

CHAPTER 5: POTENTIAL AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MAKULEKE INITIATIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a discussion of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified in the case study and summarised in Table 5.1. The discussion proceeds to link the substantive evaluation of the case study to the broader issues in the field of CBNRM.

TABLE 5.1: A SUMMARY OF THE MCTP STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS, 1998 TO 2000

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling policy & political environment • Legislative support • Institutional strength • Diverse nature of the resource base • MCTP principles of equity and accountability • Adaptive management approach • Community cohesion • Vertical & horizontal integration 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative perceptions about community-led CBNRM • Persistence of certain restrictive legislation • Institutional weaknesses • Disjunct spatial distribution of natural resource base • Persistence of negative customary gender roles • Insufficient attention to certain livelihood needs • Vertical integration however may result in community interests subsuming to those of the more powerful higher level institutional actors • Lack of adequate community funds to offset the commercial activities in the Makuleke Region • Language often a barrier to effective communication
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A balanced focus on both the development needs & livelihoods may enhance the efficiency of the MCTP in reducing poverty & inequality; • A balanced focus on the sustainable use of resources both in the Makuleke Region & in the Makuleke area may avert excessive demands in the former as the latter becomes further depleted. • A balanced focus on both the basic & strategic needs may promote real improvements in well being, livelihoods, equity, capacities & sustainability. • The controlled harvesting of resources such as elephants may generate the required income to offset commercial activities in the Makuleke Region. 	<p>THREATS</p> <p>If the CBNRM initiative fails to transform the existing poverty & inequality within a tolerable time span:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The democratisation of environmental governance may result in greater demands by community for the exploitation of resources; • The strong influence of donors, NGOs & state agencies that has resulted in the launching of a programme whose objectives are not universally shared by the community members may be questioned & the concept of CBNRM rejected by some. • The existing weaknesses in policy co-ordination between the neighbouring states adjacent to the Makuleke Region in the harvesting of fugitive resources such as elephants, whose ruminating ranges traverse national boundaries, may result in threats to regional environmental security and peace.
<p>Source: Fieldwork, 2000</p>	

5.1 Evaluation of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the MCTP

5.1.1 ENABLING POLICY AND POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

A critical factor strengthening the MCTP is the prevailing enabling policy and political environment at national, regional and global levels.

At the global level, the emergence of the sustainable development doctrine and the attendant shifts in international relations towards an enmeshing of economic and ecological concerns (MacNeill et al, 1991) has paved the way for the flow of funding and technical assistance towards institutionalised CBNRM initiatives.

At the regional level, the articulation of global sustainable development imperatives as well as the regional integration objectives of the Southern African Development Council (SADC) has given rise to a synergy in the bubbling up of CBNRM initiatives.

At the national level, the post-apartheid policy reform process has responded primarily to the internal popular movement for the formal acknowledgement of democratic rights of people such as the Makuleke who have been disadvantaged by past government policies. The South African policy reform process has been linked to national restructuring, the resolution of land disputes and political reform. The post-apartheid government has also ratified the global and regional resolutions on the articulation of principles of sustainable development and in particular the enunciation by Agenda 21 of the key role of local communities in the conservation of natural resources.

It is worth noting however that policy shifts are an initial step towards the decentralisation of authority over natural resource management. Policy alone, however, is not enough to confer secure rights to communities and to strengthen the position of communities as institutional actors in environmental governance. In view of observations elsewhere that there tend to persist certain pieces of legislation, policy statements and documents that restrict the strength of local communities in CBNRM, there is a need for the policy development process to be complimented by legislative and institutional reform. Such complimentary reform, as well as policy co-ordination between the sectional government agencies, enables the establishment of frameworks that adequately support the decentralisation of authority over natural resource management.

5.1.2 LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT

The most important strength of the MCTP probably relates to the legislative context within which the CBNRM initiative has been cast.

Firstly, the Makuleke community has been accorded legal rights and security of tenure to their natural resource base in the Makuleke Region at Pafuri and in the Makuleke area in Nthlaveni respectively. According to the co-management regime stipulated in the Settlement Agreement (South Africa, 1998), the MCPA and the SANP as members of the Joint Management Board (JMB) share the responsibility of the management of natural resources in the Makuleke Region. This has effectively placed the community in a position of greater strength than before in environmental governance.

