



# Wildlife conservation in Zambia and the Landsafe Customary Commons

by

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*Thesis*

*submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy (Wildlife Management)*

The Centre for Wildlife Management

Faculty of Natural & Agricultural Sciences

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February 2011



**Declaration:**

I, *Ian Patrick Alexander Manning*, declare that the dissertation which I hereby submit for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy (Wildlife Management)* at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Manning', written over a horizontal line.

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

25 January 2011



From the standpoint of a higher socio-economic formation, the private property of particular individuals in the earth will appear just as absurd as the private property of one man in other men. Even an entire society, a nation, or all simultaneously existing societies taken together, are not owners of the earth, they are simply its possessors, its beneficiaries, and have to bequeath it in an improved state to succeeding generations, as *boni patres familias* (good heads of the household).

Karl Marx – *Capital*

If Africa is to take her rightful place among the continents, we shall have to proceed on different lines and evolve a policy which will not force her institutions into an alien European mould, but which will preserve her unity with her own past, conserve what is precious in her past, and build her future progress and civilisation on specifically African foundations.

J.C. Smuts - *Africa And Some World Problems*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation both proposes and records the ongoing implementation of a 'Landsafe' integrated conservation and development model for the customary commons of Zambia.

In Volume I, a geographical historical perspective of the country is presented which concentrates on wildlife conservation and rural people. The changes wrought successively on indigenous peoples by invading native Africans of the Bantu linguistic group, then in turn on them by Europeans in the form of Charter Companies and later by Imperial Protectorate rule, and finally, by self-rule, is explored. The country's evolution from Western colonialism and embedded liberalism, to exploitative neoliberalism and the concurrent emergence of the traditional patrimonial system - one modernised by its meeting with European capitalism, is the backdrop and basis for the construction of Landsafe and its current implementation in two chiefdoms.

Volume II presents the Landsafe ICDP model. This is based on the formation of chiefdom statutory trusts, with trustees elected by villagers of the customary commons; and the signing of co-management agreements with government departments in respect of wildlife, Game Management Areas, and protected forest land, forests, fisheries and water. The local District Councils would be signatory to such agreements, and the chiefs and their headmen would vest selected customary land in these trusts. These vested lands are then protected, allowing for controlled exploitation by investors - such that they do not impinge unnecessarily on traditional rights or on the re-establishment of traditional guardians of nature. Land may not, under any circumstances, be alienated from customary control. A log frame programme analysis procedure is adopted and a suggested formalisation methodology and procedures for implementing Landsafe included. Finally, the socio-ecology of the first project area in the Luangwa Valley is detailed, followed by a description of the implementation of the Landsafe programme; including a critical analysis comparing Landsafe theory to practice.

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Google Map showing the area of the Landsafe Conservancy Project

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am massively indebted to my family: to my wife, partner and friend in all things, Cathlin, in particular for her unwavering courage in the face of threats by the state; to my son, Brendan who struggled on with us and who was unjustly deported; to my eldest son, Hamish, for his very generous support and management of our project's hunting operation; and to our daughter Bronwen for coming to our assistance in the eye of an administrative storm.

Rolf Shenton (and Penroy Morris early on) made Zambia for a time a vibrant place for debate and inquiry as to the way forward for the villagers and wildlife of Zambia; and Judy Carr and Martha Potgieter have kindly stood in the breach for us during our enforced absence from the country. Also, we are exceedingly fortunate to have found in Japher Mbewe, a son of the Luembe people, an outstanding individual prepared to carry on bravely with the Landsafe campaign.

There are others who gave their support: Roy Clark (Kalaki) and Sarah Longwe, Wynter Kabimba, and Ali Shenton, Margaret Whitehead and Claire Mateke- with whom I joined in the battle for the Mosi oa Tunya National Park - and Allistair Gellately who has remained our friend through thick and thin. In addition, I thank my friend and former Game Department colleague, Peter de Vere Moss, for his advice to our Zambian team. And I am grateful that Chief Nyalugwe was finally prevailed upon by Brendan to take up a constructive role in guiding his people forward with Landsafe, and also that Francis Kalunga Njobvu, the sitting Senior Chief Luembe, initially supported the first Landsafe project.

To our partner, Khalid Al Tajir, I can only marvel at his good faith in giving financial backing to what he must surely have thought were merely quixotic dreams. That we persevere has much to do with his tenacity and forbearance, as well as the critical support that Nicola Jones gives us. Without Khalid none of this would have been possible.

I am also extremely grateful to the late Professor Emeritus Donald Dodds, and his wife Pearl, for their long friendship and guidance, and for encouraging my move long ago from Luangwa to Acadia University in Nova Scotia - from whence all the best things in my life have come. Also I remember with great fondness the late Lydia MacMillan – mother of Cathlin, who welcomed me far from home during two 'study tours' and made possible the writing-up of my work on sitatunga.

