

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Rural communities living in areas surrounding protected areas are among the least developed communities of the world. The top-down, centre-driven protectionist approaches that have traditionally characterised natural resource management regimes in the less developed countries (LDCs) during the industrialist era have often had critical impacts on the food security and livelihoods of local people (Darkoh, 1996; IIED, 1994). This has detracted from the successes gained by well-supported initiatives in ensuring the survival of certain species and habitats, and resulted in conflicts between conservation agencies and neighbouring communities (IIED, 1994; Bell, 1987). The costs of policing the protected areas have also become increasingly untenable (WCED, 1987; Poole, 1989 cited in Brandon & Wells, 1992:564). In many cases, the protectionist approach has failed to avert problems of insularisation and the decline in plant and animal populations and in habitat integrity (Shafer, 1990).

More recently, there has been a shift from the classical protectionist approaches towards participatory approaches that integrate ecological concerns with the needs of 'communities' living both within the neighbourhoods of protected areas (Western & Wright, 1994:6) and elsewhere. Participatory approaches aim at involving people in the process of natural 'resource management' (IIED, 1994). Resource management is defined by O'Riordan (1971:19 cited in Mitchell, 1979) as "*a process of decision making whereby resources are allocated over space and time according to the needs and desires of man, within the framework of his technological inventiveness, his political and social institutions, and his legal and administrative arrangements*". The concept of participation has been defined and interpreted in various ways by scholars like Paul (1987 cited in Little, 1994:349), Arnstein (1969), MacNair (1976), and Pimbert & Pretty (1994 cited in IIED, 1994:19). In this study, the definition found useful is that by Cernea (1985) that participation is "*empowering people to mobilise their own capacities, be social actors, rather than passive subjects, manage resources, make decisions, and control the activities that affect their lives*". The definitions of the concept of community have also been varied. This study considers that community encompasses spatial, social, cultural and economic aspects, and therefore adopts Flecknoe & McLellan's (1994: 8 cited in Warburton, 1998:15) definition that community is "*that web of personal relationships, group networks, traditions and patterns of behaviour that develops against the backdrop of the physical neighbourhood and its socio-economic situation*".

Community participation in natural resource management encompasses a variety of community approaches that range from passive to active participation (according to a typology by Pimbert & Pretty, 1994 cited in IIED, 1994:19). These include Community Based Conservation (CBC), Integrated

Development and Conservation Projects (ICDPs), Local Resource Management (LRM) and Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) initiatives. This study focuses on CBNRM initiatives.

CBNRM initiatives engender local level, stakeholder community-based, decentralised, participatory and people-centred resource management. The goal of CBNRM initiatives is sustainable community development achieved through active community participation in natural resource management (Griffin, 1999). This goal is linked to the three overarching principles on which CBNRM initiatives are predicated namely, democracy, sustainability and efficiency. The democracy principle considers that local communities, as key stakeholders in natural resource management, should participate in all stages of the CBNRM process. The sustainability principle relates to the mobilisation of natural, financial, institutional and human resources towards the formulation and implementation of best use practices that ensure the endurance of social and economic systems and the natural resource base. The efficiency principle makes provision for the desired ends to be achieved without a waste of resources.

CBNRM is not a new phenomenon, as history shows that for millennia people have actively participated in shaping their livelihood strategies within a broad variety of ecological environments (O’Riordan, 1998; Borrini-Feyerabend, 1997; Croll & Parkin, 1992 cited in Western & Wright, 1994:1). What is perhaps novel about the current trend is that CBNRM has become institutionalised. CBNRM reverses the top-down, centre-driven conservation approach by focusing on the people who live with the resources and therefore bear the costs of resource management.

The Third World Parks Congress of 1982, considered an important turning point in the environment-development discourse, showed how protected areas could “*contribute to human welfare and increase security in the process*” (McNeely & Miller, 1984 cited in Western & Wright, 1994:6). Subsequently, there has been a growth of interest in the participatory approach particularly following the emergence of the sustainable development doctrine (O’Riordan, 1998; Borrini-Feyerabend, 1997; Western & Wright, 1994). Interest in CBNRM has grown remarkably in the aftermath of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, when world leaders ratified Agenda 21 thus confirming that sustainable development requires community participation in practice and in principle (Warburton, 1998). With regard to protected area management, the more general need for public participation is narrowed to a focus on communities living within the vicinity of protected areas.