Secondly, the constitution of the MCPA as a representative and legally accountable entity has provided for the community to act as a resource-based company and for the natural resources in the Makuleke Region to be viewed as tourism commodities. According to the Settlement Agreement, the MCPA has the prerogative to carry out or commission tourism-related commercial development in consultation with the SANP through the JMB. This has strengthened the position of the Makuleke in the distribution of economic benefits generated from resource management.

Although there has been a significant strengthening of the community's position through legislative reform, there also persist certain legal restrictions on community rights of resource use. In terms of the Settlement Agreement, the mineral rights in the Makuleke Region have been reserved in favour of the state, in accordance with the Minerals Act of 1991 (South Africa, 1998a:7). With regard to the rest of the resources, use has been restricted to abstraction or harvesting for purposes related to tourism development in the Makuleke Region. There has been no provision for the use of resources to cater for direct livelihood needs, such as food security, of the Makuleke people.

The existing legal arrangements surrounding the MCTP therefore mean that the benefits to the Makuleke will basically be derived from income generated by conservation-based commercial activities and employment generated from all aspects of resource management. It seems therefore that there has been a perpetuation of a *status quo* in which the Makuleke are precluded from direct livelihood benefits such as the harvesting of resources such as thatching grass, mopane worms and fruit. The same resources however have been put at the disposal of people from more distant locations.

5.1.3 INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

An important source of strength for the Makuleke community derives from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) that establishes local government as the third tier of government. Effectively therefore, the state formally recognises local governance structures as institutional actors in their own right. Thus, apart from the establishment of the MCPA as a representative and accountable legal entity in environmental governance, the Makuleke are represented in political governance through the TLC and the TC. Such representation potentially accords the community a degree of influence in political decision making, particularly as it relates to the CBNRM initiative. The full strength of local government structures, however, has yet to be realised in actual terms due to the persistence of a number of problems. These include a lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities of the different tiers of government that share responsibility for the implementation of the rural development policy, administrative incapacity, lack of economic viability and community suspicion of government due to past experiences of apartheid structures (LRU, 1997; May, 1998).

5.1.4 DIVERSE NATURE OF THE RESOURCE BASE

The Makuleke commanded a locally and regionally significant natural resource base, with a total spatial coverage of 26 887 hectares. Although the Makuleke area occupied by the community was smaller (approximately 5 000 hectares) and had a high human demand-resource ratio, the area was rich in actual and potential human cultural, labour, management, entrepreneurial and leadership resources. The Makuleke Region by contrast was 'a zone of convergence between nine different ecosystems' and therefore an area of high diversity in geomorphology, soils and vegetation (Tinley, 1979 cited in Robinson, 1996:6) and had a relatively low human population density. The diversity of the Makuleke Region afforded a broader range of use options and a greater potential income from conservation based tourism activities than the Makuleke area. Taken together, the human resources in the Makuleke area and the natural resources in the Makuleke Region presented a potentially viable engine for the sustainable development of the Makuleke community.

A possible constraint in the integration development and conservation objectives was that the two sites are located approximately 36km apart via the KNP's Punda Maria gate. Although in terms of the 1998 Settlement Agreement the Makuleke community has been accorded traversing rights through the KNP, the mechanics of integrating the two sites in terms of programme implementation still had to be worked out at the time of the study.

A weakness that was identified by the study was that elements of community-based natural resource management observed within the Makuleke area occupied by the community were not given sufficient

attention within the programme framework. A possible reason for this may be that the political mood in various circles involved in the drive towards redressing the poverty and inequality bequeathed by the past governments, particularly the land question, required that primary focus be on the Makuleke Region rather than the Makuleke area. Now that the land question has been resolved, the reason behind the continued neglect of the resource management regime that exists in the Makuleke area seems to be related to the fact that this regime has basically been community-led, low profile and has operated on the less visible community rules. It nonetheless constitutes an important aspect of CBNRM. There is a need for the programme framework to be adjusted so that there is a comprehensive focus on the whole natural resource base of the Makuleke.

