, management of the reserve has changed in accordance with the evolving political landscape of Maputaland, and South Africa more generally. Initially, it was intended to protect the hippopotamus that inhabited Banzi and surrounding pans, under South Africa's first conservation laws established from 1866 onwards. Subsequently the area was fenced and stocked with other large species and thus “established as a compensatory wilderness for a rapidly urbanising white population” under the custodianship of the Natal Parks Board (NPB), established in 1947 (Impey, 2006: 56). In the same year, the NPB expanded the Ndumo Reserve border, removing

approximately 700 households over the next decade from a 1,000 hectare stretch, reducing access to river water and land, relegating them to inferior terrain in the nearby flats (low-lying stretches comprised of red clay soil) and sand forest (DeGrassi, 2003: 31). During the 1980s the management of the reserve was passed onto the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation (KDNC), under the apartheid homeland system. Today, the Ndumo Game Reserve is managed by Ezemvelo KwaZulu Natal (EKZN) Wildlife²⁶, an amalgamation of the now defunct Natal Parks Board and the KDNC, under the national conservation parastatal the South African National Parks Board (SANParks). Established in 1997, following the advent of South Africa's democratic constitution, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife is responsible for the management of 110 protected areas covering a total area of 7127.9 square kilometres (Goodman, 2003: 843).

Although human occupation has been prohibited within Ndumo Game Reserve for several decades, the history of the land is closely bound up with those of its dispossessed human inhabitants. Subsequent to their removal, evictees settled on land in communities along the periphery of the game reserve where they pledged allegiance to local chiefs, built new houses and prepared new fields (Impey, 2006: 56). At present there are two Traditional Authorities, and numerous communities that house the remnants of the dispossessed families, and are thus affiliated with the reserve through land reform, and restitution policies. The Mbangweni corridor, the narrow stretch of land between Ndumo Game Reserve's eastern fence, and Tembe Elephant Park's western fence, are home to approximately 114 households, the remnants of a Tembe community that used to inhabit the junction of the Usuthu and the Pongola Rivers, in what is now park land. To the southern and western side of the reserve is the heartland of the Mathenjwa Traditional Authority (TA), where displaced Mathenjwa families sought refuge within eight different neighbouring Mathenjwa communities that border the reserve. Refer to **Figure 3**.

²⁶ Also known as the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Service (KZNCS)

Figure 3 Map of Greater Maputaland, showing study area (Adapted from Jones, 2006: 7)



Both TAs fall under the jurisdiction of the Umkhanyakude District Municipality. Districts are further divided into local municipalities: the Mathenjwa Traditional Authority falls under the Jozini Local Municipality, whereas the Tembe area falls under the Umhlabiyalingana Local Municipality. For the sake of simplicity, because there are eight Mathenjwa communities that neighbour the reserve, they will be collectively referred to as the Mathenjwa communities, whereas the single Tembe community adjacent to the reserve will be referred to as the Mbangweni community. Refer to **Figure 3**.

Both communities are typical of the broader Maputaland region, so the demographic information provided for the entire Umkhanyakude District Municipality (UDM) is instructive. The district consists primarily of poor rural communities that reside on communal land, whose livelihoods depend on subsistence agriculture, a small informal economy, and government grants such as pension and child care payments. The 2008/2009 Integrated Development Plan estimates there are 573 341 people living in UDM.²⁷ The population is young with about 70% below 18 years of age (UDM, 2009: 7-12). Employment in the formal sector is minimal, with between 30% and 40% of economically active adults formally employed in the Umhlabuyalingana Municipality (2009: 16) and Jozini Municipality (2009: 10) respectively.

Subsistence agriculture is practiced throughout the District but covers only about 10.22% of the District according to the official municipal statistics. Commercial agriculture and tourism are thought to be the biggest contributors to the formal local economy, but no statistics are available about the size of their contributions. More than 70% of the population survives on less than R800/month. Poverty is extremely high, with 82.95% of households living below the poverty line (UDM, 2009: 7-12). The area is characterised by a lack of services and infrastructure: 80% of the UDM population is without electricity, 76% without piped water, 92% with municipal waste removal services, and 78% without a telephone (Department of Provincial and Local Government, 2008). The majority of households number four to seven people. Population densities tend to be much higher in hubs like Jozini and Manguzi. In recent years, the area's numerous rivers have been drying out. The threat of drought is constant. Although average rainfall per annum is around 800 mm, the bulk of it (75%) falls within the warm summer months between October and March (Moll, 1980). Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS are major health problems in the area. The region has one of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in South Africa with up to 38% of the total population infected (Hlongwe, 2003). Statistics

²⁷ This number does not take into account cross-border immigration from Mozambique and some estimates suggest the population is as large as 610 000 (UDM, 2009: 7).

in education are also very bleak. About 46% of the population has never been to school, in contrast to the national average of 15% (UDM, 2009: 7-12).

Ndumo Game Reserve's main entrance is situated in Ndumo village, in the Jozini Local Municipality, under the Mathenjwa TA. The village is one of the main commercial hubs in the area, containing a Spar chain-supermarket, a few small shops, a petrol station, and various informal vendors and traders. There is also a small government clinic, a community centre (for community gatherings and private functions), and a media centre (computers and telephones). The wider area (which includes the eight Mathenjwa communities that border the reserve) contains eight primary schools, two high schools, and an assortment of small informal (spaza) shops.

On the other side of the reserve, in the Tembe TA, the Mbangweni community is somewhat less well off. Sandwiched between the eastern limit of the Ndumo Game Reserve and the western limit of Tembe Elephant Park, the Mbangweni live in a relatively isolated corridor that has long been used as a thoroughfare for travel between South Africa and Mozambique.

Due to the complex and largely exclusionary relationship of the reserve with these local communities, conservation in Ndumo has become increasingly contested and contentious. "Informed partly by the recollections of those who had been removed, and partly re-imagined in response to emerging opportunities for economic redress" (Impey, 2006: 56), Ndumo Game Reserve has come to embody centuries of racialised governance, imperial marginalization, and forced dispossession. With the onset of democratic politics in South Africa in 1994, the government implemented land reform and conservation programmes which sought to rectify this neglect and dispossession. These are described in detail in the following section.

2.4 NATIONAL POLICY, LAND REFORM AND CBNRM IN SOUTH AFRICA

The ANC's principle vision document, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), was formulated into a government policy guideline when the party came to power in 1994 (Isaacs et al, 2000: 6). It focused on empowerment through participation, and economic and institutional transformation towards equity. While neo-liberal approaches prevailed in other parts of the world, RDP clearly aligned South Africa with a social development or Keynesian approach and was consistent with the ANC's early focus on humanitarian and “people-centred” values (Visser, 2005: 7). This document explicitly acknowledged the urgent need provide restitution for those dispossessed of their land and the new government’s commitment to a programme of land restitution.

The constitutional negotiations and policy debates around land reform of the early 1990s culminated in the creation of a Land Claims Court (LCC), which was charged with resolving disputes related to apartheid forced removals (Naguran, 2002: 6). Land reform included three core methods of redress: (a) restitution (return of property); (b) reparation (payment of damages); and (c) repair (affirmative action). However, restitution also has a psychological component, and must “foster stability and a spirit of conciliation between the different parties involved” (Freedman, 2003: 158). Resultantly the South African government has aimed to create a more stable and equitable distribution of land amongst South Africans, and foster a sense of forgiveness and unity amongst all citizens through the land claims process.²⁸ This has proved to be an enormous and laborious undertaking.²⁹ In total 79,696 claims for redress have been made since 1994 (South African Associated Press, 2007). While there is currently no single database of all land claims on protected areas in existence, it is known that at least 26 verified land claims existed in South Africa’s 21 national parks, of which 4 had been settled by 2008 (Kepe, 2009: 311).

²⁸ In South Africa land restitution is a claim-driven process that requires basic evidence that people were deprived of their land after 19 June 1913 in a manner that would be unconstitutional after 1996

²⁹ Initially all land claims had to be referred from the Regional Land Claims Commission (RLCC) to the Land Claims Court for adjudication. However, the restitution process between 1994 and 1998 was so slow that only 27 claims out of the 40 000 submitted were settled (Sokupa, 2009). Following a review of the restitution process in 1998 it was determined that where all parties involved had reached an agreement, settlement out of court was preferable.

Claims on land proclaimed as protected for conservation present a unique set of challenges (Ashley, 2006:1). Here granting formal title to displaced communities, whilst still administering the area as a conservation site with their participation through Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM), has appeared as the most appropriate solution. This has been borne out by the milestone case of Richtersvlei, where in 1991, the South African National Parks Board (SANParks) entered into the first agreement to co-manage the newly created Richtersvlei National Park. Another significant precedent for CBNRM in South Africa is the case of the Mkululeke on the Parfuri region of Kruger National Park. Its high profile as the first community settlement and the first example of sanctioned resource usage within a South African conservation area, and its propagation as a major success story, has contributed to CBNRM becoming the general model for similar land claims (Robins & Van Der Waal, 2008; Steenkamp & Uhr, 2000).

The foundation for the co-management approach in South Africa was also established by the RDP (Isaacs et al, 2000:6), but has subsequently undergone a considerable ideological shift under the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR), implemented in 1996. The adoption of GEAR publicly heralded the shift from the strongly state-driven redistribution vision of RDP that had characterised the ANC in the early 1990s, as a liberation movement in power, toward a neoliberal efficiency focus prominent in the new economic growth agenda of the ANC as an increasingly globally aware governing party. GEAR was characterised by a fairly orthodox macroeconomic policy, based on the central tenements of neoliberal stabilisation, as espoused by the IMF and World Bank (Adelzadeh, 1996: 67). Resultantly, GEAR espoused that economic development should be led by the private sector; the state should play a smaller role in the economy; international competitiveness and an export- orientated economy should be encouraged; and social service delivery should be reprioritized such that the poor receive enough to meet their basic needs, with those social services that could not be provided to all, or

could be undertaken more effectively by the private sector being eliminated or scaled down (Visser, 2004: 9). This shift in economic focus from state-led development, to private-sector-led development quickly pervaded all areas of the South African economy, and also informed the agenda and legislation on CBNRM. In this regard, GEAR has diminished governments role in CBNRM, and facilitated joint ventures with private sector tourism operators largely focused on ecotourism. Tourism is widely regarded as having significant potential to deliver economic growth and employment. The National Government White Paper on Tourism of 1996 and the Tourism in GEAR development strategy of 1997 are two frameworks that govern tourism development in South Africa. They each espouse that tourism should be led by government and driven by the private sector, and should be community-based and labour conscious (Poultney & Spenceley, 2001: 36), and ventures within protected areas are no exception.

The scope and nature of tourism and other activity on protected areas is internationally determined by its management objectives within the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Protected areas Categories System (2010), which has become adopted by the United Nations Organisation, and become the international standard. This system has seven divisions ranging from strict scientifically monitored environmental reserves to resource reserves that are largely intended to protect resource species for human use. However, the South African government has derived and implemented a simplified categorisation of conservation according to the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act of 2004. Herein there are only five categories of protected areas are recognized in South Africa: 1) special nature reserves, national parks, nature reserves, and protected environments, 2) Marine protected areas, 3) World heritage sites (as declared by UNESCO), 4) specially protected forest areas, forest nature reserves and forest wilderness areas and 5) mountain catchment areas (Blackmore, 2005: 43); and Ndumo Game Reserve falls within the first. The alternative classification system has introduced a degree of confusion, as the South African system does not distinguish between the management objectives of national parks and provincial game

reserves, with the exception that the former are managed directly by SANParks, and the latter are administered by its respective provincial arm. Further, many of South Africa's national parks would not fit into the IUCN "Category II: Nature Reserve" classification due to more relaxed land and resource usage than this category allows. Thus, for the purposes of this study the terms game reserve and national park will be used to denote a conservation area that falls within the first category as defined by the National Environmental Management Act of 2004, and not the IUCN understanding of the terms (Blackmore, 2005: 45).

CBNRM on restituted conservation areas today is guided by the Cabinet Memorandum for the Settlement of Restitution Claims on Protected Areas and State Forests under National Government (hereafter referred to as the Memorandum) (2001), which was developed in 2001 to facilitate agreements between the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT), the Department of Land Affairs (DLA), the LCC and local claimants for their displacement from demarcated conservation areas. The Memorandum established the guidelines for the settling of land claims within protected areas. It aims to remedy the privileged and racist tradition of conservation in South Africa. It also includes material considerations such as job creation and recreation. Importantly, it firmly asserts that conservation is a land management (land use) issue and not a land ownership issue, although the goal and means of land restitution itself, via the transference of legal title deeds to claimant communities, stresses the importance of land ownership (AFRA, 2004: 18-19). This position is evidently contradictory, and the tension between restitution and conservation will be explored further in Chapter 3.

The Memorandum provides for the granting of the title deed, with conditions of use, to the claimant community. However, conditions are to be determined through negotiation between all stakeholders, such as community representatives, conservation and development-orientated NGOs, government agencies from environmental, parks and land departments, as well as any relevant international donors or consultants (Turner, S. 2004:

4). In practice, resolving the issue of who actually constitutes the community, and thus who should serve as community representatives, is challenging (Ashley & Jones, 2001: 12), especially when the community itself is the very thing that is at stake. Furthermore, because the Memorandum (2001) aims to be flexible and accommodate the vast differences that appear in such land claims from case to case, it leaves the specific terms of the negotiations and decision-making up to the parties involved, leaving considerable room for interpretation and inconsistency in its application.

The general conditions of restitution agreements on conserved land usually include that the land is maintained as a protected area in perpetuity, that no residential resettlement occur, that the property is not resold to a third party, that no development or activity except that which is compatible with the use of the land for conservation and ecotourism take place, and that the mineral rights in the land are maintained by the state. In instances where the agreement prohibits physical occupation of the property (in order to protect the integrity of the conservation area), compensation is to be made through a planned regime of economic benefits, which accrue to the claimants as the lands legal owners (AFRA, 2004: 19). In this regard Section 2, No. 10 of the Memorandum states:

Where in terms of agreements, there is deprivation of physical occupation to continue the protection of the conservation area this should be counter-balanced by a structured regime of economic benefits which will flow and accrue to the claimants as the owners of the land.

The Memorandum does not specify how such an arrangement is to be operationalised, or how benefits and responsibilities of CBNRM are to be divided up. Ultimately this limited form of community property rights provides for land ownership without residency, and land management without the right to dispose of the property.³⁰ These formulations have proven every bit as problematic in practice as they are contradictory in conception. For instance in Richtersvlei, the community voiced considerable concerns

³⁰ Dispose refers to abandoning, or selling the property to a third party.

over their relative powerlessness in park management and decision-making, and insisted on changing the terms of the CBNRM agreement such that they had formal representation in the park's management, as well as more flexibility in their land use options, by changing the lease terms from 99 years, to 24 years, with a 6 year notice period (Isaacs et al, 2000: 18). However, Richtersvlei is unique in that the park was voluntarily given to conservation and that the area is a relatively low conservation priority for South Africa. Communities involved with older, or higher profile conservation areas have significantly less room to shape the terms of CBNRM agreements.

There are various ways that management of the claimed area can be undertaken after the claim has legally been settled. Where there is provision for co-management, as in Richtersvlei, the agreement indicates who the management will lie with, how co-management will be practiced, and the means and methods through which economic benefit is to be generated. According to the agreement, in order for new owners to fully and meaningfully participate in management, a comprehensive plan for succession and skills development needs to be established. The Memorandum places a clear emphasis on co-operative agreements between agencies, authorities and state institutions and a commitment to the principles of consultation, participation and empowerment. (AFRA, 2004:20). In reality, though, balancing economic, social justice and conservation imperatives to create a viable CBNRM agreement is a complicated and contested affair, as exemplified by the case study of the Ndumo Game Reserve

The process of reclamation and repossession is further hindered, by bureaucratic backlogs and delays. In 2008 The KZN Regional LCC (RLCC) still had an outstanding 1,700 land claims to research and settle (Masinga, 2008). The Mbangweni community was the first to seek land restitution for the site of Ndumo Game Reserve. In 1995 one hundred and fourteen households made a claim to 1 262 hectares of land (Hall, 2003: 38), within the framework for land claims set up by the new democratic dispensation. Their general

grievance over the history of the removals included their forced removal without warning or consultation, their lost access to the rivers inside the reserve, their transplantation to a smaller, less fertile piece of land, and the absence of any compensation for these losses. The claim was officially settled out of court in 2000 (Jones, 2006: 25), when the RLCC at Pietermaritzburg afforded the community legal title to the portion of land in question, situated at the northeastern corner of the reserve. At the time the government, represented by the Land Claims Commissioner, responded favourably to the community's request to enter the reserve land in order to fish the Pongola River and to cultivate crops along its banks. The LCC considered releasing a portion of the reserve to the community for agricultural activity, provided no flora or fauna was harmed, for a period of five months as an interim measure. However, this potential concession caused a public uproar, with international and local conservation bodies opposed to any human activities within the reserve, arguing this would greatly harm the unique wetland. Resultantly, the idea was quickly discarded (Naguran, 2002: 8).