The international discourse on sustainable development has tended to focus largely on the LDCs, which are perceived as harbouring the ultimate threat to biodiversity (Chatterjee & Finger, 1994) and where most of the world’s poor people live. From a socio-economic development perspective, CBNRM seems a plausible means towards enhancing well being, livelihoods, capabilities, equity, sustainability and democracy, and has therefore become an important component in rural development programmes in the

LDCs. However, Darkoh (1996) observes that despite the articulation of community approaches to natural resource management by LDCs, the conditions that are enunciated by Agenda 21 remain unchanged and levels of poverty continue to increase while rural communities become further marginalised from resource ownership and the political process.

With specific regard to Africa, Walker (2000) states that the assumption in Agenda 21 that accountable democratic governments are more likely to pursue sustainable development has run aground, partly because accountability in many 'democratised' states remains incomplete. Thus, active participation by communities in natural resource management is often untenable. He further states that even where relatively successful democratic transitions have taken place, the newly enfranchised people may demand less rather than more environmental protection as they grapple with problems of poverty and unemployment. According to Warburton (1998:5): "*The rhetoric of community participation has been rehearsed many times, but it remains the exception rather than the norm on the ground. Realism about current and past achievements is vital if progress is to be made in ensuring that community approaches are accepted as an essential element of sustainable development*".

An important consideration is perhaps the ideological bases of CBNRM. Kasparson (1977:189 cited in Lund, 1987:8) notes: "*Beneath every participation programme lurks a particular social theory, paradigm, or at least a set of assumptions concerning the need for intervention and the connection of participation to the operation of the political system and the creation of social change*".

In examining the challenges faced by CBNRM in LDCs, it is perhaps worth noting that such initiatives tend to be highly institutionalised (Murphree, 1994), with the various institutional actors organised at different levels of a political ecology hierarchy that ranges from local community to global level. There are often mixed motives or objectives belonging to the various institutional actors promoting community participation in resource management (SASUSG, 1997). This is because CBNRM programmes bring together issues of conservation and development, between which there is a 'fundamental tension' (according to Robinson, 1993 cited in Salafsky, 1994:448). To a large extent however, the dichotomy between conservation and development in the case of CBNRM is a false one, since rural communities have always used natural resources to contribute to secure livelihoods and have had mechanisms to regulate the use of resources (Jones, 1997 cited in SASUSG, 1997:31).

With particular regard to communities living adjacent to protected areas, while it would seem that CBNRM seeks to articulate the goal of sustainable community development, there are some that view it merely as a mechanism for ensuring the integrity of state protected areas (Murphree, 1994). Little (1994) states that a key issue that is not often addressed in formulations of community resource management programmes is: whose definition of the problem is being invoked and who shares in its meanings? There is a particular need to determine the nature of local community involvement in

CBNRM problem definition and the extent to which the members of the local community share in the definition of the problem.

The difference in the amount of control over the basic factors of CBNRM programme formulation and implementation between the various institutional actors would seem to constitute one of the most critical performance factors of CBNRM initiatives. There is therefore a need to assess the degree of community control over the natural resource base and the CBNRM programme processes. In this regard, an analysis of the roles, resources and relationships of the various institutions involved in resource management as well as the broader political and economic factors affecting community participation is perhaps requisite.

At local community level, the shortcomings of many CBNRM initiatives have been attributed to, among other factors, the existence of power-distributing cleavages within rural communities. These are due to internal social differentiation, differences in vested interests in resources and competing political structures (Hasler, 1995). While the role of factors such as age, social class and ethnicity are acknowledged, this dissertation focuses on the role of gender in CBNRM initiatives.

Gender and gender roles are deeply imbedded in a cultural matrix and development programmes are never gender neutral (Friedmann, 1992). Because of this, the structure of opportunities available to women discriminates against them, and women have substantially less access to bases of social power and productive wealth than men do. As a result women often lack meaningful access to effective participation in political, resource-related decision making and are frequently subject to the negative impacts of resource management decisions taken by others (Dalal-Clayton, 1997). There is a need for analyses of CBNRM initiatives to examine the gender responsiveness of the programmes.

This dissertation adopts a case study approach to empirically examine the problem of community participation in natural resource management. The study presents an analysis of participation in a CBNRM initiative by the Makuleke rural community that lives in the neighbourhood of a state protected area in South Africa.

