

WHERE THE POWER LIES

Multiple stakeholder politics over natural resources

A participatory methods guide

Bevlyne Sithole



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Printed by SMK Grafika Desa Putera, Indonesia

Cover illustration (*baby squiggle*) by
Ringisai Susara Campbell and Ramarai Claudia Campbell
Design and layout by Eko Prianto

ISBN 979-8764-99-4

Published by
Center for International Forestry Research
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Making Sense of Micro-politics in Multiple Stakeholder groups

A participatory methods guide for researchers and development practitioners

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Acknowledgements

This publication has been produced with the financial assistance of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) under RETA 5812: Planning for Sustainability of Forests through Adaptive Comanagement; Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the European Community on projects led by CIFOR. Some of the work on developing the framework and illustrative cases from Chivi were undertaken with funding from the United Kingdom Department for International Development under Natural Resources Systems Programme. This part of the work was conducted on projects led by the Institute of Environmental Studies at the University of Zimbabwe. The views expressed are those of the authors and can therefore in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the donors.

This manual is a result of many contributions, comments and insights given by many people. The manual draws on experiences from different research and development projects in Zimbabwe and in other countries in Southern Africa. It aims to stimulate thinking and questioning rather than provide a rigid framework for analysis.

I am grateful for the assistance given by several experienced fieldworkers who shared the experiences and anecdotes that were used as a backdrop against which I evaluate several of the methods that are suggested in the manual. In Zimbabwe, I worked closely with the following researchers: Everisto Mapedza, Richard Nyirenda, Frank Matose, Nontokozo Nemarundwe, Judith Chaumba and Billy Mukamuri. Much of the fieldwork was undertaken with enthusiastic assistance from Witness Kozanayi. Substantive comments on early drafts of this manual were received from Professor Bruce Campbell, Dr Tony Cunningham, Dr Wil de Jong and Alois Mandoondo. Comments on later versions of the manual were made by CIFOR/ACM researchers based in Bogor at a seminar held to review the manual. Dr Carol Colfer has been constant in her assistance, review and encouragement during the course of the manual preparation.

I appreciate and acknowledge the cooperation of villagers and other stakeholders in Romwe and Mafungautsi, Zimbabwe. Names and direct references to individuals have been withheld to honour confidentiality agreements.

Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ACM	Adaptive collaborative management
AGRITEX	Agriculture and technical and extension services (Ministry of Agriculture)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Aid
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
COTTCO	Cotton Company of Zimbabwe
CAMPFIRE	Communal area management program for indigenous resources
DfID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
FC	Forestry Commission
IES	Institute of Environmental Studies
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non government organization
RDC	Rural district council
RMC	Resource management committee
PAR	Participatory action research
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal
VIDCO	Village Development Committee
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Unity Patriotic Front
CIRAD	International Center for Agronomic Research and Development
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture

Foreword

The workings of power pervade our dealings in everyday life and we ignore them at our peril... (Slocum *et al.* 1995:20)

Negotiations, promises, non-attendance, inducements, vote buying, lobbying, threats (intimidation) or bargains constitute some of the many ways stakeholders use to resolve choices and priorities in relation to each other within a group. Often relations within and among the stakeholders are highly complex and very dynamic depending on the nature of the resource being managed. The more valuable and contested the resource, the more complex and volatile the relations. Often the distribution of power in these groups is skewed towards certain stakeholders and in some cases they wield this power unchallenged by others. Inequitable distribution of power is a reality of many multiple stakeholder groups, but the challenge facing researchers and practitioners working in -multiple stakeholder groups is finding ways to enhance wider stakeholder participation in decision making and action so that no one stakeholder or faction holds absolute power (Box 1). Participation is often associated with the distribution of power in society, as it is power which enables a group to determine which needs and whose priorities need to be considered.

Box 1. What is a stakeholder?

Stakeholder is a term, which over the last few years, has come into common usage by most donor organizations: it was first used in business management theory and has since been widely adopted as a further refinement to the user concept. It is an umbrella term, which covers all the people and organizations who have a stake in and may be affected by an activity, a development program or situation or who may have an impact on it. (Hobley and Malla 1996:97)

To be successful in facilitating wider participation, it is critical that one is able to diagnose the relative power of the various stakeholders and comprehend the patterns of interdependence (Pfeffer 1992). Further, Pfeffer notes that the knowledge of the power distribution is itself an important source of power, and that an accurate perception of distribution of power is a necessary prerequisite for any stakeholder seeking powerful support for their demands. In this dynamic power-laden process there are no neutral parties; everyone is engaged (Long and Long 1992, Slocum *et al.* 1995). We can focus on a number of key questions to understand power relations:

- Whose cooperation and support is necessary to achieve my objectives?
- Whose opposition would derail or stall my plans?

- What is the effect of what I plan to do on existing power relations, i.e. who will be affected negatively or positively? and
- Who are the allies or enemies of those stakeholders whose cooperation is necessary to achieve my goals?

Power relations affect our activities in different ways though they may affect some activities more than others. Not understanding the degree to which a situation is politicised may cause a person either to use power and influence when it is unnecessary and thereby violate behavioural norms as well as waste resources, or underestimate the extent to which power needs to be employed, and fail in the task of implementation (Pfeffer 1992). For example, a researcher in Zimbabwe describes how even simple actions like consultations with stakeholders can be underlain by serious politics (Box 2). Politics involves the mobilization of power to achieve or protect certain values and interests.

Box 2. The Politics of calling a village meeting

When I first arrived in the area I was not aware of the disputed leadership position. When I started calling meetings, that is when I started to observe that there was something wrong. When both men were present at the meetings there would be some strange undertones and fireworks were frequent. I did not understand what was going on or know how to deal with it. The villagers were also divided behind different individuals. When I was told about the contested chieftainship, the pieces started to fall together. Because for a while I could not understand how a simple act of calling a village meeting could be such a political issue. I was advised that when I am calling for meetings in the area, messages should be sent to the different individuals at the same time as they often fight over who receives the message first and from whom. Consequently, I must always send two messengers of equal status to transmit the message at the same time otherwise they would accuse me of taking sides. Once the message is received by one of the individuals, they in turn send a message to their supporters only. Another complication arises when they both attend because it is difficult to allocate them places to sit or decide on the order of introductions. Local people advised that when both individual attend meetings none is introduced because then they fight over who should have been introduced first. However, when one is present, then that person is introduced as the village leader. I begin to see why dealing with politics is inevitable in my situation (Richard Nyirenda, 08-/2000).

Researchers in Zimbabwe have provided a number of reasons why we must first be aware of and secondly be able to assess micro-politics (Box 3). Often one works to keep partisan politics at arm's length, handling power relations usually in a way that seeks to avoid being drawn into controversies and conflicts, but in the end one finds there is no choice but to find ways of making sense of these relations.

Analyses of micro-politics undertaken at different stages often yield different results. Preliminary analysis of relations among stakeholders helps with targeting partners and identifying contested issues. The analysis may also highlight relationships that need bolstering and those that do not, as well as give some indication of what processes need to be strengthened to enhance participation by all stakeholders. Analysis during implementation is useful for assessing levels of participation by different stakeholders,

Box 3. Why should we be concerned with micropolitics?

- To avoid stepping on toes.
- To anticipate potential conflicts or conflict areas.
- To resolve political constraints that hinder the progress.
- As a tool to harness progressive elements in the group.
- To find out who are the troublemakers.
- To make sure your project does not undercut other projects.
- So we can cater for diverse interests.
- To ensure right timing of projects.
- To make strategic alliances with some stakeholders.
- To target our collaborators better and avoid alignment with the wrong stakeholders.
- Highlight entry points.
- Helps in the identification of problem areas and problem interests.

(ACM Harare Seminar, 09/2001).

i.e. to assess discontent or disillusionment and enthusiasm levels. Such an analysis can yield results or data that can lead to a redirection of focus, tasks and goals. Often outsider presence in the group creates its own dynamics that can undermine or bolster existing situations or relationships. Analysis during implementation can therefore limit strong externally initiated politics or what we can term 'intruder politics' while allowing for retargeting of efforts to facilitate involvement of marginalized stakeholders. Analyses that are done at the end of the activity are useful on a number of levels. On the one level, they can highlight whether the multiple stakeholder group as it has been conceived and implemented has really been inclusive of all stakeholders. Some suggest an opportunistic approach where decisions to undertake this type of analysis should be made when a need is identified. To varying degrees it is essential that one has a clear understanding and appreciation of the politics within a group.

This manual is a participatory methods guide (1) to assist those involved with multiple stakeholder situations or groups to appreciate and acknowledge the relevance and impact of micro-politics on stakeholder relations and resultant cooperative behaviour in these groups; (2) to provide a simple and systematic approach or framework to gather and analyse data on micro-politics among multiple stakeholders; (3) to highlight and offer practical suggestions for dealing with some of the methodological issues that influence gathering data on politics and relations among stakeholders; (4) to suggest some methods drawn from participatory methodologies like Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Participatory Action Research (PAR) that can be used in data gathering. Data from two sites in Zimbabwe are presented at various stages and in the annexes to illustrate how this framework can be applied and show the type of data that can be gathered.

Introduction

'In so many of these places there's so much rivalry, different factions saying theirs is the man. Often we find this group or that doesn't accept the person they are working with. Little power struggles going on even among people you'd think too desperately busy trying to survive, to have the energy...' (Nadine Gordimer, Nobel Laureate 1994).

There are many examples throughout the world of management situations involving many stakeholders. In some countries, the use of terms like 'joint' or 'collaborative' or 'partnerships' describes management situations where more than one stakeholder is involved. However, there are many variations of these situations, some having as few as two stakeholders while in other situations there are more. The mythical notion of stakeholders as bound by 'common interest' continues to direct how we view and constitute multiple stakeholder groups, therefore hiding or ignoring the biases that favour the opinions of stronger and more powerful stakeholders. The challenge addressed in this manual is to find ways to navigate these multiple stakeholder situations and make sense of the relations between and among different stakeholders. But relations among stakeholders are rarely easy to describe and label, as illustrated in the case described of relations over a shade tree (Box 4).

This case demonstrates the layering of relations among stakeholders as they seek to accommodate each other's interests; first the committee of the Chidiso garden giving plots to the church members in exchange for loss of venue; confrontations between one church and a family claiming to represent another. All these machinations and the dynamism of the relations change as stories told by the church and by the family change during the course of the conflict. The complexity of any relations is revealed here when a relatively simple situation results in a redefinition of community relations when one family challenges the decision to allocate a church site on the edge of their field. In this particular case, we also see overlaps in jurisdictions; linkages between local and external interests over local issues; the competing churches; intrahousehold relations; and gender relations. For many stakeholders, negotiations around any issue take on a strong political slant, with allegiances, alliances and conflicts noted intently (Kepe 1997).

There is generally a tendency when one considers cases such as one presented in Box 4 to equate micro-politics with conflict as many multiple stakeholder situations tend to be characterized by it. For example, relations involving multiple stakeholders have been described variously as '*battlefields*'; '*the messy middle ground*'; or characterized by '*multilayered struggles*'. Moore (1996:1998) describes relations between stakeholders as struggles. In local idiom, one finds a variety of terms used to describe multiple stakeholder situations. Currently, in Zimbabwe, local Shona people describe some of

Box 4. The politics of shade trees in Romwe catchment, in Zimbabwe

For the past ten years or so, an Apostolic church has been worshipping under a tree (the Murovamhuru tree near a community garden-Chidiso Garden). However, when the garden was extended into the area where the tree is located and the church was asked to move its meeting place. After some initial resistance from the church members to leave their holy tree, they were persuaded to move. As part of the arrangement the committee of the Chidiso garden agreed to allocate some of the church members plots in the new extension. The leader of the church consulted, the three traditional leaders involved in the community garden and presented the church's request for a new prayer site. The Traditional leaders allocated a new site for the church in another location on the edge of a field whose owner was not a member of the church. However, before the church could start using the site, there were some curious developments in the negotiations. Suddenly, the committee of the garden met and decided to withdraw from the previous agreements which promised plots to church members and decided to extend the garden in another direction. Under the new resolution by the committee the old site for the church would remain outside the new extension. The new resolution was justified by the garden committee as necessary to circumvent possible conflicts with the church. However, people in the community, ordinary members of the community garden and the church members were surprised by the new resolution which they described as 'politics'. Even the traditional leaders now said they preferred to support the new resolution than to move the church to a new tree. This surprised most people as they were under the impression that the church had agreed to move in exchange for a new site and that some of their members be allocated plots in the Chidiso garden. So what conflict was the committee referring to, people wanted to know? Some local people supported the desire by the church members to abide by the first agreement with the garden committee and go to the new site. They also demanded to know why the leaders were trying to renege on the agreement. In the meantime work to extend the garden had to be halted. After the intervention of a respected retired headmaster, the church agreed to abide by the earlier decision and moved to the new church site under a new tree. The traditional leaders informed the owner of the field about the new use of the tree shade on the edge of his field as a church site. Once services started, the wife of the farmer started disrupting services and accused the church of using the tree without permission. She would arrive during services, disrupt the service and abuse church members. She was said to have even tried to drag some church members away from the site. She argued that the new site was already being used by another church which her family attended. Church members who are all resident of this area do not recall any church services being held under the tree. They referred her to the traditional leaders to lodge a complaint, but she continued coming to disrupt the services. On one occasion, the church members got impatient with the woman and physically removed her from the site. The farmer and his wife reported the issue to the traditional leaders. At the hearing, the church leaders argued that they felt the action had been justified as the harassment was getting out of hand. The wife of the farmer, now alleged that when she was removed from the church site, the church members, some of them man had manhandled her and removed some of her clothes. Further, the family argued that prophets from the church divined that the farmer had a dangerous talisman at his homestead. In a counter argument, the leader of the church revealed that when the church started its services, the farmer had informed them that there were some bad spirits under the tree and therefore the church would be troubled by the spirits and should move from the tree. However, when no spirits troubled the members, services continued with frequent disruptions from the family. Nothing was resolved at the village meeting so the village leaders resolved to call in the Ministry officials to mediate in the dispute. In the meantime both parties consulted the Bishops in their churches and the matter was also discussed with the local Member of Parliament who is related to the farmer. One week after the village meeting, in a surprising turn of events, one of the traditional leaders allocated another site for the church. The new site was allocated under another controversial tree near a contested boundary (Romwe field data, 10-/2001).

these multiple stakeholder situations as *mwando* (all is not well); *mahlungahlunga* (confusion and chaos); *mhirizhonga* (lack of order, chaos); *jambanja* (chaos, disorderly conduct; violent conflict) or *masaisai* (ripples, instability). In South Africa, researchers working in Mkambati state reserve described the struggles among the stakeholders as obscuring who is in power as there was 'no community, no leadership, it was just one big minefield' (Kepe 1997). In everyday life we find great variations in the way constituencies are assembled and organized; diverse behaviour in apparently similar circumstances; a confusion of levels and intensities of communication; and what appears to be a vast disorganization of how many resources are managed (Slocum *et al.* 1995). Some observe that this apparent chaos is inevitable and is the outcome of how different stakeholders deal with contested issues and seek accommodation for each other's priorities. Thus for example, a researcher in South Africa describes how the politics around managing a state reserve have resulted in an enveloping web of power relations structured by intense competition between stakeholders and their allies (Kepe 1997). But often, there is collaboration and accommodation of interests among stakeholders. In this manual, we emphasize that our interest is understanding any and all relations in a multiple stakeholder group. Too often there is little understanding of the relations among stakeholders. To facilitate wider participation in multiple stakeholder groups and reconfigure the balance of power within the group, it is essential to understand better and to address the way power is distributed and wielded within them.