After still more negotiation, the community was dissuaded by the LCC from practicing agriculture within the reserve, on the basis that they would receive due benefit from income generated from future eco-tourism development that was anticipated would take place on their section of the park (Naguran, 2002: 7-8). As the Memorandum was only drawn up the following year, management remained exclusively in the hands of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife. In addition, claimant households received R500/month and food parcels from the government for six months as an immediate measure to sustain them while development plans were underway (Cox, 2004:14).

The strategy envisioned by conservation NGOs and the provincial and national government was to incorporate the Ndumo Game Reserve, along with neighbouring protected areas in SA and Mozambique into an international transfrontier conservation

area (TFCA), the Lubombo Peace Park.³¹ Neighbouring communities vehemently opposed this plan as it threatened to appropriate communal land that had remained through previous periods of expropriation. Mbangweni forms the narrow corridor between Ndumo and Tembe to the Mozambican border, and is thus crucial to the realization of the TFCA; however this requires excising part or all of the 45km squared tract from the resident community. These high stakes have galvanised actors into hostile negotiations for land rights, wherein the Mbangweni community has forcefully re-entered the reserve to cultivate crops and graze cattle (details of this conflict will be described more fully in Chapter 3). A final agreement on the use of this corridor for transfrontier conservation, as well as potential plans to establish post-Memorandum co-management in order to develop eco-tourism on the eastern portion of Ndumo Game Reserve to profit the people of Mbangweni, remain out of reach.

The Mathenjwa claim has been comparatively less problematic. In 1995, 562 households launched a claim, seeking ownership over approximately 10 000 hectares of land. It was settled in favour of the community in 2007 (Dhlamini, 2009). The Mathenjwa are considered the primary owner community of Ndumo Game Reserve, given that the Mbangweni portion constitutes less than 10% of the land area of the reserve. Resultantly, the Mathenjwa settlement has been considerably more comprehensive than that of their neighbours, because it occurred after the 2001 Memorandum had been drawn up, and was thus governed by the principles of co-management inscribed therein. At the land hand-over ceremony R10 000 was promised to each of the claimant households, although this was later revoked and replaced by the promise of rewards from a joint eco-tourism venture. At the official ceremony the Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism announced that the state would provide 25% of the total value of the Mathenjwa land

³¹ There have been repeated plans to extend and expand the Ndumo Game Reserve, beginning in 1947 when the Natal Wildlife Society envisioned a mega-park to parallel Kruger National Park, and then again around 1988, when plans to join the Tembe Elephant Park and Ndumo Reserve were considered but failed. Contemporary plans for a greater Maputaland park began in 1989/90 (DeGrassi, 2003: 31).

(R17,3 million or CAD 2,5 million³²) to the community for development of the restored land, and a further R2,4 million for “planning purposes” (Xingwana, 2008), should community members wish to embark on specific individual endeavours. However, subsequently it has remained uncertain who holds this money and how it is to be accessed. This is further analysed in Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation.

Physical occupation of the property has been precluded, in order to continue the protection of the conservation area, and although there has been no direct payments thus far (Cox, 2004), compensation is to be made through a planned regime of economic benefits which will accrue to the claimants as the land's legal owners (AFRA, 2004: 19). To this end, Wilderness Safaris, a private company, established tour operations at Ndumo Wilderness Camp, creating a luxury eight suite tented solar-powered camp, in a secluded spot in the reserve, in 1995. In 1996 a legal trust, Usuthu Community Trust, was established to hold shares in both the lodge and the operating companies on behalf of the community. Ndumo Wilderness Camp was then purchased by a Lodge Owning Company which comprises Ithala Bank – a local financial institution (42%), Isivuno -- the financial arm of the KZN Conservation Services (43.5%), and the local community (who contributed the land on which the lodge is situated). The operation of the lodge was then contracted to a separate Lodge Operating Company, which consists of Wilderness Safaris (50%), Isivuno (37.5%) and the Community (12.5%) (Poultney & Spenceley, 2001: 4).

Officials in the reserve have found themselves struggling with the community to make the new business partnership work, largely because the reserve does not receive the kinds of tourists, nor the volume, necessary to sustain the operation, and also because the agreement was made before the community was fully informed and capacitated to co-manage the camp. At the time that this research was conducted in 2009, Wilderness Safaris had pulled out of the agreement, due to poor financial progress, and the camp had

³² At the current exchange rate of 6,93 South African Rand to the Canadian Dollar on 26 August 2010.

been closed indefinitely. Still, the Mathenjwa CBNRM initiative is popularly believed to be the more successful of the two settlement outcomes at Ndumo, largely because antagonism between the conservation and the Mbangweni community has been so severe and so widely reported, and because the Mathenjwa have also conceded additional land to the west of the reserve, at Usuthu Gorge, for conservation.³³ Community perspectives on these complex conservations arrangements will be explored in depth in Chapter 3.

2.5 RESEARCH METHODS

The following section outlines the research methods used in order to answer the study's major research questions, which revolve around the history, relationships and problems that characterize CBNRM in Ndumo.

Research for this study was divided into two streams. First, I undertook a literature review on Ndumo's land and conservation history in order to understand the historical context of Ndumo's CBNRM initiative. As little or no census and demographic data exist for this part of rural northern Maputaland, I relied heavily on the information from previous studies of the area to generate baseline data about the local communities that live around Ndumo Game Reserve. Second, I travelled to South Africa for three months to conduct empirical research. I completed two meetings with the local TAs in order to gain permission to conduct research in the area, and twenty-five semi-structured interviews with both park neighbours and local and provincial officials.

³³ Usuthu Gorge is a voluntary conservation area created through the cooperation of the Mathenjwa TA, EKZNW, and the Wildlands Trust, a South African NGO.

2.5.1 Qualitative Methods

I relied primarily on qualitative methodologies in this research, especially semi-structured interviews and focus groups. A qualitative approach was better suited to my research questions, which focus on issues of livelihoods, access and power, “behavioural changes are more easily captured qualitatively, as are issues of power structure, social justice, group dynamics, exploitation, and domination” (Simpson, 2007: 188).

Two introductory group meetings, one each with the Tembe and Mathenjwa TAs respectively (with about twenty people each), and twenty-five one-on-one interviews were conducted over a period of three months. Interviews were conducted with Mathenjwa *izinduna* (headmen) and community elders, and a representative of the Tembe royal family, local and provincial government, conservation authorities, and local NGOs. As virtually no community members were conversant in English, two research assistants – both residents of Ndumo and undergraduate students at the University of South Africa (UNISA) – were employed to help facilitate interviews in isiZulu, the local language. Later, a third research assistant – also a native isiZulu speaker and a graduate of the University of KwaZulu-Natal – transcribed these recordings of the interviews from isiZulu into English. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of informants.

EXPERT INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with twelve individuals who were involved or knowledgeable about the inception and operation of the Ndumo CBNRM venture or the communities themselves. At the provincial level these included officials from the Regional Land Claims Commission (RLCC), the provincial office of the Department of Environment, Agriculture and Rural Development (DEARD), and the provincial conservation authority,

Ezemvelu KZN Wildlife (EKZNW). At the local level, I interviewed two EKZNW personnel based at Ndumo, a member of the local (Jozini) Municipality, a member of the Tembe royal family and tribal council, and an inspector from the local police station. I also interviewed a local wildlife enthusiast and ex-game ranger at Ndumo, a representative of a local NGO that works extensively in the Maputaland area, and an environmental consultant who works and resides in the area.

COMMUNITY-MEMBER INTERVIEWS

Before I conducted interviews in the community I had two preliminary meetings with each Traditional Authority. It was at these meetings that I introduced myself to the authorities, and solicited and gained permission to conduct research in the area. These meetings also provided a useful opportunity to observe the conduct of tribal council, and to gather the views of the council on the present state of CBNRM in Ndumo.

Following this I conducted interviews with the Mathenjwa *izinduna* (headmen). There are eight subwards that neighbour the reserve on the Mathenjwa side, usually governed by one *induna* (headman) each. Circumstances were such that only six *izinduna* were available for interviews.³⁴

I also conducted interviews with seven other community members, based on a snowball sample, where existing participants introduced me to future participants from amongst their acquaintances. As all the *izinduna* that I spoke with were male, I was particularly eager to consult with female community members. Women constituted five of the seven community members interviewed. With the exception of one individual, all community members interviewed were above sixty years old. There are two reasons for this. First, *izinduna* are all well respected senior men appointed by the tribal authority to govern

³⁴ One *induna* was recently deceased and a new one had not yet been appointed, thus, his subward was under the custodianship of a neighbouring *induna*, and the traditional council. In addition, another *induna* was away visiting family in Swaziland for the duration of my field research.

small neighbourhood and villages in the wider Mathenjwa area. In addition, elder women were especially knowledgeable about the history of their communities, and thus balanced the perspectives of the *izinduna*. Second, the rolling sample targeted individuals who were themselves removed from the reserve and thus were legally involved in the restitution process, and hence the CBNRM initiative. As the removals occurred between in the 1940s and 50s, all community members interviewed were in their 60s, with the exception of one man, who spoke of the experiences of his parents and grandparents. Although this sample is not representative of the community as a whole, those individuals interviewed were community representatives that had the most knowledge and interaction with the game reserve, and whose families are being targeted as part of the restitution process.

I did not conduct any interviews with members of the Mbangweni community, although, in addition to the initial introductory meeting with the Tembe TA, I did meet with a member of the Tembe royal family. There were a number of reasons for this, including the difficulty of the terrain on the Mbangweni side of the reserve and, inclement weather during my stay. However, the most critical factor that prevented me from interviewing members of this community was security concerns, which are outlined in more detail in the following section. To compensate for the lack of data from the community itself, and because of the topicality of the conflict over the eastern boundary of the reserve, most of my expert interviews focused on issues that were pertinent to the Mbangweni community specifically. Further, as the area has recently caught the attention of the popular media as well as academics, I was also able to rely on local newspaper accounts, television news transcripts and previous studies that offered useful insight into the relationship between the Mbangweni community and the reserve.

2.5.2 Research Problems and Ethical Issues

I encountered a number of challenges during the research process that forced me to revisit the conceptual and theoretical basis of my study, and re-envision the way in which I went about writing my thesis. The first and most significant obstacle was that when conducting my research I happened upon illegal activity related to the game reserve and local communities. Ndumo Game Reserve is situated on a popular smuggling route for goods between South Africa and Mozambique. Not only is knowledge of this activity pervasive, but it appears to provide a considerable income for certain groups and community members. Community involvement in and awareness of such activities limited both the number of people that were willing to speak with me, as well as the range and depth of information that I could draw from those that I did interview. People were afraid of implicating themselves, or others, in illegal activities. As a result informants were reluctant to speak with me: some were openly hostile and suspicious of my inquiries about the reserve, and occasionally meetings were cancelled completely.

Second, at the time of my fieldwork the provincial government was involved in sensitive negotiations with the Mbangweni community, who have been forcibly occupying the reserve since the end of 2008. Due to the fierce antagonism between the government and the community I was warned by a number of local government personnel that my presence as an outsider might exacerbate tensions, and pose some kind of risk to myself, or jeopardize these negotiations. After much consideration, I decided not to conduct interviews in the Mbangweni community for reasons of security. However, I have still included this community in this study, as I feel that their relationship with the reserve is vital to the story of CBNRM at Ndumo, and that comparing and contrasting the attitudes and relationships of the Mathenjwa and Mbangweni communities will be instructive.

Lastly, although I aim to make observations and inferences about the relevant communities as social wholes, it is important to acknowledge that communities are

significantly differentiated by age, class, gender and other categories of power, and that an individual's situation within particular groups significantly affects his or her relative access to and mobilization of resources. Whilst, my study is informed by this and measures were taken to make study populations as sensitive to such differences and as representative as possible, the scope of this study does not allow me to delineate intra-community differences in as much depth as I would have liked.

CHAPTER 3 FINDINGS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

My research findings can be grouped into two broad streams. The first pertains to how well CBNRM has fulfilled its self-proclaimed social justice mandate. CBNRM seeks to return land lost during apartheid to its rightful owner, devolve power to historically marginalised groups, and build relationships between communities and a previously hostile conservation regime, all the while prioritizing traditional knowledge and lifestyles. My analysis shows that CBNRM in Ndumo has failed to achieve its social justice goals. I argue that CBNRM in Ndumo has not remedied feelings of loss and marginalisation, but rather perpetuates them, in addition to exacerbating tensions between conservationists and communities.

The second stream of findings speaks to the economic outcomes of the land settlement process and CBNRM. My analysis questions CBNRM as a substitute for monetary compensation for the loss of traditional land, and the inability to reoccupy and utilise this land, as well as CBNRM's purported role as a driver of economic development in the region. The rhetoric around land reform and CBNRM has created elevated expectations that have gone largely unfulfilled, as CBNRM has failed to generate any substantial financial benefits to neighbouring communities. Furthermore, I argue that the funds and the attention that have been focused on CBNRM have served to distract from the major infrastructure and service provision needs that prevail in these communities.

3.2 SOCIAL JUSTICE, RESTITUTION AND TRANSFORMATION: ESIQEWINI³⁵ AS HOME, HERITAGE, AND TOURIST DESTINATION?

This section focuses on the role of CBNRM at Ndumo Game Reserve as a facilitator of social justice, restitution, and conciliation in Maputaland. It is divided into three sub-sections. First I briefly revisit the history of land policy in the area, especially apartheid era forced removals, from the perspective of the Mbangweni and Mathenjwa communities, and then go on to present their views on CBNRM as restitution for past injustices. This helps to answer secondary research question 1) What is the history of the area now known as the Ndumo Game Reserve, and how do these historical legacies influence contemporary debates over conservation? My findings demonstrate that feelings of marginalisation and exclusion in these communities are still prevalent, and are not easily overcome because they are strongly historically embedded. This has considerable bearing on how local communities perceive conservation, its purveyors (both private NGOs and official conservators), government and its personnel, and thus provides the historical context to answer research question 2) Who are the key stakeholders in CBNRM at Ndumo Game Reserve, and what is their relationship with each other and the reserve itself?

Second, I consider to what extent CBNRM represents a continuation of the historical trajectory of conservation in Maputaland. Here the details of the attitudes and interactions of the two communities with respect to the reserve, their respective Traditional Authorities (TAs), and the official conservation agency Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW) are explored, hence further addressing research question 2). In addition, assessing the performance of CBNRM today, and hence any problems in its operation, or friction between its stakeholders also helps to answer research question 3) What are the key problems with CBNRM at Ndumo Game Reserve, and how do these impact neighbouring communities?

³⁵ IsiZulu word for game reserve.

Third and finally, I turn to emerging debates in CBNRM and conservation and development more generally, in order to explore the two reoccurring themes of dislocation, in the contemporary context of transfrontier conservation (TFC), and race, a category that is often ignored in South African conservation. These debates also provide insights to help answer research question 3).

