

Legitimacy of Local Institutions for Natural Resource Management

The case of Pindanganga, Mozambique

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1 Introduction

This report is concerned with the legitimacy of the involvement of local institutions in natural resource management. It is argued that the legitimacy of both formal and informal institutions at a local level has significant implications for the manner in which these institutions¹ work and manage natural resources. Clarification of how and why certain institutions are seen as legitimate, while others are not, could make an important contribution to successful policy definition and implementation in community natural resource management.

The concept of legitimacy is based on the political theory of representation. This representation is concerned with who has moral or constitutional rights/powers to represent and to act in certain a way. Smith (1986: 166) defines legitimacy as 'ideas or beliefs which justify the exercise of power or the existence of superior status, privilege, and so on'. For Heywood (1994: 95), legitimacy is 'the quality which transforms naked power into rightful authority'.

According to Smith (1986: 166), legitimacy is 'never fully achieved, since there are always divergent viewpoints or dissenting individuals or groups who challenge the legitimacy of existing political leaderships or of domination elite'. However without legitimacy the government may be maintained only by fear or coercion (Heywood, 1994: 96). As Therkildsen remarked in his work about the legitimacy of local government in Africa, the legitimacy of such institutions is crucial in natural resource management. For him, 'for the local level only rule by consent seems sustainable', since government at all levels is now weak (Therkildsen, 1993: 75).

For Barrow and Murphree (forthcoming: 49), legitimacy is one of four characteristics 'required by rural resource users to effectively organize themselves for collective action for effective resource management'. For them, legitimacy conferred by governments, for example, is important, but most important is the legitimacy from the local community 'arising from socio-cultural and socio-economic criteria' (*ibid.*).

According to Weber (1978), legitimacy derives from people's beliefs and there are three bases for legitimacy – legal-rational, traditional and charismatic – that may form the basis of authority for a person or group. These types of authority differ according to the base where they have their foundation. For instance, legal-

¹ Institutions are both formal and informal rules (North, 1992:9), norms, procedures and process that bound the individual behaviour (Bingen, 2000:3).

rational authority involves obedience to formal or established legal rules and emphasizes the office rather than the individual. In contrast, traditional authority is based on fixed norms and traditional customs. Finally, charismatic authority is based on exceptional virtue such as heroism or the exemplary character of an individual (Weber, *ibid.*).

The issue of legitimacy of local institutions is of particular interest at present, since there is a strong tendency towards decentralization and the transference of responsibilities to local institutions as representatives of local communities. This policy of decentralization has been strongly influenced by international agencies and donors. However, political discourses, new laws and new legal tools concerned with natural resource management, as well as the implementation of several pilot projects², illustrate how this new approach has also taken hold at the national level in Mozambique.

The legitimacy of local institutions is therefore fundamental for their 'effective' participation in natural resource management. Through a case study of the Pindanganga area in Manica Province, Mozambique, this report explores how different socio-political and historical phases have affected the legitimacy of traditional institutions and leaders, and tries to explore the implications for present-day natural resource management.

In Mozambique, as in a number of other southern African countries, community participation in natural resource management is viewed as an alternative to the failed conservation policies adopted since colonial times, which were based on protected areas (reserves and parks), commercial exploitation of timber and wildlife, and strong state management.

However, it is argued in this paper that it is important to consider the meaning of 'community' in a post-conflict situation such as Mozambique. 'Communities' may include, for example, people who stayed in the area during the war, those who were displaced (including returnees and newcomers), refugees, and demobilized soldiers (in the case of Mozambique, from both government and the Renamo³ armies). In general, people of different ethnic groups, and people with different interests, are adopting different livelihood strategies, and using natural resources in different ways.

² Until 1998 according to DNFFB (1998) about 30 community-based natural resource management projects were being implemented in Mozambique, coordinated by Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Ministry of the Environment, and implemented and supported by different government and non-government institutions.

³ Renamo was the rebel movement that fought against the government in the civil war. Currently, it is the biggest opposition political party in Mozambique.

At the same time, different agents (government institutions, donors and NGOs) use different criteria for local community involvement in natural resource management programmes. In some cases, new institutions are created, although sometimes with the involvement of traditional leaders⁴. In other cases the traditional institutions themselves are used as representatives of local people.

The criteria to create and nominate these new institutions, which often take the form of committees, also vary in terms of their composition (proportion of men and women, old and young people), the manner of their creation (community 'election' or indication by community meetings of individuals), and their size. For instance, in Moribane Forest Reserve, members of the committee were selected and indicated by traditional leaders and all of them are male⁵; in contrast in the ground-breaking Mozambican CBNRM project of Tchuma-Tchato, they were 'elected' in a community meeting and include both women and men.

These committees are viewed as a way to solve or minimize conflicts between traditional and state-party authorities (Kloeck-Janson, 1998: 8). Other reasons such as to facilitate communication between project staff and the community, to carry out income generation projects and community mobilization are noted by project staff⁶.

The influence of traditional institutions⁷ and leaders varies from one place to another, although for the case of rural areas in Manica Province their strong influence is recognized. The Pindanganga area has some potential for timber, building material, fuelwood and wildlife. However, according to Rungo and Taquidir (1999), reflecting the Provincial Forestry and Wildlife Service's (SPFFB) point of view, this potential is not rationally utilised, contributing to forest degradation⁸. Some factors that are said to cause this degradation are:

- Uncontrolled exploitation of timber by some companies before, during and after the war without efficient government control and monitoring mechanisms;
- Charcoal and firewood production; and

⁴ The phrase 'traditional leaders' is used here to refer to individuals occupying communal political leadership based on cultural norms, customs, and social values (www.polity.org.za).

