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BIG MEN AND CAMPFIRE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ROLE OF EXTERNAL ACTORS IN CONFLICTS OVER LOCAL RESOURCES¹

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Abstract

That conflicts over natural resources occur among interest groups is a point generally agreed upon by researchers. Often these conflicts arise because of the scarcity of resources. What scholars usually neglect are the strategies that threatened groups take to ensure continued access to these resources. In this article we show that interest groups look for support from actors who are external to their community. We use the example of Binga where the Ndebele, a minority group threatened with eviction from their area of settlement, solicit the support of regional politicians. In addition, we use the example of Bulilimamangwe where powerful cattle owners who are threatened by Campfire, approach the partly leadership — the elders, for support against the local Council.

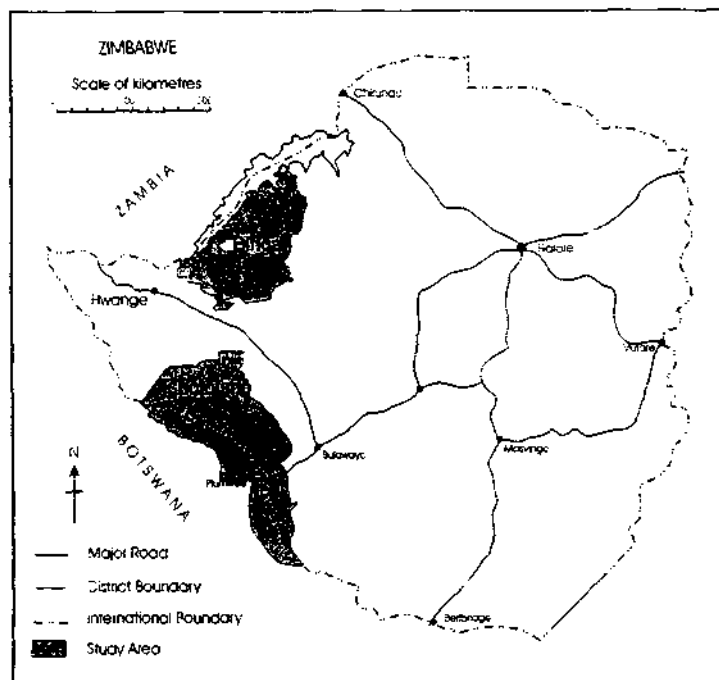
INTRODUCTION

THIS IS A COMPARATIVE study of conflict of interests between social groups over access to natural resources. We show that social groups within a community have divergent perceptions of how resources should be utilised, which might result in conflicts. In resolving the conflict, disputants invoke the help of external actors 'the big men' who they perceive to be more powerful than their adversary. This choice of outsiders for conflict resolution shows that the disputants are not driven by a desire for justice but by a need to win. To illustrate these points we use examples from Binga and Bulilimamangwe District's Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (Campfire) programmes.

Campfire seeks to engender community resource management in Zimbabwe. This is through devolving natural resource management roles to local communities. Natural resource management at the local level interfaces several stakeholders (Murphree, 1992; Agrawal, 1997). Interaction of actors with varying and at times discordant interests is

¹ Comments and criticisms from Professor Michael Bourdillon and an anonymous reviewer, are gratefully acknowledged.

LOCATION OF STUDY AREAS



sometimes conflictual. In this study we discuss a conflict between immigrant Ndebele agriculturists and subsistence Tonga farmers in Binga. The Ndebele view agriculture as the major indicator of success. They feel that the Campfire programme, which is supported by the Tonga, allows potential arable land to be used for wildlife management and by so doing increases cases of crop destruction by wildlife. The Tonga, with the assistance of the local authority, seek to expel the immigrants. In Bulilimamangwe district, we give an example of a conflict between owners of large herds of cattle and the rest of the community. The cattle owners want the range for their cattle. They view the Campfire programme and those who support it as obstacles because of the proposed use of part of the area for wildlife. Those supporting Campfire want to forcibly remove the cattle from the range. We also give an example of a conflict between the Tsholotsho Rural District Council and a community over relocation from an area designated for wildlife.