3.2.1 Community Views of Conservation, Past And Present

Feelings of exclusion in the region are historically embedded. Thus, it is important to view contemporary debates over land restitution in light of the larger history of land policy in Maputaland. To illustrate how historical land policies and wilderness conservation in this area have affected local people, we must, as Roger, son of iNkhosi (King) Mzimba Tembe, brother of the current iNkhosi Tembe, and a senior member of the Tembe TA, stresses, begin at the “beginning”. Referring specifically to the case of Mbangweni, Roger argues that the conflict over the reserve is not new, but is one in a long line of political maneuvers that has served to divide and oppress his people. In his view contemporary tensions begin with the Mahone award, the survey and declaration of the South African border with Mozambique by French President MacMahone in 1875 (Kloppers, 2003: 68). Roger states: “I want to say that the border there between Mozambique and South Africa does not exist to us, because it cut the community into two”. Beginning seventy years later, the removal of individuals from the Ndumo Game Reserve further contributed to the fracture of the Tembe people. Mbangweni's isolation and marginalisation was also reinforced at this time as the border became more dangerous and militarised due to tensions between South Africa's apartheid government and South African freedom fighters stationed in Mozambique, as well as Mozambique's own civil war. For local people, the enclosure of both the Ndumo and Tembe game reserves have served to isolate Mbangweni from the rest of the Tembe communities in

South Africa, as the establishment of the South Africa's northern international boundary has separated them from their kin in Mozambique.

All twelve expert interviewees, whether government personnel, private consultants, or local 'experts', expressed the view that members of the Mbangweni community maintained profound feelings of loss, displacement, and neglect, that are insufficiently addressed by the CBNRM agreement. Roger, from the Tembe royal family, (2009) asserts that the Mbangweni community is most bitter about their removal from the reserve under the apartheid regime, because this relegated the Tembe people to the infertile, cramped confines of the Mbangweni Corridor. Ismael (2009), a provincial government official from the DEARD and native of Maputaland, concurs:

The problem is historical. The proclamation of Ndumo Game Reserve, you know people were dispossessed. Their access to natural resources on the east bank [of the Pongola] was cut off. And at that time, the approach of conservation was not about negotiation or approaching the community, it was about putting up the fences, forced removals, dispossession. That's one cause of hostility.

Even once the land claim was granted in 2000 the community expressed dissatisfaction with ownership that precluded occupation and allowed limited or no use-rights. Because communal land tenure is the norm – meaning that land is granted to tribe members by their chief or TA based on their need to construct homes or cultivate crops – legal ownership is meaningless to local people who cannot comprehend ownership without accompanying use rights. As Roger (2009) notes: “even if they have the title [deed], they ... are not interested in the title [deed] because the land belongs to the entire tribe and the people want to use it”. The Land Claims Commissioner, Thabi Shange, recognized the importance of local people being able to access 'their' land, and in 2000, considered granting the community 200 hectares for the duration of the agricultural season (5 months) in order to facilitate psychological reparation. She acknowledged the Mbangweni people's need for agricultural land, and expressed hope that such a concession would help “[remove] the bitterness of the past and [let] people look into the future with positiveness and begin to think that there are other bigger things other than

simply occupying or using that place” (50/50, 2008). However, the outcry from conservation NGOs, including the Wildlife Society of South Africa (WESSA), and members of the public resulted in this idea being discarded.

In response to the possible cession of 20 hectares of the reserve, the RLCC, supported by various conservation agencies and interested individuals, argued the community never actually resided on the land (Tong, 2002). This point is clearly made by Peter (2009), a retired game ranger who worked at Ndumo Game Reserve in the 1970s, who believes that the people of Mbangweni are actually displaced Mozambicans and thus have no right to land reparations in South Africa. In contrast, community members maintain that they and their ancestors did indeed occupy homesteads on the land, in addition to using it to supplement their livelihoods on a seasonal basis by hunting and collecting wild fruit and reeds, as well as cultivating in the floodplain and the river banks in the dry season. Ismael (2009), the DEARD representative affirms this view and also asserts that in the KZN borderland, the Mozambican/South African distinction is unhelpful because of the constant movement of people across the border, and the fluidity of their identities:

People move around, all over people move around. Even people, with South African identification, they have come from somewhere, even way back in the days of Shaka, people move around. So where do you draw the line and say that this is a Mozambican and that is a South African? And if you go into the history the boundary between the two is one that people will say was imposed. Socially people have relatives between borders, you know. Even if you go to other places, look at the border between South Africa and Lesotho. People have relatives on both sides of the fence. To them that fence is an artificial boundary. I think you will not be looking at the real issues. You know the moment you are saying these are Mozambicans, you know what are you saying, you're not supposed to provide services, you're not supposed to attend to their land claim. Where does that leave you?

As the LCC had already granted the Mbangweni claim, and their ownership of the conserved land cannot be revoked, the point is legally moot. However, the attempt to disprove the Mbangweni claim has deepened feelings of alienation amongst the people of Mbangweni towards the government. For a people that have a strong sense of their past and their identity, the accusation that they never inhabited or used the land in the eastern

portion of Ndumo Game Reserve, represents a denial of their history and heritage. This resentment is evident in the following quote by Ismael (2009), the DEARD official, when he recalls a recent meeting at Mbangweni: “When we first went the reception wasn’t, I cannot say it was good. It was more hostile. They welcomed us government officials as people. But they did not welcome the government. They were very bitter”. Adam, a senior consultant for EKZN employed to deal with land claims on EKZNW sites, summarises the frustrations of the Mbangweni people when he paraphrases a conversation with an irate community member: “The bones of our ancestors are there, we want to occupy that land which is ours! We were unfairly thrown off it, and it is the only fertile land. Why are we able to go back to it? What’s this business of land claims, we won our claim!”

Similarly, all 13 of the Mathenjwa community informants reported feelings of loss related to their inability to reoccupy their ancestral home in the Ndumo Game Reserve, and all individuals expressed dissatisfaction with CBNRM as the mechanism to redress this. In many cases, this was the strongest point made by interviewees, who described their feelings of marginalisation at length. Repeatedly, individuals recalled better times in *Maphindela*, *Bunguzana* and *Mvutchini*, names that are all but forgotten having been swallowed up by the Ndumo Game Reserve.

Various individuals from the Mathenjwa community recalled stories of how their ancestors came to live in the area now known as the Ndumo Game Reserve. Leko (2009), son of Induna Mthombeni who governed the Mathenjwa communities that lived within the reserve at the time of the evictions, and now a Mathenjwa *induna* himself, described the people of the area as descendants of Gina, who came from over the hills (Swaziland) and settled, with the grace of the Tembe royal house on the west bank of the Pongola River. Although he could not provide any sense of how long ago this happened, he went on to describe how Gina's clan was defeated by the Mathenjwa and absorbed into their kingship. Many of the elders described in detail the lives that their families had

made for themselves along the fertile west bank of the Pongola River. Informants characterized this past as harmonious and happy. For instance Pe (2009) and Babanango (2009) talked about how their parents had fields of fruits and vegetables, herded animals and fished the Pongola River and associated pans. These memories are echoed by Gogo Dladla (2009),³⁶ who remembered how her family would harvest bananas, sweet potatoes, sugar cane, and peanuts, as well as occasionally hunting buck. Whilst these memories may be embellished, it remains true that the enclosure of protected areas precipitated a fundamental change or limitation in land use and ownership, which severely restricted the local people's ability not only to preserve their livelihoods but also to effectively maintain a place of 'belonging' or 'home'. Connor (2005: 368) emphasises that such quixotic recollections and sentimental claims of 'belonging' to a 'home' or ancestral lands by the neighbours or previous inhabitants of protected areas are based on genuine relationships with these landscapes.

In contrast to these fond memories, almost all the elders interviewed recalled the confusion and trauma their families experienced during the forced removal from Ndumo Game Reserve by the Natal Parks Board. They described how they were suddenly penalised for hunting in the area, even though their families had done so for as long as they could remember. They described the way in which families were evicted, one by one, for breaking the laws in the reserve, even though they were not even aware of any laws prohibiting hunting or resource harvesting. Gogo Dladla (2009) remembers how her family was removed in the 1960s: “They come to your house and place a marker. The next day the police come and say you were under arrest. After that you were kicked out to fend for yourself. They’d say we stole from the reserve. It was no longer our land”.

Similarly *Induna* Leko, an elderly Mathenjwa headman, (2009) recalled:

Those who built the reserve took it forcefully – nothing was discussed. When my ancestors were still living there they had problems with the monkeys and the hippos eating their crops. When the reserve representatives arrived, they promised to fence up the area, preventing the hippos from entering and damaging their fields. After that these white men came and told them not to

³⁶ Gogo means grandmother in isiZulu and is a common title for older women.

breed dogs in the area. At this point the residents became suspicious. They were then told not to hunt birds. If you were found hunting birds in your settlement, you were arrested and then removed. There was no longer a vote. People realised that the things they agreed to came with problems. It was also the point of no return – they had fulfilled their promise of ridding the crops of the hippo problem, but have also taken their homes by overpowering them.

When asked about the trauma of forced removals and how CBNRM-related benefits fared as compensation for the lost land, Pe (2009) expressed a popular sentiment:

It got to the point where we thought it was the white man's land. Why else would they remove us so violently? We did not know the land belonged to us. Now we want it back. To this day this has not happened. Now they're trying to fool us into thinking we're getting something back by giving us money from the reserve. We appreciate the money. But we want our land back. We lost many of our cattle. They probably got eaten by the wildlife. If we said something, they'd threaten us with jail time.

These sentiments may be more concentrated in this sample than in the population more generally, as participants were either displaced themselves, or were kin to displaced individuals, or were community elders that had a considerable knowledge of the history and impact of the reserve on the community. Further, time has no doubt sweetened the collective memory, such that memories of life within esiQewini (game reserve) have taken on a mythical or utopian aspect. The present is by comparison inferior, and even seemingly positive aspects are tainted by this constant comparison. One such example is where Malume (2009), an approximately 60 year old Mathenjwa man, claims that “the reserve continually short-changes the community, they give us meat that has rotted”. This is unlikely to be true as the reserve runs a government abattoir and distributes meat to local communities on a rotational basis, and even the reserve's harshest critics have offered positive responses about the programme. Here the question posed by Frisch (2004: 33) is pertinent: “As an era of intense collective experience recedes into the past, what is the relationship of memory to historical generalisation?” Indeed, history and memory cannot be separated out and in this case, both serve to inform the views of Mathenjwa people. What these stories provide then, more than simply approximations of what life for the people of the area had been like before and after exclusion from reserve

land, is an insight into how community members have made sense of their past, their individual and collective identities, their social context, as well as their present.

3.2.2 Contradictions of CBNRM: Conflict and Tensions between Stakeholders

COMMUNITY FRUSTRATIONS RELATED TO CBNRM

Conflicts over resource-use rights are ongoing as members of both communities wish to resume fishing and harvesting food³⁷, medicinal plants, and reeds.³⁸ As CBNRM prohibits any land-use other than conservation at Ndumo, and allows only limited access for resource harvesting (at the discretion of the park managers), the relevance and meaningfulness of this form of restitution is questionable. At present, it appears to create more obstacles to, rather than opportunities for, local livelihoods security. To make matters worse, very low levels of socio-economic development have occurred in the area, even after the arrival of multi-racial democracy in 1994. This has further embittered local people and added credence to the view that the government is disinterested in their plight. Joseph (2009), a 52 year old married farmer from the Mathenjwa community, laments: “I think ... the government doesn’t see us as being important”. Mbangweni is even more isolated and remote, and resultantly the socio-economic situation is even direr. After protracted conflicts between local people and park authorities around water and access to the Pongola River through the park, water committees were established and water points were set up in communities around the park. According to Isaiah (2009), an official from the DEAT, there is currently a project to build toilets in the area. However, he admits that apart from this there is very little government involvement in the area.

³⁷ In addition to various wild fruit, interviewees also frequently referred to fruit trees, especially mangoes that had been planted by their families.

³⁸ Traditional houses are built with the tough, durable stalks of the reed *Phragmites australis* found on river banks throughout the area (Tarr, 2006: 5).

These low levels of development in other sectors put an increased pressure on conservation related tourism to provide sizable returns. Fred (2009), a senior EKZN employee at Ndumo Game Reserve, notes that EKZNW is in an unenviable position, as the most proximal government agency to local communities, it is often held responsible for more general concerns and frustrations aimed at the government for the lack of economic opportunities and poor infrastructure and service delivery. “EKZN cannot provide services, but when people see 'official', they look for development”.

Besides a history of resource harvesting and agriculture within the reserve, both communities have maintained strong emotional and spiritual ties to the land within the Reserve, especially as the graves of relatives of displaced families lie within its confines. “There are burial grounds that we still visit today that we request to visit if things are not going well. Things have cha. We are not allowed in”, laments another Mathenjwa *Induna* Nate. While EKZN does occasionally grant access for such visits on a discretionary basis, permission is increasingly difficult to obtain, and many people do not even bother to make such requests. There is also a profound sense of loss related to being unable to lay more recently deceased family members to rest in their ancestral home, alongside the bones of their ancestors. Induna Leko (2009), son of Induna Mthombeni of esiQewini, recalls: “Our origins are in esiQewini. That means when my father came here, he had no claim to anything. He had ties with iNkosi uManekha who allowed my father to live with him due to being removed from esiQewini. This is where he lived out the rest of his life and was eventually buried – right outside the reserve to close to the ancestors”.

In the face of these complex relationships with the land in question, the delays within the land restitution process are a great source of bitterness for both communities. From their submission to the LCC, it took five and twelve years respectively for the Mbangweni and the Mathenjwa claims to be granted. While this allowed for the title deeds for the land to be transferred from the government to the Mbangweni and Mathenjwa claimants, to date

the actual terms of the settlement agreements are still evolving, and the terms of co-management and benefit-sharing for each community remain uncertain. The frequent delays surrounding the restitution process contribute to the view that the government sees Maputaland as a low priority, and “does not have an interest in the area and its people (Malume, 2009). In the Mathenjwa area individuals frequently expressed frustration at the slow pace of the process, lamenting that “some of the people who launch complaints have already died waiting” (Gogo Mampo, 2009).

Local communities have very little space to assert themselves, as once they agree to engage in CBNRM, the option of withdrawing from conservation does not really exist (AFRA, 2004: 21). Thus, local people have had to find alternative avenues to express their dissatisfaction. Ismael (2009), the DEARD official, affirms that “the issue of the land claim is at the centre here”, but that it has considerable effects on conservation management, especially because Ndumo Game Reserve is the most immediate physical manifestation of their perceived exclusion and neglect, and EKZWN, the most proximate arm of the government that they hold responsible. “It’s not EKZN who is going to resolve that claim, it’s the RLCC. Now if those guys move slowly, then EKZN has been affected”, he adds.

This increasing frustration directed towards the government has manifested itself in increased incidence of vandalism on both boundaries of the reserve (50/50, 2008). Ismael (2009), and James (2009), a local researcher and resident of Maputaland, note that this is born out of a culture of resistance that matured in response to the injustices of apartheid. Government and its institutions are still viewed with suspicion and antagonism, in part because of their historical link with the apartheid regime. James notes that at Mbangweni the community has been cutting down small portions of fence and damaging EKZN property for a number of years. Whilst the obvious rationale for such actions is to gain access to the reserve, James (2009) also notes that in the community such actions are referred to as “sending a fax”: an action that is intended to

convey a message to the government. The most recent example of this was the removal of 11km of game fence along the eastern border of the reserve in 2008. This was about more than simply access: a far smaller opening would have served this purpose. This mass removal of fence was an act of defiance, sending a clear message of the community's dissatisfaction with current conservation arrangements, and their refusal to bear it any longer. According to Ismael, "people cut the fence which then affects conservation management, because they were saying that the process to resolve the land claim was going very very slowly". While this incident was exceptional in its nature and scale, frustrations continue to boil over, and acts committed against the park are becoming increasingly violent. Late last year members of the Mbangweni community had an altercation with a game officer, which resulted in him being captured and beaten (Fred, 2009). However, officials and local police refuse to comment on this incident.

In the Mathenjwa community anger towards government has manifested itself in similar ways. Three years ago the guard hut at the entrance to the reserve was burned down when the guard had closed the gate and gone home for the night. Although it is commonly understood that the perpetrator or perpetrators were from the local community, no suspects were arrested. In addition, several community members and a local politician mentioned a "march" in the last year, where community members assembled at the local Spar supermarket in order to march to the game reserve to express their grievances to the conservation authorities (Mark, 2009). However, elders and community leaders are reported to have defused the situation, at which point the spontaneous gathering disassembled. Gogo Dladla (2009), was amongst the crowd and informed me that they had planned to walk "to the reserve and wait for the reserve to call a Minister". These actions reflect the feelings of voicelessness and brewing discontent of the community. This is apparent when Gogo Dladla goes on to say of their failed attempt to attract official attention: "No one helps us. They simply help the environment, not us". In the face of severe power inequality, and a lack of decision-making and bargaining abilities, in both communities such actions appear to have become a core way in which to

communicate with local authorities and government, and to attract attention to their grievances. As Induna October (2009), a 65 year old Mathenjwa *induna*, explains, “the main reason for their actions was that they did not know what else to do. They wanted government to hear them.”

THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL AUTHORITIES AND LOCAL CONSERVATION BOARDS IN CBNRM

Traditional Authorities represent an influential and powerful force in rural communities and as one of the main bodies responsible for administering CBNRM, there is considerable potential for them to facilitate co-management and resolve conflicts. However, it is vital that they have evolved sufficiently from their apartheid era incarnations to be able to foster conciliation and genuine partnerships with the local communities. Robin Turner (2006: 14) laments the fact that African Traditional Authorities have been excluded from the broader discussion on CBNRM until now, while Cousins & Hornby (2001, cited in Turner, R. 2006: 18) assert that legislation pertaining to restitution and community ownership has “two curious gaps: it ignores 'traditional' authority and customary law, and it makes no reference to local government; these lacunae could facilitate deeply divisive contestation over authority”. Under apartheid ‘tribal’ authorities were established in homelands to serve the interests of the ruling regime, by inexpensively taking on the functions of the state, but without much of representation and power-distribution mechanisms of their pre-colonial versions (Cousins, 2007). Ndumo fell within the homeland of KwaZulu. Homelands no longer exist, but the Traditional Authorities who ‘governed’ the area remain in power, and are struggling to retain their relevance and autonomy amid the changing political landscape. Under the democratic dispensation, TAs, as noted by Manny (2009), an EKZN official charged with public relations and outreach for Ndumo Game Reserve, continue to exert social and political influence wherever they can, and CBNRM has proven to be a crucial area of continued influence. But questions remain regarding the degree of transformation

these TAs have undergone. In post-apartheid South Africa, where local government representatives have been democratically elected and Traditional Authorities with dubious land administration rights persist, community ownership of conservation areas adds a new dimension to an already complex, and often contradictory, political dynamic.

Defining a role for the TA within CBNRM has been especially problematic in Mbangweni. The Tembe TA governs the largest communal area in South Africa, and still comprises the direct lineage of the founding Tembe kings. However, its control over the area and its people has consistently been challenged, first by its assimilation into Natal province, then by the British colonial administration, and most recently by the Zulu Homeland, resulting in its constantly trying to assert itself as a political force. Instances of abuses of power and authoritarian decision-making are explored by Jennifer Lee Jones (2006) and include the establishment of the Tembe Elephant Park in 1983, when the king received payment for the park land, but in the process hundreds of Tembe households were displaced. In a similar but more recent incident, the private company operating the lodge at Tembe Elephant Park in 2002, circumvented the conservation authorities, and arranged a private business deal with the Tembe chief, to secure and expand his operating authority. In return the lodge owner divested partial ownership of the lodge to the Tembe chief, as well as other incentives, including a 4x4 vehicle, to the chief (Jones, 2006: 68). The Mathenjwa TA too has been suspected of corruption, as it cannot account for R99,400 (US\$ 12,662) paid by Wilderness Safaris between 1996 and 2001 to the Usuthu Community Trust, located at the TA (Poultney and Spenceley, 2001). Such actions have created concerns that the TA cannot be trusted to act as a proxy for local communities.

In light of this, local conservation boards (LCBs) have been established to “promote local decision making regarding the management of nature conservation and heritage resources within protected areas as well as to promote the integration of the activities of

the protected area into that of the surrounding area” (EKZNW, 2010).³⁹ The Ndumo/Tembe board was one of EKZN's four pilot projects.⁴⁰ A joint LCB for Tembe Elephant Park and Ndumo Game Reserve, including members of Tembe and Mathenjwa TAs and local communities, was established in October 2000 (Lockett, Mkize & Potter, and 2003:10). The local boards, in consultation with EKZNW, are responsible for planning and implementing management plans for the conservation area, and are also responsible for the administration and implementation of the community levy fund, and any other funds accruing to the Usuthu Trust (EKZNW, 2009).

However, the effectiveness of the LCBs in representing community interests remains in doubt. Seven of the 13 Mathenjwa interviewees responded negatively when questioned about the role of the LCB, while only one thought that they had a positive impact on community participation (the others did not express an opinion on the matter). The most frequent explanations for these negative responses was that the board was unreliable, that it did not convey information to the communities, that it misrepresented the communities, and that it was corrupt or mismanaged funds. Nate (2009), a Mathenjwa *induna* in his 60s of Tembe origin, asserted:

I think it is them [the LCB] that is to blame. They are the main bridge between the community and the government. One day they say one thing, next day they say something else. We tell them that 550 people were displaced. The next day they tell us it's 600. Now the government does not trust what we say.

This accusation of misrepresentation of community interests came up repeatedly in interviews. Induna Leko (2009), son of Induna Mthombeni of esiQewini, bemoans the LCB as the main source of misunderstandings between the community and the government, saying: “They lied to the government and told them that 560 people were

³⁹ LCBs are chosen by the Provincial Minister of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Rural Development (DAEARD), in consultation with EKZNW, and must comprise at least one member of EKZNW. The Minister must also invite submissions from residents of, and neighbouring communities to, the protected area or areas of the names of persons who could be taken into consideration when appointing members to the local board (DAEARD, 1997).

⁴⁰ The others were established at the central section of the Ukhahlamba Drakensberg Park, The Coastal Forest Reserve and The Hluhluwe-Umfolozi Park (AFRA, 2004)

removed. When they asked us, we told them well over 600, they thought, because the reserve was making money, we were wanting to take advantage of that by increasing our numbers”. Furthermore, the LCB’s efficacy is undermined by the fact that the TA is still the final authority on matters relating to land in communal areas, as all land is held by the Inkhosi. For example, in 2002 lions were reintroduced into Tembe Elephant Park with the unilateral consent of the Inkhosi to increase its appeal to tourists, despite the opposition of the neighbouring Tembe people, including the Mbangweni community (Jones, 2006: 66). This example also reflects poorly on EKZN, as they were the primary driver for the establishment of the LCBs, as a more accountable participatory mechanism for decision-making, but have happily bypassed the board, and local concerns, by appealing to the TA to support their plans.

THE ROLE OF EKZN IN CBNRM

There are also serious concerns about the role of EKZNW in CBNRM, because the body's primary concern is ecological preservation, and hence they are not accountable to local people. The organisation represents the merger of two apartheid conservation agencies, the Natal Parks Board, the conservation agency for white Natal province, and the KwaZulu Department of Nature Conservation (KDNC), created to administer conservation areas in the homeland of KwaZulu. With the onset of democracy, these bodies were reconstituted into the KwaZulu Natal Conservation Services, popularly referred to as Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW), the single custodian of the wild commons of the entire KwaZulu Natal province, in 1994. Hence EKZN is a major stakeholder in CBNRM, and must balance both ecological preservation and community empowerment goals. Unfortunately, there appears to be a disjuncture between the rhetoric of CBNRM and the extent to which the EKZNW actually engages with and shares power with local people.

For instance, in a 2003 study, 68% of EKZNW employee respondents felt that the level of community outreach and education was not consistent with the needs in the area (Goodman, 2003: 846). Further studies indicate that EKZNW does not often consult local communities on park management issues, and generally adheres to a preservationist mentality (Jones, 2006; Poultney & Spenceley, 2001; Naguran, 2004). One observer noted that “a number of the old guard conservators in the conservation agency do not support initiatives that involve... communities situated on the periphery of their parks” (Goodman et al, 2002; cited in Jones, 2006: 59). First hand discussions with junior game rangers on the reserve highlighted how little they knew about the communities alongside the reserve. Many viewed Mbangweni in particular with fear and suspicion. Jappie (2009), a 22 year old trainee game ranger at Ndumo from Pretoria, asserted that “those people, are a different kind... [they are] more cultured”. The term culture seems to be used in a derisive way, implying more traditional or ethnic, or even less civilised. It appears that the influence of CBNRM rhetoric on the conservation agency has been limited, and more exclusionary views of conservation still persist amongst its personnel.

Joint-management has been espoused through the CBNRM agreement, but ultimate management responsibility relies almost exclusively on the government, in the form of Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (Naguran, 2002: 9), because EKZN does not have the resources nor expertise to implement co-management. Fred (2009), a senior EKZNW official at Ndumo, asserts that their mandate remains primarily conservation management, and that they are inexperienced and ill-equipped to engage in the kind of development that co-management requires. He acknowledges that so far, even at Mathenjwa, co-management has been very informal and inconsistent, and that there is still so much to be done that he “[doesn't] think that [they] have even started”.

This heavy-handedness persists for two reasons. First, the CBNRM model being implemented in Ndumo is still biased toward the expert conservation authority, holding western environmental science and conservation superior to local and indigenous

knowledge and management techniques (Ward, 1997). Community members are acutely aware of this. For instance when asked about the terms of the CBNRM agreement, Gogo Manana (2009), one of the dispossessed Mathenjwa, and a grandmother who now resides in central Ndumo says “We couldn’t understand everything due to our lack of experience in these matters”. Second, communities targeted for CBNRM in SA are not only previously disadvantaged, but historically marginalised ones and their previous suppression and discrimination – that no doubt have considerable bearing on their individual and collective identities – as well as the history of antagonism between them and various state agencies affects their ability to engage with their partners on an equal footing and assert their views (Turner, R. 2006: 3-4).

The following quote by Joseph (2009), the Mathenjwa farmer, is indicative of the general sense of alienation that the community feels toward the park and its management:

I also think it is important that they let us know about anything they plan on doing [...]. There is this habit the people who run the reserve have about leaving us out of the decision-making. We heard about certain white men who were in talks over buying a hotel, a hotel we as the community had stakes in. They say we’re working together, so what’s going on here? What does it mean to work together? Clearly the white man’s interpretation of working together is different to ours.

The “hotel” in question is the lodge at Ndumo. The community is well-aware that the lodge was purchased on their behalf and of their apparent role in its management, yet given how little they have been consulted, feelings of exclusion abound. Induna Leko (2009) echoes these sentiments asserting that the main problem is that the conservation managers “does not keep close relations with the people [and] when they do something they do not inform [the community]”.

As a result, community members do not trust the motives of government or conservation officials. In the words of Adams and Hulme (2001: 196) “local people have long

memories, and are often acute (and cynical) political analysts – men in uniforms that yesterday held guns are not credible agents for participatory approaches to conservation”. Communities are all too aware that the primary mandate of EKZN is biodiversity conservation, and are rightfully suspicious that CBNRM is merely another attempt to prevent them from disrupting this mission. Laments that the animals and plants are more important than the people were heard frequently, both in interviews and in conversation in and around Ndumo. For instance Pe (2009) says somewhat indignantly: We don't see the problem, we have to eat. There are plenty of animals, but they accuse us of abusing the environment.”

THE EMERGENCE OF INTER-COMMUNITY CONFLICT

CBNRM also appears to be creating and exacerbating local divisions. The Mathenjwa and Tembe of this area have a long and overlapping history. Their relations are delineated in folklore. Nate (2009), an elderly Mathenjwa *induna*, tells us that the area and the reserve were named after the founding king, Ndumo. He governed the west bank of the Pongola, after the land was given to him by the iNkosi (King) Mathenjwa. In contrast, Roger (2009), a member of the Tembe royal family himself, recounts that the Tembe chief handed the west bank over to the Mathenjwa kingdom, because it was too inconvenient for him to frequently cross the Pongola to attend to his subjects on the other side. However, Leko (2009) adds, the *induna* on the west bank was to always be a Tembe man, as it “was the law that there should always be Tembe representation” on the west bank. Whatever the case may be, it is commonly accepted by both the Mathenjwa and the Tembe that they share a common ancestry.

Unfortunately, the relationship between these communities has deteriorated through the years. Gogo Mampo (2009) seemed unsure about why this is the case: “I don't know what is going on over there. They used to do many things for us, now this is no more”.

Several interviewees expressed disdain towards or even fear of the Mbangweni. This community has come to be seen as lawless and wild, due to their isolated location, their perceived foreigner status because of their strong kinship ties with Mozambique, the prevalence of amaTonga instead of isiZulu as a spoken language, and, more recently, because of news of their forced occupation of the reserve. Joseph (2009), the Mathenjwa farmer, says of Mbangweni: “the communities living closer to Mozambique used violent tactics to get what they want, using guns and whatnot. This even appeared in the papers”. Induna October (2009), even asserted that they do not allow people from Mbangweni to come into the area anymore.

The isolation, and resultant outsider status of Mbangweni is largely a result of the historical legacy of conservation which has served to remove the small Tembe group from the broader social landscape. The enclosure of the Ndumo Game Reserve, and later the fencing of the Tembe Elephant Park, cut the Mbangweni off from their Mathenjwa neighbours and Tembe kin, respectively. Further tensions have arisen in part because the Mathenjwa own ten times as much land at Ndumo than do the Mbangweni, and are considered the primary stakeholders. In addition, because their claim was settled post-2001, the Mathenjwa have the benefit of co-management being inscribed in their settlement, in accordance with the Memorandum, whereas the Mbangweni community has had to retrogressively negotiate co-management rights (Dhlamini, 2009). Thus, Mathenjwa have absorbed the bulk of attention and funds relating to CBNRM. However, according to Tembe oral tradition, Ndumo was the son of the Tembe iNkhosi Ngwanase.

⁴¹ His authority extended from the Indian Ocean to the border with Swaziland. “But because of the Pongola River he could not cross the river and service the people on that side. Ndumo is one of the sub-wards that falls under Tembe” (Roger, 2009). If Ndumo is seen as rightly Tembe land, it is unsurprising that Mbangweni residents feel frustration over the Mathenjwa ownership on most of the property.

⁴¹ The son of Queen Zambili, who fled Portuguese aggression and came to British Southern Africa at the turn of the 20th century.

Conflict between Tembe and Mathenjwa is also rooted in having to share the meager benefits of CBNRM. Mandla (2009) reports that community members from the Mbangweni and Mathenjwa are employed to cut down alien plants in the reserve. However, conflict has arisen where Mbangweni residents have over-stepped the demarcation and crossed over to the Mathenjwa side in order to garner a greater portion of the workload. At Ndumo, the land claim process has involved competing claims based on different ideas about who should constitute the ‘community’ in Community-based Natural Resource Management. Even though the settlement of the claims on Ndumo mark the formal resolution of this problem, “when benefits do flow, they [do] not flow equally” (Ashley & Wolmer, 2003: 39). Thus, CBNRM has inadvertently created new inter-community tensions, and inflamed existing ones.

3.2.3 Other Debates: Issues of Space and Race

TRANSFRONTIER CONSERVATION AREAS

Many residents are hopeful that the establishment of the Lubombo Peace Park (LPP) will help to alleviate inter-community tensions by improving living conditions and offering greater economic opportunities for both communities. This initiative hopes to formally connect the protected areas of Ndumo Game Reserve, Tembe Elephant Park, and the Maputo Special Reserve in Mozambique to form a single transnational conservation area. The primary institutional driver of trans-boundary conservation in southern Africa is the Peace Parks Foundation (PPF), a South African based non-governmental organization with an essentially western conservation outlook that garners funding from a host of international aid donors, conservation NGOs, and western government sponsors (Jones, 2005). Its current president is Anton Rupert who started his career as a nationalist thinker in the Afrikaner Broederbond, which sought to empower Afrikaners in the business world (Draper et al, 2004: 342). Although the role of local communities was not

originally part of the LPP mandate, the PPF now describes its mission as follows: [to facilitate] the establishment of transfrontier conservation areas (peace parks) and [develop] human resources, thereby supporting sustainable economic development, the conservation of biodiversity and regional peace and stability”. Part of the logic that informs this vision is that bigger parks promote ecological continuity and integrity, as well as greater financial returns according to the neoliberal economic principal of returns to scale. TFCAs are increasingly being reconfigured as a development mechanism based on the assumption that accompanying economic benefits will accrue directly to local communities or, at the very least, trickle down to them (Magome & Murombedzi, 2003).