⁵ See Marena Project Thematic Briefing #MZ09.

⁶ See Marena Project Thematic Briefing #MZ10

⁷ Traditional institutions include sets of rules and norms based on cultural principles and values of a specific ethnic group to regulate and control social behaviour and maintain cultural practices. Generally, these institutions have their origins well before the colonial period.

⁸ For Eden (1996:45) forest degradation "involves clearance of, or damage to, the existing forest cover. Degradation could be nonreversible or reversible depending in the intensity of the catalyst causing the degradation and duration (Johnson and Lewis, 1995:5).

- Increased pressure from traditional farming due to a large number of households seeking land after the civil war.

Trying to minimize the problem, improve well-being and promote development of the area, the provincial government has proposed that Pindanganga become a community forest management pilot area under SPFFB coordination.

At the time of fieldwork for this study, two international organizations were working in Pindanganga: GTZ⁹, which was working in coordination with SPFFB and the Forestry Research Centre (CEF) to identify opportunities to implement community-based natural resource management; and CONCERN¹⁰, an NGO that has been working in the area since 1992, firstly in the emergency programme and subsequently in development projects.

1.1 Description of the study area

Pindanganga area is located in Manica province, Gondola district, in the Administrative Post of Amatongas, about 50km from Chimoio town, the capital of the province (see map 1) covering an area of approximately 400 km².

A survey carried out as part of this research has estimated the total number of households¹¹ in Pindanganga at approximately 800 with around 4,500 people. According to this survey, 452 households (56 per cent of the total) are originally from Pindanganga. Of these, around 75 per cent reported being displaced during the civil war¹² to villages along the Beira corridor, whether voluntarily or through government coercion. The remaining 44 per cent of the total number of households currently in Pindanganga have moved there from other parts of the country and the majority of them came after the war. Some of these households (16 per cent) were already living in Pindanganga before the war, whilst a further 10 per cent came during the war, mainly as Renamo soldiers.

Around 52 per cent of the recorded population are women and 48 per cent are men. The majority of the population (80 per cent) is concentrated along a road from the national road (RN6) to the Pungue river (which passes through the middle of Pindanganga). Linguistically people speak Chiteu and Chigorongose - both Shona dialects.

⁹ GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit) is a German development organization, which was working up to June 1999 to prepare a community forest and wildlife programme.

¹⁰ CONCERN is an Irish NGO operating in Pindanganga in education, health and poverty alleviation programs

¹¹ In this study, households are defined on the basis of co-location, and no assumptions are made about intra-household relations.

¹² The civil war in Pindanganga began in 1982 and finished after a peace agreement signed by government and the Renamo rebel movement in 1992.

Altitude varies between 200-700 m above sea level, with an annual average rainfall of about 1,080 mm concentrated in January and February. The predominant soil types in Pindanganga are brown-grey sandy soils with organic material and brown-red with a low-deep and low organic-content.

The natural forest of Pindanganga is miombo woodland with its dominant species of *Brachystegia* and *Jubermardia*. There is a medium to high tree density, and trees have an average height of 10-15 m, typical of land over 500m and annual rainfall between 90 to 1,400mm (Costa, 1996). There is also bamboo covering about 10 per cent of the total area of Pindanganga. The area is relatively rich in wild animals such as antelopes, crocodiles, hippopotamus, possibly lion and leopard, and different species of rodents mainly in the northeast where the human population is low.

Social infrastructure is scarce in the area because all conventional shop buildings were destroyed during the war. Since the war, basic commodities have been available at shops constructed of bamboo and grass. Other social infrastructures include two primary schools and a water pump. There is no hospital in Pindanganga and people have to travel to the nearest clinic at Chipindaume village, located 13 km to the east, or Gondola, the nearest main hospital of the district.

1.2 Natural resource use

Subsistence agriculture based on maize and sorghum production using traditional methods is the main economic activity providing a major part of the livelihoods of the residents of Pindanganga. Most of the original households have two fields, one around their houses and another along the rivers where bananas, sugarcane, maize and vegetables are cultivated.

The crops cultivated along the rivers play an important role in generating income for the households. These crops and their by-products are used to encourage neighbours to work on the farm, through a traditional system of mutual help. Access to this labour gives these households the opportunity to have bigger fields than others and consequently a better income than households who do not have fields along the river.

The land has been under state ownership since independence in 1975 but, as in much of rural Mozambique and indeed in many countries in Africa, the land in Pindanganga is governed by a traditional system based on lineage and headed by chiefs. These chiefs also mediate land and other natural resource conflicts. In essence, the traditional system exercises *de facto* ownership over the land.

The forest also plays an important role in providing goods and services to the villages. It is a source of firewood, building materials, wood implements, food

and fruits, medicinal plants, and is a source of animal protein. The species composition of the forest in Pindanganga also provides suitable conditions for beekeeping and other activities as well as services and facilities. Members of the community have the right to clear the forest for farming when the specific site is not occupied by another household, as well as the right to harvest and use products from the forest.

After the war, forest products became an important source of income for many households in Pindanganga. There was increased commercialization of building materials such as poles and bamboo, as well as firewood, handcrafts, honey, game meat and charcoal. These activities include men and women, younger and older people, and both original inhabitants and newcomers. Reasons for this increased commercialization of forest products include the lack of an adequate marketing system for agricultural products; weak or inadequate control of resource utilisation whereby there is effectively free access to forest products; and increased demand for some of these forest products in nearby towns — such as charcoal and bamboo.