In all these conflicts, external actors play an important role in resolving them. Relations of a patron-client nature between remote local communities and outsider politicians are the basis of this involvement (Berry, 1980). Because their interests are at stake, disputants seek the support of those actors who ensure that their interests are protected. For example, in Binga, we show that the immigrants who were threatened with expulsion made use of the politicians. In Bulilimamangwe, owners of large herds of cattle who felt that Campfire threatened their access to pastures sought the support of a national politician. In Tsholotsho also, relocated households sought the help of the politicians and senior government officials to protect their interests.

BINGA

Binga is situated in the Zambezi Valley, nearly 500kms west of the capital of Zimbabwe, Harare. The Zambezi River in the west and Chizarira National Park in the north bound it. The area is very hot, with summer temperatures sometimes reaching 48°C. The rainfall is generally poor with some low lying areas receiving as little as 500mm per annum.

Until recently Binga was heavily infested with tsetse fly. The country's Veterinary Department has rid most of the area of the fly, which is now confined to narrow belts along the Zambezi River. However, malaria remains a serious problem. Mosquitoes continue to populate the area notwithstanding intensified campaigns by anti-malaria spraying teams from the Ministry of Health. Each year some people die of cerebral malaria. The mosquito and the tsetse fly have largely contributed to the valley being an inhospitable place.

Binga still has abundant wildlife notwithstanding previous efforts by the Veterinary Department to eliminate it in pursuit of tsetse eradication.

Among the animals found in the area are elephants, most feared by the people on account of their destruction of property and human beings. There are also lions, which occasionally prey on the Tonga and the Ndebele, the inhabitants of the area.

The Tonga are a matrilineal people, who have historically lived in the Valley and the adjacent highland area. Since colonisation, this group has been the subject of multiple relocations. In the 1950s, the Tonga were evacuated from the banks of the Zambezi River, their dominant fishing ground, to give way to the lake arising from Kariba Dam, a huge development project aimed at solving industrial problems for dominant ethnic groups located outside the Valley (Colson, 1971). The colonial state resettled the Tonga in the semi-arid areas of the escarpment and beyond and promised them social services, including a supply of water (Trimmel, 1994). The Tonga were evacuated in the late 1960s from these new homes to give way to tsetse eradication. And recently there have been attempts to resettle some Tonga to give way to a hunting concession. All these movements have contributed to the Tonga's being suspicious of development projects (Reynolds, 1991, xxv).

Although they were acephalous in times past (Gielgud, 1898), the Tonga are now organised in chiefdoms. The chiefs, together with their village heads, constitute a popular political system. Efforts by the government to abolish this traditional leadership soon after the independence of Zimbabwe were met with resistance by both chiefs and their people. For the local people, traditional leadership is linked to the fertility of the area (Dzingirai and Bourdillon, 1997) and any replacement of them is thought of as likely to cause a disaster of some kind.

While the entire Council is Tonga, all the senior local government posts are filled by Ndebele people. The district administrator, provincial administrator, party chairperson and the provincial governor are all Ndebele.

The Ndebele who are settled in Binga are recent migrants from the surrounding Ndebele speaking areas, which include Lupane, Nkayi, Gokwe and Bubi. Originally the Ndebele were settled in the high rainfall and fertile areas, which were claimed by White settlers beginning in the 1890s when they defeated the Ndebele. Generally immigrants come to Binga in search of land for agriculture and pasture. There are others who come to Binga in search of places free from social tension. While some get permission to settle from what Council regards as corrupt Tonga leaders, the majority unilaterally settle themselves in places of their choice (Dzingirai, 1994, 167-176; 1996, 19-30). There are also immigrants who claim to have been invited to settle in Binga by national politicians who include a Member of Parliament who is based in the province.