Making sense of power relations

'These are the crucial points that the Ait Hadiddou make an increasingly rationalistic world: that people who like each other generally get along better, that people who get along generally like each other better, that singing and dancing together after the sun has set and partaking in the collective celebration of important events helps keep the grass green for everyone.' (Petrzelka and Bell 2000:351)

Many management situations now involve many stakeholders of diverse backgrounds and interests with different personalities and different ways of doing business. The more stakeholders there are in a group, the more complex the relations. There is a tendency to view relations in terms of conflict or collaboration. However, relations are not always easy to define. Sometimes there is a layering of relations, Sithole (2000) describes how despite obvious tensions between the government and communities over use of contested resources, actual practice exposes some underlying relations which show that for most part, the two stakeholders accommodate each other's interests. For most part, stakeholders pursue a variety of competing objectives and in doing so they have engaged in a number of power plays and entered into complex and shifting relations with each other at different moments in time, ranging from alliances or collaboration at one end of the spectrum through wary neutrality or relative indifference to outright hostility and confrontation at the other end (Kepe 1997). Relationships within a group can range from respectful civility to oneness. In general, relations will shift within the group depending on the issue at hand. On some issues, stakeholders will agree and on others they may disagree. At any given moment, stakeholders will be differentiated in terms of these relations of power. Decision making and management at a particular place and time

'is the outcome of conflicting interests between groups of people with different aims. Usually there is no absolute dominance by one group, so there are commonly a number of different ways of using resources at the same place and time, usually there is no absolute dominance by one group ...' (Abel and Blaikie 1986: 735).

Some field workers in Zimbabwe attempt explanations of micro-politics as follows (Box 5). There are in both statements suggestions that micro-politics are baffling as well as intriguing. There is no clear statement that micro-politics are conflicts; they are relations of power among stakeholders. However, not all relations lead to cooperative behaviour.

To understand how these relations are formed and constituted it is necessary to define a number of key concepts (Box 6). The central concept is power. Power is the ability to exert control by whatever means and in whatever sphere (Maquet 1971; Pfeffer 1992). It is the capacity to bring about certain intended consequences in the behaviour of others.

Box 5. What is micro-politics?

“You make wonderful plans and do all the consultations and then suddenly things don't work, you can't understand why you are making no progress, then you realize that there is something going on, but you can't put your finger on it, that is the politics. It is 'politics for little people'. Micro-politics can be disastrous in a group of stakeholders.” (Dr Billy Mukamuri, Lecturer, University of Zimbabwe).

“Most initiatives involving many stakeholders fail and you look for reasons why, sometimes they don't even fail, they seem to take forever to get started or for activities to get underway and often you wonder why. I would say very often micro-politics is the culprit. It is those undercurrents, the looks, explosions for no apparent reasons, those inexplicable little things you can't put your fingers on but you know are there, you play hide and seek with them and it is the overwhelming feeling you have when your sixth sense tells you to tread carefully, when people won't look you in the eye when you try to find out why, it is that realization after a long time, one day you wake up and say that is what it was, why did I not see it before, it has been there all the time!” (Witness Kozanayi, Fieldworker, Zimbabwe)

Box 6. Perspectives on power

Women and other marginalized groups are frequently described as being in the “*politically weak*”; “*without a voice*”; “*in the shadow of decision making*” or “*bypassed by decision making*”. While this view remains dominant among development practitioners and still underlines most of their advocacy for inclusive democratization, there is growing skepticism among those who subscribe to Scott's argument that the weak are powerful in their own right. Scott (1985) challenges our conception of class relations and the notion that some elites hold their power unchallenged by the poor. He suggests that these weak often do define their own rooms of maneuver and possess various weapons that they can use to challenge those in power. Scott challenges the notion that some elites hold their power unchallenged by the poor. He lists such weapons as including actions like foot dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage and so on. He calls these everyday forms of resistance. These forms of struggle require little or no coordination or planning; they make use of implicit understandings and informal networks; they typically avoid any form of direct confrontation with authority or elite norms. Villareal (1992) notes that often those labelled as powerless or oppressed within specific circumstances are not utterly passive victims and may be involved in active resistance. Conversely the elite and powerful are not entirely in control of the stage. The degree to which they are also forced to act within certain limits is not to be discounted.

Similarly, gender studies have also challenged traditional arguments about women being weak and powerless. Schmidt (1992), writing about Shona women in Zimbabwe, argues that despite the public indications of subordination, women were not 'the downtrodden timid individuals' they are often portrayed to be. While women may not have power they have influence. Men have power to define and enforce the rules by which society is governed. The power allows them to monopolize structures of governance. Influence, in contrast, is not institutionalized. It represents the strategies of those without formal power to limit the power of others and the ways in which that power impinges upon their lives. To the extent that women are excluded from structures of governance, they must rely on influence. In Shona society women wield a significant amount of influence, which permits them to exercise a significant amount of informal influence.

Moore (1998) suggests that one of the ways power operates is through mapping social inequalities onto spatial categories that are produced through contestation, boundaries carved out through historical struggle.

Within a group, we can think of power as the right to decide, choose, and express oneself and exercise one's rights in relation to a host of other stakeholders. Thus for each stakeholder, power is the ability to articulate personal goals and influence others to achieve those goals. It is the ability to get what we want; hold on to what we get; and to shape events the way we want to shape them (Pfeffer 1992). Power is not employed when there is no difference of perspectives or interests or when there is no conflict. However, in many cases, stakeholders hold different types of power and relate to each other in relation to their perception of that power. Powerful people not only have strong influence when decisions are made, but they can influence the rules about who makes the decisions and how. Those rules often entrench their positions of influence and protect their interests (Pfeffer 1992). While politics is defined as the exercise or use of power, authority is a socially recognized and legitimate right to make decisions (Bratton 1994). Autonomy is the freedom from control by other stakeholders (Bratton 1994). Power and political processes should be seen as an important social process that is often required to get things done within a group. Without inequitable power there are no dynamics within a group. However, if the inequities are skewed too much in the hands of a few, then cooperative process and negotiations among the group is compromised.

In many situations, inclusion in a multiple stakeholder group has not come with the requisite power redistribution promised or intended. Such redistribution would require that some stakeholders give up some of their power. But some researchers argue that this objective runs contrary to the bureaucratic tendency to hold on to power by whatever means (Murphree 1990). In many countries different types of power exist, ranging from charismatic, to political, or other types of power. Each must, however, be defined for a specific context and time. Most cultures are rich with idioms of power. Moreover the meaning of power and the way it is exercised in different situations is different between societies. Attitudes towards power tend to be ambivalent, because often people don't approve of the way power is accumulated or exercised (Pfeffer 1992). But power is an important social means of achieving certain objectives within groups. We generally assume that power means the same things in different cultures. In Europe and America there is a tendency to identify power with economic control and coercive force: any status or prestige not linked to it is regarded as empty prestige (Tsing 1996). In many parts of Asia and Africa, the view of power is different. Power is linked to spiritualism. For example Tsing finds that in Javanese society, power is viewed in relation to the puppet figures of Arjuna and Raksasa (Box 7).

Box 7. Power in Javanese society

Power is represented in the contrast between shadow puppet figures of Arjuna, a Javanese cultural hero, and the Raksasa (Monster) he fights. Arjuna is small and fragile looking with downcast eyes and delicate features. The monster is large, bulbous, loud, forceful and direct - not unlike westerners. Yet in battle, the delicate Arjuna need only flick his wrist for the gross and forceful monster to fall, defeated. (Tsing 1996).

Power always implies struggle, negotiation and compromise (Villareal 1992). When stakeholders seek to influence others we talk about engagement (Bratton 1994). When they make no such claim or actively evade the influence of others we talk of disengagement (Bratton 1994). Relations resulting from dynamics between the stakeholders create a rich social drama among stakeholders that constitutes the micro-politics of management. Relations of power are often interwoven with other kinds of relations (Villareal 1992).

The central challenge of analysing power relations is to identify units of joint and separate interests; particularly networks or alliances of interests and within and across these to identify important social criteria to define how the identities of each stakeholder are constructed (Villarreal 1992). As our intention is to understand the causes, connections and consequences of power processes, we have to look very closely at

' the everyday lives of stakeholders, explore the small ordinary issues that take place in different contexts, and show how compliance, adaptation and also resistance and open struggle are generated. In this endeavour we shall find no strong, visible manifestations of power. Rather we have to look for small flashes of command that may peek out from behind the screens.... I claim that power is of a fluid nature that fills up spaces, sometimes for only flickering moments and takes different forms and constituencies, which makes it difficult to measure, but conspicuous enough to describe' (Villarreal 1992:258).

For example, bargaining within the household is often covert, involving emotional manipulation and unspoken power games, often involving bargaining on behalf of others—especially, but not only, children—all of which makes both the processes and outcomes difficult to detect (Locke *et al.* 1998).

Within a particular group of stakeholders, one can observe a variety of relations. These relations are not always played out in public. Rather, some may be hidden from view and occur in places or at times rarely accessible to an observer. For example, one field worker working in Romwe, observed that jostling among stakeholders rarely if ever happens in public. He notes that for the group he works with,

"if you are talking about decision making you are focusing on who participates in making that decision. For example, in a home, it will be a discussion between family members, but recommendations, summaries and statements of intent are issued by the head of the household. Even in a simple interaction like interviewing a household, though husband consults wife, he makes the last statement which is recorded. Public decision making is about posturing and often does not tell you about the dynamics preceding the decision. This is why it is dangerous and sometimes misleading to talk about decision making as being a monopoly of this stakeholder or that group or to say that what you see in these public meetings is the real dynamics between stakeholders. Sometimes the meeting happens long after the real jostling has occurred and decisions have been made" (Romwe field Notes, 06-01-2001).

However, there are some instances when the observed dynamics within a group of stakeholders in public are real and represent the final jostling before a decision is reached. Therefore, sometimes when one observes dynamics in public fora such as meetings one is never sure whether what one is witnessing is an end of or the beginning of a process of negotiations and bargaining.

Relations among stakeholders are never as simple as they appear. If each stakeholder is considered as having a social horizon, then one would note that most horizons extend well beyond the stakeholder, the group, the organization where they come from; the society they are part of; sometimes the donors that fund them, etc. This horizon would include everyone that stakeholder maintains continuous relations with, especially relations of cooperation or dependence. Thus, to understand power there is need to think about stakeholders as purposively creating identities that allow them to draw on many sources

of power. Further, relations that we witness sometimes mask other types of relations. The challenge is to find out about these other relations and establish the degree to which they influence the behaviour of that stakeholder.

Power relations do not always evolve in isolation from events elsewhere. Moore (1998) finds that struggles between stakeholders are highly localised, in a specific place and time, yet they are never simply local. Thus he explains that in many cases, relations among stakeholders are created not on a fixed stage but on shifting ground where matrices of power emerge as stakeholders jostle to assert their claims on natural resources that are being shared and managed. In fact, in many cases local relations are driven by outside rather than local forces. However, sometimes local relations can actually spiral out from a small problem to a full-fledged issue involving more stakeholders operating at different levels. The challenge is to recognise wider linkages for processes observed at the local level and those occurring at other levels, thus develop a realistic perspective of where real power resides.



Framework for analysing micropolitics

We need an experiential methodology for the acquisition of serious and reliable knowledge upon which to construct power, or countervailing power, for the poor, oppressed and exploited groups and social classes - ...' Slocum and Thomas-Slayter 1995:12

Generally this manual argues for analysis of micro-politics to be situated within the context of participatory action research (PAR). PAR involves action and investigation. The investigation is informed by the action. Most PAR uses methods from participatory rural appraisal (PRA) because these methods are suited to the type of reflective research process that attempts to come up with practical responses to concerns raised by stakeholders (Scoones and Thompson 1994). PRA and PAR have been defined as a family of approaches and methods to enable local stakeholders to share, enhance and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan and act (Chambers 1993: Pretty *et al.* 1995). Participatory approaches are rooted deeply in a philosophy of respect in which contributions from every actor are solicited and valued. Participatory research tools are already widely applied in many situations in many countries (Umans 1995). These tools encourage participation and make it easier for stakeholders to express their views. In most cases, because the tools involve stakeholders, there is an opportunity to observe power relations as they unfold, therefore making it possible to gather information on social dynamics (Goebel 1996).

However, with all the opportunities presented by such a methodology, the use of these participatory approaches can often also work to hide the internal dynamics of communities, i.e. the relationships between those who take part and those who watch from the sidelines. Cornwall (1998) observes that it is important that one recognizes the politics in a given location by acknowledging that all stakeholders who speak or act within a group do so from a particular experience. She also suggests that while participatory methods open up the possibility of dialogue, their use does not in itself constitute the making of a participatory process.