According to forest legislation from both the colonial era and the present day, commercial exploitation without permission is forbidden. However, during the colonial period, traditional leaders were involved in the control of resources, and were expected to guarantee respect for the legislation in their communities. If they failed, they risked being dismissed or punished by the colonial government. For instance, the previous chief of Pindanganga commented: 'If your area was known to have valuable species of timber stolen such as *umbila* and *pangapanga*, but you were not able to find and punish those who did the damage, you would have trouble with the Administrative Post chief...'

One particular commercial activity that has been introduced to Pindanganga since the civil war is the production of charcoal. Around 60 per cent of the total number of households in Pindanganga were found to be involved in charcoal production for sale at the time of this research, and most of these households were newcomers to the area.

According to many respondents, charcoal production represents an important source of income, given that revenues from the sale of agricultural products are negatively influenced by the weak market for agricultural crops, low prices and lack of access to land along the rivers. In particular, people who do not have access to land at the river's edge, and do not have any other source of income, have opted to produce charcoal as a survival alternative.

Although the activity was initially pursued as a survival strategy, today it is used to acquire goods viewed in Pindanganga as luxuries, such as radios, bicycles

and/or to pay *lobolo*¹³. This is motivating an increasingly large number of people to engage in charcoal production. As a result, both newcomers and people original to the area, including young people, and even some traditional leaders have engaged in the activity. For instance, the local chief got involved in charcoal production in order to raise money to buy a bicycle. As he said, 'everyone has a bicycle. I'm a chief and I have no transport yet! I need transport to move around. Because I do not receive any pay, I have to produce charcoal in order to get money...' The chief in this case is using the income from charcoal production to enhance his social position within the community, whilst at the same time he is demanding a salary from the government as in colonial times.

To acquire land one has to make a request to the traditional leaders. Within Pindanganga, the forest is considered common property, and everyone has the right to harvest and use forest products and services but they are supposed to know the rules and respect the sacred forests.

2. Research Methodology

The data for this study were collected from October 1999 to March 2000 using a combination of social survey methods. Initially, to determine the population and natural resource distribution in the area, a survey was carried out using GPS (Geographic Positioning System) to mark the geographic points (coordinates). At the same time, informal interviews were conducted with household members and key informants in order to establish household compositions (number of people and gender), their place of origin, their main economic activities, and the process of land and other natural resource acquisition.

Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted in 30 households selected randomly in order to have more detailed information than that previously obtained. Some traditional leaders and members of the local committees were also interviewed in order to understand the history of the area and institutions behind natural resource management, their function and activities/roles and their relationships with the community and other institutions.

Members of natural resource user groups such as charcoal producers, beekeepers, traditional healers, hunters, and a women's association were also interviewed to ascertain how they acquire rights to use natural resources for specific purposes, their

¹³ *Lobolo* is the compensation (goods or cash) given by the parents of man who wants get married to the woman's parents. This compensation symbolizes a new kinship based on the marriage of two people. It is a culture of the lineage of the centre and south of Mozambique.

organization, motivations and their relationships with other groups and institutions.

To understand the government's point of view and the way that different government institutions represented in Pindanganga operate, interviews were also carried out with administrative staff at locality and administrative post level, as well as at the offices of the SPFFB and CEF. The field officers of the various international organizations represented in the area were also interviewed to understand their roles and purpose and how they are working with local institutions and the community in general.

3. Local institutions

3.1 History of traditional institutions

In Pindanganga, as in many African rural areas, the social organization is a lineage represented by a traditional chief and traditional institutions. Pindanganga is the name of both a chief and an area. The area is named after the chief because people believed that he had supernatural powers, that were used to control ferocious animals.

This power was probably the basis of his recognition as a leader because it was viewed as a guarantee of protection against harm. Harm is seen as potentially coming from a range of sources, including ferocious animals, bad spirits, natural calamities and epidemics. For the community, the leader was also their guarantee of communication with their ancestors who owned the land and other natural resources on which their well being and continuity depended.

Pindanganga, who was the chief of a lineage (*chapanda*) worked with a group of counselors (*madodas*), kraal-heads (*fumos*) and auxiliaries (see diagram in Appendix 1). This group of people constituted the 'traditional authority'. Above this *chapanda* was a paramount chief Dodoeroi, who had under his control nine other *chapandas* covering the area now under Amatongas and Inchope administrative posts.

Dodoeroi was however removed in 1920 by the Portuguese, since he was considered anti-Portuguese and rebellious after joining Macombe¹⁴ against the Portuguese occupation in the Barue revolt, which occurred from 1917 to 1920¹⁵. At this time, the Portuguese government nominated a new paramount chief (Mr. Nhantchuwara), and Pindanganga began to work directly with him. However Dodoeroi continued to be the ceremonial leader conducting all traditional ceremonies such as the rain ceremony.

¹⁴ Macombe was a traditional chief from the North of Manica and the leader of the most famous rebellion against Portuguese colonization in Manica-Mozambique.

¹⁵ See Branquinho, A. M. (1967)

A new administrative division was established in 1933 with coming into force of Decree law n° 23.229 of 15/11/33 about 'Overseas Administrative Reform' (RAU)¹⁶ and the Mozambican territory was divided in *circunscrições* or *conselhos*. These *conselhos* were aggregated into districts and subsequently into provinces (Alves, 1995: 71).

According to the same Decree Law, a new social and administrative division for rural areas was determined and with this there was a new designation of traditional leaders. Rural people were organized in *regedorias*, led by a *regedor* or *regulo* (for example Nhanshuwara). The *regedoria* was divided into groups of villages, each led by a chief of a group of villages (for example Pindanganga). In turn, each village was to be led by a chief of the village (*fumo*).