Immigrants, who are effectively Ndebele, generally have a wider contact with the changes that have been taking place in the country, and unlike the Tonga, are often Christians (Alexander and Ranger, 1997, 6-7) and educated. They have large herds of cattle, modern farming implements and generally acquire a good income from agriculture. Immigrants use the Tonga as servants and a source of cheap labour.

Although resident in Binga, immigrants rarely acknowledge Tonga leadership. They regard the Council, entirely Tonga, as tribally biased against them and also as inefficient. As evidence of Council's inefficiency, the Ndebele cite the slow rate at which schools and clinics are built in the district. Although they do not have chiefs of their own, these immigrants have prominent, influential and wealthy men who live among them. Generally, these men, because of their undisputed authority, play a leading role in conflict and dispute settlement. These men, in charge of villages, which are all spatially removed from the Tonga, are also used by regional politicians — also known as '*badala*' or 'elders' — to mobilise the support of immigrants.

These 'elders' are not necessarily old people. In the study area, they all are middle-aged individuals employed by government in key positions in the countryside. They include the police chief, district administrator, his assistant, the provincial administrator, and the head of the central intelligence services, the governor and the Party chairperson. With the exception of the district administrator and his assistant, the elders are located outside the district. While we have made no effort to confirm their identity, these elders claim to be from the Ndebele ethnic group.

The elders also belong to the ruling Party. They claim to be heroes of the *Chimurenga* war that liberated the country from colonial rule. A point they regularly make is that all local people, including the Tonga, owe their freedom to them. Because of their role in the war and current status in the party and government, these men claim to be powerful enough to veto all decisions made at levels below them. In particular, they claim, as will be shown later, superiority over councils.

Immigrants are interested in development issues; they are keen to see Binga having schools, clinics and major social services. One of their private but widespread allegations is that the district would dramatically change if only they became chiefs and headmen in place of the Tonga. Even though they despise the Tonga, whom they say are ignorant and undeveloped, immigrants generally respect the latter's rituals regarding rainfall and fertility of the land (Dzingirai and Bourdillon, 1997). Sometimes they intermarry with the Tonga.

Conflict Over Resources in Binga District

There is a struggle between the Tonga and the Ndebele that centres on land. The Tonga want the land for their own agricultural purposes, and as

an inheritance for their children. Recently the Tonga have developed an increased interest in land on account of Campfire. According to them Campfire, although not providing much household income, provides revenue needed for economic and social development. When one understands that the programme has yielded over Z\$5m since 1990, the claims by the Tonga become justified. To date the Tonga have used the revenue to build clinics, schools and grinding mills. The main argument by the Tonga is that if the land is all taken away by Ndebele agriculturists, the benefits from wildlife will cease.

There is another reason, political in nature, why the Tonga oppose immigration. The Tonga claim that throughout history, they have been forced to relinquish their resources, which include water, wildlife and land for use by other powerful groups. According to them, this is very unfair and unacceptable. Since they perceive migration to be linked to their deprivation, the Tonga do not readily support it.

The Ndebele have a different perspective. They want the land for settlement as well as for commercial crop cultivation. Since most of them generally keep large herds of cattle from which they regularly sell, the Ndebele also want land for grazing. The Ndebele do not like the Tonga whom they accuse of wasting land. Their argument is that the Tonga put valuable land to petty indigenous crops like millet. A second criticism they level against the Tonga is that they want to possess huge tracts of land which they are not using and will never be able to utilise.

The Ndebele are opposed to the presence of wildlife, which is regarded by the Tonga as a basis for Campfire (Madzudzo and Dzingirai, 1995, 25-42). Wildlife destroys their treasured crops and livestock. The Ndebele claim that this deprives them of thousands of dollars from farming. Secondly, the Ndebele allege that wildlife occupies land that could be better used for commercial agriculture. As a solution, the Ndebele suggest that all wildlife, including the smallest creatures, be relocated to the country's national parks where they won't bother anybody except the state and its Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management. Alternatively, they suggest a mass slaughter of all the animals, large and small, so that the problem of crop and livestock damage is permanently solved (Dzingirai, 1996, 25-6).