1.2 CBNRM in the South African Context

At this point in the history of post-apartheid South Africa, there is concern both in official government circles and in academic discourses to meaningfully restructure the present polarisation of spatial development in order to achieve development that is equitable and sustainable (IDRC, 1995; South Africa, 1997d). The post-apartheid policy reform process has focused on giving the impoverished and underdeveloped communities of the country access to bases of social power and the control of

productive resources such as land and natural resources. There has been a particular emphasis on rural communities living in the neighbourhoods of protected areas (South Africa, 1996a: 1997d:32). For these communities, CBNRM has been viewed as presenting a potentially effective means towards articulating the goal of equitable and sustainable development espoused in the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). This study focuses on the case of the Makuleke community, wherein a CBNRM programme has been initiated.

The historical development of protected areas in South Africa has involved a process of forced removals of local communities to make way for the establishment of protected areas (Carruthers, 1995). The exclusion of these communities from resource-related decision making, resource utilisation and the appropriation of benefits from tourism (Carruthers, 1995) has left a legacy of impoverishment that represents a challenge for the present state. The land question particularly seems to occupy a central position in the community development dialogue. The prevailing mien of democratisation has unleashed the claim-making power of these communities that is manifest in the proliferation of land claims against protected area management agencies. Such claims can be viewed as an attempt by local communities to regain control over the natural resource base so that they can achieve both the tangible social and economic development objectives and the intangible goals such as affirmation of social and political power.

There is concern by the state, conservation authorities and private enterprise, however, over the impact of land claims on the ecological integrity and the revenue generating capacity of protected areas (South Africa, 1997a:30). There is also concern over the implications of such claims on the unfolding regional integration of natural resource management through trans-frontier parks and multiple use management areas (Pinnock, 1996). Despite these concerns, there has been some groundbreaking progress towards the devolution of natural resource management responsibility to rural communities living in the neighbourhoods of protected areas (Koch, 1994).

In this case study, the Makuleke community was forcibly removed to make way for the northward extension of the Kruger National Park (KNP) (Figure 1.1). With the advent of the post-apartheid state and the attendant land reform process, the community lodged a land claim against the South African National Parks (SANP) Board and other state institutions. The Makuleke were restituted portions of land within the KNP and two smaller neighbouring protected areas. The restituted land is strategically located at the intersection of the boundaries of Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Africa and therefore provides an important linkage for South Africa's involvement in a proposed trans-frontier park for the three countries. Having waged a prolonged struggle for the restitution of their land rights, a key question facing the Makuleke is how to translate this gain into tangible community development benefits without compromising the sustainability of the natural resource base. Towards this end the

Makuleke have initiated a CBNRM programme, muted as the Makuleke Conservation and Tourism Programme (MCTP).

FIGURE 1.1: LOCATION MAP OF STUDY AREA



1.3 The Research Problem

This study addresses two problems relating to community participation in the CBNRM initiative.

1.3.1 THE QUESTION OF POWER AND CONTROL

Given the institutionalisation of CBNRM within a hierarchical political ecology, the study is concerned with the issue of power and control in natural resource management. Differences in relative degrees of institutional actor control in environmental governance constitute probably one of the most critical factors to the success of CBNRM initiatives. The first problem can be captured in the following question:

- What have been the relative degrees of community control in the CBNRM initiative?

The assumptions here are that:

- If the goal of a CBNRM initiative is to enhance wellbeing, livelihoods, capabilities, equity and sustainability through community participation, then the community should be divested with a certain degree of control in environmental governance as well as in the CBNRM programme formulation and implementation processes.
- If a community has enough power in a CBNRM initiative, it can set the terms for its own participation and it can influence the direction of or even stop a particular project that is generated from outside.

1.3.2 A QUESTION OF GENDER

Sustainable livelihoods are secured through ownership or access to resources (Chambers & Conway, 1992 cited in Mtshali, 1998) and through access to bases of social power and productive wealth (Friedman, 1992). However, research on 'women in development' suggests that development programmes often do not take into account the gender nature of work and access to resources (Nabane, 1995). In view of this, this dissertation is concerned with the differences and similarities in access to political decision-making between women and men at the community level.

The second problem for this study's investigation is:

- Is the unfolding CBNRM process perpetuating the traditional power relations between gender groups or is there an attempt to bring about real empowerment of both the women and men of the Makuleke community?

The assumption is that:

- If a particular CBNRM programme is designed to improve the position of a segment of the population (in this case, the 'disadvantaged' members of the community and women in particular), the programme must give this population increased access to control of resources.

1.4 The Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to assess the potential and effectiveness of the Makuleke CBNRM initiative in enhancing the well being, livelihoods, capabilities, equity and the sustainability of the community.