While proponents of the TFCA are hopeful that it may accelerate improvements to livelihoods based on economies of scale, this will likely not alleviate problems related to financial dishonesty, or the community’s general air of distrust towards conservation initiatives, if it does not address issues of institutional transformation for either EKZN or TAs. Mathenjwa community members are divided over the desirability of the initiative. Six interviewees thought a TFCA was a bad idea, while seven thought that it was good, if it could provide jobs and infrastructure. The main reasons interviewees offered for this opposition to the TFCA was that foreigners from neighbouring Mozambique and Swaziland could not be trusted because they were responsible for crime. Another reason informants offered was that the TFCA would prevent them from accessing neighbouring countries to visit family, as borders that have been relatively permeable for local people may be enclosed within the TFCA and stocked with wildlife. Gogo Mampo’s (2009) response encapsulated both of these fears: “The thought of us joining Mozambique and Swaziland is too terrifying. Not only because of the dangerous wildlife, I’m also talking about the crime. It would also prevent us from visiting relatives if the area is now filled with this dangerous wildlife”. Clearly ties to neighbouring countries are important to local livelihoods and culture, and the movement of people back and forth between the formal boundaries of South Africa and Mozambique is a well-entrenched historical practice.

In order to join Ndumo Game Reserve and Tembe Elephant Park, a considerable portion of Northern Mbangweni is to be excised from the community. All or most of the 114 Mbangweni residents would have to be moved, presumably into Southern Mbangweni and the neighbouring Bhekabantu area, depending on how much land was deemed necessary for ecological continuity within the corridor. Such a corridor is an essential link in the Lubombo TFCA initiative, but threatens to further destabilise an already aggrieved community by relocating them once again, even as the fallout from their apartheid era resettlement is yet to be resolved. Roger (2009), a member of the Tembe royal family, is skeptical about the benefits the TFCA will have for the Mbangweni people: “You can work very hard to make sure this thing is joined, but if you want to join this you must have an alternative for the people. Create a sort of employment, create a sort of changing of the lifestyle of the community away from there”. He goes on to explain that in his view there wouldn't be a need to resettle Mbangweni residents if they saw a viable alternative, because the land is so poor there that they would be happy to move out gradually, if they were offered employment or livelihood opportunities elsewhere. Jones' (2006) study points to a number of potential negative social and economic impacts on Mbangweni residents that could occur as a result of forced mass relocation in order to create the Lubomobo TFCA. Amongst these are decreased access to important livelihoods resources (grazing land, water and trade in Mbangweni and Mozambique), further fragmentation of the social linkages between Mbangweni and family members and friend still living in Mozambique, and increased intra-community tension due to ballooning population density as a result of their resettlement in Southern Mbangweni and the neighbouring Bhekabantu area (Jones, 2006: 170). Roger (2009), a member of the Tembe royal family, stresses the severity of these concerns: “If I can tell you, to we Blacks, the issue of land are very important. If you want to start the war, start the issue of land”.

STILL JUST BLACK AND WHITE: THE DYNAMICS OF RACE AND CONSERVATION IN NDUMO

The debate over CBNM in Ndumo is often described in racial terms. No fewer than five Mathenjwa community members referred to race in some way; most often it was used to differentiate the community from the conservators, where the conservation agency itself, game guards, NGOs, and their personnel were referred to as “white men”, and frequently, as with Roger (2009), the community was self-identified as “us blacks” or we “black people”. This is consistent with the broader literature on the history of conservation and racial politics, where white people, particularly white men, are viewed as the self-identified custodians of nature, and Africans are seen as poor, resource hungry peasants, who pose the most immediate and grave threat to Africa's pristine wildernesses. Kepe (2009) confirms Beinart's (2000) view that this characterisation of African peoples and environments, and the subsequent creation of protected areas that marked colonial imperialism, is a trend that continues today. The most poignant symbol of this deep connection between race and conservation is barbed wire fence, which has had an extraordinary and evocative role in South African history and politics. Spierenburg and Wels (2006: 196) chronicle its history: from the Anglo-Boer War, where the fence was used for the first time in warfare, to its popular use to keep animals in and people, more specifically black people, out of conservation areas. Now increasingly, fences are being dropped or re-positioned to form TFCAs, in a way that purports to extend wilderness beyond colonial national boundaries, and simultaneously reach out to African communities.

Spierenburg and Wels (2006) question this continued emphasis on boundaries and spatial structure in TFCs, and argue that the explicit use of cartography on such a grand scale by western conservationists in the PPF is interpreted by community members as a continuation of imperialist expropriation. That is, the way the politics of cartography play out, produce nature and space in contemporary southern Africa, where maps appear to precede the territory, and are the specific forte of westerners, seems to prevent the

involvement of local communities in the process. Monmonier (1995, cited in Spierenburg & Wels, 2006: 196) pointedly refers to this as “mapism, ... the same mix of ignorance, prejudice, and arrogant conviction that leads seemingly honest, well-meaning people to assert the superiority or inferiority of a racial or ethnic group”. The work of Cheryl Teelucksingh (2007) on environmental racialisation can be readily applied to position of the PPF, and other proponents of TFCs. The author asserts that environmental racism is insufficient to account for the range of actions and consequences that should be the subject and work of environmental justice, because it focuses too closely on rationality and intentionality. Meanwhile, there is a whole gambit of actions that while being well-intentioned, can result in unpurposeful racist outcomes, even if these outcomes are systemic (Teelucksingh, 2007: 649). In this case, even though the objective intention of PPF is to facilitate a broadening of the environmental commons for increased ecological continuity, regional cooperation, and rural development, they subjectively impose a view of conservation, knowledge and space that disadvantages local African populations by working in a format and scale that is inaccessible to them. Despite these continuities, however, current debates about conservation in South Africa do not often confront race issues that were intertwined with conservation in the past, and that continue to inform it in the present (Kepe, 2009: 873).

3.2.4 Conclusion

CBNRM as practiced at Ndumo Game Reserve appears to have diminished rather than improved social justice and reparations for the Mathenjwa and Mbangweni people. The land claims process has been fraught with delays, false-promises and confusion. It has been difficult to arrive at a CBNRM agreement that is clear, practical and mutually agreeable in either the Mathenjwa or the Mbangweni case, because community members desire access to their ancestral land and resource use rights, but the government appears determined to adhere to a vision of conservation that excludes these possibilities.

Government officials have frequently used the promise of CBNRM-related benefits to garner support from local people to continue conservation on restituted land, but have not been able to fulfill their promises. As a result local people do not feel that they have been sufficiently compensated for their losses, either directly or through flows from CBNRM. Furthermore, conservation has remained very much an 'official' concern, and local people have voiced frustration at being unable to participate in reserve operation or management, despite being the purported legal owners of the property and the process. The primary institutions responsible for facilitating CBNRM, EKZNW and the Mathenjwa and Tembe TAs do not appear to have undergone sufficient transformation from their apartheid era incarnations. Trans-frontier Conservation (TFC) has been gaining momentum in conservation and development circles, but poses new challenges to these rural livelihoods, especially for the people of Mbangweni who may be relocated. Far from alleviating historical loss and trauma of forced removals, CBNRM in Ndumo has compounded feelings of loss and marginalisation.

3.3 ESIQEWINI AS A SOURCE OF FINANCIAL GAIN

CBNRM has been touted by the South African government, global financiers (such as the World Bank and USAID), and various conservation NGOs, as a major driver of rural economic growth in impoverished areas of South Africa. In the wake of this rhetoric, at Ndumo, direct monetary compensation for apartheid era forced removals has been reduced or eliminated in the hope that CBNRM would serve as a lucrative substitute. However, the reserve had not been able to generate the kind of economic benefits that proponents had predicted. I begin this section by demonstrating why, from the beginning of the restitution and settlement process, hopes were high for the gains to be made from newly bestowed ownership of the reserve land, but as the process commenced, the terms of the settlements became more unclear, as government has tried to place more emphasis on CBNRM and related endeavours as a compensatory mechanism. But, as I will go on to show, CBNRM has not proved profitable enough to be considered appropriate

substitute for direct compensation, nor a sustainable driver of economic growth in the area.

3.3.1 From 'hand-outs' to CBNRM

A number of factors have contributed to the high expectations over the benefits associated with conservation in Ndumo. When Tembe Elephant Park was established in 1983, the Tembe TA, responsible for Mbangweni, was promised a 25% share of gross tourism revenues, but mistakenly received 25% of the park's total budget. This mistake was corrected soon after, but it helped to create big expectations over the profitability of eco-tourism within the traditional authority and the communities it served .(Jones, 2006: 65). The Mathenjwa community had a similar experience: between 1996 and 2001, R 99,400 was disbursed to the Mathenjwa TA from the Lodge Owning Company. This was done to demonstrate goodwill, and bolster confidence in the community about the venture, even though the Ndumo Wilderness Camp was not turning a profit at this time. While these remunerations were well-intentioned, they served to create the false perception that CBNRM at Ndumo was financially rewarding, when in fact the eco-tourism project floundered from the outset. These two examples helped create the view amongst the two TAs and the broader community that CBNRM was capable of providing significant financial rewards, compensation for land reforms, and generate long-term economic growth.

Government promises over CBNRM benefits as compensation of apartheid era forced removals further contributed to these elevated expectations. Prior to 2001, land claims were settled by returning lost land where possible, or awarding direct monetary compensation for the alienated land and for the suffering endured as a result of the alienation. However, subsequent to the establishment of the Memorandum, government has increasingly tried to reduce the financial toll of land claims, by making settlements on

conservation areas pay their own way. As a result, in both Mbangweni and Mathenjwa settlements began with expectations of considerable monetary compensation that were then replaced by promises of economic rewards through CBNRM.

These promises have been a consistent source of debate and confusion, because they were not very well defined in the settlement agreements, and have changed several times through the negotiation process. When the draft settlement for Mbangweni was drawn up in 2000, the Land Claims Commissioner, Thabi Shange, suggested that the Mbangweni people be permitted to access a portion of the reserve for cultivation and also provided R 10,000 in compensation per claimant household. Similarly, when the hand-over celebrations for the Mathenjwa section of Ndumo Game Reserve were held in 2008 at Bessiesvlei Farm, the then Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Lulu Xingwana, announced that R10,000 would be afforded to each of the 562 claimant households. Subsequent to these optimistic arrangements, both settlements have been plagued by inconsistency and confusion. At Mbangweni, Minister Shange ultimately cancelled the formal land restitution ceremony inside the park (where title deeds would have been handed to those identified as bona fide claimants), in the face of major contestation over the proposal to allow Mbangweni residents use a portion of the reserve for agriculture. Although this was merely a formality, and the people of Mbangweni do legally own the portion of the reserve that they claimed, this represented a shift in public opinion about the appropriateness of CBNRM for Ndumo, and the deservingness of the claimant community to receive compensation. In light of this, any potential rights to occupation or use of the park for cultivation by Mbangweni people has been revoked. Later the monetary compensation too was halved to R 5000 (Mail & Guardian, 2008). To date, no funds have been dispersed by the LCC (Adam, 2009).⁴²

⁴² While the settlement process progressed, the claimant households received R500 per month and food parcels for 6 months as an immediate poverty alleviation measure, but it is unclear whether the interim 500 per month will comprise part of the R5000 or not.

The relationship between conservation authorities at Ndumo and those living on the eastern boundary of the game reserve has deteriorated in recent years. In August 2008 frustration over the lack of benefits accruing to the community from Ndumo Game Reserve culminated in members of the Mbangweni community cutting 11km of boundary fence in order to occupy the eastern corner of Ndumo Game Reserve. However, according to Adam (June 2009), the senior consultant for EKZNW on Mbangweni, an agreement had been reached in mid-2009 between EKZNW, DEAT and the community according to which the community is being allocated alternate land to compensate for their limited access and use of the park (Jones, 2008: 1).

In Mathenjwa, the actual amount and means of compensation has also been a major area of contention. Informants characterized their interaction with government agencies as being full of miscommunications and contradictions. The R10,000 promised to the Mathenjwa community never materialised. Walter Silaule, the Director of the Regional LCC in Pietermaritzburg, argues that such hand-outs create dependency, and thus the RLCC would rather compensate claimants through benefit-sharing in a public-private partnership eco-tourism venture (Cox, 2004:14). This has been a sore point for all claimants, who report feeling manipulated and lied to. Gogo Manana, an elderly female claimant from Mathenjwa laments: “They told us that they could not let us back in, but promised we would receive money to live off of. To this day we have not received anything”.

As the primary claimants, the residents of Mathenjwa were also supposed to receive 25 % of the value of their land, estimated at over R17.3 million, for the “development of the restored land”, as well as a further R2.4 million for “planning purposes” (Xingwana, 2008), should community members wish to embark on specific individual endeavours. These two sums have not had very much of an impact the community, and only two respondents even mentioned them as CBNRM-related benefits. This is because development of the restored land, facilitated by the first sum, is used for eco-tourism

development and infrastructure within the game reserve, which is generally invisible and inconsequential to the community outside the reserve as they are not kept abreast of these developments, nor do they reap any tangible benefits from it. Further, the grants for “planning” are supposed to be disbursed for community-based economic ventures in the wider area, but members are uncertain of how to go about such an entrepreneurial undertaking, and the bureaucratic process through which it is dispensed is unclear to them. A Jozini municipal councilor for the IFP, Mark (2009), echoes this point when he states that “all what they are saying is little bit complicated because the project, they've said they have [money] for the people if they want to do the project... but I don't see them assisting them or forming cooperatives to approach that funding, it's nothing, just talk”.

This is another source of feelings of confusion and exclusion that persists within the Mathenjwa community. CBNRM represents a new, complicated set of arrangements and economic and bureaucratic procedures, which, in the case of Ndumo, leave many community members feeling alienated from and marginalized by the park's management. This is illustrated by the quote by Gogo Manana (2009) noted in the previous section: “We couldn't understand everything due to our lack of experience in these matters”. Likewise, October (2009) admits that even as an *induna*, “it is hard for me to give the full story ... We need better trained people to handle these things”.

As recently as July 2010 negotiations at Mbangweni were still underway, and the community had not yet evacuated the reserve. Whether this agreement will endure is uncertain. Ismael, the official from DEARD, acknowledges that the Mbangweni land claim has been handled poorly, “when the land claim was awarded to them, there were any number of promises that were made and not kept, and that has created another area of hostility”. He insists that the DEARD and EKZNW are in the process of developing a comprehensive plan for Mbangweni, which involves CBNRM as well as identifying “opportunities for agriculture outside the protected area, economic activities, and opportunities for services delivery”. Adam (2009) informed me that CBNRM on the

Mbangweni portion will likely include hunting concessions, which may be very lucrative because of the surplus of Nyala buck, a favourite for game hunters, in the area. However, the poor financial outcomes of the neighbouring CBNRM initiative at Mathenjwa do not warrant confidence over the prospects of future endeavours.

Members of the Mathenjwa community lament the dearth of economic benefits that have accrued from the CBNRM venture. Communities adjacent to the park are intended to benefit from income generated through a community levy paid by visitors. These funds are provided to communities for development needs as prescribed by the local conservation boards. While no official information is available as to how much the community levy fund has accrued to date, low levels of tourist activity suggest that this funding arrangement is not very lucrative. The Ramsar profile (1996) for the site states that “day visitors arrive in small numbers”.⁴³ In 1998, Wilderness Safaris, the private operator that runs Ndumo Wilderness Camp, was reporting highs in occupancy at 52% and lows at 15% (Elliott, 1998: 6). According to Spenceley (2008) Wilderness Safaris lost approximately R5 million between 1995 and 2004. This poor performance is largely a result of the distance and difficulty in accessing the park from any major town or city, and also because Ndumo’s niche as a key bird-watching destination limits its appeal for both domestic and international tourists (Makhaye, 2008: 1).

Ndumo’s difficulty in drawing large numbers of tourists is neither unique nor unusual. “Many community-based eco-tourism projects cited as success stories actually involve little change in existing local land and resource-use practices, provide only a modest supplement to local livelihoods, and remain dependent on external support for long periods, if not indefinitely” (Kiss, 2004: 232). Where Ndumo is different is that the main source of financing has been the private sector, which is generally unwilling to endure losses or very low profit margins for any period of time. Not surprisingly, the private tour operator Wilderness Safari, which had been operating the lodge since 1995, has

⁴³ Data on the actual number of visitors to Ndumo Game Reserve are unavailable,

pulled out of the venture, and the lodge at Ndumo has been closed indefinitely since the end of 2004 (Spenceley, 2008). However, the facility has been maintained and used to accommodate government personnel and other exceptions until 2009, when this research was conducted. This has resulted in the laying-off of twenty-one local residents who had been employed by Ndumo Wilderness Camp (Poultney & Spenceley, 2001: 22).