In summary, the Ndebele are in conflict with the Tonga whom they perceive to be an obstacle to their own individual development. In the next section, we detail some of the strategies used by the Ndebele to safeguard their stake in Binga.

When confronted by the Tonga and their Council to leave the area so as to give way to Campfire, the Ndebele often approach the big men of the area. In 1992, the Council decided to evict immigrants who had unilaterally, and therefore illegally, settled themselves, in the Lusulu area, a traditional

safari hunting ground. The Council and the safari operator who hunts in the district, argued that the Tonga people were being deprived of millions of dollars by immigrants some of who had settled in the hunting areas where he hunted wildlife. When word regarding the eviction reached immigrants, they immediately appointed a committee to approach the provincial administrator resident in Hwange, a small town 300 kms west of Binga so that he could use his office to protect them. The administrator allegedly told the delegation, upon hearing its full report, to go back, as the Council had no case. He pointed out that the Council was playing tribal politics, which was against the government policy of nation-building. He also chided the Council for according more importance to wildlife than was morally acceptable. In addition, he accused the Council of being used by White commercial hunters, whose long-term plan it was to regain control of the whole country using the Campfire programme. He promised to discipline the Tonga Council leadership, in particular the senior officer, who had initiated the move to 'expel people on account of a wildlife management programme'. Such people, he said, needed to be humbled since they wrongly thought they were now powerful enough to make decisions regarding the land. He told the delegation to relay the message to other immigrants back in Binga that his office would not allow such injustice to go on.

The discourse by the administrator instilled further courage among the once ruffled immigrants. It also endowed them with the belief that Council and its people had no case. When asked what would happen if Council resuscitated the plan to evict them, Malls,² a prominent Ndebele farmer, refused to entertain any possibility of that happening.

I tell you nothing of this sort will ever happen since our elder has spoken. No Whites will be allowed to regain control of the country. That is something past. Who shall fear when the elders and big men have spoken?

Through this intervention, then, immigrants were temporarily able to win the battle over land.

A few years later, the Council took advantage of a transfer of the provincial administrator from the province, and renewed its decision to evict all immigrants. The Council stated that it was not against any other ethnic group settling in the area. It claimed that it was concerned with the immigrants' manner of settlement. Immigrants, Council alleged, were randomly settled. The manner of settlement resulted in the Council finding it difficult to provide social services for people, including immigrants. Council also stressed that it valued human life more than wildlife. It

² Not his real name.

claimed that it was taking this decision to evict immigrants only to prevent its area from being turned into a desert by people who illegally settled themselves. When alerted, immigrants deliberated on the matter and resolved to approach the supreme leader in the province, the Governor, based in Bulawayo some 300kms away. A detailed report was also sent to the head of the intelligence services based at Lupane town, some 150kms away. The meeting appointed men who would take the issue to the Governor. When falsely informed that it wanted to evict Ndebele farmers on grounds of tribe and of a White man's hunting concession, the Governor immediately contacted the Council by telephone with a message to suspend the planned relocation. The Governor instructed the delegation to tell others to proceed with growing crops and keeping cattle since nothing would happen to them. He also assured them of total protection from any form of racism and tribalism.

When the Council and the safari operator ignored the ruling, and issued immigrants with eviction orders, immigrants beat up scouts from the Council, and vandalised the safari operator's camp and equipment. They shouted abuse at Council and the safari operator for trying to start another war for land. Immigrants also hurled insults at them for trying to reverse the decision of war heroes and current elders. The attacks on the Council and on the property of the safari operator and their resolve to remain in the disputed territory suggests that the immigrants were now confident that the politicians would support them in the struggle for land.