In trying to extend the process of colonial government into the rural areas, traditional leaders were declared as auxiliaries and intermediaries between the colonial government and the rural community (art. 7° of RAU; Caetano, 1951: 48). They were given a role to control their people, collect tax, maintain social infrastructure, and disseminate government policies and information. In addition, a system of remuneration was established to pay chiefs according to the number of people they controlled (amounting to two per cent of the tax collected). It was at this time that chiefs began to be given uniforms and emblems. It is important to say that until around 1941, when Mozambique became governed by a single administration, the influence of Portuguese colonialism was concentrated in the southern and coastal areas. Most of central and northern areas were rented to private companies. Manica was rented to the *Companhia de Moçambique* (Vines, 1996 quoted by Anstey forthcoming: 137).

At the time that these changes were introduced, Pindanganga began to play both an administrative role, based on the principles and laws defined by the colonial government and a social and cultural role, based on community principles. In other words Pindanganga, who was enjoying charismatic and traditional legitimacy based on the population's belief in his supernatural power and the fact that he was traditionally considered the landowner by his community, became, as other traditional leaders, formally recognized by the government.

Chief Pindanganga worked at that time both with the successors of Nhantchuwara on administrative issues and with the successors of Dodoeroi on traditional and cultural issues. This strategy maintained the chief's support from the community, because he continued to

be the link with their ancestors. However, it also allowed the chief to create good relationships with the government in such a way as to protect himself and his people.

It was common for elders who were close to the chief to talk about community behaviour during the colonial period with some nostalgia. For example, one elder commented that during colonial times, 'uncontrolled fire was not as frequent as it is now, because whoever caused it was immediately arrested by the chief and sent to the administration. But now, everyone burns the forest and nothing happens...' Another commented, 'at that time, people respected the chiefs and that was why we had order...'

Such comments suggest that the balanced strategy adopted by chiefs was 'accepted' by the community, since they viewed chiefs as the guarantors of social order, spiritual satisfaction, cultural continuity, and well-being within the community. Traditional institutions and their leaders were accorded recognition and respect. However, it also suggests adaptability and flexibility on the part of traditional institutions at that time, in such a way as to maintain their influence and role.

Other aspects may also help to explain the high level of community recognition and acceptance of chiefs in Pindanganga. For instance, in contrast with other areas, the colonial government did not impose the traditional leadership in the specific case of Pindanganga. Meanwhile, there was a diversification of sources of income in Pindanganga, and a high level of motivation on the part of traditional leaders. These factors also could have helped to minimize the pressure on natural resources and facilitated their conservation during colonial times.

For example, many respondents noted the opportunity that they had in working on Portuguese farms, and the fact that there was a good market for agricultural crops providing a reliable source of income. The market for agricultural crops was facilitated by the existence of shops and the good level of maintenance of roads in the area.

When Mozambique became independent from Portuguese colonialism in 1975, the government banned traditional leaders and their institutions. According to government rhetoric at that time, they were labeled as obscurantist, superstitious and oppressors who worked with the colonial government and were viewed as a barrier to the construction of a socialist society¹⁷.

¹⁶ Alves, A. M. N. T. (1995): Análise da política colonial em relação à autoridade tradicional. Autoridade e poder tradicional; Vol. I. Ministério da Administração Estatal. Núcleo de Desenvolvimento administrativo. Pp71-87

¹⁷ See Alexander (1994:2), Geffray (1991:16), Honwana (1993:3), West (1998) .

According to some of those interviewed, a member of Frelimo¹⁸ organized a local community meeting where it was announced that traditional leaders were dismissed and excluded from any authority and group leadership and that new community leaders, (known as *secretários*) and *grupos dinamizadores*¹⁹ supported by the Frelimo party were to take their place. *Secretários* and *grupos dinamizadores* were elected, and presented to the people.

Subsequently, communal villages (*aldeias comunais*) were established and all community members were asked to live there. The main argument in favour of establishing these communal villages was to facilitate basic state assistance and provide social services such as medical, educational, and potable water.

However, for many respondents, this time was the starting point of 'social disorder' and disrespect for traditional culture and principles. From the point of view of these respondents, such traditional principles were important tools to regulate people's behaviour and also to educate them.

Although officially prohibited and in general weakened, the chief and some *fumos* continued to play the role as personal counselors and sometimes organized traditional ceremonies clandestinely. For example one chief commented that '...even sr. Pita, who was in the *grupo dinamizador*, came several times to ask me help to resolve conflicts...'

When the war in Pindanganga began in 1982, communal villages were destroyed, and Renamo occupied the area of Pindanganga, the traditional leaders were re-imposed as community leaders. In some cases members of previous chiefs' families or their collaborators were appointed to substitute those who had died or were displaced from the area.

According to some commentators such as Hughes (1999: 70) and some residents in Pindanganga, Renamo used a strategy of re-imposing traditional institutions and traditional leaders in order to raise support from these leaders and their followers, and guarantee logistics and a pool of human labour. In return, Renamo soldiers would offer clothes and other goods to chiefs and sometimes to other members of the community and guarantee armed protection against government and Zimbabwean soldiers.

The followers viewed the re-instatement of traditional leaders as the renaissance of their cultural inheritance. For example, one commented '...the mambos know they are better than a *grupos dinamizadores*...' This does not mean only that they knew the area's boundaries,

but also the culture and traditions, and could represent the rightful landowners—the ancestors.

After the war came to an end in 1992, traditional leaders continued to play an important role in controlling land allocations according to customary traditions, resolving conflicts, and conducting traditional ceremonies. In general, most people respect the role played by traditional leaders and recognize them as landowners and judges who resolve conflicts within the community.