The impact of the closure on the Mathenjwa community has been less severe than expected, due largely to the lack of benefits that accrued to the community while the lodges were operational. Clive Poultney and Anna Spenceley, both associates for the Institute of Natural Resources in South Africa, provide a telling assessment of the initiative. From 1995/96, when the lodge opened, to 2001, Wilderness Safaris failed to turn a profit at Ndumu Lodge. However, as previously mentioned R 99,400 was distributed from the Lodge Owning Company to the community's Usuthu Trust between 1996 and 2001. This theoretically benefited all members of Mathenjwa at a rate of R 4.78 per person over a 5 year period, or less than R 10 (less than US\$1) per person per year. Poultney and Spenceley (2001) report that the Ndumu Lodge staff that they interviewed asserted that they had not seen any benefits from this money and had no idea what the TA had done with these funds (Poultney & Spenceley, 2001: 22).

Not surprisingly, all 13 interviewees reported that they did not see any tangible benefits from CBNRM at Ndumo. Induna October, from Mathenjwa, states: “we did not receive the money we were promised ... [or] the jobs that were promised to us”. Induna Leko also questions the financial benefits of CBNRM, and the way in which they were disbursed, stating: “The reserve started making serious money. They promised it would help the community, but it was sent to the kingship. The community did not benefit much in the end”. When asked how CBNRM had affected his community, Baba Muzi, the *induna* of the community where the entrance to Ndumo Game Reserve is situated, responded: “Nothing. They give us nothing. The only thing that we can say is that they sell us meat every now and again”.

Accusations of corruption and mismanagement of funds are rife, compounding the resentment created by poor financial returns. EKZNW has generally been concerned about the degree of transparency and accountability of TAs responsible for receiving and disbursing funds from CBNRM, as their financial activity generally goes unchecked by the tribes-people it serves. The Mathenjwa TA has been unable to account for the R99,400 that had flowed to them from Wilderness Safaris over 5 years (Poultney & Spenceley, 2001). In order to address this and to create better lines of communication, EKZNW established Local Conservation Boards in 2000 with the aim of integrating its institutional within the livelihoods strategies of neighbouring communities. However, Mathenjwa community members were doubtful about the ability of the board to operate successfully and transparently. Eight community interviewees admitted that they feared corruption and mismanagement of funds, although seven specifically mentioned the LCB citing a lack of accountability, transparency, and rumours of corruption as concerns.

At Mbangweni, it is only now that the community has occupied the reserve that plans are being formulated to invest in an eco-tourism venture on their side of the Ndumo Game Reserve. It is difficult to assess its potential for success, though the discouraging precedent of Wilderness Safari at Mathenjwa offers little room for optimism. A financially viable venture seems difficult to envision, especially since it will provide direct competition for Ndumo Wilderness Camp, should this venture ever become operational again. Considering that the community accepted the terms of the land claims settlement on the basis that they would be compensated through a planned regime of economic benefits, it is apparent that CBNRM is not living up to expectations. Given this discouraging outlook for tourism, it is not surprising that the Mbangweni have reverted back to their original demands for agricultural and residential use of their portion of the reserve.

3.3.2 Reliance on Alternative Livelihoods

Community members in both areas still rely heavily, indeed almost entirely, on land-based livelihoods, and questions concerning access to land set aside for conservation are a constant source of tension. Reed stocks inside both Tembe and Ndumo parks are carefully monitored by EKZN so as to avoid depletion. This is a huge source of resentment for community members, especially women, who feel entitled to continue using the grass to construct houses as they have done so for generations. Reed harvesting has always been practised by local communities, but previously it was done on a subsistence basis. Now, increased population and the relative inexpensiveness of reeds, compared with traditional western building materials, has resulted in a burgeoning market for the durable grass. In light of this and the limited economic opportunities in the area, instances of illegal harvesting have risen (Tarr, 2006: 6).

Small game poaching has also increased in recent years, by as much as 350% according to one estimate. (Tarr, 2006:133). Residents of Mbangweni consume significantly more bush meat than surrounding communities, likely due to a combination of taste, and a lack of inexpensive protein substitutes. According to Jones 2006: 168), conservation authorities attribute 70% of the poaching in the game resource to is residents from Mbangweni and another Tembe ward, and 30% to Mozambicans (Jones, 2006: 168). Such poaching is almost entirely for immediate consumption or small-scale economic enterprise (Jones, 2006; Kloppers, 2004). These two examples of local resource use suggest that CBNRM has not alleviated, but rather intensified, the resource dependency of local people (Jones, 2006: 168). These increased incidences of reed harvesting and bush meat consumption further underscore residents' resistance to the dominant valuation of nature – as a good to be consumed by western tourist – upon which CBNRM is predicated.

Furthermore, rumours of illegal activities at Mbangweni are rife around the area. Smuggling between Mozambique and South Africa is the most prevalent: cigarettes, pots and pans, even hijacked motor vehicles are ferried across the border with ease (Hennop and McLean (Cited in Kloppers, 2004:146). This stretch of border contains many of the main routes used by both the apartheid regime and the ANC to smuggle weapons into Mozambique during the Civil War. From 1993 to 2002, the SANDF recovered 874 vehicles along the border that were hijacked and stolen in South Africa. In many places, there are tire tracks on both sides of the border where stolen vehicles have been recently driven through (Kloppers, 2004: 150). Adam (2009), the chief consultant for EKZN, reports that the South African Police are undertaking a major cross-border investigation around a car hijacking and smuggling syndicate that operates through Mbangweni. Other items cited by Kloppers (2004) include second-hand clothing, fish, alcohol and marijuana. The prevalence of cross-border smuggling was affirmed by four of my expert interviewees (Ismael, 2009; Morris, Roger, 2009, Rudolph, 2009). This suggests that local communities are not ascribing to the logic of CBNRM and are seeking alternative, more autonomous, forms of revenue generation.

3.3.3 TFCAs and Economies of Scale

The proposal to extend conservation at Ndumo into a larger TFCA has been espoused as a solution to the poor economic performance of the CBNRM venture. In June of 2000, the governments of Swaziland, Mozambique, and South Africa entered into the Lubombo Transfrontier Trilateral Protocol to formally establish the Lubombo Transfrontier Conservation and Resource Area (Patel, 2006). Although government officials are working in earnest to dismantle international border fences and create management plans, and make the TFCA operational, it may not be a practical or desirable solution for local people, who will be the most affected by its implementation.

James (2009), a long time resident and researcher in Maputaland, argues that the TFC project is not economically viable. He suggest that, while the project may serve the conservation and diplomatic ends of the government by forging deeper ties with countries in the region, it will do little for economic development in northern Maputaland, given its remote location, its status as a malarial zone, and the limited number of tourists who visit the area. He also notes that there are concerns that such a venture may worsen the situation of surrounding communities such as Mathenjwa and Mbangweni. For example, at the Great Limpopo TFCA, the centerpiece of the PPF's efforts, which links Kruger National Park, Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe, and Limpopo National Park in Mozambique, research found that of the 115 field rangers to be trained for the Mozambican portion of the park, only 29 individuals were selected from local villages (Jones, 2005: 269). This figure challenges the proposed employment benefits of the TFCA for local people. Furthermore, rather than increasing rural development, there are concerns that TFCAs will purposely limit development as current communal land-use patterns are maintained to act as buffer zones or interstitial corridors of low-impact surrounding conservation areas, and thus prohibit any economic activity that could disturb the ecology of the area, either directly, or by increasing population density or road traffic (Wolmer 2003).

Most crucially, there is still no support from the neighbouring communities, without whom the future of the project seems dubious. Adam, a government consultant engaged with negotiation at Mbangweni, details the difficulty in negotiations over the using the Mbangweni corridor as a key conduit in the TFCA. Time after time the community has backed away from any deal, signaling the lack of support for this project and likely fear a new wave of displacement or the loss of crucial agricultural land (James, 2009). Adam recalls community members citing the loss of grazing land as a reason for resisting the TFCA, but does not believe this reasoning himself:

When we asked, but why is this being rejected? 'Oh, because it will take away our grazing area'. Now the number of cattle here, and the amount of under-utilized grazing, is incongruous with the fact that they could claim that it would

take away their grazing area. It all boils down to the fact that if that happened, there would be no smuggling route.

This speculation that criminal elements in the community may be inciting residents against such a venture as it may disrupt the illegal cross-border trade is significant. Right now community members control the border and can utilize this corridor as they wish (for smuggling goods, to enable them to move across the border as they wish.

Establishing a transfrontier park would give the state(s) control over this border and limit the ability of community members to control this boundary. To the extent that this trade represents real economic flows to the community, and CBNRM does not, this is bound to be a sticking point (Adam, 2009).

3.3.4 Summary

If CBNRM is to replace direct compensation within land reform, and to catalyse rural economic growth a number of outstanding problems still need to be addressed. The sophisticated nature of eco-tourism as an industry, its foundation in western conceptions of nature and the capitalist market economy, and the obvious power differential between the various stakeholders puts local communities at a considerable disadvantage.

Community members complain of being excluded due to a lack of consultation, decision-making power, and relevant knowledge. Attempts to advance conservation through expanded protected areas (TFCs) promise greater returns to neighbouring communities based on the logic of economies of scale, but preliminary research suggest that such a ventures in Maputaland is unlikely to garner local support due to the potential appropriation of more communal land, the enclosure of thoroughfares between South Africa and neighbouring countries, and uncertain level of involvement and benefits for neighbouring communities. TFCs also threaten to further alienate local people, who risk being engulfed in multinational ventures, that are theoretically grounded in local

management, but that require high degrees of cross border policing and management, and trans/multi-national negotiation and decision making.

3.4 CONCLUSION

As CBNRM continues in Ndumo, it is important to understand the impacts that it has with respect to the self-proclaimed goals of restitution and rural development. In both Mbangweni and the Mathenjwa communities, it is doubtful that CBNRM has served as sufficient remedy and recompense for the historical injustices suffered by the people of the area. Although their circumstances and their involvement with CBNRM have been quite different, both communities appear to have significant feelings of resentment over lost land rights due to conservation, and continued feelings of voicelessness, powerlessness and neglect within current CBNRM arrangements.

Mathenjwa and Mbangweni residents view the area upon which the reserve is situated as their ancestral home and associate various sentimental and use-values with the land. There is an almost unanimous feeling that their lives on the banks of the Pongola River were richer and more harmonious, and that they have experienced little but hardship since their removal. Government efforts to provide recompense are seen as feeble, protracted, and an exercise in tokenism, and there is little goodwill between the people and the other official CBNRM partners. What it means to be an authorised user in the Ndumo context is dubious in itself as rights to harvest natural resources are still heavily contested and the conservation authorities determine the scope and extent of usage. Joint-management has been espoused through the CBNRM agreement, but ultimate management responsibility lies heavily on government, represented by Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (Naguran, 2002: 9). Furthermore, the levels of transformation in the primary institutions of CBNRM, the EKZN conservation agency, the Traditional Authorities for each area, and the local conservation board seem inadequate, as a high degree of authoritarian decision making and elite capture persists. As a result, the attitudes and conceptions that prevail at the

decision-making levels are not conducive to genuine community involvement, participation and transparency. And CBNRM has become, in effect, no more grass-roots or community oriented than any alternative top-down approach.

This becomes especially problematic when considering CBNRM's second goal of economic development. CBNRM has been conceptualised and operationalised within an essentially neoliberal global context, on the basis that it can generate economic benefits for the local communities involved. However, CBNMR at Ndumo falls short of the economic driving force it was initially envisioned as, as and has consistently produced poor results. Where financial benefits did exist, barely any made its way to community members. Communities are further excluded from important processes and decisions due to their low-levels of skills, broken lines of communication, and their unfamiliarity with tertiary economic endeavours like eco-tourism, resulting in a very skewed balance of power between private-partners, conservation managers, and local stakeholders.

Finally, questions about the economic benefits of CBNRM notwithstanding, it appears that a considerable proportion of park neighbours do not even share the view that conservation is a worthwhile endeavour, whether it is community-based or not. This has important implication for CBNRM, as truly empowered, local decision-making may lead to outcomes that are undesirable for conservation, but following conservation goals without taking cognisance of the will of the community defeats the goal of CBNRM, and indeed is not CBNRM at all.

CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section I aim to synthesise my research findings using some of the key concepts delineated in my theoretical framework. Of these, the most significant are Adams and Hulme's criteria for successful community conservation (CC), introduced in their 2001 study.⁴⁴ I have identified four criteria that are crucial to evaluating the effectiveness of CBNRM in the case of Ndumo. These are (1) the just compensation for lost land rights by local people due to conservation initiatives; (2) the transformative effect of CBNRM rhetoric on the conservation agency (e.g. the creation of genuine power-sharing between the conservation agency and local people); (3) the fulfillment of community expectations; and (4) the existence of a common conception of nature and its values that is shared by conservation authorities and neighbouring communities. These four criteria combine CC's focus on achieving social justice and economic outcomes simultaneously, and thus provide a crucial test for evaluating whether CBNRM in Ndumo has achieved its stated mandate.

4.2 SYNTHESIS

4.2.1 Feelings of Loss and Just Compensation

Adams and Hulme (2001: 196) argue that, although "economists like to argue that every grievance has its price [...] this is a very limited and cynical" view. The foundational logic of CBNRM suggests that suitable compensation for lost rights through direct payments, aka benefit-sharing, will remedy existing grievances such that conservation can continue unhindered. However, Adams and Hulme (2001) suggest that this is an

⁴⁴ Infield and Adams (1999) and Levine and Wandesforde-Smith (2004) also provide important insights.

overly simplified view; where resentment over evictions or loss of rights in a protected area is profound; gaining the community support and participation required for CC is particularly unlikely. In many cases, the greatest loss for community members was the land itself. Infield and Adams (1999) found that at Mgahinga Gorilla National Park the conserved land was primarily imagined as past or future fields, from which people were, and would continue to be, excluded. In other cases, park lands that preclude occupation represent an alienation from a clan identity or ancestral home (Ranger, 1999). Such landscapes possess a profoundly sentimental and cultural value. They comprise a unique sense of place, heritage, and connection with living relatives and deceased ancestors. Inability to reside on traditional and culturally important land represents a discontinuity with the past, and an uncertain future, neither of which are easily remedied or compensated for.

In Ndumo, feelings of loss and dispossession have continued to plague the CBNRM initiative even after agreements over the ownership and use of the land were concluded. This study has shown that community members still feel dissatisfied with the restitution value of CBNRM. In Mbangweni payments of R5000 and food parcels were made to families that were dispossessed of their land during the establishment and development of Ndumo Game Reserve. In Mathenjwa areas, it was decided that no direct payments would be made but that funds would be set aside for locally driven development and that indirect benefits of CBNRM, through tourism revenues and related expenditure in the area, would compensate local people. To date, the tourist venture at Ndumo has failed to generate a profit and has shut down, rendering compensation through benefit-sharing meaningless. Initial payments were made to the Mathenjwa Tribal Authority (TA) by Wilderness Safaris to show goodwill toward the community, but these amounted to R 10 (less than US\$1) per person per year, and do not constitute any significant improvement in their wellbeing.

Despite these financial shortcomings, there remains the possibility that, given the nature of historical dispossession at Ndumo which can be traced back through British colonization and apartheid, financial measures alone may be insufficient to satisfy conditions for just recompense to the affected communities. Many informants suggested that the only acceptable outcome for the community is reclamation or reoccupation of the land. For instance, when asked what outcome she hoped to see from the land claim settlement, Gogo Emerald, a 95 year old grandmother and subsistence farmer said: “They can leave so we can return to our homes. If they opened the reserve tonight I would get here and sleep under a tree”. Similarly Gogo Dladla (2009), also a Mathenjwa grandmother, conveyed that for her ownership without access through CBNRM is meaningless: “We want our land back. The government said they’d give it back. This did not happen. They told us that we would own the land, but this is not the case”. Indeed all interviewees felt that conservation took a higher priority than their own well-being, and that community conservation did not reflect any change from the years of exclusionary tactics and racism that had preceded it, as evidenced by the feelings of neglect and exclusion catalogued in Chapter 3. This feeling is encapsulated in following quote from Malume (2009), an approximately 50 year old Mathenjwa man “The government does not have an interest in the area and its people. People still don’t have land to farm, firewood, and they are hungry”. The constraints of land ownership without occupation are not conducive to reconciliation, and it is possible that within these constraints there is no solution that the government could provide that would meet the social justice and economic needs of these communities, other than giving the land back to those who were dispossessed.