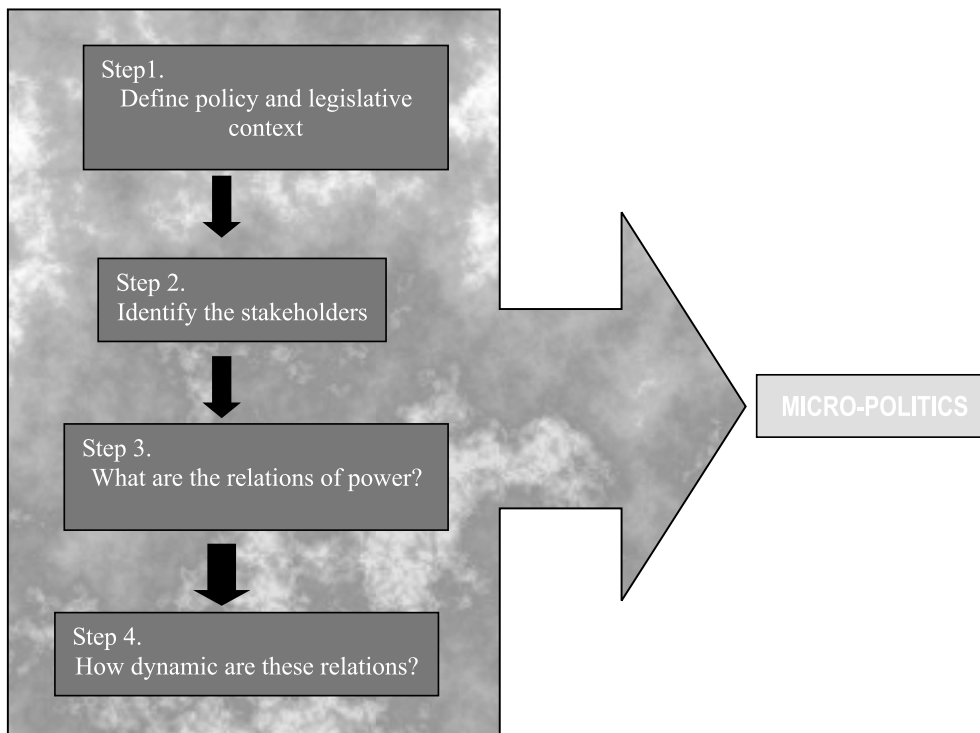
Using a number of questions we propose a simple framework to analyse such dynamics, as follows (Figure 1):

- What is the setting for the multiple stakeholder management?
- Who are the stakeholders involved?
- What are the relations among the stakeholders?
- How dynamic are these power relations?

Each of these steps is addressed as a separate section of the manual. Though the framework presents the steps in sequential order, there are no strict rules about adhering to the sequence.

The manual has been prepared for researchers and development practitioners with previous experience of PRA and PAR. A list of related manuals has been provided for those who may want further reading on some of the methods.

Figure 1. Steps in the analysis of micropolitics



The development of the framework for analysing micro-politics was based on wide consultation with other researchers and practitioners working in multiple stakeholder situations. More substantial development of the framework is based on work done on two projects in Zimbabwe. One of the projects is the selected site for a project by the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) to focus on adaptive management and social learning, which is about to begin. The project examines relations among multiple stakeholder groups for the joint management of a state forest in the southern part of the country. The second project on which some stages of the suggested framework were developed is a site where there is an ongoing PAR and development project coordinated by the Institute of Environmental Studies at the University of Zimbabwe. This part of the manual development focused on one component of the PAR project; the Simudzirayi micro credit scheme. The process notes and data collected from these sites are presented in Annex 1 and Annex 2.

Different steps in the framework are described in the following sections. In each section questions are presented to help focus your data gathering. Some methods have been suggested but there is no requirement that they should be used in the sequence in which they have been presented or that all are used. However, use of more than one method is encouraged as this will improve the quality and reliability of data. Case studies and experiences from other researchers and development practitioners are included to elaborate different points and present examples of some of the complexities of these types of analysis.

Step 1. Define the policy and legal context for management by multiple stakeholder groups

Understanding the context within which stakeholders operate is important as it explains some of the underlying issues and aspects of how these groups function. At this stage of the analysis, one must collect enough background information to understand the broader context in which most of the relations are formed. To the extent possible one must also try to appreciate the overlaps, intersections and contradictions presented in multiple stakeholder groups whose members are linked to other levels by different types of hierarchies and chains of command. The first step in the analysis is to form some general impression of what the policy and legal framework for multiple stakeholder groups is within the country, region and internationally. Further, one should establish the level of experience in multiple stakeholder groups in natural resources in general and specifically for the resource being managed.

Question:

What is the policy and legal context for multiple stakeholder groups involved in natural resources management?

Specific questions:

1. What is the policy framework for multiple stakeholder management?
2. What are the current tenure arrangements for the resource being managed?
3. What are the incentives or imperatives driving management based on multiple stakeholder groups?

Specifically, in this section one would need to gain an understanding of the past and present systems of management. Further, it is important to explore how multiple stakeholder systems of management have come about. In some countries, macro and international events tend to have a profound effect on national policy. One must be aware of this possible effect and not confine themselves within national boundaries.

What to look for:

1. Compare policy and actual practice. Sometimes stated intentions in policy documents bear no relation to how those policies are interpreted and applied.
2. Get a sense of the extent to which local practices are controlled or determined by actions at the centre or beyond the centre. What is the locus of control?
3. Determine the drivers for multiple stakeholder groups i.e. (democratisation; participation, devolution or empowerment).
4. Determine whether there is any previous experience of multiple stakeholder groups.

Suggested Methods

- *Literature reviews and archival searches.*

The review of government documents and legislation will provide an overview of the situation as regards natural resources management. In cases where one is dealing with systems of management financed by donors or other organizations, it will be necessary to review the project documents. Often, however, what is described in documents is not what one sees on the ground and sometimes the interpretations or perceptions of what the multiple stakeholder group should be or was meant to be also differ among those of particular stakeholders involved. Opinions should be sought from wide ranging sources operating at many different levels.

- *Key informant interviews*

Interviews should be conducted with relevant key informants (government officials, project personnel and any other relevant people). However, one must be careful to differentiate between individual and organizational statements. Are the key respondents responding in their capacity as employees or in their individual capacity?

Some documentation may be inaccessible or classified, therefore the proper procedures to acquire these documents must be followed. They must also be appropriately referenced. Some respondents may also want to be anonymous or refuse to be cited. Their wishes must be respected.



Step 2. Identifying the stakeholders in the multiple stakeholder group

The identification of stakeholders is an important step in the analysis. Where resources are contested, gathering data on stakeholders needs to be conducted with a high degree of sensitivity and diplomacy. The purpose of the analysis, will determine the amount of data required to build individual profiles on each stakeholder.

Question:

Who are the stakeholders involved?

Specific questions:

1. What type of stakeholder are they (Individuals, private companies, communities; the government; non governmental organisations etc.).
2. What are their interests in the resource?
3. Who are the stakeholders representing?
4. Who are the stakeholders accountable to?

There are many methods currently in use for identifying stakeholders. Of these methods the most common is stakeholder analysis. However, even stakeholder analysis has evolved through time, from relatively simple checklists of all the stakeholders involved to complex analyses detailing many characteristics of the stakeholder as well as describing the roles and jurisdictions of each stakeholder. Some methods are based on interests and others are based on type of organisation. An analysis of the stakeholders in forestry in Cameroon shows a range of stakeholders extending from local to supranational level (Table 1). The complexity of the analysis will vary depending on the amount of information one needs for this and other related analyses. The way the data is presented may also vary from simple lists to matrices.

For this type of analysis one may need to collect data at several levels as stakeholders often interact at different scales. For example, stakeholders in many natural resources situations extend beyond the national borders and include both legitimate and illegitimate stakeholders. In management situations like forestry in Indonesia one identifies a whole array of stakeholders from indigenous people to government officials, NGOs, donor organizations, national and illegal loggers and international companies. Hierarchical and vested interests are a feature of many natural resources management situations. For example, Hasler (1993) in Zimbabwe explains how different levels can exert control on management decisions on wildlife that occur at the resource level (Box 8). Management takes place both within and between levels. Consequently, though we may focus on a particular multiple stakeholder group as the entry point, it is important not to discount the importance of other stakeholders operating at other levels, or the linkages between them. Quite often, there are stakeholders that 'front' interests other than those they claim to represent. Further, there may be stakeholders who have not been included but have a stake in the decisions that are taken. Often these stakeholders find ways to have their interests considered. Thus, the definition of stakeholders should not be restricted to only those participating and sitting around the table or listed in some documents.

What to look for:

1. Who are the stakeholders?
2. Which stakeholders should be involved who are not included?
3. Which stakeholders are involved who should not be there?
4. What other levels of organization exist and connect with that stakeholder and influence their participation?

Table 1. Stakeholders involved in forestry in Cameroon (after Brown and Ekoko 2001: 38)

Category	Stakeholders	Description
Actors associated with the locality	Internal elites	People in the locality of high status.
	External elites	Natives of the locality based in towns who have high status and retain an interest and significant influence over village affairs
	Migrants	People originating from outside the locality
	Indigenous people	Baka, Bakolas
	Small farmers	Most villages concerned with subsistence and cash cropping, agriculture and forests as the primary source of livelihood but may have other sources of income
	Logging employees	Employed by loggers at the locality in a range of occupations, originating from inside and outside the area, temporary or permanent
Logging	National logging companies	Ministry of Environment and Forests; Ministry of Agriculture
	Foreign logging companies	Majority owned by non-Cameroonians
	Individual loggers	May operate on an <i>ad hoc</i> and informal basis, entering into transactions with farmers for individual trees
Actors associated with the state	Technical	Ministry of Agriculture including; <i>agent arondissement</i> ; <i>chef de gropement</i> ; <i>chef de village</i>
	Administration	
	Enforcement	<i>Gendarmerie</i>
Indirect actors	NGOs	Local, national and international
	Research organizations	CIFOR, TROPENBOS International, CIRAD, IITA
	International cooperation	Bilateral development partnerships
	International agencies	Multilateral agencies

Box 8. The politics of collaborative management in wildlife resources in Zimbabwe (after Hasler 1993:5)

Indeed the strength of the Communal Area Management Program For Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) program is that in practice it often recognizes a multisectoral, multilevel approach and has support at all these levels. For instance national politicians and senior government officials representing different constituencies and government departments have their own agendas, which may or may not coincide with CAMPFIRE objectives. They are often capable of influencing district-level decisions. Likewise provincial politics can influence the outcome of CAMPFIRE initiatives. At district level, appropriate authority is vested in the district councils and not in producer communities themselves. District council and local government represent a distinct set of political and economic vested interests. Such vested interests in the district's resources do not always run parallel to the interests of particular producer communities. And within the communities themselves interests in collaborative management vary. This suggests that analysis of institutional arrangements for collaborative management cannot ignore wider political issues within the country and abroad.

5. What is the nature of participation by each stakeholder (regularity of attendance, contribution to discussions)?

Sometimes the list of all the stakeholders can be very long. There are methodologies to streamline the list into those stakeholders that have a more direct and significant stake. One example of such a methodology is the 'who counts' matrix developed by Colfer (1995) at the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). The "Who Counts Matrix" is a useful method tool for assessing the relative importance of stakeholders (Box 9).

Box 9. 'The 'who counts' matrix"

"The 'who counts' matrix' proposes a method for identifying and defining the most significant stakeholders in sustainable forest management. The method has been field tested in West Africa, North America and Indonesia. Stakeholders are placed on one axis and six factors which are considered most relevant to relations of forests and people on the other axis. The following are identified as the six factors used in the matrix:

- Proximity (closeness) to forests;
- Pre-existing rights of tenure (these vary from place to place);
- Dependency on the forest for a range of goods and services;
- Level of local/indigenous knowledge about the forests;
- Forest culture integration (religious and symbolic links with the forest) and;
- Power deficits (people who live with or in or near the forest often have little power compared to other stakeholders).

The method is qualitative and relies heavily on the 'best judgement of the experts'. Using a scoring system on a scale of 1-3 (1=high; 2=medium; and 3=low with an additional variable) based on field experience, then one can calculate the mean scores for different stakeholders. A reasonable cut off point for defining the stakeholders seems to be 2. Some weaknesses have been identified in the application of the matrix. This is an easy and popular way to decide on stakeholders who are key. (See Colfer 1995).

Sometimes it may be useful to further aggregate particular stakeholders to understand the forces driving them. Thus, for example, stakeholders representing local people may only represent a segment of that population, leaving out migrants, nomadic and other groups. It is important to note that even as a stakeholder is representing an organization or a constituency, sometimes they differentiate between actions or responses made in their individual capacity or as a representative of the organization. In many developing countries stakeholders participating at the local level represent the lowest rank of huge bureaucracies or hierarchies and often have no power to make decisions without consulting those in 'higher office'. In Zimbabwe for example, some government field workers often refuse to make decisions until they consult their superiors or until they get authorization from head office. It is important to note that sometimes not all stakeholders who should be involved are involved. However, there are cases where some stakeholders deliberately shun involvement even though they have the opportunity to be involved. Research in southern Africa suggests that stakeholders will often be differentiated within their own constituencies but assume a single identity when confronted with other stakeholders (Murphree 1994). For example, a researcher working in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe found that state departments sometimes represent a unified 'we' and other times depicted as 'us and them' but also one finds that individual departments can dissociate themselves from other departments (Moore 1996).

Methodological issues:

Institutional analysis of any form requires the utmost discretion and diplomacy. The excise of asking about power among stakeholders creates its own politics (Pfeffer 1992). In many situations it is very difficult to remain outside the dynamics among stakeholders. Stakeholder perceptions of the outsider influence their interaction with the individual and the degree of openness to that person.

Each stakeholder has a varying number of roles through which they relate to unfolding events in the course of daily life, like occupation, social stratification, sex, family relationship, associational membership —, all of these provide multiple and alternative social roles. Information about the different attributes of the stakeholder is useful to construct their composite identities and will also reveal the complex web of relations and networks between stakeholders. In general, identity is created or constructed so the stakeholder is able to draw on multiple alliances, networks, membership to kin or religious groups as well as other attributes. The issue to be considered here, is how particular attributes are juggled, sometimes highlighted and obvious, other times hidden or unacknowledged as the stakeholder defines their relations to others within the group. Following on from such an analysis, one would thus be able to determine and explain reasons for some alliances or factions that may appear baffling to the outsider.

Within the multiple stakeholder group, one should also determine the nature of the multiple stakeholder group by examining the structure of the group in greater detail. As a first step one must describe structures within the group that are formally recognised and documented. For example, one can analyse the structure and operations of the group using the following questions.

- Who holds which position in the group, for how long have they held that position?
- What are the social attributes (their gender, age, ethnicity, intellect, race, religion, origin, period of residence etc.)?
- What other portfolios do individuals hold?
- What is the commitment of a stakeholder to the group (attendance at meetings, involvement in discussions during meetings, performance of tasks)?
- How many constituency does the stakeholder represent?
- How do they communicate with their constituency (do they wait for directives from head office; how do they communicate with their electorate or the groups they represent)?