In the next case, of the alleged witch, Ncube, immigrants used the police in arguments over resources. Perhaps disappointed that the Council would never succeed in controlling and preventing further immigration, a group of Tonga decided to expel a powerful and wealthy immigrant, Ncube, who had been migrating from one district to another all his life. For the Tonga, Ncube was a difficult, arrogant and greedy person, who wanted to deprive them of their own resources, particularly land. They accused Ncube of being a 'mighty sorcerer' and the cause of drought in the area. Traditional leaders, including chiefs, diviners and village heads, argued that as long as Ncube and other immigrants remained in the area, droughts would recur. When Ncube defied the decision that he should immediately leave the area, taking his cattle and donkeys with him, the village-head promptly summoned a few youths to deal severely with him. Startled, immigrants held a prompt informal meeting to see how they could deal with this challenge. Some said this was bad precedent, which needed to be checked before other dreadful things occurred. A decision was made that the matter be reported to the chief of police in the area. The Ndebele officer, upon hearing the details of the story, promptly intervened and ordered the immigrant to stay. The officer also ordered

the arrest of all who had taken part in the illegal expulsion of Ncube. Those arrested were charged under an Act, which forbids witchcraft accusation and other related practices. Thus through their resort to a Ndebele police officer, the Ndebele were able to secure their stay.

What comes out in the case of Binga is that a conflict has risen between the Tonga and the Ndebele based on land. In this struggle for land, the Ndebele immigrants successfully utilise externally based agents to secure a victory over the Tonga. This utilisation of external agents to resolve conflicts over natural resources can be seen in our second case study of Bulilimamangwe, where an elite group perceived Campfire to be a threat to its wealth based on animal husbandry.

THE PROCESS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN BULILIMAMANGWE DISTRICT

Bulilimamangwe's Campfire programme is focused on an unsettled range in the western part of the district (see map). This range is a habitat to several resident wildlife species and those that move in from the nearby Hwange National Park. Private safari operators hired by the local authority hunt some of this wildlife. Safari operators are important to local authorities for making hunting, and therefore tourism revenues, a possibility. Local communities use this unsettled range for seasonal grazing, locally known as *lagisa* (Madzudzo and Hawkes, 1996). The absence of cultivated land in this area increases available pasture and reduces the herding effort, an attraction to owners of large livestock herds (Madzudzo and Hawkes, 1996). These cattle owners are suspicious of Campfire. They feel that it impedes their access to this frontier with abundant pasture. Original Campfire designs for Bulilimamangwe gave credence to this suspicion. This range was to be divided into wildlife and livestock areas. An electric fence would separate these two areas. Local communities were supposed to decide on the position of the electric fence.

As mentioned above Bulilimamangwe's Campfire programme entailed dividing up the *lagisa* area into zones for wildlife and livestock. Owners of large herds were opposed to this because it limited their access to extra grazing. Challenging the project at meetings was ineffective, as it was proceeding despite their protests. Construction of water points for wildlife was already underway. These cattle owners were labelled by project proponents as people who were against development, i.e. against the management of wildlife. Council and Zimbabwe Trust officials, a non-governmental organisation in Bulilimamangwe which assists in the implementation of Campfire, argued that most other people (presumably those without cattle) had already agreed to the proposed partition. The

only delay in implementing the project had come from the owners of large herds. These officials labelled cattle owners as enemies of development meant for the people.

Determined to safeguard their interests, cattle owners drove their livestock into the proposed wildlife area. They also infiltrated the newly formed wildlife committees, the local institutions created to manage Campfire. One cattle owner campaigned for and won the position of chairperson on the ward wildlife committee. In this position he ensured that he blocked the project. Project implementers were anxious to get the local community to accept the positioning of the electric fence, which would separate the wildlife from the livestock areas in the range. The wildlife committee chairperson did not discuss the issue with his community at all. It became apparent to the Council officials that the wildlife committee under such leadership would not make the desired progress.