5.1.5 MCTP PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The constitution of the MCPA has been predicated on the principles of equity and accountability. The constitution therefore has made provision for the safeguarding of the democratic rights of all members of the MCPA, particularly those who have traditionally been disadvantaged such as the less affluent and the women. This provision has ensured that the CBNRM initiative has the popular support of the MCPA members, who perceive that their stake in the process is backed by legal guarantees.

There were observations by the study that while a conscious effort had been made to promote the active participation by women in the MCTP, there still persisted some negative elements of traditional gender roles that militated against the strategic participation by women. Due to the persistence of social structures and attitudes that discriminate against women, it would seem that the MCTP has adopted a 'project approach' as a means of facilitating participation by women. While there are merits in the project approach, there is a potential danger that the approach that was observed at the time of the study may fail to significantly improve the lives of the Makuleke women and may probably further marginalise them from mainstream economic production. Part of the problem with the observed project approach relates to its emphasis on consumption rather than production, with many of the women's projects reinforcing the 'home economics' stereotype of appropriate women's activities.

For so long as the social and cultural restrictions on the participation by women lag behind efforts to promote women's access to political decision making, there is a danger that the women's interests may persist in being marginalised. Indeed, there were observations that although the needs for income and employment opportunities have been addressed, the livelihood needs strongly expressed by the Makuleke women do not seem to have been given sufficient attention. Rather, the formulation of the CBNRM initiative appears to have emphasised the community needs perceived by men. Given that women constitute a significant proportion of the productive population at Makuleke (LRG, 1995), there

seems to be a need for a more equitable emphasis on gender needs. There is also a need to balance the promotion of women's participation in both the basic and strategic components of CBNRM.

5.1.6 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT APPROACH

A key test of the potential for success of a CBNRM project derives more from the extent to which change is possible rather than which grouping is dominant at any given time (SASUSG, 1997). The adaptive management approach adopted by the MCTP Executive Committee has been an important source of strength for the Makuleke initiative. This approach is in effect a trial and error process that allows for progress to be made in the management of the complex and unpredictable mixture of natural and human systems within the context of the power distributing cleavages of the community. Thus, there has been no prescriptive blueprint model to restrict the innovation of case specific strategies.

5.1.7 COMMUNITY COHESION

The observed conscious effort by the Makuleke people to foster the cohesion of the community, particularly through the integration of the traditional and newer governance and civic structures, counts as a factor in the strengthening of the MCTP. Thus, although there persist differences in vested interest in resources, competing political structures and differences in social class within the community, these have been subsumed in favour of the broader community interests. It is worth noting though that community cohesion is not dependent on maintaining a certain group of people in dominant roles in decision-making and benefits distribution. Rather, it depends on the consistency of focus on the broader community goals and objectives despite the inevitable changes in leadership that may occur through time. Community cohesion also depends on accountability and the ability of the leadership within the MCPA to resolve conflicts in a manner that is acceptable to the constituency. The MCTP's principle of accountability and adaptive management approach have therefore also provided useful conflict resolution mechanisms.

5.1.8 VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION

The relationship that the MCTP has had with other institutional actors within the political ecology hierarchy of natural resource management is a possible source of strength for the community. The formalisation of the vertical and horizontal linkages has allowed for political, financial and technical support to be given to the MCTP by global, regional and state level institutional actors within the hierarchy.

However, the vertical and horizontal integration of the MCTP has also carried potential negative effects in that community interests might end up subsuming to the interests of the more powerful higher level institutional actors. The influence of donor funding and the intermediary NGOs playing nurturing roles might promote the interests of non-local individuals and groups in the conservation of the Makuleke Region at the expense of the livelihoods of the Makuleke people. In this regard, the weakness of the MCTP lies mainly in that the MCPA has lacked sufficient capital and expertise to enable it to reduce reliance on external agencies and thereby maintain greater control of the community's stake in natural resource management.

There has also been a problem of language, wherein the facilitation of the CBNRM process by external NGOs has required that communication in meetings should include the translation of proceedings into both the English and XiTsonga languages. Apart from the cumbersome nature of such communication, many Makuleke respondents to in-depth interviews expressed concern that their lack of proficiency in using the English language tended to undermine their confidence in meetings. It is therefore possible that a significant degree of community contributions to CBNRM may have been lost in the facilitative process, thus reinforcing the possibility of the marginalisation of community interests in the resource management initiative.