In cases where large numbers of people believe that they are the legitimate owners of land, the land is often seized as soon as an opportunity presents itself Adams and Hulme (2002). Connor (2005: 265) asserts that the prevalence of such reclamations “indicate that those who have lost access to a home-based territory in the past thrive on the need for some form of memory of such a homeland, and will try to recapture such a loss, often

through violent means”. This explanation resonates with the case of Mbangweni, where at present community members are actively seeking to reclaim lost land through massive fence destruction, and forced reoccupation of their traditional land within the Game Reserve. This land has come to represent an important source of community cohesion, cropland, and other livelihood opportunities. Connor (2005) emphasises how more sentimental claims through historical ideas of belonging and home, often embody claims to these landscapes as a valuable resource in times of need. Even in Mathenjwa, where the community has been much less reactionary than in Mbangweni, individuals express a similar sentiment, exemplified by Gogo Emerald (2009) the previous paragraph, wherein she expresses that the only outcome acceptable to her is for the community to “return to [their] homes”.

Adams and Hulme (2001) argue that the most critical component of a compromise solution for local communities is secure land tenure. As Clover (2005: 99) notes, a key component in building rural livelihoods that are dependent on natural resource use is access to, and the form of, tenure on the land. The exclusionary nature of the tenure arrangements at Ndumo, alongside uncertain and inconsistent resource-use and access, severely restrict the local residents’ ability to effectively manage and construct their 'homes' and maintain a sense of belonging to their traditional land, because they are not allowed to engage in the cultural, social and agricultural practices that give it meaning (Connor, 2005: 368). In Ndumo respondents often expressed their frustration at not being able to cultivate the land within the reserve, to fish its rivers and pans, hunt, harvest reeds at will, and visit burial sites (Leko, 2009; Gogo Dladla, 2009; October, 2009; Pe, 2009). To the extent that the restrictions on land-use prohibit access to the former livelihood resources that were available pre-1940s, and do not provide practical accessible and useful alternative livelihoods opportunities, CBNRM does not represent just recompense for either the Mbangweni or the Mathenjwa people. This is a major impediment to resolving resentment over lost rights for both communities at Ndumo. The South African government appears to recognise this, as evidenced by the emphasis

that Ismael (2009) and Adam (2009) place on future plans to create alternative livelihoods opportunities such as agricultural land, and business ventures, both within and outside the reserve. However, until such ventures become a reality and are demonstrated as successful, it is unlikely that the local people will be inclined to support them.

4.2.2 Power-sharing

CBNRM in South Africa requires implementing participation in institutions that were previously authoritarian or exclusionary. Participation is a process. In cases with a history of authoritarian regimes, the process can be especially complex and lengthy. Thus, in South Africa CBNRM has been charged with perpetuating the status quo, by concealing preservationist tendencies beneath the veneer of participation.

TAs represent a powerful opportunity to amalgamate traditional African institutions into CBNRM and thus increase its appeal and relevance for Maputaland's rural residents. As a result, in an effort to share power with local people, EKZN first began to engage the TA in issues relating to reserve management. However, TAs themselves pose a major problem for CBNRM's goal of empowerment and participation, as they maintains an authoritarian hereditary power structure, and are often not accountable to their people. Instances of abuses of power and authoritarian decision-making are explored by Jones (2006) and include the establishment of the Tembe Elephant Park, when the Tembe king received payment for the park land, but in the process hundreds of Tembe households were displaced. Another instance is where R 99,400 was paid to the community trust at the Mathenjwa TA by the private tour operator, Wilderness Safaris, funds which the TA was unable to account for (Poultney & Spenceley, 2001). There are now concerns that the TA cannot be trusted to act as a proxy for local communities.

Since 2000 local conservation boards (LCBs) have been the central means through which EKZNW has attempted to promote participation and power-sharing. However, more than half of the 13 respondents asserted that they did not trust the boards to serve their interests or accurately represent them. EKZNW also does not appear to hold the conservation board in high regard, and frequently bypasses it, deferring to the TAs to support their agendas (Jones, 2006: 66). For example, when lions were reintroduced into Tembe Elephant Park in 2002, to increase its appeal to tourists, EKZN sought consent of the king, who unilaterally agreed, ignoring the fears and complaints of the neighbouring Tembe people, including the Mbangweni community.

Beyond the creation of local conservation boards, there is little evidence to suggest that the EKZN staff at Ndumo have changed their modus operandi to include participation and local knowledge. Local people themselves do not interact with the reserve and its management on a regular basis, and rely instead on park management and the local conservation boards to keep them abreast of pertinent developments, and to consult with them on important decisions. Joseph (2009), a 52 year old married farmer from the Mathenjwa community, states that “They say we’re working together, so what’s going on here? What does it mean to work together? Clearly the white man’s interpretation of working together is different to ours”, gives a strong sense of the feelings of exclusion felt by community members.

The kinds of opportunities and interactions made available to local people by EKZN are more representative of park-outreach style endeavours than true empowerment through CBNRM. Interviewees reported that their most frequent contact was when they received meat from the reserve’s culling program, which rotates between the 8 *izinduna*'s wards on a weekly basis. On the whole interviewees exhibited little knowledge of the reserve management’s purpose, the operation of the tourist lodge, or the community’s role in the decision-making process. For their part, game rangers demonstrated a profound lack of

knowledge and understanding of the neighbouring communities, and were accused of arrogance and hostility by individual community members.

Such negative perceptions characterise the views of an already wary and reluctant local people, and as Adams and Hulme (2001: 197) note, if the community does not believe that there is any real potential for change, it is unlikely to participate. If CBNRM is to have a future at Ndumo, it needs to develop new and improved ways to encourage participation and empower local people through conservation management, or risk being reduced to mere rhetoric. While CBNRM at Ndumo aspires to the 'genuine' CBNRM goals of social equality and investments in natural resources, it does not reflect true community involvement or autonomy. Instead it masks the continuation of the fortress tradition in conservation, founded on exclusion positivist conservation science, and recreational benefits for a privileged few (Nash, 1967; Grove, 1994; Cronon, 1996).

4.2.3 Fulfilling expectations

CBNRM projects have a tendency to create unrealistic expectations about the nature and extent of the outcomes that it can produce (Ashely et al, 2001: 34). This often results in an unrealistic view of CBNRM as a miracle solution for conservation and rural economic development, especially with respect to its ability to empower local people through both through participation and economic benefits. However, Adams and Hulme (2001) emphasise that participation is a process that can take a very long time and is heavily dependent on the institutional and socio-economic context. Further, the economic benefits of CBNRM are not guaranteed; tourism is a highly competitive industry, and the market for eco-tourism is very sensitive to international and national trends and economic events, so any success may be short-lived (Turner, R. 2006: 18). The conservation mandate of CBNRM can put severe constraints on the range of opportunities and activities that are possible within an eco-tourism initiative because

tourism usually must be low-volume but high-end to be lucrative, and win-win solutions are not always possible. One of the biggest challenges to natural resource management is balancing conservation objectives with the needs of local communities.

Despite this tension, CC is still marketed as a panacea. This is the case for a number of reasons. CC provides a more politically acceptable conservation narrative, and its purveyors are attracted by development buzzwords such as sustainability, community, participation and empowerment (Cornwall and Brock, 2005). In addition they are eager to find solutions within the pervasive neoliberal paradigm, to achieve their particular conservation or economic ends, and to pacify skeptics. The broad rhetoric of CBNRM has deftly been used by government and private sector as a tool to gain rural support for neoliberal conservation initiatives, and to assuage development and social justice concerns.

Various critics have pointed highlighted the contradictions within this approach. In the African context, Levine and Wandesforde-Smith (2004: 138) argue that the invisible hand of the market has not been able to produce anything remotely akin to widespread support for wildlife conservation, community-based or otherwise. Instead there is:

evidence [...] that markets in Africa do not function as smoothly and efficiently as in developed countries, while issues of accessibility, political instability, different cultural ideas about economy (for instance more based on kinship or patron–client relations than on demand–supply logic) and high volatility in some important market sectors such as tourism further inhibit markets to function as western proponents would want them to (Büscher & Whande, 2007: 32).

At Mathenjwa actual profit sharing from the eco-tourism venture has been limited by the remoteness of the lodge, limited accessibility by road, the specificity of Ndumo as a bird-watching destination, and fierce competition in ecotourism, both nationally and internationally have resulted in generally low occupancy. The tourist lodge failed to generate a profit during its operation, and provide dividends on the 12.5% stake held by

the Usuthu Trust. It did pay the Mathenjwa community trust at a rate of ZAR10 per person per year, but even this small handout was not felt at the ground level due to unaccountable financial management by the TA, who is responsible for disbursing the funds. The rhetoric of CBNRM has buoyed expectations and led many community members to believe that the Ndumo Wilderness Camp was more profitable than it was, leading to a prevailing sense of disappointment and betrayal. The financial difficulties suffered by Wilderness Safaris are not well understood by local people, and this combined with the lack of transparency of the TAs spending, has resulted in the community feeling that they have been duped. October, an *induna* of a Mathenjwa ward, states “They [the tour operator] have not given us the greater cut of what they make when visitors arrive, we have an idea of what they must make. This leaves us wondering where the rest of the money goes to”. Similarly, Nate, another Mathenjwa *induna* asserts: “We understand what they are doing, but we would just like to benefit as they [government and Wilderness Safaris] are”. Even though no one has really benefitted financially from eco-tourism at Ndumo Game Reserve, the popular rhetoric of CBNRM has meant that communities still see the project as lucrative, and as they are not reaping the rewards, they assume that someone else is.

It is not possible to discuss community expectations in comparison with the outcomes of CBNRM at Mbangweni as, despite the agreement that Ndumo Game Reserve would not be occupied on the basis that the community would receive benefits from ecotourism and related economic activity, there is no CC venture in place as yet. Plans are only now underway to develop a hunting lodge on the eastern side of Ndumo to be co-managed with the Mbangweni community, the specifics of which are not yet in place.

Another result of the neoliberal focus of CBNRM is that governments are not encouraged to participate to ensure social justice and equity goals are being met. In the case of Mgahinga Gorilla National Park in Uganda, Adams and Infield points out that the earnings from the gorillas ‘is actually seen as substituting for government investment’,

and in effect contributing to the founding of the broader national budget rather than being earmarked for development of the gorilla's habitats or the human communities surrounding them (Adams and Infield, 2003: 185). As a result, contrary to raised expectations, the focus on development and conservation may see an overall decline in benefits to local people.

Maputaland is one of the most underdeveloped areas of South Africa, characterized by high levels of poverty, low levels of employment in the formal sector, and limited infrastructure throughout. Ecotourism is seen as a primary economic strategy and has been touted as an incentive for increased private sector investment in the area, and accompanying government investment in road, telecommunications, and sanitation removal infrastructure, with congruent rises in employment and demand for local produce, and curious (DEAT, 2010). Ismael (2009), a representative of DEARD, acknowledges that government has failed to provide for the people of Maputaland and to meet the expectations created by the emphasis on CBNRM: "I think the fact is that for many years the department has not supported those people. See we're talking about a very poor area here. And there is very little in terms of services provided by the government, in terms of water and sanitation". At Ndumo, development benefits associated with CBNRM allocated to the community by the government are too entangled in bureaucratic processes to be accessible. Where funds have been made available to the community for 'projects' and development, very few interviewees reported even knowing about them. As Mark, the IFP municipal councilor, explained, even in his position as a local government official, he is uncertain about how to access such funds, or how to facilitate access for other individuals. So while there may be provision for benefits that meet the expectations of community members, CBNRM benefits are not always accessible and transparent to the supposed beneficiaries.

It is clear, then, that the benefits experienced do not out-weigh the perceived costs of lost agricultural production, lost grazing and natural resources (water, reeds/thatching grass,

game). Frustration over the lack of benefits has been expressed in reactionary and confrontational ways. For instance the forced reoccupation of the reserve by the people of Mbangweni, and the burning of the guard hut, as well as the spontaneous gathering at the local Spar supermarket to protest the continued enclosure of the game reserve at Mathenjwa, underscore that some elements these communities oppose CBNRM at Ndumo. The idea that CBNRM can meet the needs of local communities seems to have created the impression that this is a substitute for government investment and development in the area, as evidenced by Fred's (2009) assertion that local people look to EKZN to provide all manner of local development. However, the limited financial outcomes of CBNRM, as demonstrated by the poor performance of the eco-tourist venture, highlights the need for additional, more direct measures to target poverty, HIV/AIDS and general underdevelopment in the area.

Failure to meet expectations has long-term effects on the conservation goals of CBNRM. Ultimately this creates a cyclical effect where dashed expectations lead to a lack of interest, trust, participation and cooperation, which further impedes future conservation efforts. The main concern amongst observers of Ndumo is that unfulfilled expectations have led to an erosion of trust between the communities and the management of Ndumo. Given the mounting failures at Ndumo, it is not unexpected that the communities are dissatisfied, and that at Mbangweni, community members have reverted to their original call for occupation of the reserve.

4.2.4 Understanding the value of nature

Contemporary western ideals of wilderness and conservation have emerged from romanticised European visions of a sublime and spiritual nature. It is premised on the idea that nature is beautiful and majestic and that preserving biodiversity is morally right (Adams & Hulme, 2001: 197). Within this view human interaction with nature is viewed

as innately harmful. (Clover, 2005:78). This western view is often in stark contrast to the lived experiences of many rural communities that interact with wilderness on a daily basis. Conservationists often dismiss this alternative view as ignorant or uneducated. Adams and Hulme (2001) refute this 'knowledge gap' view, arguing that the adoption of values is complex and cannot always be accounted for by standard economic or moral analysis.

African valuations of nature regularly depart from such western ideals. Nature often holds non-material or spiritual significance to local communities. Certain wildlife or plant species may hold spiritual or healing powers, particular habitats may be held as sacred due to its perceived connection with spirits or ancestors, or various landmarks may have become sanctified through myths and folklore. People situated in remote rural areas often rely on nature for a variety of material needs. Sharpe (1998) details the experience of forest neighbour communities in South-West Cameroon where, despite the efforts of conservationists, indigenous and settler people hold differing and complicated views of the forest as the source of life. This notion includes resources such as timber and water, and the view that the forest is the locus of both benevolent and evil power. Furthermore, Sharpe shows that in trying to impose conservation values, conservationists have also imposed a homogenous view of community and participation. In reality local people envision many different social futures, which vary in their compatibility and contradiction of the forest future envisioned by conservation.

Today's wilderness conservation paradigm has taken on a distinctively economic dimension. The developing world is believed to hold a comparative advantage, where the environment allows certain recreational activities unavailable in the Global North. People from the North increasingly desire visiting countries in the South in order to partake in the wilderness experience through eco-tourism (Novelli et al, 2006: 64). But to the extent that nature is both a good in itself, and a means of generating revenue, it is accepted that ecotourism is a non-consumptive practice, and that consumption by other non-tourists

must be prohibited in order to preserve both nature, and its aesthetic, utopian value, for tourists. Once again, Western principles of wildlife conservation consumption (e.g. valuing wilderness as a tourism commodity) “often conflict with the practicalities of the daily livelihood, human/beast coexistence, self-defense, subsistence, poverty, survival and victuals routine of those people living in strict contact with wildlife” (e.g. valuing wilderness as a daily commodity) (Novelli et al, 2006: 63). At the same time, CBNRM is rooted in a commitment to local rural development, through an integrated development-tourism model. While the core idea is that benefits will flow from eco-tourism to communities, CBNRM also embraces the ideas of indigenous knowledge, local participation and the interconnectedness of indigenous populations and nature (Clover, 2005: 82). However, indigenous populations often engage in consumptive natural resource utilisation. Thus the North-South divide in perceptions of nature is reinforced through the preservation implications of ‘wilderness as a tourism commodity’ versus the consumption implications of ‘wilderness as a daily commodity’ (Novelli & Scarth, 2007: 53).