These events worried project officials, who devised a plan to get rid of the chairperson for the sake of 'progress'. Project officials held a meeting with the community where he was absent, and mobilised the community against the chairperson of the wildlife committee. Their argument was that people's private interests should not derail the community's quest for development. For development to come to the area, the officials argued, the community had to replace the chairperson. At that meeting a new chairperson was elected who would support Campfire initiatives. Thereafter the proposals to erect the electric fence were adopted. It was located in an area that in the opinion of the cattle owners provided very little pasture for their cattle. The Campfire project had managed to overcome an obstacle for erecting the fence.

Local authority officials demanded that livestock be removed from the wildlife area of the range. In defiance cattle owners instructed their cattle herders to continue using the wildlife project area. In the end, the Rural District Council sought police assistance and forcibly removed the cattle herders. In the process, temporary shelters belonging to the cattle herders were burnt down. Cattle owners challenged their expulsion, arguing that they were heeding government's call for people to remain in the communal area and engage in income-generating activities. One of the large herd owners argued that they were helping the government to meet its quota of beef exports to the European Union. They argued that this beef exporting initiative had come under threat from the White farmers who were turning to wildlife management. They alleged that Rural District Council and Campfire had now joined this conspiracy.

Owners of large herds banded together as an income-generating club based on cattle fattening, as they said, 'in response to government's call for co-operative initiatives'. Cattle from this club grazed on community

pastures. Sometimes they even allowed their animals to stray into the project area from where they had been evicted. However, there was still the threat from the Rural District Council and the Campfire project. As a strategy, the cattle owners organised a field day for their club. They invited a leading politician to be guest at this occasion and presented him with a beast as a gift. In public speeches the cattle herders said that they took heed of government's call for people to stay and make a living in the rural areas. The cattle owners' major problem was the hindrance from the Campfire project. To the cattle owner's delight, the politician rose to the occasion and castigated the Campfire project for championing the interests of outsiders (supposedly foreign, White hunters, the major clients for safari hunting) at the expense of the locals. As mentioned above and observed elsewhere (Berry, 1980), in the communal areas the politicians, with their wider networks and influence, are more powerful than the functionaries. A speech castigating Campfire weakened the project officials *vis a vis* cattle owners. Thereafter the idea of complete separation of wildlife and livestock was shelved. The electric fence was erected close to settled areas to protect arable areas from wildlife. Owners of large herds continued to access the pastures as before. An outsider had played a crucial role by enabling a local elite survive a threat to their interests.

Below we show another dynamic in conflict resolution between a community and a local authority over project implementation.

TSHOLOTSHO

A foot and mouth disease (FMD) cordon fence marks the boundary between Tsholotsho and Hwange National Park. Immigrant households inhabit the western half of Tsholotsho. These families came to Tsholotsho after being evicted from those areas that had been designated as White commercial farming areas. Households were ordered to settle in lines near boreholes, which are the only source of water for humans and livestock (see Hawkes, 1992, 39). A line made up of several households is the lowest unit of settlement in Tsholotsho. Usually two to six lines make up a village. There is no fixed number of households that make a line and neither are there a fixed number of lines making a village. Each line has its traditional leader, *sabuku* or kraal head. Several villages make up a ward. Some lines like Solobhoni, Korodziba, Lubanji, Ziga and Zandile are less than three kilometres from the Hwange National Park fence. Department of National Parks regulations prohibit hunting within five kilometres of a park boundary.

To enhance safari hunting, Tsholotsho's Campfire programme sought to create a buffer area between settled areas and the FMD fence. As in

Bulilimamangwe an electric fence would separate settled areas from the buffer zone. This buffer would create ample space for local authority sponsored safari hunting. Ostensibly the local authority argued that these activities would reduce the effects of problem animals, like elephants destroying fields and lions predation of livestock. Therefore those lines of settlement along the area designated as the buffer zone had to be relocated away from the proposed buffer zone (see map).