Suggested methods

- *Review of project documents*

As a first step one can review project documents to examine the structure of the group; the stakeholders involved; structures of decision making; the constitutions; code of conduct; and levels within the different structures of the group (i.e. relations between the executive committee with the wider stakeholder group; relations between executive committee with other sub-structures of the group; and relations of the different structures with other structures or organisations whose interests are related to those of the multiple stakeholder group. However, these can be complemented by data derived from interviews to confirm whether all those indicated as participating are indeed involved. At resource level, identification would be part of the process of consultation with all the stakeholders.

- *Flow diagrams*

We can construct network diagrams to indicate jurisdictions and overlaps between stakeholders operating in other structures. In these networks one is able to associate stakeholders with different roles and hierarchies and networks.

- *Matrices*

Matrices are also useful for collecting information on different stakeholders that one can use in comparisons. Comparisons can be made between the stakeholders using scoring or ranking. Explanations of why a certain score or rank is given should also be included in the matrices. Matrices prepared with different groups are a good indicator of how the composition of stakeholders is conceived and of the varying interpretations of power dynamics among them.

- *Group and key informant interviews*

Stakeholders can be asked to identify and describe relations between those involved in the group. Often, one should try to interview even those organizations that are not involved as they may have useful insights about who is or should be involved. One can use the expert groups (people who work or have previously worked in the area) to make the preliminary list of stakeholders.

Local communities have their own classification systems that assign characteristics and labels to different stakeholders (Table 2). These systems can be compiled through group and key interviews. Stakeholders are labelled and ascribed various characteristics that are often indicative of the relations between them. Uncovering some of these classifications highlights the basis for certain stereotyping of stakeholders involved in multiple stakeholder groups.

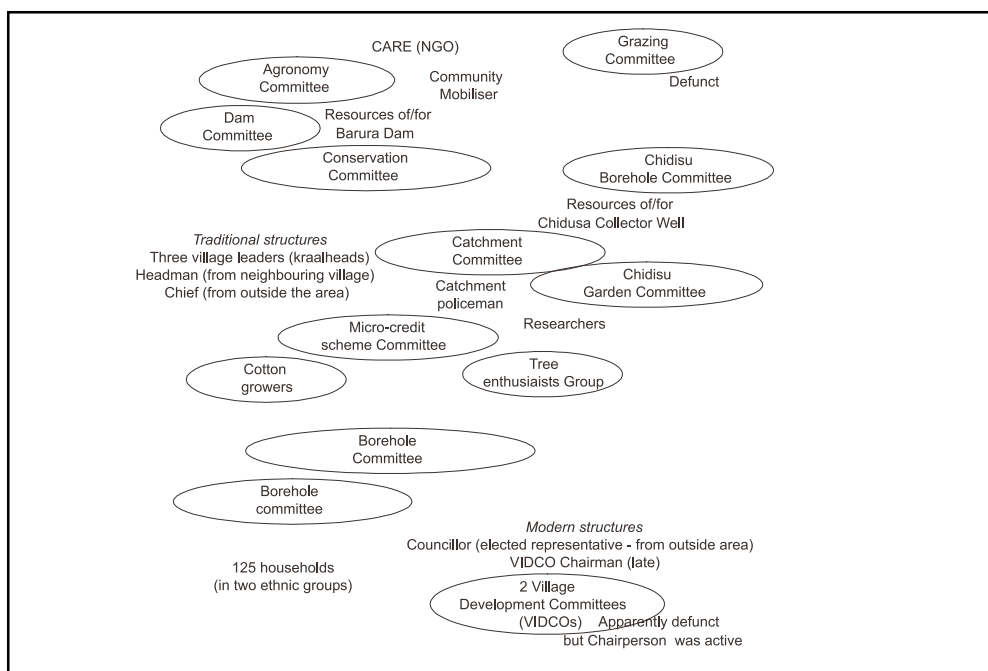
- *Venn diagrams*

Venn diagrams are useful as they expose the diversity of organizations and stakeholders involved in a variety of management situations. Thus for example, Campbell and Sayer (in press) present this cluster of organizations operating in the Romwe catchment (Figure 2). Using the Venn diagrams, the clustering of committees involved in the management of different resources is indicated. The figure shows the diversity of stakeholders but exposes little about the dynamics of relationships between the different stakeholders.

Table 2. Locally constituted classes describing different stakeholders (after Sithole and Kozanayi unpublished)

Term used	Description of character
<i>Chidzachopo</i> or <i>chidza</i> (Native or indigenous stakeholders)	Native stakeholders to an area. Meetings cannot be held if they are not present, they are native to the area and feel they have prior claims which are more significant and should be prioritised.
<i>Muuyi</i> (Outside stakeholders)	Stakeholders whose interests are considered to be external rather than local or who may have an interest but come from outside the resource area.
<i>Voho</i> or <i>vohoushe</i> (ruling elites).	These are the stakeholders from the ruling class. Their views are weighed carefully and considered. They get elected to positions without much effort.
<i>Dukununu</i> (stupid, foolish stakeholders)	These stakeholders are described as scarecrows that watch things from a distance and do not participate, but their presence is required to get "consensus" or the "community view".
<i>Nhire</i> (strong-willed stakeholders)	These are resolute stakeholders. <i>Nhire</i> is a hard bean, which takes a very long time to soften when you try to boil it. These are stakeholders who are regarded as slow to accept change and often do not adopt new ideas readily. Many stakeholders like to have <i>Nhires</i> around as they watch and criticize but never offer concrete suggestions.
<i>Vanatinhadzingwe</i> ; (troublemakers, gossips)	These are stakeholders who start trouble; they incite insurrection and often speak through others. They are compared to a stakeholder who herds two bulls to a corner just so that they can watch them fight. Such stakeholders cause conflict.

Figure 2. Communities organized around the use of various resources in Romwe (After Campbell and Sayer in press)



Step 3. What are the relations of power?

Focusing and gathering data on relations follows naturally from identifying the stakeholders. However, depending on the nature of current group dynamics, one needs to be very careful how they discuss relations of power. In cases where the resource is highly contested or where the current political situation is volatile like Zimbabwe, discussing relations among stakeholders is a dangerous enterprise. In such situations, one's sphere of operation is often limited to those localities where one is well known and one enjoys a high degree of familiarity with most of the stakeholders. In this type of situation, familiarity cultivated through long-term association and presence with a group will be necessary. But not all situations are sensitive or volatile. In this section we provide some insights on how one can collect data on relations and understand how these are constituted. Stakeholder relations can be thought of as complex mosaics and matrixes of relations between individuals, subgroups and with different constituencies. Relations must be described between stakeholders and among different categories of stakeholders. At the end of this section, one should be able to map out relations between and among stakeholders, highlighting different types of relations and describing the processes through which these relations are formed.

Main question:

What are the relations of power among the stakeholders in the group?

Some key questions:

1. What is power in different societies?
2. What are the relations of power among the stakeholders involved?
3. How are these relations between stakeholders constituted or described?
4. What is the nature of the bargaining and negotiating processes between and among the stakeholders?
5. Where is this power played out?
6. How are the relations conceptualised when the group was formed?

In addition, one must also determine relations between the stakeholder and their constituency. One could ask the following questions:

- Does the stakeholder represent a clear and homogenous constituency or constituencies?
- Is the stakeholder aware of and responding to multiple interests within the constituency?
- Which group does the stakeholder represent the most?
- Where does the stakeholder get their support?
- How does the stakeholder deal with these different interests?
- How does the constituency influence role and performance of the stakeholder group?

To understand better what types of relations exist among and between stakeholders, we can use the following questions as our basis for analysis:

- Why do stakeholders appear to agree with issues that they are violently opposed to?
- Why do they not contest decisions made without their approval?
- Why do some stakeholders support actions or decisions that clearly go against their interests?
- What are the trade-offs made between and among the stakeholders?
- How far are stakeholders willing to compromise their interests for the common good?

Answers to these questions are not always easy to come by. Quite often, one must employ various methods and operate in many situations or arenas where stakeholders interact to understand what is going on. Thus it is important to recognize that though we are often preoccupied with observing dynamics among stakeholders in the public domain like meetings and seminars there are other places, situations or arenas where stakeholders meet which are unofficial, less public and often difficult to access. One needs to get a sense of how vibrant these hidden arenas are and the extent to which the politics played out in private end up in the public arenas. Researchers and development practitioners often operate in artificial arenas and miss the informal, impromptu arenas where the real discourse that precedes decision making happens. The arenas where the outsider can operate are also limited by factors like gender, status, ethnicity, or age group. For example, in societies where gender roles are very clearly defined, it is difficult to go against these social restrictions where one has to be the right gender to move around or even to speak. In Box 10, we describe some of the arenas where negotiations and bargaining occur in Romwe, Zimbabwe.

Box 10. Impromptu arenas in Romwe

At social events like funerals, church meetings, and weddings, local stakeholders sometimes start discussing issues that are pertinent and interesting to you. Often you may be standing close by and you hear stakeholders speaking among themselves about the very issue you have been wishing to discuss at a more public meeting. It is not always easy to 'sidle' up to them and participate in the discussion or even to just listen. Sometimes you hold a meeting and stakeholders do not participate or discuss a particular issue and you use your powers of facilitation but get nothing, then suddenly you hear them talking about it in another, very unlikely situation. For instance, you may be walking from the bus-stop and meet up with a few stakeholders or that you are waiting to collect water at the borehole, standing in line at a clinic or just before the meeting starts. I think it is very frustrating to feel that there all these dynamics going on around you and you cannot capture it or be part of the discussion. The other frustrating experience is the so-called impromptu meetings or back-to-back-meetings, where stakeholders will meet to discuss a specific issue unrelated to your interest and then suddenly they decide to also discuss the issue that you are interested in. Now how can anyone predict when that discussion will happen, it means you just have to attend all meetings or events, and when you do, you hope one of them will be one of these back-to-back meetings that yield some relevant data (Witness Kozanayi 06-2001).

Coming across some of these arenas is largely coincidental with the suggestion from some researchers that coincidences can determine how many relations one is able to see and analyse (Wels 2000). Thus it can be coincidences of networks, coincidences of meeting

people, coincidences of finding documents, coincidences of context and coincidences of timing that have much to do with the type of data that is collected.

Over different issues, stakeholders regroup and there are sometimes different types of relations among them. So at any given point, one can expect to have a complex constellation of relations overlying each other. Over much more critical issues, these constellations may be easy to identify, but over less critical issues, they may be less visible, but still exist.

What to look for:

- Where are the relations played out?
- What form do the relations take?
- What drives the processes through which the relations are formed? and
- What is the effect of these power relations on management?

Relations between different stakeholders impact the group to varying degrees. Not all relations, whether conflict or cooperation, have an adverse effect on the group. However, the balance of power must be maintained in a state where no one stakeholder or faction within the group holds absolute power and cannot be challenged.

Methodological issues:

For this type of analysis one needs to be very sensitive to context, i.e. have a sense of time and place and be careful to not offend. Such sensitivity will determine when you speak, with whom you speak and how you approach the subject. You will need to investigate the source and conditions under which the information is being given. Specific issues may relate to your appreciation of the following:

- Who talks about power?
- Where can one discuss power?
- Who is present during the discussion?
- With whom can one discuss power?
- What is the relationship between the person giving the information and the one receiving it?
- What is the perception of the respondent stakeholder about the person receiving the information (i.e. their affiliations, alliances, roles and place within the group).

It is also important that one is able to interpret the 'language' used in discussing relations. Quite often in some cultures, veiled statements, metaphors and other conversational tactics are used to deliberately avoid direct reference. It would be important in these instances to check interpretations of this 'language' with others before documenting one's interpretations. There are political as well as cultural norms that influence where and how we can talk about relationships among stakeholders.

Some field workers have indicated that the problem of familiarity with the stakeholders can be resolved by working with someone who is familiar with the group. In both sites in Zimbabwe, discussing issues like witchcraft, illicit relationships between married people or political affiliations was very sensitive yet our appreciation of some of these attributes is crucial to our understanding of group dynamics at a local level, where some stakeholders have these attributes. However, in some situations where the outsider is very well known in the area, some of this data is derived through less informal methods through everyday gossip, or catching up between friends and neighbours. In one example, in Zimbabwe, the researcher found that less formal association and communication with the community was one way to gather data. However this data is embedded within wider conversation about events in the community. In the case presented in Box 11, he describes events related to one of the key stakeholders in a community project.

Box 11. When data starts coming to you rather than you seeking it!

Barely a week and a half after I left the study site, many things have happened. I made a technical appearance in the catchment on the 11 of November 2001. During my four-hour stay in the community news had already started to flow to me from all directions. And when I say "news", I mean real news.

Our friend, the traditional leader for Chitsa village is in deep trouble. He was slapped slapped with a fine of Z \$10 000.00 by the headman on the 10 of November 2001. Everyone has someone who creates problems for him or her. Our friend is being sued by the late Mhushu's daughter for having caused the breakup of her father's marriage and causing divisions in the family. Her father is the old man who hanged himself on a tree allegedly because some local men including our dear friend were having extramarital relations with his "youthful" wife. People say the young wife was having affairs with the traditional leader, Gudo, Zvenyika, and old man Mafukashe. So the grudge is deep rooted, one should have exceptionally good 'root cause analysis' skills to understand the micro-politics taking place here. Anyway, the daughter suspects that her father was hung by one of her step mother's lovers. She took her suspicions to the headmen. I am told she got the backing of the councilor for ward 25. The two are distant relations but as you know, in times of conflict even template relations mutate to be genuine ones. Among other issues she raised, were the burning of the homestead soon after the burial of Mhushu, unclear circumstances surrounding her father's death; "strange circumstances" surrounding his expulsion from our friend's village. Who said leaders are immune to prosecution while they are still in office?

So at the headman's court, after long deliberations, our friend was found guilty and fined Z \$10 000 for behaving in a manner unbecoming for a traditional leader. In the traditional leadership structure, the headman is senior to the traditional leader and controls a number of local leaders called Kraalheads. From my very credible sources our friend protested when the fine was handed to him but latter gave in. Astute pleading skills by some elderly men at the *dare* (court) saw the fine being reduced slightly to Z \$7000. This is still a lot of money for someone of his low socio- economic status, not withstanding the prevailing economic hardships. I think it was a bitter pill for him to swallow. Most likely in his entire "career" as a traditional leader all the fines he has imposed on offenders do not collectively add up to that figure; a figure he was asked to pay as a fine for only one crime! The same sources tell me the daughter was very eloquent and articulate in the way she presented her case. She had records of all discussions with our friend.