5.2 Opportunities for Strengthening the MCTP Instruments

The foregoing evaluation of the MCTP shows that although the foundations of the programme framework have generally accorded an impressive degree of strengths that enhance the potential for success, there have also been some instrumental weaknesses that might detract from the success of the CBNRM initiative. This section explores some opportunities that may be exploited towards the further strengthening of programme instruments.

5.2.1 BALANCING DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND INCOME REQUIREMENTS WITH LIVELIHOOD NEEDS

The programme instruments identified by the study showed that the Makuleke were committed to breaking the poverty traps set by the colonial and apartheid governments and to promoting equity in access to bases of social power and productive wealth within their community. The formulation of the MCTP, however, did not seem to have clearly resolved the question of how to achieve this in actual terms. The focus was on community development objectives, employment opportunities and women's projects emphasising consumption. There was less regard to taking full advantage of the few assets that the women and the poor have. There was also scant attention to livelihood needs such as food security.

The strength of the MCTP may be enhanced if the programme instruments place a balanced emphasis on the development, employment and livelihood needs.

In addressing the livelihood needs of women, the programme instruments may need to be restructured such that there is a balance of emphasis between projects based on consumption and those that emphasise production. This may be an initial step towards enabling women to realise their full potential and become a viable part of mainstream economic production.

There may also be a need for the programme instruments to incorporate preventative measures that try to avert deprivation of the vulnerable members of the community such as the aged and the poor. A possible safety net against threats to food security, for example, may be an allowance for the controlled harvesting of certain resources from the Makuleke Region for distribution to the aged and the poor when the need arises.

5.2.2 BALANCING NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOCUS ON THE MAKULEKE REGION AND THE MAKULEKE AREA

The sustainability of the socio-economic development objectives of the Makuleke seems to depend on the sustainability of use of natural resources in both the Makuleke Region and the Makuleke area. Although the resource management regime that was observed in the Makuleke area has basically been community-led, low profile and has operated on the less visible community rules, it nonetheless constitutes an important aspect of CBNRM. There is a need for the programme framework to be adjusted so that there is a comprehensive focus on the whole natural resource base of the Makuleke.

The community-based management regime observed in the Makuleke area indeed presents a useful opportunity within the CBNRM framework because the regime was built upon some of the traditional resource management practices and the adaptive strategies adopted by the Makuleke following their resettlement in the Nthlaveni area. The existing adaptive management approaches, which have included the rationing of resources such as firewood, thatching grass, rain-fed croplands and communal pasture among resources users, may provide the necessary springboard for the enhanced management of both the Makuleke area and the Makuleke Region. On the other hand, since the older Makuleke people have had a longer and more intimate relationship with the Pafuri area than the modern protected area conservation agencies, their traditional resource management knowledge may be of significant value as a basis for the ecological management of the Makuleke Region.

It may be argued however that in the light of evidence of land degradation that was observed in the Makuleke area where community-led approaches have been dominant, the existing land use practices of

the Makuleke have tended to be unfavourable to conservation. This study cautions against such simplistic notions, and considers that the degradation of resource in the Makuleke area is more a product of the apartheid political economy than the lack of management ability or concern by the community. The apartheid political economy was based upon the setting of poverty traps such as the deprivation of productive assets and social services within black rural communities (May, 1998; Platzky & Walker, 1985) in order to ensure the supply of cheap migrant labour to the commercial and industrial centres. Thus, despite the implementation of adaptive strategies by displaced communities like the Makuleke, environmental degradation ensued as a result of increasing pressure on resources by the growing human population and the lack of adequate government support for remedial measures.

5.2.3 SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND CONTROL THROUGH HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION

In spite of the potential problems posed by the vertical integration of the MCTP, there are real opportunities for positive growth and enhanced control to be gained from the horizontal integration of the CBNRM initiative.

Horizontal linkages provide opportunities for the sharing of knowledge and experiences in CBNRM. Taken individually, local communities may have difficulty in competing against the established tourism agencies, maintaining their stake in natural resource conservation, bargaining for a fairer distribution of benefits generated from natural resource management and in seeing the broader picture of the CBNRM problem. However, communities can improve their reckoning position through collective purpose and action. The Makuleke initiative seems to have forged useful horizontal linkages at local, provincial, national and regional level. There may still be scope for an even greater emphasis on the horizontal integration MCTP initiative to further enhance the growth and strength of the programme.