The objectives of the study are:

- To assess the relative degrees to which the Makuleke community has had control in the CBNRM formulation and implementation processes;

- To determine the extent to which the community resource management programme has been responsive to gender roles, relations, needs and access to political decision making.

1.5 The Methodology of the Study

1.5.1 THE RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The research framework (Figure 1.2) is centred on two axes of enquiry: the degree of community control in the CBNRM initiative and the gender-responsiveness of the programme. The gender question is linked to the first objective in that it includes assessments of gender access to factors of community-level control in the CBNRM initiative.

The two themes framing the enquiry into the degrees of community control in the CBNRM initiative are:

- The implications of the broader policy environment on the decentralisation of natural resource management; and
- The nature of community participation in the CBNRM programme initiation, formulation and implementation processes.

The theme of Gender Analysis in the investigation is:

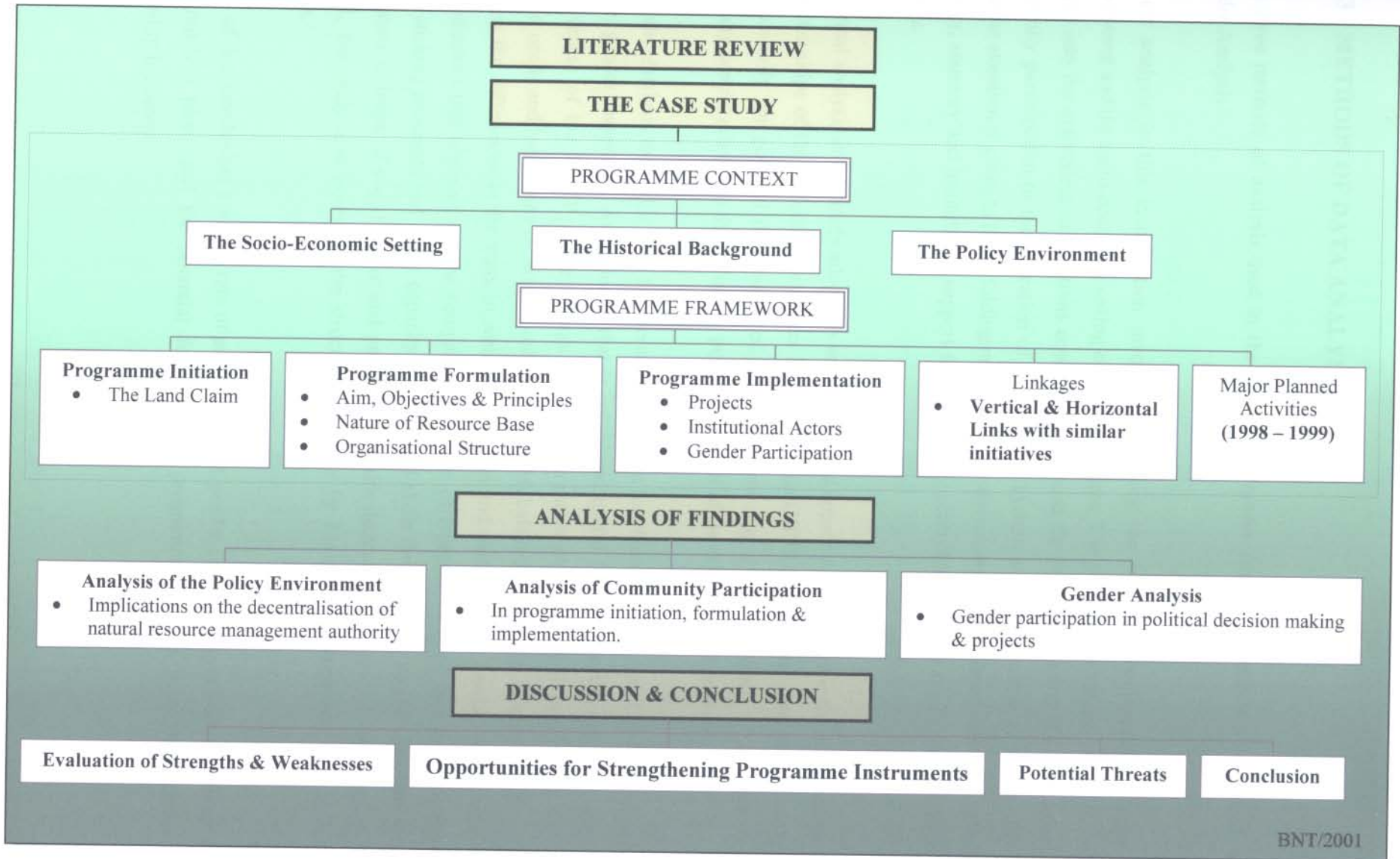
- Gender access to political decision-making in the CBNRM initiative.