As mentioned earlier, 258 new households came to Pindanganga after the war for different reasons, but most of them looking for productive land. All of them, when asked how they obtained land to farm and to build their houses responded that they requested this land from traditional leaders, according to traditional procedures in the rural areas. These leaders are the ones who also define the boundaries of a given community, and explain to newcomers the community rules and norms, such as prohibitions on the use of material from the cemeteries or the cutting of trees at the source of rivers. For example, one of the farmers interviewed stressed that '...it is like when you go to another family's house, you have to ask for permission to get in from the house owner...'

However, in contrast with original inhabitants, when most of the newcomers and young people were asked about the significance of local traditional ceremonies and their participation in these events, they were reticent and in some cases they had difficulty in explaining the significance of some ceremonies. This could suggest two things:

- a) for newcomers, the ancestral heritage evoked in Pindanganga had no significance to them. In other words, they did not identify with Pindanganga (the first chief); and
- b) the social, political and military transformations that occurred over time and which were described briefly above could have contributed to a breakdown of the process of dissemination of knowledge and acceptance of community principles and norms that had guaranteed social harmony from one generation to the other.

Despite continued respect for the chief's position as the landowner, his powers had been diluted over time. These facts make traditional leaders more interested in empowering themselves by seeking different sources of support. Their alliances with different institutions and groups such as political parties, governmental bodies, NGOs, and religious institutions, are signals of this priority.

For example, during the fieldwork, the existence of more than 20 churches and sects that have emerged after the war was verified. Some of the traditional

¹⁸ Created in 1962 as liberation movement (Mozambique Front of Liberation) and government party from 1975.

¹⁹ (secretaries and dynamic group) Political leaders and institutions at local level created by Frelimo

leaders, such as the chief and some *fumos*, are also leaders of these churches. This could suggest they are looking not only for spiritual satisfaction but also for social and political support and alliances.

Traditional institutions have also begun to work more closely with the government, through Renamo, primarily by mobilizing the community to participate in different events such as electoral and general censuses, voting at elections and the building of schools. More recently, the District Administrative Officer gave the chief the responsibility to resolve certain problems within the community and to collect taxes.

It is important to explain that after the peace agreement of 1994, members of Renamo were integrated in the government, so that it could work in areas controlled by Renamo when the war finished – effectively extending the government's authority. Pindanganga was one of these areas where Renamo nominated one of their members to be president of the locality.

At the same time they began working with NGOs such as CONCERN, timber companies, and government institutions such as the provincial and district departments of agriculture and education. Recently, this has extended to collaboration with GTZ and SPFFB in a natural resource management programme. In all these activities, they worked as mobilisers, transmitters, mediators and judges.

However, in many of these programmes and projects, a top-down approach has continued, where the community and their leaders in many cases are involved only at the implementation phase. In other words, community participation continues to be passive.

These kinds of relationships between traditional leaders and formal institutions can be beneficial for both the traditional leaders and their institutions, because they may help them to garner important formal support to re-empower themselves. This empowerment involves alliances and material achievements essential for their recognition. This is the reason why they are asking for payment and uniforms from the government as in colonial times. For instance, the chief asked,

'How can we work without payment? We leave our fields to work for the government but we have no compensation. The colonial government used to pay us but now... To have money I have to produce charcoal. How can I ask other people to stop producing the charcoal if I'm producing in order to have some money?'

In other words, at the present moment, control and management of natural resources such as forests and wildlife is not their priority.

2.2 Government, international organizations and NGOs

There is a District Administrator's office and administrative staff at local level to represent the government in Pindanganga. In addition, other government institutions, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (through the Provincial Forest and Wildlife Service —SPFFB) and the Ministry of Education are also working in the area. In collaboration with these government institutions, two international organizations—GTZ and CONCERN, are present locally.

However, analysis of the role and participation of 'outside' institutions and organizations in the management of natural resources in Pindanganga should focus primarily on the SPFFB and GTZ, because these are the two main institutions that are directly involved in natural resource management.

The Provincial Forest and Wildlife Service (SPFFB) represents the government in forest and wildlife control and management. This includes protection and conservation, promotion of sustainable management, control over access to natural resources, and law enforcement. However the SPFFB has strong human, financial and logistical constraints to its role in the process of sustainable forest and wildlife control and management. For instance to control around 66,660km², SPFFB has only 36 forest and wildlife guards and a few vehicles. As a result, most of the people involved in commercial exploitation of forest and wildlife resources do not pay taxes. In other words, they are operating illegally.

2.3 Moves towards community management in Pindanganga

It is important to stress that, according to the recent Forest Law (art. 15), the local community can harvest forest and wildlife products for their own use according to community norms and customs. However, to sell these products, a license is required. Therefore, charcoal production and marketing in Pindanganga is illegal according to the Forest Law because most of the producers do not have licenses from the SPFFB for commercial harvesting of trees.

Previous attempts to enforce the law failed in 1990/91 when the SPFFB tried to stop 'illegal' charcoal production, forbidding production and transportation without a license. The community response manifested itself with a roadblock on the Beira corridor. Since that time the SPFFB action has centered on charcoal transport control at some points along corridors (Beira and Tete corridors) and some sporadic control of produced and transported quantities from licensed producers.

According to the head of SPFFB, to minimize the problem of uncontrolled production of charcoal, a

strategy is emerging to organize producer involvement in the control of production. The aim is to test this strategy in an area of high potential such as Pindanganga – a zone suggested by the Governor of Manica Province when he visited the area in 1998. Thus, Pindanganga has become one of several community natural resource management pilot areas in Manica. According to the head of SPFFB, the new Forest Law facilitates this strategy, since it promotes community participation in natural resource management.

To develop this idea, a new strategy was introduced at local level in collaboration with other institutions such as CEF and GTZ. The process started with an exercise to delimit the area of Pindanganga, based on an approach that involved community participation. The delimitation and demarcation of the land are seen as one of the pre-conditions for a community request to acquire a title to the land and other natural resources included in the Land Law (art. 10, 3) and land regulation (art. 9, 3).