5.3 Potential Threats to the Makuleke CBNRM Initiative

5.3.1 QUESTION OF THE POTENTIAL OF THE MCTP TO ACHIEVE REDUCTIONS IN POVERTY AND INSECURITY

The greatest threat to the MCTP perhaps relates to the potential of the programme to achieve fundamental reductions in poverty and insecurity. The CBNRM initiative has provided a greater potential for the realisation of aspirations by the Makuleke people than the top-down conservation approach. However it is possible that with the passage of time, no amount of participation will convince the Makuleke people to continue investing in conservation activities when they remain faced with problems of poverty and insecurity.

As Walker (2000) observes, the democratisation of environmental governance may result in the newly enfranchised communities such as the Makuleke demanding less rather than more protection of the environment as they try to grapple with problems of poverty and unemployment. This potential threat is particularly pertinent in view of the fact that the launching of the Makuleke CBNRM initiative was strongly influenced by external agencies such as donor organisations, governmental, non-governmental and conservationist institutional actors, and the definition of the problem was not universally shared by all the Makuleke people.

It is imperative therefore that the MCTP should generate and devolve benefits to the community within a tolerable time span. This requirement appears to have been recognised within the MCTP framework, and the MCPA Executive Committee has indeed successfully generated income from limited harvesting of elephant resources in order to offset the establishment of MCPA-operated tourist facilities within the Makuleke Region. Generally, however, this may not always be easy in the face of contrary views by some proponents of conventions such as the CITES, and since CBNRM initiatives tend to have lengthy gestation periods (World Bank, 1998).

Apart from this problem, there have been observations in South Africa that late entrants into tourism tend to have problems in breaking into the mainstream industry that is dominated by established agencies (Ngobese, 1994). Thus the resource-based companies operated by local communities such as the Makuleke may find themselves relegated to the fringe, where benefits tend to be trickle-down in character. The generation of trickle-down benefits may be reinforced by the fact that tourism ventures by local communities tend to be dependent on external input and technical assistance (Ngobese, 1994), since communities often lack adequate reserves of such resources. The dependence may result in leakage of generated income (Koch, 1994) and may undermine community control in the CBNRM initiative.

Added to these problems, the reliance by local communities on conservation-based commercial activities such as tourism has been observed to harbour possible hindrances to community livelihoods and security as the tourism ventures increasingly become externally orientated at the expense of local needs (Ngobese, 1994).

While solutions to these problems may not be easy to find, there is perhaps a need for the adoption of an approach that tempers elements of aggressive marketing with the cautionary handling of the social and livelihood impacts of tourism.

5.3.2 LEGITIMACY OF THE MCPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The foregoing threat to the MCTP is closely linked to the question of legitimacy of the MCPA Executive Committee. From the local community perspective, this legitimacy seems to derive more from the extent to which the MCPA Executive Committee sustains the functions of articulating and pursuing community goals than from the democratic accession into office by the committee members *per se*. Local ecosystems and local political jurisdictions, however, are imbedded within larger natural and political systems. Hence it has been argued that local interests alone may not adequately respond to the common good of the larger whole (McCloskey, 1996 in Hoff, 1998:236). Thus, within the hierarchical framework of CBNRM, community-based institutional actors like the MCPA have been vested with obligations to both their constituent communities and to the broader political ecology of resource management. The challenge for the MCPA Executive Committee therefore is to find mechanisms for striking a balance between their accountability to the community and that to the rest of the institutional actors within the hierarchy.

The achievement of such balance may not be easy however, since the integration of interests between stronger and weaker actors has tended to result in the interests of the weaker subsuming to those of the stronger actors. The possibility of such a development occurring raises concern on its potential implications on the development objectives of the MCTP. This concern emanates from views expressed by scholars like Bromley (1994).

Bromley states that the economic dimension of CBNRM initiatives centres around the search for new institutional arrangements that will align the interests of local people with the interests of non-local and often distant individuals and groups seeking the sustainable management of particular ecosystems. Such ecosystems represent benefit streams for both the people in the industrialised North who seek to preserve biodiversity and those in the South who must make a living amid this biodiversity resource. The interests of local people, however, are often discounted relative to the interests of those who care for the ecosystem but not for its inhabitants.