A key analytical tool within the research framework is the testing of the Makuleke CBNRM initiative against a defined set of critical elements for success derived from literature on other similar initiatives. The study acknowledges that each CBNRM initiative has its own unique set of factors, such that there are no blueprints or replicable models for programme formulation and implementation. Therefore the critical elements are used as indicators rather than the blueprint or ideal model for success. The elements are also viewed as providing useful insights in the assessment of the potential for success and the effectiveness of the Makuleke CBNRM initiative.

1.5.2 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The study relied on both primary and secondary data. The primary data sources included participant observation, semi-structured interviews with key resource persons, in-depth interviews with members of the Makuleke community, workshops and focus group discussions. Secondary data sources such as maps, community records, published texts, statistical survey reports, and documents compiled by government and non-governmental institutions, academics and other researchers were used.

FIGURE 1.2: RESEARCH FRAMEWORK



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The data collected is presented in diagrams, tables, maps, textboxes and graphs.

1.5.3 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The three methods of analysis used in the study are Context Analysis, Institutional Analysis and Gender Analysis.

Context analysis in this investigation involves examining the historical background, the policy environment and the socio-economic setting of the programme. The programme context provides useful insights into the antecedent assumptions concerning the need for intervention and the connection of community participation to the operation of the political system and the creation of social change. Particular attention is given to the unfolding national policy environment as it demonstrates the strength of policy, statutory and institutional support for community control and gender equity in the CBNRM initiative.

Institutional analysis in this study adopts an actor-orientated approach to determine the roles, resources and relationships of the various stakeholders involved in the CBNRM initiative. Institutional analysis helps to clarify the political dimensions of the programme and gives indication of the degree of community control relative to the influence, power or control of the other institutional actors.

The Gender Analysis method is used to determine the extent to which the unfolding CBNRM initiative has been gender responsive. An indicator that is considered useful for gauging the degree of gender responsiveness of the MCTP is the linkage of the programme objectives and instruments to the perceived needs and aspirations of women and men in the Makuleke community. Attention is given to examining the differences in the ways in which the women and men perceive needs and aspirations. Other indicators that are used are the comparative degrees of representation of men and women in decision-making processes and in the capacity building and skills development projects implemented. Since access to bases of social power and productive wealth determine the level of participation in CBNRM, the study also examines the structure of access by Makuleke women and men to land resources.

Analysis of data emphasises both the rate of achievement of gender specific targets both in qualitative and quantitative terms and the potential for CBNRM programme success using the specified sustainability indicators.

1.6 Scope of the Study

Chapter Two presents a review of relevant literature in order to set the context for the study. Although the study is concerned with the application of community approaches in LDCs in general, particular attention is given to the African experience as it shares greater common background with the case study. Firstly, the key concepts of the study are defined. Then the conceptual and ideological bases for community approaches are examined in order to define the underlying assumptions of CBNRM. Then the critical elements of successful CBNRM, derived from studies done elsewhere, are surveyed as a basis for developing case study-specific indicators. The critical elements are incorporated into the conceptual framework. Lastly, the detailed methodology for the study is presented.

In Chapter Three, the case study is initially cast within context through accounts of the historical background and the broader policy and political environments affecting the Makuleke initiative, as well as the socio-economic conditions prevailing within the community. Following this, the findings of the study are presented, with due cognisance of the indicators developed in the conceptual framework in Chapter Two.

Analysis of the findings is made in Chapter Four. The analysis relies heavily on the indicators developed in Chapter Two. The three main themes of analysis are:

- the implications of the policy environment on the decentralisation of authority over natural resource management and community;
- community participation in the CBNRM programme initiation, formulation and implementation processes; and
- gender access to political decision making.

Chapter Five presents a discussion of findings and an assessment of the potential and the effectiveness of the Makuleke CBNRM initiative. On the basis of concrete empirical findings, suggestions are made for the Makuleke case. While these are not intended as blueprints or rigid guidelines for success, it is hoped that the Makuleke and other similar initiatives elsewhere will find some of the insights gained useful.