One more story about our dear friend. It turns out while he was messing around with the late Mhushu's daughter, his own wife was messing around with his brother. For him it never rains but pours. The affair came to light because our friend's wife caught a venereal disease and had to confess. The illness was traced to the brother. The case was reported to the police and headman. The police came and recovered some disused veterinary needles, which the brother used when he pretended to be vaccinating his partners against venereal disease. It turns out, the brother had relations with many other women. Now the our friend and these other men want him prosecuted. The headman refused to consider the case and said it was a family affair. Now everyone is considering the complications of this new development. It will definitely change the politics of the project for a while. (Romwe Notes 11-11-2001).

US\$1 = Z\$55 (official rate): (Real value on the alternative market was Z\$300 = US\$1 at the time of the study) in 2000.

In the story presented in Box 10 there are clearly different levels of relations that are intertwined. Relations of the traditional leader and one particular household expose the complexity of how relations are constituted and maintained in a local setting. In particular, through such everyday stories one is able to construct relationships in relation to difficult topics like, suicide and infidelity. Data of this nature is often difficult to obtain through public interviews yet is crucial for explaining everyday behavior, attitudes, and perceptions of power in a place at a given time.

One needs also to develop an extensive network of informants across the board who become informants, who through everyday interaction can reveal what is going on, explain complex relationships and offer insights on behaviours, rationale, etc. However, one needs to work hard to create these networks. Some fieldworkers have observed that one may need to get involved (or work with someone already part of the local life of stakeholders) in local life experiences like attending church, funerals, and other societal gatherings. For example, a field worker in Romwe in the Chivi district of Zimbabwe, found that adopting some of the attributes of the stakeholders was a useful tool to attain acceptability in Box 12.

Box 12. How one field worker worked towards becoming one with the community

When I leased a piece of arable land from a local farmer and started farming like everyone in the community, my interaction with the locals was greatly improved. People became more open about issues that are usually treated as secrets. We started to openly talk about illegal transactions in land. I also came to interact on a one-on-one basis with those who provide hired labour to the rich in the community when they flocked to work in my field. They told me why they prefer to sell their labour to the rich instead of working in their own fields. I also learnt a lot in the community garden where I have a few plots. As I mingled with the farmers irrigating or weeding we talked, joked and commented on everything. Even the farmers who are usually shy to speak at group meetings spoke their minds freely in the garden. The more I interacted with the locals, the more they wanted to tell me more about themselves, hear about me (where I come from, my family, my fears, etc.), and about the interaction with them. Formal community meetings are not always the best platforms to discuss contentious issues, as some people are stage shy while others believe that there are only two views to everything—their own view or no other view! I became convinced that one needs a tape recorder as most of these exchanges occur when one has no note pad to record the information. (Witness Kozanayi, 03/2001).

Ultimately, the goal should be to become identified with the stakeholders to a point where you can go anywhere without ceremony; attend meetings even when you are not invited; be included or consulted over issues or decisions. One field researcher observed that *'to get good data, one must be prepared to endure hours of mindless gossip; sit in many a smoky kitchen; buy as many scuds (a traditional beer brew sold in a container shaped like a scud missile used during the Gulf war) as possible; and join in as many chores as possible* (ACM Seminar, Harare: 08/ 2000).

Meanings of power differ between societies and the contexts in which power is exercised also differ. Our common sense ideas about power, and with it, status, are turned inside

out when we try to understand relations in widely varied contexts. Therefore there is a need to explore the conceptions of power through key interviews and focused group discussions focusing on these questions:

- What are the local perceptions of power, how is it described and how is it manifested in everyday life?
- Who among the group of stakeholders is perceived to hold power and why (i.e. who is weak and who is powerful)?
- Why do other stakeholders feel that one stakeholder is more powerful than others (where do they derive their power from)?
- How does power affect the relationship?
- When and how do power relationships change?
- Are there incidents or times which demonstrate how power plays out over various issues?

One can also explore power relations in terms of self-image, i.e. how do stakeholders describe their roles and status? We need this understanding to be able to evaluate the power relations between stakeholders. Some researchers have suggested that to study power and understand its form, one can start by identifying indicators of power. Pfeffer (1992) identifies the following indicators:

- Reputational indicators of power (e.g. based on interviews where you ask who has power and why). However, this method of studying power has its own shortcomings, as often people are reluctant to discuss power. Further, there is no guarantee that people are thinking about and defining power the same way. It is useful in highly politicised situations where power has much visibility and in which discussing politics is not off limits.
- Representational indicators of power include positions on committees where stakeholders have defined roles and powers.
- Diagnose power by defining its consequences, i.e. who benefits to what extent from organizational decisions.
- Symbols of power (i.e. who sits where under the tent, who is introduced first, who gets to eat with the important dignitaries or visitors etc). In many grassroots committees the chairperson and the treasurer are generally regarded as the important roles with much power.

Some of these indicators of power are closely related, and any single indicator may be misleading, therefore to diagnose power one must use multiple indicators. In the analysis of power we must be aware that the act of asking about power may in fact produce the phenomenon being studied. There may not be in reality a power differential between stakeholders but the appearance of differences in power may have been produced by the process of asking about it (Pfeffer 1992:55).

Power relations in Africa are not restricted to politics, nor do they form a separate system of their own (Marquet 1971). They are found diffused through networks that involve various distinct social groupings such as those of kinship, alliance, and dependence. There are dynamic and delicate sets of relationships that reflect not just a connection to a resource but also the multiple social worlds (compatible and incompatible) to which the individual belongs (Brown and Ekoko 2001). Mapping relationships can be used to identify more clearly the relationships within and between stakeholder groups. Some of these relationships, once exposed, can provide clues that can lead to the explanation of baffling alliances between stakeholders. Mapping relationships is tedious and time consuming.

As mentioned before, there are many different types of interactions involving different categories of stakeholders at different times over different issues. However, to understand what goes on when these interactions occur we can ask some of the following questions:

- What is the nature of relations between stakeholders in terms of decision making (the question deals with two points: relationship between a stakeholder and their constituency; and their relationship with other stakeholders)?
- What are the shared and separate interests of stakeholders?
- What strategies do stakeholders use to advance these joint and separate interests?
- What aspects of these relations have changed over time?
- Through what processes are these relations negotiated?
- What is the perception of stakeholders of their relative bargaining position in relation to other stakeholders?

What are the relations of these people I have identified with others, both local and external to the project or initiative?

In different countries, different researchers will have some signs or indicators they use to read situations that may be rife with micro-politics. In Zimbabwe, some of the indicators of micro-politics are presented in Box 13.

Box 13. Signs of micropolitics

- Body language
- People just sighing but refusing to be drawn
- The level of grumbles and mutterings
- Statements made after the meeting
- Differences between what people say and do
- Order of arriving and sitting at meetings
- Who supports who during the discussions
- Who is dominating discussions
- Confrontations
- How information gets transmitted between stakeholders

In the 1960s a research assistant to a famous anthropologist in Zimbabwe said:

'my people speak not only with their mouths, but with their hands and eyes, how can I make you understand what they really mean if I do not tell you how they looked when they spoke to me. You see sir I want you to understand everything, so that later when your book is ready I can read it and say to myself, my master has written the truth about my people.' (Holleman 1958:64).

In East Kalimantan in Indonesia, a researcher states that listening to the shifting multistranded conversations in which there was never full agreement led her to identify disjunctions that she used to explore relationships between groups and individuals (Tsing, 1996:9). Another researcher working in resettlement areas in the east of Zimbabwe described these disjunctions as fissures or deep divisions that appear in the group over issues being discussed (Goebel 1996). Sometimes these fissures are obvious and other times they are not. However, sometimes where there is a history of conflict stakeholders may readily portray images of conflict even when there may be synergy between them and their said adversaries. It is important to rigorously crosscheck data.

Suggested methods

• *Participant observation*

Participant observation is a valuable tool here, where one can observe first hand relations unfolding among stakeholders in arenas where the stakeholders interact. In many instances interactions in multiple stakeholder multiple stakeholder groups can be observed at meetings, workshops or seminars. Researchers suggest that one can determine the relationships among stakeholders by observing exchanges, expressions and actions during meetings (Goebel 1996; Cornwall 1998). These are used in follow-up focused group discussions or key interviews to investigate undercurrents, understand innuendoes and subtleties, identify alliances or fissures among the group of stakeholders. Participant observations in meetings can also yield important information about the following:

- Who is present?
- Where are they sitting and who is sitting next to them; does the pattern of sitting change?
- What is the body language between stakeholders?
- Who says what in response to which stakeholders?
- How do stakeholders treat each other?
- What is the conversation and behaviour in between proceedings (i.e. during the coffee or lunch breaks)?
- Who goes home with whom after the meetings; who drinks together; who is related to who?
- What conversation or remarks are made after the group has dispersed?
- Who is whispering to who during the proceedings?

In addition, information regarding the selection of venues; the time and duration of the meeting; other activities occurring on the same day or time; what incentives are offered for participation; what differential treatment stakeholders get (in terms of transport; *per diems* and accommodation); and how people are informed yield important insights into the dynamics that are observed. To understand the dialogue it is necessary that one understands the background of the speaker and the context in which the contribution is being made as this makes data more meaningful. We must be careful about allotting specific characteristics to specific individuals about their dominance or lack thereof in public spaces where stakeholders interact. The reason for this is that sometimes stakeholders who speak in public or in specific situations can be designated and assigned the responsibility to speak on behalf of other stakeholders. This means that sometimes the exchanges we witness in public arenas are choreographed or stage-managed and may often not be a true reflection of the dynamics over a particular issue. The more sensitive the issue the more strategic stakeholders can be in deciding who speaks; what is said and how it is presented. For exchanges that are less public (mutterers, whispers, expletives etc.), it is important that one works with other people located strategically among the stakeholders. These people can help in the analysis of the proceedings and give perspective on assessments.

It is important to emphasise that participatory observation and recording of dynamics in meetings is only possible when the outsider knows the stakeholders well. The outsider should sit strategically where they can observe the body language, the tensions and the expressions on participant faces. This method is useful for the analysis of small meetings but may be too difficult to apply in a big meeting where one would need the assistance of other people. Further, it is important to emphasise that the dynamics observed over one particular issue may be quite different from those observed when focusing on another issue—for example, in the consultation phase of the project when curiosity about the

activity gives rise to all sorts of conflicting dynamics; i.e. when there is much misinformation about purpose of visit as well as misconstruction of facts and conjecture. One can follow up on some of the issues that are raised in the meetings later and also raise questions concerning the behaviour of different individuals to understand the undercurrents and dynamics taking place. However, one must be careful at this stage in case questioning is interpreted as troublemaking.

Observations must not be restricted to formal situations or interactions (public arenas) but can be made even for less public and often private interactions occurring in informal arenas. Interaction among stakeholders occurs in wide ranging spaces where negotiations and bargaining are made over issues. Sometimes decisions are agreed upon and strategies charted even before the public meetings with the big group. Also in some of these arenas alliances are made, negotiated or broken as individuals exercise their power to veto actions and decisions made by their representatives who sit in these multiple stakeholder groups.

- *Role-plays*

Role-plays can be used to portray relationships between stakeholders as these can expose relations of power and highlight the nature of the processes of bargaining and negotiations within and between stakeholder groups (Boal 1985). Presentations of role-plays to a larger group play on emotions and may elicit a wide range of responses. It is essential to follow up a performance with further discussion, focusing on questions like:

- Who are the stakeholders being portrayed in the theatre or role-play?
- What is the relationship among the stakeholders being portrayed?
- What processes of negotiations are at play in the role-play?
- What are the different dimensions to the conflict and how are they used as stakeholders jostle for the upper hand (i.e. gender; kinship relations; commercial versus subsistence interests)?
- What happens to the stakeholders themselves during the negotiations (realignments as groups reconstitute and disintegration as the conflict progresses)?
- For how long do these negotiations take place and what drives the different events that are recorded in the role-play?

However, good role-plays are not easy to facilitate. One possibility is to have several role-plays depicting various cases of past and current relationships. Role-plays of current relationships are particularly useful as issues that are portrayed are topical and of direct interest to the observers. Depending on the sensitivity of the issue being portrayed, it may be necessary to pursue some of the suggested questions through key interviews or focused group discussions. One must be aware of the sensitivity of issues being portrayed and understand the limitations these sensitivities place on the individuals participating in the role-play. When facilitating role-plays one must be careful of the cultural norms of the locality and let stakeholders define role-plays that are culturally appropriate. Some questions can be used to explore issues highlighted in the role play are listed here.

- Can the portrayals be improved and in what way?
- Was that a realistic portrayal of the situation?
- Were the observed dynamics typical or atypical?

Interactive role-plays allow for diverse participation from all those in the play and those watching it. Quite often, observers of a role play will start to interject and correct portrayals right in the middle of the presentation. One can facilitate such incidences to

facilitate more involvement by observers who offer their own view of process and relationships. However, these are also difficult to facilitate.

- *Venn diagrams*

Venn diagrams expose the diversity of structures operating at any level and highlight the diversity of structures in which stakeholders are involved or are directly linked to individuals involved. The Venn diagram can be used to indicate areas of overlap between and among stakeholders, thus exposing potential areas of conflict or synergy. Venn diagrams are best prepared with small groups, and can be used to define relations among stakeholders.

- *Ranking and scoring*

Often, ranking and scoring different stakeholders against each other yields important data on what respondents feel about each of the stakeholders and the relations between them. For this type of study, the scores or rank are not so important. What is more important are the comments on how different stakeholders are perceived in relation to each other.

- *Group discussions and key interviews*

Group discussions and key interviews are useful to follow up on sensitive issues and relations. They are best held in private and often some respondents request anonymity. Follow-up interviews may be conducted with targeted individuals in smaller groups.



Step 4. How dynamic are these relations?

Once one has a clear view of how relations are constituted the next step is to establish how sustainable these relations are. Relations among stakeholders are not static; they are constantly shifting, sometimes giving rise to simple constellations of relations and at other times relatively complex constellations. Further, such shifts are not easy to predict. Relations change over time and space in response to a multitude of factors. Some relations change rapidly and others more slowly. While it is relatively easy to assess those relations occurring at a more sedate pace, rapid shifts of relations in everyday politics are more difficult to discern and understand. Some of the processes through which some of these relations are formed are low visibility and their everyday nature means that the methods selected should be sensitive to the constant and rapid shifts.

We have suggested questions to focus a data gathering exercise. The methods suggested will present varying opportunities to capture past dynamics as well as unfolding dynamics. However, different stakeholders will interpret events in different ways and present differing versions of similar situations, events or outcomes. It is important therefore to triangulate and crosscheck data to get a clear and consensus version.