Bromley further asserts that proponents of CBNRM initially tend to adopt facilitative policies to nurture community participation. Donor agencies and intermediary NGOs are the outsider institutional actors used to play the nurturing role. However, when the interests of local communities are not consistent with enhanced conservation of resources, it becomes necessary for the institutional actors of the North to move beyond facilitative policies to actions that appear more regulatory in nature.

In view of the possibility of such motives as expressed by Bromley (1994), the securing of community rights to natural resources through legislative reform and the constitution of the MCPA as a

representative and legally accountable entity seem to be mechanisms for controlling local communities. In pursuing community interests, community-based actors such as the MCPA Executive Committee therefore face the daunting task of grappling with a situation where local interests are effectively reined in while external interests are promoted. Since the integration of conservation and development objectives is often perceived and articulated as a dichotomous rather than complimentary process, it may indeed seem that the Executive Committee is bound to be caught up in the dialectics surrounding CBNRM. Thus, regardless of which community members assume office, each successive MCPA Executive Committee is bound to lose legitimacy in the view of either the community or the external agencies and in due course be replaced by another that enjoys the popular support of the moment. The adaptive management strategy adopted in CBNRM also seems a useful mechanism for dealing with institutional actor demands and ensuring that local community frustration does not build up beyond critical levels when CBNRM initiatives fail to deliver on their development objectives.

5.4 Conclusion

This study set out to assess the potential and effectiveness of the Makuleke CBNRM initiative in enhancing the well-being, livelihoods, capabilities, equity and sustainability of the community. The first research objective was to assess the relative degrees to which the Makuleke community has had control in the CBNRM formulation and implementation processes. The second research objective was 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. A key analytical tool was the testing of the Makuleke CBNRM initiative against a defined set of critical elements for success derived from literature on other similar initiatives. These critical elements were used as indicators rather than the blueprint for success, and were viewed as providing useful insights in the assessment of the potential for success and the effectiveness of the Makuleke initiative.

The aim and objectives of the study have been addressed. The strengths and weaknesses of the MCTP have been evaluated, and opportunities for strengthening the MCTP and potential threats to the programme have been identified. The issues of control and gender in CBNRM indeed emerge as two of the key issues in the Makuleke initiative. The analysis and evaluative discussion of findings by this study, however, raises a number of questions concerning methodological aspects and ideological bases of the unfolding field of CBNRM. While this section attempts to present some conclusions on a few of these issues that are deemed critical to the success of CBNRM initiatives, the dissertation recognises that there are no simple answers to the questions raised.

One key question relating to the methodological aspects of CBNRM articulation is:

- To what extent does the meeting of the preconditions for community level control actually lead to enhanced community control over CBNRM?

A second related question in the articulation of CBNRM by communities such as the Makuleke is:

- What happens beyond the process of facilitation?

Will the communities be allowed to claim full control of the CBNRM process envisaged by Pimbert & Pretty (1994 in IIED, 1994) and Borrini-Feyerabend (1997) or will they have to resort to *de facto* means of gaining full control? In other words, will the decentralisation of authority over natural resources ultimately result in a complete shift of control to the local community level? Can the dependence of communities on external institutional actors really be reduced to a level where the community assumes full power and control over CBNRM?

The view in this study is that the ultimate outcome of CBNRM initiatives is dependent on a more complex interplay of a number of variables than solely on empowering local communities through strengthening CBOs, securing resource rights, devolving economic benefits and developing capacities. While the power play between local communities and external, higher level institutional actors may see communities gaining increasing control in environmental governance, the extent to which the communities can strengthen their power would remain subject to certain externally imposed strictures. Hasler (1995; 1996) succinctly captures the import of this situation when he states that there exist "multiple levels of jurisdictions", "bundles of rights" and "bundles of powers" in natural resource management. These militate against the exertion of ownership and control by any one level or institution within the political ecology hierarchy. This study adopts Hasler's (1995) summation that it may be hoped that, at best, certain defined controls and benefits are devolved to the local community level. If the devolution of such controls and benefits can enable the achievement of fundamental reductions in poverty and insecurity as well as the realisation of the economic development objectives of local communities, then a part of the problems facing the people and governments living in the LDCs may have been resolved.