Tsholotsho Rural District Council had long thought of removing the people of Solobhoni and Korodziba (Murphree, 1989, 12). As far back as 1982 the Rural District Councillor, who later became Member of Parliament for the ward, mooted the idea of moving the people from the two lines to the interior of the ward. However, apart from the affected community's opposition to the idea, there were not enough resources at that time to undertake the exercise. Furthermore, 1982 marked the beginning of political disturbances that resulted in the paralysis of all government and development activity in Tsholotsho and Matabeleland in general (Werbener, 1991). For these reasons the plan for relocation was shelved. In the meantime people continued to build houses, grow crops, clear more fields and fence their homes.

RELOCATION OF KORODZIBA AND SOLOBHONI IN TSHOLOTSO DISTRICT

Tsholotsho Rural District Council stated the aims of the relocation of Korodziba and Solobhoni lines to Gwabazabuya line as follows:

- (i) To justify the staff complement at the primary school. The school at Korodziba had 31 pupils and three teachers from grades one to seven. Another school, Gibixegu near Gwabazabuya line, had 40 pupils from grades one to seven with three teachers. Tsholotsho Rural District Council argued that both schools were over-staffed and thus there was a need to combine the schools to satisfy the requirements of the Ministry of Education on staffing.
- (ii) To reduce poaching and boost safari hunting. Local hunting is believed to hamper species diversity in the Tsholotsho area. The Council felt that relocating human settlements away from wildlife areas would reduce local hunting (poaching).
- (iii) To provide more area for wildlife by providing a buffer zone.
- (iv) To take advantage of the availability of funds from donors. USAID funded the relocation exercise.

Relocation was mooted at three meetings between the community, Council staff and Zimbabwe Trust officials. The Council made it clear to everyone present that this relocation was not by fiat. However, the consequences of refusing the relocation were also spelt out: the Council

would not be in a position to undertake any borehole repairs or introduce any other social services in the two lines because the area was remote from other settled areas. This meant that, for example, a borehole breakdown would imply disaster for the communities and their livestock.

At the last meeting Council officials were accompanied by police, intelligence agents, visitors from Botswana, and Zimbabwe Trust staff. What were significant were the eight vehicles, and the diversity of the people present around the villagers. Villagers' experience of the violent conflict between 1982 and 1987 instilled fear of officialdom and strangers. This meeting was an epitome of these past experiences. The community's powerlessness becomes apparent.

In this conflict, Korodziba and Solobhoni residents invoked 'the weapons of the weak' (Scott, 1985), where powerless actors engage in resistance that denies the powerful actor justification for violent reaction. To demonstrate their unwillingness to be relocated the communities requested to stay on for another year while they built houses in Gwabazabuya. In a bid to delay the relocation some women argued that they needed time to consult their husbands who were away working in towns or in South Africa. For one thing they did not want to give up their homes for the benefit of what they called, 'wild animals belonging to Game'³. The Council tried to convince the residents of these two lines that they would benefit from Campfire. The community was not convinced and argued that hunting had been done in the past with no benefit to the local community. Despite the community's protests the local authority sent a lorry and a tractor to transport the community to the new line. By September 1991 Korodziba and Solobhoni had been relocated to Gwabazabuya.

This relocation disappointed the Solobhoni and Korodziba communities. They went to the Provincial Administrator and to the press to complain about their relocation. One of the reports in the press read:

A four-man delegation sent to the *Sunday News* by the disgruntled villagers said their belongings and families had been dumped in the open . . . The delegation, which was led by (the) kraalhead, said: 'We are inviting the Minister of State for Local Government, Rural and Urban Development . . . and the Provincial Administrator . . . to visit us so that they can see for themselves the conditions under which we are living' (*Sunday News*, 27th October, 1991).