Question:

How dynamic are the power relations among the stakeholders?

Key questions:

1. What causes relations to change?
2. What are the processes leading to the change?
3. Do current relations and processes have historical precedence or are they rooted in a past association between the stakeholders?
4. How susceptible are these relations to change?
5. What effect do these changing relations have on power dynamics in the collaborative project?

What to look for:

1. What events or incidents have significantly influenced the nature and dynamism of a relationship? Different stakeholders may, however, interpret the significance of the same event or incident differently.
2. Determine whether changing relations between one small group of stakeholders influence relations elsewhere in the larger group. How do these events or incidents influence the relationships between the stakeholders?
3. Are relations altered to a significant degree or just marginally?
4. What is the relative susceptibility of relations to power shifts?
5. To what extent do relations shift because of events outside the larger group?

To analyse dynamism of everyday relations among stakeholders one must have a clear appreciation of the variety of stakeholders involved; their past and current relations; the level of contestation over issues or interests among the stakeholders; and how power is shared and exercised among the stakeholders. It is important to appreciate that over some issues the dynamism of relations is likely to be much more pronounced and faster than over some issues.

Methodological issues

We must be cautious about attributing particular shifts in relations to an event or several

events without proper verification. Quite often, different stakeholders construct historical data to reflect their view of things and to suit their agenda. It is not surprising, therefore, that stories or accounts or narratives by one stakeholder can change depending on who is asking, where they are and what situation is current. Stories about the past are often used creatively and can be manipulated in different ways for different purposes. Fortmann (1995) examines the use of stories and narratives as discursive strategies used by different stakeholders to lay claim on resources and finds that stories focusing on one issue can be diametrically different, reflecting backgrounds and latent power struggles between stakeholders. She tells a story about how the fencing of woodlands on private property is viewed by commercial farmers and the neighbouring communities (Box 14).

Box 14. Stories about local use of indigenous woodlands on commercial farms

'In 1966 we put up the fence. That is when the war started.' He saw the obvious astonishment register on my face—the war of 1966? '*No not that war,*' he said, dismissing the liberation war, '*the war of the fence!*' So it transpired, he related, that every time he put the fence up, the people took action. They didn't just climb over the fence. They took the fence down and carried it away. All in all, he estimated, they carried off 20km of fencing. Across the river the old men also tell their story. In their rendering, the former white owner used to let them use the resources from the farm. 'We would go there with our cattle and collect firewood, fruit.' Remembering my interview with the farmer I asked, but didn't he put up fences? 'Oh yes,' they answered, '*but he put in gates for us to use*'. (Fortmann 1995:1053)

There are multiple interpretations of events and their effects on relations and often these constitute stories that are constantly being crafted and retold depending on the objectives of the respondent. Through crafted memories, stakeholders can build their pre-eminence with current social relations (Tsing 1996). Unequal power relations among the stakeholders are expressed through opposing accounts of events. Indeed, competing accounts that change people's minds and end up giving a better account are the primary means by which we know that unequal access to information and resources among stakeholders to a controversy really does matter when it comes to how an issue is perceived, communicated and managed in situations of high ambiguity (Roe 1994). Contradictions in accounts signify power plays between stakeholders. One needs to listen to many accounts from various stakeholders and use the differences as a starting point to explore stakeholder interactions. When focusing on these narratives one should question:

- Why is that stakeholder telling the account?
- How is the account told?
- Is it told to everyone (are stories told to different people different and why)?
- When do these stories get told?
- How often are they repeated?
- Who is telling them?

Many stories are constructed to suit different circumstances and often change in relation to the listener. For this analysis it is necessary to interview many stakeholders and crosscheck their accounts with other respondents. Following each story one can ask these questions of the story teller:

1. How would you describe your relations with other stakeholders (one stakeholder at a time) through different time periods?
2. Has the relationship changed over time?
3. Why has the relationship changed?
4. To what extent has it changed?
5. Are you comfortable with the current state of affairs or would you like to change it?
6. How would you improve relations between you and other stakeholders?
7. What aspects of the relations are accepted, rejected or contested?

It may be necessary to document some case studies of relationships or incidents that are described. Some events remain etched on the memories of stakeholders and shape present relations. Therefore it is important that one uses different methods to collect the data.

Suggested methods:

- *Literature reviews and archival research*

Literature review and archival searches can yield important insights about documented incidents and the interpretation of events and processes in the past. In many countries vast amounts of information are contained in the grey literature (dissertations at local and overseas universities; donor reports; consultants' reports; workshop proceedings; NGO reports and government reports or archival records).

- *Key informant interviews*

Key informant interviews with relevant officials in both the public and private sector and with various individuals will give some depth to the accounts of relations between stakeholders. These key informant interviews can be structured or unstructured. However, for consistence we recommend that you prepare a series of questions that are used in the interviews.

- *Group interviews*

Group interviews may be useful to get more than the individual interpretation of events in cases where an individual is representing a bigger group. Such group discussions can offer important insights on the interpretation of event, processes and outcomes. Like the key interviews it is better that these group interviews are structured.

- *Time lines*

Time lines are a useful way to collect historical data. There are many variations of time lines, some more intricate than others. The important issue is to define realistic time periods that all stakeholders identify with and try to define events in each of these periods.

- *Role-plays*

Role-plays can be used to present sequentially events that have influenced relations in the past up to the present. Such roles plays are difficult to facilitate but when presented are useful for initiating discussion among stakeholders on the sequencing of events, processes and outcomes.

- *Matrices*

Matrices are another way of compiling data. Like time lines, matrices can range from simple checklists to relatively complex presentations.

- *Meetings*

Meetings can be documented in progression to analyse dynamics among stakeholders

over an issue. Alliances change, and with them, shifts among stakeholders, as there is constant regrouping among stakeholders in relation to changed circumstances. In these meetings one can observe the following:

- Which stakeholders participate?
- Are there changes in alliances among stakeholders?
- Have the contested issues changed form or shape since the last meeting?
- Are the dynamics in this meeting similar to those of the first?
- Are the participants the same?
- Who talks; who dominates; when and over what issues?
- Who is the real driver in these interactions?

Though the analysis of a progression of meetings, workshops or seminars can be a good source of data on the dynamics of relations between stakeholders it is important to note that sometimes, depending on the sensitivity of the issue, meetings may be called very quickly or happen spontaneously in response to something or an event that happens. Consequently, one may only be able to use this method if one stays in the area for extended periods and has extensive networks of informers.



Managing power relations

“Seeing the tangled web is only the first step, the real challenge lies in knowing how to undo the tangles”.... (Nonto Nemarundwe 2000)

It is easy to get immersed in descriptions of microlevel politics and lose sight of why this manual has been prepared. Knowledge gained in this analysis will put you in a position to manage power in ways that will allow you to influence the composition; anticipate or determine; relations or dynamics; and facilitate some of the processes among stakeholders. In the introduction, we argued that ignoring micro-politics could have a disastrous effect on cooperation in multiple stakeholder groups. This type of analysis has little value unless applied to planning for action. It helps us make more strategic decisions about how to use our organizational resources and energies. It can help us link with organizations with similar interests and goals and aid in the design and craft of creating more functional multiple stakeholder structures. Being strategic means taking informed action on when, where and how to frame or design interventions multiple stakeholder groups.

There is no clear formula suggested for analysing the data. Instead, we suggest a number of questions that may be used to direct your analysis.

- Does the existing institutional, policy and legal framework support management by multiple stakeholder groups?
- Are all the stakeholders who should be involved included in the group?
- How are their relations constituted and formed?
- Through what processes do these relations form?
- Where are these relations formed (in formal or informal arenas)?
- How is power exercised in the group?
- Do we have some idea of which relations need strengthening or bolstering?
- Are there processes of negotiations, bargaining or lobbying which can be enhanced?
- Are current arenas of interaction among the stakeholders appropriate and inclusive of all?
- Where does power lie among the stakeholders?
- To what degree do local relations among stakeholders get influenced by events elsewhere?
- How dynamic are these relations among the stakeholders?
- How can we minimise the political dynamics of our own involvement with multiple stakeholder multiple stakeholder groups and make these initiatives truly local?

On the basis of these questions, one can begin to build a clear picture of the micro-politics to the extent possible; be able to highlight with which stakeholder one should work; determine who is powerful or influential in the group; how actions to facilitate change in the dynamics among the group should be effected and to what extent existing relations shift over time. Further, such answers especially to the later questions indicate to what degree outsiders should interfere with dynamics among the group. As mentioned

before, relations among stakeholders are highly dynamic, sometimes unfolding in a matter of seconds and at other times unfolding very slowly. However, in these types of analysis, one must be cautious about making rash judgements about the nature of relations in place. Judgements about micro-politics must therefore be made on the basis of thorough analysis and rigorous crosschecking of the data.

In a recent case in Zimbabwe, a researcher explains how they intervened in a community project involving three villages to facilitate equitable sharing of resources (Box 15).

Box 15. Stimulating collaborative action in Romwe, Zimbabwe.

After ten years the committee of the Romwe catchment project mobilized to collect money to host celebrations over for the success of the project. Money was collected from members of the project. Most of the money was used to purchase a prize cow for the occasion. At the meeting to decide on the celebrations members agreed to donate the money on condition all the meat and other purchases would be consumed on the day and that allocation and use of the money would be transparent. On the day of the celebrations the bull was dully slaughtered and meat was distributed to various villages. The food was shared and members were surprised at the quantities of meat they received. As they departed, some voiced their bewilderment at the quantities of meat that had been shared, and many were clearly not satisfied about how the meat had been shared. By nightfall, it was clear that most people did not believe that all the meat had been shared. Some people claimed they had seen some elites with some of the meat. At this point the researchers decided to intervene. As people passed the research station, the researchers invited them to see the meat, which had been stored in the engine room. Person after person was clearly shocked by what they saw. So much meat they said, why was it not prepared, why are they pretending that very little is left, who put it there? So many questions and the researchers pretended ignorance. Before the end of the evening a constant stream of people arrived to view the meat. The majority of the members were now aware that there was more meat in the engine room. Come early morning members started coming to the meeting place. All members attended the meeting. All wanted the money accounted for; all wanted to see all the goods that were left over; all wanted an account of all the people who had taken pots full of meat to their homes. It was a very volatile meeting. The researchers watched from a distance and marveled/marvelled at democracy at work. For once every member of the project was participating and demanding transparency from the leaders. It took all of a Z \$150.00 contribution from each household for us to witness how members reach consensus. When it was clear to leaders that the members were not compromising, the meat was brought out and chopped into 100 small pieces. The 8 loaves were similarly broken into small pieces, which were similarly distributed. The leaders were charged for the tea they had consumed using sugar purchased using the money collected. Everyone left with their little piece of the cow; evidence that sometimes negotiated consensus is possible. The leaders took away nothing, no meat as they were allocated special ritual pieces the day before. One leader said of the meeting "often the will of the people" prevailed when too much wrong has been committed by the leaders". (Romwe field notes, 03-/2001).

Interfering or manipulating micro-politics should however be done cautiously to manage the prevailing dynamics in ways that harness political energies and opportunities for facilitating positive processes and outcomes. Creative conflict among stakeholders can have positive impacts and stimulate constructive change, but interfering in politics can backfire, as the impacts of such interventions are often not as predictable as may be apparent and can have far reaching impacts.

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Development of the framework in Zimbabwe

Case material from Mafungautsi Joint Forest Management Project,
and Simudzirayi Micro-credit Scheme

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Acknowledgements

This publication has been produced with the financial assistance of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) under RETA 5812: Planning for Sustainability of Forests through Adaptive Comanagement; Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and the European Community on projects led by CIFOR. Some of the work on developing the framework and illustrative cases from Chivi were undertaken with funding from the United Kingdom Department for International Development under Natural Resources Systems Programme. This part of the work was conducted on projects led by the Institute of Environmental Studies at the University of Zimbabwe. The views expressed are those of the authors and can therefore in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the donors.

We appreciate and acknowledge the cooperation of villagers and other stakeholders in Romwe and Mafungautsi, Zimbabwe who gave freely of their time and shared valuable insights used to develop a framework for the analysis for micro-politics in multiple stakeholder groups. We are very grateful to the insights provided by researchers and development practitioners in Zimbabwe and Indonesia who are working on different projects in situations where management is undertaken by multiple stakeholder groups. Names and direct references to individuals have been changed to honour confidentiality agreements.

Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ACM	Adaptive collaborative management
AGRITEX	Agriculture and technical and extension services (Ministry of Agriculture)
CIDA	Canadian International Development Aid
CIFOR	Center for International Forestry Research
COTTCO	Cotton Company of Zimbabwe
CAMPFIRE	Communal Area Management Program For Indigenous Resources
DfID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
FC	Forestry Commission
IES	Institute of Environmental Studies
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non government organization
RDC	Rural district council
RMC	Resource management committee
VIDCO	Village Development Committee
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Unity Patriotic Front

Developing the framework in Zimbabwe

To develop an appropriate and easy to apply framework for analysing micro-politics in multiple stakeholder groups we held consultations with experienced field practitioners working on research or developing projects in Zimbabwe and Indonesia. These consultations were held for a number of reasons:

- i) To identify demand or need for an analytical framework to assess micro-politics among people who work with multiple stakeholder groups;
- ii) To establish existing experience and gaps in analytical tools for such an analysis;
- iii) To collect experience and opinions on some of the critical methodological issues when conducting this type of analysis;
- iv) To get some ideas of what the form, structure, and language should be used to describe the framework;
- v) To identify existing situations where the framework or aspects of it could be developed; and
- vi) To review the draft outline of the framework.

The framework was developed on the basis of work undertaken on two unrelated projects in Zimbabwe that involve multiple stakeholders. One is a joint forestry management project involving local and external stakeholders in managing a state forest (Sithole and Kozanayi 2000). The other is a component of a larger multiple institutional development and research project involving three villages cooperating in the management of a microcredit scheme. In both the projects some of the steps of the framework were developed and refined. The data collected during the development of the framework was directly relevant to the projects in question and has been incorporated as inputs to work in progress.

In each of the projects used, some process notes are included indicating which methods were used highlighting sequencing and methodological issues that may have arisen. For each project, the needs identified for this type of analysis within the project are identified. Data collected to address the concerns is highlighted. An analysis of the relations among the stakeholders is presented at the end of each project.

Annex 1.