The second step involved identification of potentialities and constraints through a participatory rural appraisal and forest inventory. At the same time, the community was mobilized, either through direct contact with people in meetings, or through the encouragement of traditional chiefs to participate in the programme.

Traditional leaders were seen as playing an important role in encouraging people to come to attend meetings; it is for this reason that they were contacted by SPFFB and GTZ at the beginning of the programme and asked to work with SPFFB and GTZ in community mobilization.

To advance this process of community mobilization, a visit was arranged by SPFFB to a CBNRM project in the north of the country (the Tchuma-Tchato project²⁰) with the aim to 'learn from that community/project and appreciate the advantages and benefits of community natural resources management programmes'. The three *fumos* and two other members of the community including one woman were selected for this trip. According to a GTZ officer, 'the project decided to give priority to traditional leaders and influential people of the community...'

During the fieldwork it was possible to participate as an observer in community meetings organized by GTZ as described in the following case:

Case 1: A community meeting

²⁰ Tchuma-Tchato was the first community natural resource management project in Mozambique, where implementation began in 1995 by government through SPFFB Tete, and with the financial support of the Ford Foundation.

A community meeting was organized in February 2000 to discuss 'environmental problems in Pindanganga'. The meeting was attended by about 45 people, among them the local administrative headman (Locality President), traditional leaders (the chief and some *fumos*) and other community members. From this group of people around eight were women, but they did not talk during the meeting. The discussion centered on deforestation, uncontrolled fires, community benefits, and the role of traditional leaders. The meeting began with the Locality President underlining the natural resource potential, the necessity of its rational use and the role of all community members and in particular, the role of traditional leaders in controlling and promoting 'good' use. Talking about the role of the traditional leader he said 'You have an important role in control because you know the area and all people, it is you who allocates land, you have to control illegal hunting, tree cutting...'

Then the experience of Tchuma-Tchato was referred to as an example of community control and benefit. After that the discussion was polarized by a group of charcoal producers who argued that the GTZ and SPFFB came to forbid charcoal production without suggesting any concrete alternative. The traditional leaders then claimed that some timber companies with government licenses did not respect the traditional leaders and as one of the *fumos* said, 'they come here, cut trees and win a lot of money but we have no benefit, they don't even buy a pair of shoes for our *mambo*...'. Meanwhile, the locality president and GTZ staff were trying to persuade the meeting that 'things have changed and the new laws permit community participation...'

Uncontrolled fire was the other aspect discussed. For the charcoal producers, this problem is caused by hunters and constitutes the main reason of environmental degradation. One commented: 'when we took the person who caused uncontrolled fire to the chief nothing happened to him...'. This point of view was opposed by the other group of people, believed to be hunters, who argued that the problem of deforestation was caused mainly by charcoal production activity. However at end of the meeting, according to a suggestion from the GTZ field officer, people 'agreed' to define specific areas to produce charcoal and minimize uncontrolled fire problems.

This meeting revealed a number of tensions. First, there was a tension between the stated aim of community participation, and the way in which the meeting was organized, which appeared to tend towards a pre-arranged agenda. Second, in the discussion, a conflict of interest between hunters (most of them original inhabitants of the area) and charcoal producers (most of them newcomers) emerged,

although this was largely ignored by the GTZ officer's summary of the meeting. In addition, negative past experiences, whereby people questioned the likelihood of community benefits, and the role of traditional leaders, came to the fore.

Subsequently, a natural resource management committee was created whereby six members were 'elected' in another community meeting. This meeting provides an example of how programmes can merely attempt to impose an imported model, rather than seeking solutions based on practices that are locally legitimate.

Case 2: Electing a committee

The meeting was attended by about 50 people among whom were traditional leaders, other members of the community and 12 women. A model process and constitution for the committee was put forward by GTZ, including the pre-condition of six people, each one with a specific role/position (see appendix) and the inclusion of a minimum of one woman to be a vice-president. A list of candidates was also proposed by GTZ itself. However the chief, supported by other members of the community, refused the previous list and decided to propose and indicate according to the consensus of all present. Each member was proposed by someone and according to general comments was approved or refused.

An interesting feature was that when the vice-president (a woman) was proposed by one of those present (this woman had been on the visit to Tchuma-Tchato), the reaction was immediate. One of those present said, 'she can not be a member of the committee because she is married and her husband is not here to approve'. Then another woman stood up and said, 'I'm not married, so I can join the committee...' and all those present applauded (agreed).

According to one GTZ officer, the model for the creation of this committee was taken from the experience of Tchuma-Tchato and other similar projects, and was seen as conforming to the pattern expected by the new Land Law.

As in case 1, the extent of community representation, discussion and participation could reveal disinterest, lack of information or mobilization and/or cultural issues. For instance, in the meeting women and young people generally stayed quiet. Another aspect was the inclusion of one of the *fumas* (proposed by the chief). An important lesson from this meeting was that despite 'participatory' rhetoric, the meeting displayed much more the features of a top-down approach, which in turn was 'accepted' by the community. Yet, as experience shows, such a process ultimately is unlikely to work, because it has no legitimacy.

The aim of this committee, according to its president is as follows:

'Although we are still not clear and defined, we think we will work and negotiate with timber companies, mobilize the community to minimize uncontrolled fires and promote forest and wildlife products such as honey, mushrooms, timber in order to achieve benefits for all of the community.'

Within the community there are different points of view and perceptions relating to this project and the processes associated with it, such as the creation of the committee and its role, and their participation in control and use of natural resources. In general, people are not clear about the project's objectives and the general idea is that the project has been set up only to control fire and charcoal production.