The provincial administrator castigated the Rural District Council for its high handedness. The donor, USAID, expressed concern over this matter that was seemingly done on behalf of a project it had sponsored.

³ Game is the local name given to the Department of Parks and Wildlife Management.

Researchers and the press censured the Rural District Council for these forced relocations. As a consequence the local authority was forced to assist the relocated communities with building materials. A piped water scheme, the first one in this part of the district, was also constructed for the community, which emerged from the conflict with benefits as a consequence of the involvement of external powerful groups. This involvement of external groups had far-reaching effects as we show below.

Ziga and Zandile lines benefited from the protests against forced relocations mentioned above. Tsholotsho Rural District Council requested the local councillor to approach the communities of Ziga and Zandile lines to discuss their relocation in order to make way for the electric fence. The usual benefits of wildlife management were mentioned to the communities. They were also told that the Rural District Council had resolved not to use force in relocating people. It was up to the people to decide for themselves.

The communities did not deliberate over the issue for a long period of time. One respondent had this to say about the meeting: 'In our area we refused relocation, we said that the electric fence should go on top of the veterinary (FMD) fence. Any area given up for wildlife would have reduced our grazing land'. The community's sentiments were summarised by the following comment made at a meeting: 'We want the project, but if the project only works through the fence I would like to point out that we do not want the fence and the Campfire project.'

As a result the electric fence was constructed close to the existing FMD fence. The community had been empowered to impress their interests upon the local authority through the help of outsiders.

CONCLUSION

This comparative study has shown two related points. The first is that where social groups meet in a particular locality, conflicts occur over how natural resources should be utilised and who exactly must be entitled to them. In Binga, conflict arose between the local Tonga and the Ndebele immigrants. The Tonga did not want immigrants to remain on their land, affecting their newly found Campfire programme. On the other hand, immigrants wanted not just to remain on the land, but to take it from the Tonga whom they claimed were both under-using and misusing the land. In Bulilimangwe, conflict immediately arose between cattle owners and those without cattle who generally supported the Campfire programme. The cattle owners wanted to use the wilderness for animal husbandry, their major source of income. In contrast, those who did not own cattle wanted to use the wilderness for Campfire activities, which

brought income to them. Finally conflict arose between the Tsholotsho Rural District Council and the locals. The development community wanted the locals to vacate their land to give way to safari hunting. On the contrary the locals had different aspirations regarding this land. They wanted to remain on their land in pursuit of agriculture, their major source of livelihood. Conflict, then, seems to be the natural outcome where different interests interface. The desire to see one's interests prevail brings in a role for external actors. This brings us to the other point.

The second and main point is that when disputes break out competitors approach outsiders. The disputants rarely make use of local institutions to resolve their conflict. In Binga, the Ndebele immigrants sourced the services of regional politicians when their claim to the land was questioned. Similarly, in Bulilimangwe, the cattle owners sought, amongst others, the services of senior national politicians when Campfire threatened to put an end to their unregulated use of the range. Likewise, in Tsholotsho locals approached the provincial administrators and the media when their stake to land became threatened by Campfire. Social groups, then, tend to make use of external people and institutions as a strategy to ensure entitlement to natural resources.

But why should competitors almost always look to outsiders for conflict resolution? Why don't they make use of local institutions? In our view it is likely that competitors enlist the services of external agents because they perceive them to be capable of furthering their sectional interests and not because they are impartial. The immigrants sought the services of the regional politicians because they believed these to wield power enough to overrule the Tonga, their local opponents. Similarly, in Bulilimangwe the wealthy cattle owners approached the media and senior state functionaries because they regarded them as very powerful to overrule and overhaul Campfire. Our point therefore is that social groups make use of external actors because they perceive them to have the power to guarantee their interests. But since the study is based on one region of the country, the proposition we advance may be one that needs further research.

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