Mafungautsi Joint Forest Management Project, Gokwe District

Mafungautsi Joint Forestry Management Project was selected as a site for the development of the manual for a number of reasons. The first is that the project has been in existence for 10 years and over that period, the stakeholders have interacted to varying degrees over the forest. Second, the project has been selected as an Adaptive Collaborative Management (ACM) site for the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) to look at issues of stakeholder interaction at different decision making levels. On paper, Mafungautsi is a joint forest management project between the State forestry authority and the local communities residing on the edge of the forest. However, over the past ten years the project has included other stakeholders. The development of the framework was undertaken as part of the process of:

- initiating the project;
- understanding local politics to improve strategic decisions about entry points for the ACM project;
- targeting the right partners;
- identifying current power relations and establishing the degree of involvement by different stakeholders; and
- in particular, identifying the extent of wider participation by gender and other marginalized groups in the joint forest management project.

At the time of the research, the ACM research team was only just completing its district level consultations among stakeholders involved in the Mafungautsi Joint Forest Management Project. Thus the project presented an ideal case for analysing multiple stakeholder relations before implementation in this project, all the proposed steps of the framework have been applied.

1.1 Defining the policy and legal context for multiple stakeholder groups

Methods and process notes

We conducted a review of government publications and donor reports. There is a huge volume of literature on the state forests in Zimbabwe. An annotated list of this literature can be compiled as part of this excise and would be useful for future reference. We also interviewed some key officials in the government (the project officer); the district forestry officer and a number of NGO researchers that had previously worked on the project. However, not all documents relevant to this part of the analysis are accessible to the public. Officials were reluctant to pass on information and reports that were deemed 'sensitive' to the project. In general, officials noted that information on contested state forests like Mafungautsi tends to be more difficult to use as it exposes some of the contradictions in state policy about devolution and policing of natural resources. Some of these documents, even when made available, could not be directly cited. We also interviewed some key respondents, including government officials and researchers working

in Mafungautsi. We found that some local forestry officials were unwilling to have their opinions documented or cited. Some officials were only willing to discuss their views after assurances of confidentiality were given. Some researchers also declined to comment on the project for fear that such disclosures would compromise their working relations with the state which still controls the forest.

Policy and legal context of Mafungautsi Joint Forest Management Project

There is much interest and experience in management on the basis of multiple stakeholder groups in Zimbabwe. Over most of the key resources like water and wildlife the government is developing management approaches that include other stakeholders, especially local communities. However, experiences with CAMPFIRE have demonstrated that the intended inclusion of local people in the management of wildlife has not been as complete as would be ideal. Instead, the rural district councils maintain their grasp on power even though the legislation clearly intended for that power to be passed down further (Murphree 1990; 1991). In many analyses, local people have thus remained powerless in spite of the rhetoric to the contrary. In the water sector, reforms have taken a similar path. The reconfiguration of power away from white farmers to communities has not yet been seen; instead, communities continue to underwrite white farmer programs for water because they really have no power to veto anything that the white farmers want (Sithole 2000). Thus far, Zimbabwe has much experience in multisple takeholder groups but has yet to have a real success story. The pilot case of joint management of state forests with other stakeholders has taken ten years and still no concrete suggestions or policies have been developed for managing similar forests or indeed to reduce the conflicts among the stakeholders involved.

There is an adequate institutional framework for the integration of stakeholders at the district level. But this framework tends to be discounted and bypassed as most ministries and government departments ignore their existence. This is one reason for the conflict between them and ministries or departments because the district councils feel sidelined as often no organisations wants to work with their structures. Some local government structures at village level are often deemed illegitimate.

Mafungautsi State Forest Reserve is found in Gokwe District, in Mashonaland West Province. The forest is about 82 000 ha in extent and was reserved in 1954. Most of the settlement is at the forest margin though communities use a wide variety of products and services from the forests. Some of the use is termed 'illegal and poaching' by the forestry authorities. In general, communities are allowed subsistence use of the forests but need permits to collect certain products. There is much literature on local use of forestry in Mafungautsi and detailed accounts and analyses of the relationships between the forestry authorities and the communities have been made over the years (Bradley and McNamara 1993; Matzke 1993; Vermuelen 1994; Matose 1994, 1997; Nhira 1995; Nemarundwe *et al* 1999; Roper and Maramba 2000). The relationship between the forestry authority and the local people is best described as being largely characterised by suspicion, years of conflict and there is sometimes violent confrontation (Matose 1994, 1997).

To understand what type of arrangements forests in Zimbabwe are managed under, we applied the concept of 'tenurial niche' developed by John Bruce of the University of Wisconsin Land Tenure Center (Bruce 1986) to define finer categories of forest resources in relation to the stakeholder composition, and came up with the list presented in Box 1.1 The concept of social forest describes property relationships, not space or physical characteristics.

Mafungautsi State Forest is one of a number of forests managed by the Forestry Commission. In recent years, literature reviewing the project has suggested that the

Box 1.1 Niches in Zimbabwean forests and woodlands

Forests and woodlands in Zimbabwe can be classified into tenurial niches as follows:

- Forest land controlled by the state (The state is the sole stakeholder. This category is often seriously contested).
- Trees controlled by district councils on communal lands and resettlement areas (Communities claim ownership of trees, but legal ownership resides with the district councils. Like the state forests, trees in communal lands are subject to much contestation).
- Trees planted by groups and institutions (These belong to the planters).
- Trees planted and protected by individuals on individually controlled land (These can belong to individuals; however, naturally occurring trees can be disputed by the district council).
- Trees on commercial farms (Private property, but sometimes farmers will enter into agreements with neighbouring communities to share the trees).

Though these categories appear separate, overlapping niches are common. As a result, different people or stakeholders may claim the same trees on the same land, or different trees on the same land, or the same land. Overlapping niches can result in conflict. Though management systems on these niches are well defined and articulated, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive (after Nhira and Fortmann 1992).

Forestry Commission jumped on the bandwagon of collaborative and joint projects as a strategy to avert conflict rather than as a genuine desire to cooperate in managing and sharing the forest (Matose 1994). With money from the Canadian Development Agency, they have been testing multiple stakeholder arrangements at the forest as a pilot for other forests over the last ten years with little success (Roper and Maramba 2000). Reviews of the joint management project have generally been negative, describing the Forestry Commission as retaining its top down management and ignoring other stakeholders. Some local respondents described the Forestry Commission as a 'leopard that has not changed its spots'. Some of these sentiments came out in the course of data collection and are recorded in other sections of the Annex.

The Forestry Commission acknowledges the presence of other stakeholders and has over the past ten years employed a wide variety of ways to get them involved. This involvement has been neither consistent or come with the public acknowledgement of need for collaboration that is expected by the other stakeholders. Current attitudes and views about the nature of cooptation of other stakeholders are explored in the relevant sections. As a mechanism to implement the joint management project the Forestry Commission formed Resource Management Committees (RMCs) constituted by 'democratically elected' individuals from the villages along areas bordering the forest. The goal of the project is 'the sustainable management and use of Mafungautsi State Forest through community involvement.'

1.2 Identifying the stakeholders involved

Methods and process notes

For an initial list of stakeholders we consulted existing project reports and the literature available. We also consulted an expert group of researchers, government and non government organizations working in the area. We were also given a list of stakeholders that were included in the CIFOR consultative meeting that was conducted at district

level. Some additional stakeholders were added on to the list based on group and key interview data that was received. We were able to meet with some but not all the stakeholders identified. Profiles of each of the organizations were made from the responses from key interviews and group discussions with respondents at the district offices in Gokwe and local people residing in one of the resource management areas around the forest under the Batanayi Resource Management Committee (RMC). Communities are defined administratively by the Forestry Commission in relation to this committee. There are three villages in the RMC. The names of villages have been changed to honour confidentiality agreements. Names of respondents who made statements that are directly cited in this Annex have also been withheld.

Who is involved in the management of Mafungautsi forest?

On the basis of data collected from an expert group meeting the following stakeholders were identified:

- Forestry Commission (district, province and the head office). The Forestry Commission manages the forest under an act of law.
- Communities through their RMCs (must be differentiated by ethnicity and period of residence as migrants tend to be isolated in the development projects).
- Donors (CIDA is the biggest donor in the area and provides funding to the Forestry Commission).
- CIFOR (an international research organization, a recent presence at the local level).
- Rural district councils (established by act of Parliament to coordinate development activities at a district level).
- Politicians (there are local level politicians and higher level politicians. Councillors from the district council are elected to their positions like the member of Parliament who represents a larger area and sits in the Parliament of Zimbabwe. Both are active at the local level, though MPs tend to patronize local politicians).
- The State (distinguished from the Forestry Commission and referred to locally as *Hurumende* or the government, it is perceived to be a much bigger and more powerful entity than the Forestry Commission).
- Outsiders (poachers, urban entrepreneurs and seasonal collectors, neighbouring small scale commercial farmers). This group is not included in the structures governing the state forest.
- Research organizations and NGOs (there were numerous students from local and overseas universities undertaking research in the area. NGOs undertake both development and research activities in the area).
- Traditional leaders (in this paper, the term is referring local leaders within the traditional hierarchy who are known as 'kraalheads'. These individuals are responsible for small numbers of households varying between 20 to 50 households. Each Kraalhead exist in relation to other Kraalheads who together comprise an area under the control of a headman. Beyond the headman is the 'larger area' consisting of several headman under the control of a chief. This is the highest level of traditional authority in the country).

Detailed descriptions of the structures of these stakeholders already exist in both published and unpublished literature. In this section we only present data gathered from group discussions with local people and from key respondent interviews.

The Forestry Commission

The forest was transferred to the extension divisions in 1993 to facilitate the development of the CIDA-assisted joint management project. One forestry extension officer has the overall responsibility for managing three forest reserves and coordinating all forestry extension activities nationwide. Since 1994, a project officer has been added to the staff

to manage the implementation of the joint management project in Mafungautsi. She is not resident in the district and runs the project from the head office in Harare. There is also a forestry protection unit that is understaffed. There are only six people to monitor illegal use of products and services from the forest. The state forestry department has offices at district level in Gokwe. Officers at this level have their own responsibilities though sometimes they assist in the Mafungautsi project. Though Gokwe is close to the RMC chosen as a case for this analysis, local people still describe the Forestry Commission as being '*as far from us as Johannesburg is from Gokwe* (about 2500 km)'. The more remote the village, the less access the people from that village have to forestry officials based at the district centre in Gokwe. Officials admitted in key interviews that remoteness influences their level of interaction with different RMCs and subcommittees.

Local communities and their RMCs

There are 14 RMCs around the forest. Each of these RMCs has different zones for use. Each RMC comprises of a number of VIDCOs. There appears to be no rational reason for the way these RMCs were drawn. Batanai RMC is a popular RMC for the FC and is the selected site for the CIFOR multiple stakeholder work. There are three villages that constitute Batanai RMC. Representation by village is considered and the results are presented in Table 1.1.

Batanai RMC used to be much bigger but was subdivided because the FC argued that it was too big for the committee to be effective. The people on the previous RMC were thought to have been hand picked by the FC without elections. In the current RMC elections were held, but respondents argue that the FC influenced who should be elected to each position. They also requested that women be elected. The RMC operates in relation to subcommittees of particular projects. During the fieldwork only two subcommittees were operational, the beekeeping and thatch collectors' groups.

To understand the extent of marginalisation of different groups in the RMC we examine how the committee is constituted so that we can determine the extent to which the committee is representative of the three villages (Table 1.2). All the villages in the RMC are represented on the committee, although the people who hold the two key positions of chairperson and treasurer are from Mrembwe village. Other members of the committee indicate that most decisions are made by the chairperson and the treasurer in consultation with the officials from the Forestry Commission, with little or no input from them.

There are no women on the bee keeping committee (Table 1.3). There are 24 registered beekeepers in the group. Only one of these is a woman (the traditional leader's wife in Mrembwe). The idea of the beekeeping group was not discussed throughout the RMC. A total of 15 prominent beekeepers did not register with the group. For example, the most well-known beekeeper owns about 200 beehives and did not participate in any of the meetings, and is not registered with the group. He is an immigrant from Manicaland. Some of these prominent beekeepers stated that they were ignorant of the existence of the group while others did not want to participate because they believe that groups stifle individual initiative. The chairperson takes advantage of his literacy to influence decisions made in the committee. He has also travelled extensively for the political party—ZANU PF—and has a wealth of experience as a retired professional, which sets him apart from other members of his committee. We believe that the chairperson considers the other members to be mere 'passenger participants' because they do not actively participate and are often sidelined. The composition of the beekeepers in the group by village is shown in Table 1.4.

The thatch grass collector's group comprises eight women and one men. Even though we find no formal organizational structure for this group, it functions as one. In fact the FC

Table 1.1 Representation on the RMC committee in Batanai

Designation	Village	Kinship ties	Other positions
Chairperson	Mrembwe	Nephew of traditional leader in Mrembwe village.	Chairperson of vegetable group, member of school board, coach of local football club.
Deputy Chairperson	Chanetsa	He is not related to anyone else on the committee.	Traditional leader of Chanetsa.
Secretary	Vizho	Nephew of traditional leader in Vizho.	No other positions.
Deputy Secretary	Chanetsa	Brother of traditional leader of Chanetsa. He is brother-in-law to the traditional leader of Mrembwe village.	Retired from the Zimbabwe steel company in 1992, a staunch ruling party member; chairperson of Mumbudzi beekeeping group; Chairperson of the Chanetsa nursery group; committee member of Sengwe No. 2 church burial society.
Treasurer		He is related to the traditional leader of Mrembwe through his daughter who is married to the son of the traditional leader of Mrembwe.	Member of the Sengwe dip tank committee.
Committee member 1	Mrembwe	Wife of traditional leader in Mrembwe.	Member of beekeeping committee; leader of thatching grass collectors' group; suspected witch; mother of much sought-after research assistant; chairperson of nursery group; leader of savings club.
Committee member 2	Vizho	No kinship ties were identified to any of the leaders.	Holds no other positions.