For many of the people of Pindanganga, the SPFFB is seen primarily as a group of forest guards who control (control for the people means to forbid, and/or insist on a license) charcoal production and forest fires and protect some tree species for timber exploitation. For example, most of the charcoal producers interviewed viewed the project as another way for the government to control charcoal production. Meanwhile, from the point of view of some of the original inhabitants of Pindanganga who do not produce charcoal, this control by the project is seen as minimizing deforestation, although they have no idea about how this could benefit the community.

According to this group, experience shows that timber companies are the only beneficiary of forest protection. For example one of those interviewed said 'the government control our forest activities to benefit timber companies who come here to exploit timber without any benefit for us...' A similar point of view was expressed by another resident, who said 'many companies come and exploit timber, but we have no hospital, nothing...'

Some people are afraid that they will be removed from their land or forced to live in a fenced area. On the one hand, this reflects the fact that the SPFFB and GTZ officials often use the word 'reserve', whilst people are aware of the experience of the Gorongosa National Park, where people were obligated to leave the area during colonial times. On the other hand, the experience of Tchuma Tchato, where the main village in the project is protected by a fence, was viewed by some of those who visited the area as restrictive and, for some reminded them of *aldeias comunais* from the time before the war.

The process is not clear also for some members of the committee who expected to have salaries and a uniform from the government. Several reasons could justify this point of view. For example, their experience

from other projects is that those people involved in implementation were paid; at the same time, many appear not to have been clear about the purpose of this project, or their role in it. This also shows that it is important to find out about the different motivations of people involved in CBNRM projects, and avoid creating false expectations.

It is important to stress that the model used to constitute the committee was imported from other experiences and presented by GTZ staff as the only alternative, even though the philosophy of CBNRM implies a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach. Indeed, a top-down approach could easily discourage community participation and foster distrust in the committee, as happened with the failed political structures created after independence. In other words, although the community chose the members of the committee, it could end up with no legitimate base on which to guarantee the achievement of its objectives.

Another issue is that when the project began, expectations were high about the granting of land titles, as was promised during a community mapping process initiated in Pindanganga in 1999²¹. However the community has still not received feedback on this process, which has contributed to suspicion about the project. For example, one of the respondents said, 'everyone, whether in NGOs or the government, when they come to work here promise everything but in the end...for example, when GTZ came with the Ministry of Agriculture, they promised to give us a letter (saying we own) the land but not yet'.

However, this process did encourage debate within the community about environmental problems, and more specifically about deforestation in the area. Meetings were organized to discuss the causes of deforestation and the solutions to minimize the problem. Tree felling for charcoal production and uncontrolled forest fires were the main causes identified. To minimize the effect of these it was proposed to define areas for each activity (i.e. create a land use plan) with community and government participation. This kind of initiative can be seen as positive because it encourages community participation in the definition of problems, and the identification of solutions regarding the use and control of natural resources.

3. Environmental impacts

The production of charcoal was identified by most respondents as the main cause of deforestation in Pindanganga. On average each producer produces around 90 bags of charcoal per year and if one considers that, as a minimum, one person from at least

²¹ This was the first part of the development of the pilot CBNRM project in Pindanganga.

60 per cent of the total number of households in Pindanganga produces charcoal, this is equivalent to around 44,640 bags being produced per year in the area. This indicates that annually around 350 ha of forest is cut down to make charcoal. However, according to a forest inventory carried out in 1999/2000, the annual production that can be sustained from the area is about 11,666 bags (Carla, 2000:39). This shows that the actual production is well over the maximum annual capacity that could be considered sustainable.

Most of the charcoal is produced in the southeast of Pindanganga, close to the Inchope-Gorongosa road and Beira corridor, where the price is relatively high, and also along the road from the national road (EN6) to Pungue River because it can be sold easily. In other words, pressure on the forest is localized in specific areas where consequently one can see high levels of deforestation.

According to some scholars such as Serenje et al. (1994: 72), deforestation caused by charcoal production in miombo woodland has no immediate ecological effect and does not contribute to the reduction of species diversity. According to the same source, tree felling could stimulate regeneration and increase the tree density. However, the simple fact of vegetation reduction inevitably causes some environmental transformations. The reduction of vegetation cover, by cutting trees and setting fires, could make the soil susceptible to increased overland flow and soil erosion. As Chidumai pointed in his study about miombo in Zambia, deforestation in miombo woodland has an immediate effect in an increased peak stream flow and increases also in runoff (Chidumai, 1997: 122).

The situation is aggravated by uncontrolled forest fires, which occur every year in this area. Fire is used mostly to clear fields and hunt wild animals. According to most respondents hunting is the main reason for uncontrolled forest fire, as it is practiced mainly by young boys. These boys are seen as having no responsibility and not respecting the traditional rules. The over-exploitation of forest resources, and the fact that charcoal production is concentrated in specific areas, could accelerate the negative effects of deforestation.

Agriculture is another activity that is identified by many as causing deforestation in Pindanganga. Although the area occupied by farms is relatively small - around 10 per cent of the total area - this activity is centered along the main roads and along the rivers causing high pressure and deforestation.

3.1 Institutional change and environmental impacts

Traditionally, the use and protection of natural resources such as forest, land, water, and wildlife is

done through norms and principles based on customary law and spiritual belief. For instance, in Pindanganga, forest areas considered sacred are protected through rules based on spiritual principles. The harvesting of trees or other products is forbidden in such forests. According to elders, hunters must ask for permission from the traditional leaders and in some cases ceremonies will be required afterwards to give thanks to the ancestors, who are considered the owners of the land. It is also forbidden to cut some trees or hunt some wild animal species, whilst certain animals, such as pangolin, should be eaten only by traditional leaders.