I am greatly indebted to Professor Wouter van Hoven for agreeing to take in to his cellar of academia an old partly corked wine; and to his wife, Suzanne, for encouragement on the map front; and to Liset for her kindly welcome to the University of Pretoria's Centre for Wildlife Management. And I thank the American academics: Professor Delwin Benson, for his insightful critique of this dissertation; and Professor Stuart Marks - whom I have known from the time he began his seminal study in the Luangwa in the 1960s - for some very wise, generous and trenchant advice and comment. And finally, I must thank our editor at Gamefields Press, Debbie Coetzee, for attending to the minutiae of the dissertation itself.

**For Cathlin, Hamish, Brendan and Bronwen.**



## INTRODUCTION

At the start of this Zambian project seven years ago the author still held patently Eurocentric views regarding the previously named Northern Rhodesia, and Zambia: that the country was a Western-style state within the Western club of nations requiring assistance and effort to safeguard its institutions and to further its modernisation. In such a country, wildlife would be conserved, the poor enfranchised and safeguarded, and democratic freedoms assured. Later on in the project, the author gained an insight into the neoliberal effects of restructuring, foreign aid, and of the control exerted by the West over the political and economic realms, and of their impact on the elite and on the urban and rural poor. These were, after all, the same forces that had destroyed the embedded liberalism of the post-war years in the West, replacing it with the cult of individualism and the withdrawal of the state from social provision. And added to this, anti-globalist forces now increasingly object to excessive corporate greed and its negative externalities. Harvey analysed the forces at work within capitalism, noting how prone it is to crisis, calling for remedial social action by setting out ‘some loosely agreed-upon common objectives’. These objectives resonate with African communal culture and with Landsafe:

These might include respect for nature, radical egalitarianism in social relations, institutional arrangements based in some sense of common interests, democratic administrative procedures (as opposed to the monetised shams that now exist), labour processes organised by the direct producers, daily life as the free exploration of new kinds of social revelations and living arrangements, mental conceptions that focus on self-realisation in service to others and technological and organizational innovations orientated to the pursuit of the common good rather than to supporting militarised power and corporate greed. These could be the co-revolutionary points around which social action could converge and rotate.<sup>1</sup>

An Africanist called for something similar - for an autochthonous model for Africa’s development:

It would be found, rather, in devolving executive power to a multiplicity of locally representative bodies. It would be found in re-establishing ‘vital inner links’ within the fabric of society. Democratic participation would have to be ‘mass participation’ And ‘mass participation, patiently evolved and applied, would be able to produce its own version of a strong state: the kind of state, in other words, that would be able to promote and *protect civil society*.<sup>2</sup>

These, in essence, are objectives and views of the way forward that are in harmony with African culture, certainly with the people of the chiefdom commons. Yet, it is questionable that the reform of capitalism and any neoliberal reversal would make much difference to Zambia. The author’s experience gained during the Landsafe project reveals that Zambia is not a Western state in waiting, or a state wishing to modernise - as Europeans would wish. It is, in fact, a country of many ‘nations’ run by ‘Big Men’ and their networks of ‘clients’, a country occupied by people who - perhaps because they did not experience the Industrial or Mesopotamian revolutions - have little interest in Western notions of development. What motivates Zambians is social wealth – and the material wealth to assure that status’s continuance, for they are a deeply communal culture, who do not act at the individual level as do Westerners. While the institutions and the administrative capacity to run a modern state appear to be in place, the reality is that they barely function, except as harvesting centres – as the Auditor-General’s reports continually confirm. It is patrimonialism that ‘runs’ the country, a bewildering set of major and minor corruptions, of highly integrated social networks required to make it function, all of it inimical to Eurocentric modernisation:

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<sup>1</sup> Harvey, D., 2010. *The Enigma of Capital: And the Crises of Capitalism*, Oxford University Press, USA, p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> Davidson, B. 1992. *The Black Man’s Burden: Africa and the curse of the nation-state*. Times Books, New York, p. 294.

...what all African states share is a generalised system of patrimonialism and an acute degree of apparent disorder, as evidenced by a high level of governmental and administrative inefficiency, a lack of institutionalisation, a general disregard for the rules of the formal political and economic sectors, and a universal resort to personal(ised) and vertical solutions to societal problems.<sup>3</sup>

This statement describes Zambia, with a patrimonial system that impacts negatively on people (thus not surprising that Zambia's 2010 standing on the Human Development Index places it fourth from last in the world, with Liberia, Congo Republic and finally, Zimbabwe, following behind it by only a few points). This is the reality that this partly polemical Eurocentric history contained in Volume I hints at. But does this belated conclusion mean that the author's efforts so far – as laid out in Volume II –will not deliver any improvement to villager livelihoods or to wildlife? Upon review, the author concludes that by providing the statutory institutional shape for the chiefdoms of Zambia, and by the attempts to implement it in two chiefdoms, some minor accretion of modernisation will - and already has, occurred. But it needs to be taken up by other chiefdoms, without being a mere fleeting addition to the patrimonial food chain, and without becoming a curse, rather than a blessing.

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<sup>3</sup> Chabal, Patrick. & Daloz, Jean-Pascal. 1999. *Africa Works: disorder as political instrument*. James Currey, Oxford, p. xix.