This study cautions, however, against simplistic notions that CBNRM initiatives may be the panacea for the development problems that are faced by LDCs. Indeed, evidence from CBNRM approaches elsewhere reveals that progress in the breaking of the vicious cycle of poverty, insecurity and environmental degradation has been disappointingly slow (Walker, 2000), and conditions enunciated by Agenda 21 have largely remained unchanged (Darkoh, 1996).

The CBNRM problematic is perhaps best explained through an examination of the ideological bases of the unfolding field. Although the concept of CBNRM is predicated on the noble, albeit debatable, principles of sustainability, democracy and efficiency, there also subsist certain ideological perceptions that militate against the promotion and success of community-led CBNRM initiatives. For instance, there is the assumption by some proponents of CBNRM that local indigenous communities in the LDCs characteristically tend to degrade natural resources and therefore certain ecosystems have to be protected from them. This assumption, which is reminiscent of Garret Hardin's (Hardin, 1975) 'tragedy of the commons' perspective, seems to have persisted despite evidence to the contrary.

Seymour (1994) attempts a distinction between two dominant assumptions in CBNRM initiation. She identifies 'designers' as being CBNRM proponents who assume that existing resource use patterns are not favourable to conservation, therefore the need to design CBNRM initiatives that ensure the sustainability of local ecosystems and global socio-economic systems. Seymour further identifies 'discoverers' as being CBNRM proponents who assume that appropriate local resource management regimes exist, therefore they need to be discovered and legitimised with the assistance of external actors.

This study argues however that while the assumptions of the designers and the discoverers may differ, the ideological viewpoints of both classes of CBNRM proponents are convergent. Both classes approach CBNRM from the view that local indigenous communities cannot be fully entrusted with the leadership of CBNRM initiatives. The view of both classes of proponents is that the CBNRM initiatives gain legitimacy when external institutional actors facilitate them. Such ideological viewpoints and assumptions pose critical problems in the conceptualisation of CBNRM. They perpetuate the stereotypical notions that have characterised the global political economy of resource management since the era of European imperialism. Indeed, in view of the dominance of such ideologies, scholars like Little (1994:356,357) and Chatterjee & Finger (1994) have considered the bubbling up of CBNRM initiatives in LDCs as being largely a Northern agenda. For so long as the eurocentrist ideological bases persist in dominating CBNRM articulation, the unfolding field of CBNRM may continue to be viewed as just another form of imperialism.

Despite the fundamental problems with the articulation CBNRM approaches in LDCs, the view in this study is that there is potential for a few real gains to be made by communities from such initiatives. The success of CBNRM initiatives may ultimately be sanctioned by the degree of real commitment to local community interests by the stronger northern institutional actors. However, it may be necessary for LDC institutional actors to adopt certain precautionary measures to safeguard the stake of local communities in natural resource management.

At the community level, the involvement of local facilitative institutional actors in the CBNRM process may help keep in check the adverse motives of similar institutional actors whose accountability leans more towards their clientele in the North than toward local communities. At government level, there is a need to balance the state roles of securing the conditions of production with those of securing social integration.

In many cases however, LDC states have tended to collude with external interests in order to secure conditions of production at the expense of social integration. Hence, part of the failure by CBNRM initiative to achieve fundamental reductions in poverty and insecurity has been due to the fact that these initiatives have often been promoted as mere palliatives to indigenous rural people. These people have posed potential threats to the political interests of governments and the conservation interests of Northern agencies through their *de jure* and *de facto* claims on resources within the ecosystems in which they live. In the face of requirements by LDC states for foreign investments and technical aid and the need to defend local community interest in CBNRM, even the more democratic and committed LDC governments have had to make certain critical choices. These will have significant implications on the success of CBNRM initiatives like the Makuleke Conservation and Tourism Programme.

Thus, while the issues of control and gender are important in determining success of CBNRM initiatives, such success depends on a more complex interplay of variables than that at the community level. A particularly critical factor is the role of the state with regard to governmental, non-governmental and private sector stakeholders ranging from the community to the international level. Ultimately, the role played by the state seems to be the critical factor determining the success or failure of CBNRM initiatives such as that of the Makuleke.