Violation of these spiritual and customary rules and norms were mostly sanctioned or mediated through ancestors. Sanctions varied from individual punishments, such as making the culprit lose their way within the forest, to collective responses, where, according to respondents, the spirits are 'very angry'. In such cases, drought may be sent, or large numbers of insect pests or baboons sent to invade fields. To solve such problems, ceremonies would be organized through the *mambo* in order to seek ancestral pardon.

Respect for these rules was based on people's belief in the ancestors, and in the legitimacy of the *mambo* as both intermediary between the community and ancestral spirits, and at the same time as judge. These principles were passed from one generation to another through parents and community elders, both through day-to-day practices, and in special ceremonies.

During colonial times, new rules were introduced. For instance, traditional leaders were expected to arrest all those who broke rules such as the cutting of tree species considered by the government as reserved for timber exploitation, or the burning of areas of forest. Since that time, natural resources use and protection became mediated through formal law.

As discussed earlier, the socio-political and military situation at various points in the past also contributed significantly to changes in institutions, both formal and informal, which controlled the use of natural resources. Sometimes this has led to a significant weakening of these institutions. For instance, the formal abolition after independence of the traditional institutions that guaranteed community discipline over natural resources through enforcement of customary law, spiritual principles and formal law, has contributed to the breakdown of their authority over natural resources. As a consequence, the common property regime over natural resources was, in practice, converted to an open access regime, where the priority or principle became the maximization of individual benefit from exploitation of different natural resources rather than the promotion of common interests.

Loss of power by traditional institutions was caused first because the normal chain of traditional rules, beliefs and principles transmitted through generations was interrupted, and secondly because formal support from the government for these institutions was removed. The fact that the area became inhabited by a relatively high number of newcomers after the war exacerbated the situation. This influx not only affected the capacity of traditional leaders to mediate different interests and impose limitations on the use of natural resources by members of the community, but it also weakened their capacity and authority to exclude outside users, who have no reason or motivation to respect local institutions. In other words, the boundaries of the community became porous, resulting in almost unlimited entry for potential resource users.

As a result, the immediate priority of traditional leaders since the war has been to re-acquire powers they have lost, rather than specifically to control access to and use of natural resources. This could contribute, in certain ways, to perpetuating the uncontrolled use of natural resources and consequently resource degradation in the area. However, the fact that they are looking for re-empowerment through alliances within the community and with other outside institutions could favour a regaining of their legitimacy and create incentives to control resources in order to achieve common benefits.

It is also the case that the government institutions, such as the SPFFB, have a limited capacity to enforce formal rules and to control access to, and use of forest and wildlife resources. The implication of this is a weakened control and monitoring of forest activities, high levels of illegal exploitation, low capacity to collect tax, and inadequate implementation of forest and wildlife management programmes. The current concerns of SPFFB are focused on control and protection of forest and wildlife, rather than empowering, in any real sense, the community. The creation of new institutions such as committees, without any strong support within the community and using imported 'prescriptions' rather than strengthening existing local institutions is evidence that the main priority is conservation and control over natural resources and then the people.

According to most respondents, the NRM 'committee' in Pindanganga is viewed as an extended branch of SPFFB, in the same way as the *secretarios* and *grupos dinamizadores* created immediately after independence were viewed. In other words, this committee is more likely to fail than succeed. Worse, the creation of the committee in Pindanganga could contribute to disrupting social order over natural resources, favouring opportunistic unregulated exploitation of the

natural resources - contrary to the improvements that are expected.

Conclusions

This paper has argued that traditional institutions and leaders provide, in practice, the most effective local level control and management of natural resources such as land, forests and wildlife. This control over access and use of natural resources is regulated by traditional mechanisms in a way that promotes and mediates collective use and benefit; however, it is now increasingly difficult for these mechanisms to be enforced. This is because over time, the role of these institutions has changed. Through time, traditional leaders have moved from being judges and representatives of ancestral spirits, to being variously representatives of the government in colonial times, 'clandestine' counselors after independence, and managers of logistics during the civil war. Currently, they are expected to play the role of both judges and passive intermediaries between government, NGOs and their community. This has affected their ability to both 'sell' rules, and enforce sanctions over the use and protection of natural resources. For instance, each year more uncontrolled fires are reported in the area, including the burning of sacred forests. Fire has become a problem as private property such as houses, field crops, and domestic animals are destroyed. In such cases, with traditional leaders' mediation, the offender is sometimes obligated to pay damages. But whilst the role of traditional leaders to mediate human conflicts is clear, their ability to prevent such damage in advance is less so.

Overall, the basis of legitimacy of traditional leaders and institutions, whether in a legal-rational or a traditional sense, has been negatively affected. As a consequence, the authority of traditional leaders and institutions in Pindanganga over control of natural resources is weak and appears to have contributed to an increase in the level of uncontrolled use of forest and wildlife resources. For instance, charcoal production and uncontrolled forest fires are two major problems which traditional institutions currently find it difficult to minimize. Furthermore, for traditional leaders, the first priority appears to be a process of re-empowerment where the focus is on forging different political and social alliances, rather than controlling and managing natural resources.

The strategy of community participation adopted by the government has ironically weakened the capacity of community institutions to enforce rules concerned with natural resource use, according to many respondents. This is because the way that it has been implemented has failed to empower community institutions. In contrast, the creation of committees

risks weakening community capacity or interest to control 'their' natural resources. In Pindanganga, the top-down approach in use from the beginning of the project, involving a prescriptive attitude on the creation of the committee, and the accumulated negative experiences of the community from the past is affecting the credibility of the committee and consequently of the project.

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