Such tensions resonate soundly in the case of Ndumo. Livelihood strategies in Mbangweni are strongly derived from consistent resource harvesting and hunting. Jones (2006: 168) documents that residents of Mbangweni consume significantly more bush meat than surrounding communities, and conservation authorities state that in Ndumo Game Reserve 70% of the poaching is conducted by residents from Mbangweni and another Tembe ward. CBRNM has failed to curb such resource uses. Tarr (2006:133) reports that incidences of illegal harvesting of resources have risen, and small game poaching has increased by as much as 350% in the Ndumo Game Reserve in recent years.

Jones (2006: 49) describes the current conservation landscape in Mbangweni, and KwaZulu-Natal more generally, as “a classical juxtaposition between formal protected areas and indigenous resource user paradigms”. It is clear that there are circumstances in which conservation does not maximize the potential economic and livelihood benefits

available to the claimants, as they see other land uses, such as agriculture or residence, as optimal, or that they are simply unconcerned with the preservation of wilderness at all. This appears to be especially acute in Mbangweni, where CBNRM arrangements with regard to the Ndumo Game Reserve have all but collapsed, and the community has actively sought to deconstruct the barriers to resource use created by conservation, both by physically removing game fence, and by shutting down communications and cooperation with the conservation agency.

Community members in Mathenjwa value nature in divergent ways. This is indicative of how highly differentiated the 'community' really is, and although there is a common view of the reserve as alienating and exclusionary, there is little agreement on what its future should be (this echoes Sharpe (1998)). Of the 13 Mathenjwa community members interviewed, only 5 thought that conservation through protected areas was positive and necessary. Of those, one qualified his response by adding that he did not think that the current conservation authorities were going about things the right way, one felt that it is only important for young people to engage in conservation, and three felt that it was only important if it created jobs. The idea that conservation is only for young people, or that elders merely want to settle the matter of the land claim, is a common sentiment. But seeing as they are the claimants, and are thus the most directly involved in the CBNRM initiative, their views are central to the success or failure of such an initiative.

Those nine individuals that were not in favour of conservation argued that it was not EKZN 's duty to conserve this 'natural landscape; it's their land, their animals. Many rejected the basic premise of conservation, arguing that it was completely unnecessary as the wildlife was not in danger or that they were in greater need than the wildlife. This is exemplified by the statement by Gogo Dladla: "God put us on this earth. He also put the animals there for us to eat. These animals reproduce. It's for the community to live on". Nate adds: "If we're out hunting and we find two buck, we will kill both buck at the risk of one of them rotting". This illustrates the utilitarian idea that if the community is not benefiting from wildlife, it is wasteful; nature itself is only valuable if is useful.

These responses show that the commitment to conservation is waning in this community. Some observers even speculate that initial support merely represented a pragmatic stance to facilitate the settlement of their land claim (Turner, 2006:12). This also highlights the contradictory nature of CBNRM, as restitution and empowerment goals suggest that communities should have greater decision-making power over 'their land. However this may be in direct opposition to conservation and preservation goals. For instance, Pe (2009) firmly states: "Now we want [our land] back...they're trying to fool us into thinking we're getting something back by giving us money from the reserve. We appreciate the money. But we want our land back. We lost many of our cattle. They probably got eaten by the wildlife". Such views are antithetical to conservation and whilst they may be exaggerated because the community members in question are frustrated and angry about the lack of benefits from CBNRM, they do suggest that there are conflicting views of nature enshrine in CBNRM and local perspectives that will continue to jeopardise CBNRM until they are addressed.

As in Mbangweni, there appears to be a sharp disjuncture between the economic and conservation imperatives of conservation and eco-tourism in Mathenjwa. In this regard, one claimant said: "I don't believe in money. I think it would benefit us a lot more if people were each given a half acre of a hectare to farm their crops. It is the way of our people". Gogo Mampo, an elderly Mathenjwa woman, confirms this view: "To them, money is more important. We live in a society where money is not the biggest issue. We just want to live... They are obsessed with making money. This doesn't benefit us. We would rather get buck to eat than to get money". For many community members the chosen compensation through benefits from ecotourism within CC is insufficient and impractical as it does not align well with or support traditional modes of living or support resource-consumptive rural livelihoods. By investing direct in the tertiary economy, it does nothing to support the consumptive land-based livelihoods on which the poor are dependant for subsistence (Dressler and Büscher, 2008: 455).

Not only is the land rights afforded to the community by CBNRM incongruent with local modes of production, but the very nature of the CBNRM tenure arrangement defies the logic of communal tenure that is practiced throughout the Mathenjwa and Tembe TA, and other rural area of South Africa. As Roger notes: “even if they have the title [deed], they ... are not interested in the title [deed] because the land belongs to the entire tribe”. This is reflective of a greater national debate over tenure reform that has been ongoing since 1994 (Wynberg & Sowman, 2007: 184). Tenure reform represents one of the three aspects of the ANC governments land programme along with restitution and redistribution. However, it may be the most complex as it is underpinned by the conflict between individual and collective land rights. Lahiff (2000: 47/8) notes that legally, most communal land is nominally owned by the state, but is generally held in trust for specific tribal communities and allocated by chiefs to people living under their jurisdiction. This is not well understood, and in popular perception, virtually all categories of land in former Bantustans are believed to belong to the community, or the chief (whether in a moral or a legal sense), despite the fact that formal title (in the form of deeds) is held by the state. Despite the pervasiveness of communal tenure, and the commonplace view that it is indigenous to African society, communal land rights have undergone various modifications and distortions through various stages of colonisation and apartheid. It is “significant that communal tenure was in fact a vital aspect of the apartheid migrant labour system, facilitating the concentration of the maximum possible number of Africans in the reserves/homelands, preventing the emergence of a stratum of rich peasants and providing the basis for a high degree of social control through compliant tribal leaders who controlled access to land” (Lahiff, 2000: 47). Furthermore, TAs have a history of arbitrary and authoritarian distribution of land, and abuse of power, and this remains a major concern for contemporary South Africa.

While the individualisation of rights to property represent the state’s attempt to modernise tenure and in rural areas in line with the rest of the country, and to create a more secure system of tenure for the rural poor, such a view appears to ignore the reality

that communal tenure is a widely accepted and functioning system in much of South Africa. Lahiff (2000: 63) provides evidence from the Arabie-Olifants scheme in the Northern Province of SA, to demonstrate that there is a high degree of satisfaction felt by local people, traditional leaders and elected local councilors towards the way in which people attain land, the conditions under which it is held, and the rules governing the transfer of land. Dissatisfaction is mainly focused on the failure of external institutions, both government and financial, to grant this locally-accepted tenure system the recognition and respect that residents feel it deserves. Cousins (2007) and Lahiff (2000), suggest that the most appropriate approach to tenure reform in South Africa is to inform both the law and relevant institutions with existing socially legitimate occupation and use rights, as they are currently held and practised, in order to revise communal tenure into a more secure and transparent system. There is reason to believe that such an approach would make land restitution on conservation areas less severe and more compatible with local practices and beliefs, and thus more widely accepted. However, the confluence of land reform and environmental justice is little researched (Wynberg & Sowman, 2007: 184) and how these institutions would operate with respect to conservation areas is, as yet, unclear.

Given that the local communities at Ndumo conceive of both nature and land, in way that is distinctly different from the way that the national government and the broader Western public view them, it is uncertain that CBNRM, based on such foreign principles can become accepted, relevant and meaningful to local people. The dominant response from both law-makers and conservators has been to interpret these differing values as a lack of information or knowledge on the part of local people, and to attempt to bridge this gap through education, in effect make local people fit western-style CBNRM. Instead, CBNRM should aim to fit within the local context of land management. A more fruitful approach may indeed be to amend institutions and frameworks, if possible, to accommodate such views, as suggested by Cousins (2007) and Lahiff (2000).

4.3 CONCLUSION

To conclude, I return to the central research questions that guided the research and analysis of this dissertation:

1. What is the history of the area now known as the Ndumo Game Reserve, and how do these historical legacies influence contemporary debates over conservation?
2. Who are the key stakeholders in CBNRM at Ndumo Game Reserve, and what is their relationship with each other and the reserve itself?
3. What are the key problems with CBNRM at Ndumo Game Reserve, and how do these impact neighbouring communities?

In response to question 1, an analysis of CBNRM in Ndumo highlights importance of the historical legacies of colonisation and apartheid in the Maputaland area. Collective historical experiences of colonial and apartheid race and land policy, and related environmental racialisation (Teelucksingh, 2007) have resulted in the local inhabitants developing and maintaining a primarily negative view of conservation, as externally imposed, exclusionary, racist and often traumatic.

Resultantly, the relationship between CBNRM stakeholders is continually strained and often antagonistic. To answer research question 2, the most significant stakeholders identified in CBNRM at Ndumo Game Reserve are the two local communities, the Mathenjwa and the Mbangweni, their respective Traditional Authorities, the Mathenjwa and Tembe TAs, and the provincial conservation agency, Ezemvelo KwaZulu Natal Wildlife. The local communities feel alienated and excluded from the reserve land, although they are now the legal owner. They do not view CBNRM as facilitating their access to and re-establishment of traditional social and cultural ties with the land. They also view government agencies and conservationists with suspicion and as the core obstacles to the communities re-appropriating their traditional land as they see fit. Community members see themselves as fundamentally different from these stakeholders,

in terms of their relationship with the Ndumo Game Reserve, their values with respect to the significance of nature (its value and utility), the understanding of land rights, their ability to exercise control and decision-making power, and often in terms of race.

Resultantly community members and local experts have highlighted a variety of difficulties with respect to operation of CBNRM at Ndumo Game Reserve, which answers question 3. While the rhetoric of CBNRM represents a significant departure from the principles and motives of Fortress Conservation, in reality it retains modes of conservation management in practice. According to participants in this study, CBNRM does not provide adequate restitution for historical injustices, continues to exclude local people from participating in conservation management and decision-making, has the potential to inflame apartheid era antagonisms between various stakeholders, and reinforces fractures within and between communities. Further, the primacy of the private sector within conservation programmes has exacerbated the neglect of local interests. Ecotourism has proven ineffective in generating the kind of revenue needed to develop Ndumo, and represents a clear failure on behalf of the government to honour the initial terms of the agreement with the community.

CBNRM in Ndumo has resulted in little improvement in the lives of local people. It dangerously conflates the means of government and public conservation goals with the specific livelihoods interests of local people. However, “local livelihoods do not exist in isolation from macro external institutions and much of the conservation and development debate is the product of past power, paradigms and practices” (Jones, 2006: 178). It can be argued that the South African national public as a whole, generally has more symbolic interests in far-away protected places (Davenport, 2007: 356), based on particular and pervasive western philosophical beliefs about the purpose of wild lands, and their aesthetic and psycho-spiritual value. Following from this view, it is unsurprising that the means and ends of CBNRM are not distinctively different from those of its predecessor Fortress Conservation, which was informed by this same perspective.

Given that this is an historically marginalised area, and it has seen little improvement under the new dispensation, there are a multitude of pressing issues that warrant government attention, including widespread poverty and food insecurity, massive unemployment, and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. If the government is not seen as making a concerted effort to address these issues, but is consistently funneling energy and funds into conservation, or at least is perceived as doing so by local people, this contributes to already severe feelings of disenfranchisement and neglect. Ultimately, conservation cannot be the sole or even central provider of economic development in Maputaland. It should be conceived as one strategy within a comprehensive set of approaches to combat poverty and simultaneously provide natural resource security.

The potential of CBNRM to realise economic improvement and meaningful restitution for communities, and to facilitate sustainable use of protected areas without exacerbating social divisions seems very weak. Recent instances of unrest in Ndumo demonstrate the fragility of current CBNRM agreements, and it is not unlikely that without rapid reform of CBNRM and additional development initiatives, similar problems will emerge elsewhere in South Africa's contested conservation areas. Ecotourism is no panacea. It is important not to exaggerate the opportunities and benefits it can bring. Careful planning and improved knowledge is needed. Ecotourism should be part of wider sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies, whether at the level of international development discourse, national policy formation or local community structures. Any possible solution must balance due concern and sensitivity for an environmentally significant and delicate landscape with the legal rights to property, human rights and livelihood needs of historically dispossessed and still marginalized peoples.

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APPENDIX A List of Interviews

Expert Interviews

Adam (2009) Personal Interview (role of EKZN in the conflict over land at Mbangweni), 17 July.

Dhlamini (2009) Personal Interview (role of the RLCC in the land claims on Ndumo Game Reserve), 11 August.

Fred (2009) Personal Interview (management of Ndumo Game Reserve), 29 June.

Ismael (2009) Personal Interview (role of DEAT in conflict over land-use at Ndumo Game Reserve), 22 July.

James (2009) Personal Interview (views on Mbangweni conflict over land), 13 August.

Jappie (2009) Personal Interview (views of Mbangweni people and place), 29 June.

Manny (2009) Personal Interview (management and public relations at Ndumo Game Reserve), 29 June.

Mark (2009) Personal Interview (role of local government in CBNRM), 6 July.

Mkumbo (2009) Personal Interview (issue of criminality and smuggling in the Jozini District Municipality), 8 July.

Peter (2009) Personal Interview (views on Mbangweni and Mathenjwa land claims), 3 May.

Roger (2009) Personal Interview (history of Tembe TA, its role in CBNRM at Ndumo Game Reserve), 13 July.

Rudolf (2009) Personal Interview (information on smuggling and its role in conflict over Mbangweni corridor), 11 August.

Community member Interviews

Babnango (2009) Personal Interview (memories of esiQewini before forced removal and after forced removals, views on contemporary situation), 3 July.

Gogo Dladla (2009) Personal Interview (memories of esiQewini before forced removal and after forced removals, views on contemporary situation), 3 July.

Gogo Emerald (2009) Personal Interview (memories of esiQewini before forced removal and after forced removals, views on contemporary situation), 4 July.

Gogo Mampo (2009) Personal Interview (memories of esiQewini before forced removal and after forced removals, views on contemporary situation), 5 July.

Gogo Manana (2009) Personal Interview (memories of memories of esiQewini before forced removal and after forced removals, views on contemporary situation), 5 July.

Gogo Mary (2009) Personal Interview (memories of memories of esiQewini before forced removal and after forced removals, views on contemporary situation), 3 July.

Joseph (2009) Personal Interview (memories of esiQewini before forced removal and after forced removals, views on contemporary situation), 3 July

Leko (2009) Personal Interview (memories of esiQewini before forced removal and after forced removals, views on contemporary situation), 5 July.

Malume (2009) Personal Interview (memories of esiQewini before forced removal and after forced removals, views on contemporary situation), 3 July.

Muzi (2009) Personal Interview (memories of esiQewini before forced removal and after forced removals, views on contemporary situation), 4 July.

Nate (2009) Personal Interview (memories of esiQewini before forced removal and after forced removals, views on contemporary situation), 5 July.

October (2009) Personal Interview (memories of esiQewini before forced removal and after forced removals, views on contemporary situation), 4 July.

Pe (2009) Personal Interview (memories of esiQewini before forced removal and after forced removals, views on contemporary situation), 4 July.

25 interviews: 12 expert interviews, conducted in Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Ndumo.
13 community interviews, conducted with Mathenjwa community members at Ndumo.
All names in text are pseudonyms and some details have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants. Interview dates are included above.

APPENDIX B Sample Recruitment Script for Interviews

International Development Studies

Dalhousie University

*Finding the community in Community-Based Natural Resource Management: The case of
Ndumo Game Reserve, South Africa*

(Translated into isiZulu by research assistant)

I am a graduate student under the direction of Dr Matthew Scnurr in the Department of International Development Studies at Dalhousie University, Canada. I am conducting a research study to better understand how the community-based resource management of the **Ndumo Game Reserve operates**, and how **eco-tourism** ventures in the reserve have affected **local communities and individuals** with respect to **restitution and economic goals**.

I am recruiting individuals who are residents (either permanent or seasonal) of the Mathenjwa community, or who are involved in the Ndumo CBNRM initiative in some way, or have special knowledge of it, to participate in an individual interview with myself or my research assistant at a time suitable to you. This should not exceed one hour in length and you will be asked a series of questions related to CBNRM in Ndumo, and you will be encouraged to share what you know about CBNRM and eco-tourism in Ndumo, and to share your experiences with CBNRM.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you have any questions concerning the research study, please call me at 083 296 6511.

Yours sincerely,

Talia Meer