Table 1.2 Representation on the RMC from the 3 villages in Batanai RMC

Designation	Village
Chairperson	Mrembwe
Deputy Chairperson	Vizho
Secretary	Vizho
Deputy Secretary	Chanetsa
Treasurer	Mrembwe
Committee member 1	Mrembwe
Committee member 2	Chanetsa

Table 1.3 Beekeeping Committee and how it is constituted

	Village of origin	Wealth class	Comments
Chairperson	Chanetsa	2	Ndebele tribe. Related to both the traditional leaders of Chanetsa and Mrembwe. He is retired from the Zimbabwe Steel Company in 1992. He is also the RMC deputy secretary, a prominent Zimbabwe African National Unit, Patriotic Front (the ruling political party) ZA NUPF member, and he is 65 years old.
Deputy Chairperson	Mrembwe	2	Shona, 45 years old, friend of the traditional leader of Mrembwe.
Secretary	Vizho	4	40 years old. Related to the headman of Chanetsa. Shangwe tribe.
Deputy Secretary	Mrembwe	4	Tonga tribe. 32 years old, secretary of a group of farmers working with COTTCO, successful vegetable producer, related to the traditional leader of Mrembwe. He is also married to the traditional leader's sister.
Treasurer	Vizho	4	40 years old, Ndebele tribe, very vocal at meetings.
Committee member:		4	37 years old. Has no connections with any of the others on the committee.
	1 Chanetsa		
	2 Vizho	3	35 years old.
	3 Vizho	3	30 years old.

Table 1.4 Composition of beekeeping group and membership by different villages

Village	% number of participants	Sex
Vizho	29	All men
Chanetsa	9	All men
Mrembwe	61	1 woman, 12 men

regards the group as a formal entity. All the women in the group are related. The only male member is the traditional leader of the village where all the women come from. He was invited by his wife to join the group in order to 'give weight to the group'. Within the group, there is a gradation of authority in relation to the extended family of the traditional leader. The wife of the traditional leader assumes the leadership roles even though she is not elected. The women collect thatch grass for resale in Gokwe town where the grass fetches high prices. The group operated previously as a savings club to help purchase utensils for the home. All the women own wetland gardens and produce vegetables for sale. The money earned from vegetables is sometimes used to pay for permits for the grass. When the RMC was initiated the group decided to start the thatching grass initiative. They sell some of the grass as a group and the rest as individuals, selling it during school holidays when school children are around to help.

Some respondents note that, *"some committees we never see being constituted, you only find out when they are there and often you don't know how they came to exist"*. At the village meetings, many people professed ignorance about RMC subcommittees and even some of the members of the subcommittees were not able to describe the function or purpose of the committees. These committees are constituted rapidly, with little consultation as few people attend the meetings where these committees are constituted. The subcommittees are also dominated by people from one village.

Within the RMC, there is much variation in participation in the project. Attendance at RMC meetings is very low. Though the three villages in the RMC have over 400 households, fewer than 25% regularly participate in meetings. Participation in public meetings by women in this area of Zimbabwe is even lower (Table 1.5). Even when women attend the meetings they rarely participate in the debates.

Table 1.5 Attendance at one of the biggest meetings of Batanai RMC, aggregated by gender and village

Village	No. of men	No. of women	Total
Mrembwe	46	71	53
Chanetasa	5	0	3
Vizho	49	29	44
	100	100	100

Among the different ethnic groups represented, the few women who spoke at the meetings were usually from the Shona, one of the two dominant migrant tribes settled around the forest. Other women only participate when they hold public office as committee members or village community health workers. In one of the villages we examined participation by wealth category, ethnicity and degree of participation in development activities for all the members of the village, as shown in the matrix (Table 1.6).

People in the very rich and the very poor categories are described as having little or no interest in participating in the joint management project. There is high ethnic diversity within Mrembwe village, a characteristic of the other two villages in the same RMC. The indigenous population in the area are the Shangwe, who are a minority group. However, the Shangwe are described as reclusive and will often assume attributes from other tribes and therefore tend to be identified with those tribes. On the other hand long-term resident tribes like the Shona and Ndebele also now regard themselves as native to the area even though they are not. In general, recent migrants feel excluded from decision making and exist outside the process. For example, one migrant states; *'I do not actively participate in the RMC. When you are a migrant you have little say in what goes on in the RMC, you will never be elected leader to RMC, they elect each other.'* Sometimes migrants do get involved but their voices are discounted. For example, one school official states

'There are many people among the locals who can spearhead development in this area. Unfortunately they are not allowed to speak at meetings or even attend meetings. When they suggest something at meetings, no matter how good, people discount it on account of your origin. If you persist and try to be involved, they threaten you with eviction or witchcraft.'

Table 1.6 Participation in Mrembwe village by wealth and ethnicity

Class	% number of people in each Category	Ethnicity	Comments on participation in RMC
1 (very rich)	9	7 Shona, 8 Ndebele households	Immigrants. In general some of these migrants rarely participate in RMCs
2	11	15 Ndebele, 3 Shona, 1 Tonga	Some members participate and occupy positions of authority on the RMCs
3	31	20 Shona, 30 Ndebele, 2 Nyasaland (from Malawi), 3 Shangwe	Very active in projects and RMCs
4	17	2 Nyasaland, 3 Shona, 21 Ndebele, 4 Tonga	Less than half participate in the RMCs
5	28	14 Shona, 5 Tonga, 1 Kalanga, 2 Shangwe, 1 Nyasaland.	Some of the members of the group are members of projects but do not hold any positions
6 (very poor)	4	1 Tonga, 1 Shona, 4 Ndebele, 1 Nyasaland	Rarely attend meetings and are not members of any projects. One member is a committee member of the nursery group

Early migrants are more accepted than recent migrants, whatever their ethnic group, and they do sometimes get elected to higher positions. For example, the chairperson of the beekeeping group is a migrant. However, this individual is well connected both locally and outside the village.

Canadian International Development Aid (CIDA)

CIDA financed the project through the Forestry Commission's community forestry division. Over the last ten years the financing of the CIDA has been relying primarily on review reports and consultants' assessments of the collaborative project.

Centre for International Forest Research (CIFOR)

CIFOR is a relatively new player in Gokwe, having only started working there in 1999. It may be premature to try and outline how CIFOR relates to the other organizations, as locally their interactions have been primarily consultative at district more than at the local level. At present, local attitudes towards CIFOR were limited to comments from participants of a district level workshop and from village people who attended CIFOR-initiated village meetings. CIFOR is working on a project to facilitate social learning to improve collaboration among stakeholders involved in joint forest management.

Rural District Council (RDC), Member of Parliament (MP) and the councillor

The Rural District Council (RDC) is the local government authority that derives its powers from the Rural District Councils Act of 1988. The RDC comprises a council of elected individuals and an executive controlled by the Chief Executive Officer. The councillor is an elected individual who is also Chairperson of a ward. A ward covers an area of more than one Village Development Committee (VIDCO). A Member of Parliament (MP) is elected

from a district to sit in Parliament. The councillors and the MP are generally viewed as political rather than development oriented.

Local communities and villages

These are small units of households under a traditional leader that reside in an area whose boundaries are known and often contested. This unit is different from an area referred to as a VIDCO which is an administratively defined and administered by a village development committee (VIDCO). A VIDCO controls an area comprising numerous traditional villages under a traditional leader called a 'kraalhead'. The boundaries of a VIDCO are even more vehemently contested compared to the village boundaries as they bear no relation to functional systems of organization or how the people prefer to be organized. In general local people ignore these boundaries.

The villages in and around Mafungautsi State Forest are ethnically diverse. Three main groups are identified: the Shona, the Ndebele and the Shangwe. The Shangwe have resided in the area the longest and speak a Shona dialect though they communicate publicly in Ndebele. They often identify themselves with the Ndebele, giving the appearance of a dominant Ndebele group. Within the study area, the Shangwe are regarded as backward and ignorant. They account for higher figures of illiteracy in the area and are sometimes involved in hunter-gatherer activities. There are other groups like the Tonga, but their numbers are small compared to the main groups. More recent migrants, whether Shona or Ndebele, often are described as separate from the longer-term resident groups and tend to be ignored and left out of projects in the area. There are a number of leadership disputes among different individuals from the ruling households. These disputes tend to result in the reconstitution of communities where leaders may assimilate migrants in order to gain more support. Among these ethnic groups, Shona women tend to participate more in public meetings while the Shangwe and the Ndebele are not as forthcoming. Researchers cite cultural restrictions as reason for limited participation by women. Further user groups are not always constituted by local people. Some of the people in and around the forest were evicted in the 1980s. Different groups prefer different land uses for the forest. People evicted from the forest would like the forest to be converted to agricultural land. Some of the other users are seasonal users from other villages close by and from areas far from the forest who come to harvest particular resources.

The government

This is defined as something bigger and more influential than the local representatives of the different departments of government in the area. It is also not separate from the ZANU PF political party. Thus respondents were often referring to "the government" as ignoring them, forgetting them or exploiting them. Views were also expressed about support for the government or lack thereof because of failed projects, misdirected resources or the plunder of resources by public officials while restricting access by local people. There is no clear distinction made between the government and the ruling political party.

Traditional leadership structures

Traditional institutions exist but tend to be replaced by elected committees in development projects. Most local respondents stated that they prefer to work through the traditional institutions. In a comparison of institutions using ranking, traditional institutions were picked out each time as the organization people would be most happy to work through. However, some respondents who are migrants were sceptical of the capacity of these traditional institutions. Migrants also indicated that some of the traditional leaders ignore the needs of migrants. But one traditional leader argued that only those migrants whose

residency is not sanctioned by them find themselves abandoned or live in conflict with the local system. The migrants should and must come through the traditional leaders and be legitimately settled.

Outsiders

This is a broad group of stakeholders including poachers, entrepreneurs, government ministers, and people from other villages remote from the forest who come to the area and compete for the resources of the forest. Local people resent what they call outsiders and often believe that the presence of some of them is sanctioned by the district council.

1.3 Relations among the stakeholders at the Mafungautsi Joint Forest Management Project

Methods and process notes

Because of the highly sensitive nature of the relations between the Forestry Commission and the community most of the information gathered here was based on key informant interviews and focused group discussions held sometimes in less public fora. It is best to start with group discussions and follow up with key interviews and focused groups. Based on all the interviews with local and external respondents, it is clear that the Forestry Commission is by far the most dominant stakeholder. All relations of stakeholders tended to be defined in relation to the FC.

Forestry Commission and RMC relations

All parts of communal areas bordering the forests are now represented by Resource Management Committees (RMCs), which were established to represent the local people in their dealings with the Forestry Commission. RMCs cover a number of VIDCOs. A VIDCO is an administrative boundary demarcating an area of authority under an elected committee. VIDCOs vary in terms of population size and extent. Originally, there were three or four VIDCOs under one RMC committee. Most of these early RMCs faced serious administrative setbacks resulting in the reduction of RMC areas to about one or two VIDCOs. Smaller institutions are viewed as being more responsive to the local people's needs as they would then coincide with a particular decision-making unit such as the VIDCO.

Forestry Commission and local communities relations

There are indications that the level of hostility towards the state Forestry Commission varies within villages. The hostility is associated with the protection of forest resources and products. Previously any use by local villages of none forest timber products was regarded as poaching. However, since the project started local people have been allowed to extract resources and use the forest for grazing. Permission is granted through permits that are issued by the RMCs. Local people expressed dissatisfaction at having control over some but not all of the valuable products from the forest.

Some comparisons were drawn between RMCs and Communal Area Management Program For Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) producer communities. In the CAMPFIRE programme control over wildlife resources has been devolved to all the producer communities. Under the management arrangement, proprietary rights cover all wildlife found in the producer area. Thus local producer communities derive benefit under the program from revenue and other benefits from harvest of all wildlife in their areas, not just small or big game. The local communities around the forests question why under their own arrangement they are only allowed to use some of the less valuable resources for subsistence and

must get permits if they want to sell the products. One local respondent compared the management arrangement where all use especially for valuable wet timber is unheard of and is determined by the forestry authority to the absolute power a husband has over his spouse in this way, "*wet trees are the wives of the forestry Commission, it is not possible for anyone to ask to harvest that tree, it is similar to asking a man to if one can have relations with his wife*". Another, local respondent explained the resentment that locals feel at being limited to subsistence use of the forests when outsiders can come and harvest valuable timber in this statement: '*FC wants to look after people who come from far and neglects people who live here. You would not buy a uniform for another's child when your own has nothing, You would first clothe your child then clothe the other.*' Despite the project, resentment towards the Forestry Commission is undiminished among the general population.

Very few people, especially transporters and local livestock owners, saw any positive impact of having the project. Though no figures are available to verify this claim, both forestry officials and local people observe that incidences of poaching are higher relative to the pre-project situation. For example, one villager who lived on the edge of the forest states:

'Sometimes I do not go to get the permit, I just go into the forest, as you can see I live on the forest boundary. The RMC members live far away and when I do not have time to visit them, I just go into the forest and get what I want. Also some of the RMC members are too full of themselves and they take their time processing the permits as if to make you feel their authority. Once I got caught and they took all the grass.'

Once the revenue is collected, the local community, the RMC and the Forestry Commission hold consultations to decide on which projects should be financed. Local people allege that they only use the revenue under the direction of the Forestry Commission. The Forestry Commission prefers certain types of projects and forces the local people to select these even when they are low priority. Local villagers complain that even when the Forestry Commission

'says the money is yours, but tells people do this and do that in that way and this way, where is our ownership in that...the money generated by the RMC is controlled by the Forestry Commission, the money from the RMC is not our money, that is why people poach, they say the resources belong to the Forestry Commission and they are not being used.'

Respondents find that their choices of project are rejected by the officials who state that

'you have lost focus, what you plan to do has nothing to do with the Forestry Commission, but this rejects people's desires, beekeeping is not popular, we told the authority that we wanted to build a school, but they also said we lost focus. Beekeeping is not sustainable, we want things that will last, no one survives on a gum tree which they want us to plant.'

Relations between the RMCs and RDCs

The creation of RMCs is highly contested by other local organizations like Rural district council which argues that the joint management project should have been implemented by the Village development committee, a local government administrative structure set

up as part of efforts by government to decentralise local government to the communities. VIDCOs or the Rural District Council (RDC) and the traditional leaders have no clear relationship with the RMC.

One official from the Forestry Commission noted that the reason, the RMCs are unpopular with the local government officials and councillors from the cash-strapped RDCs because the former retain all the revenue collected from permits. If the project had been run through the VIDCO, the Forestry Commission officials suggest that the revenue would have been 'hijacked' or diverted from the real beneficiaries as has been the case where wildlife producer communities in some districts have failed to receive any benefits because the RDC keeps most of the revenue. Consequently, the RDC tends to regard the RMC as an extension of the Forestry Commission rather than a genuine committee for the people.

Some FC respondents stated that RMCs were seen as a subcommittee of the VIDCO, but this link was never formalized by the RDC under which the VIDCO falls. Consequently, RMCs continue to exist independently of other organizations. However, because the Forestry Commission facilitated their formulation, the RMCs have tended to be regarded as a village level FC. For instance, the previous members of the dissolved Batanai RMC claim to have been paid Z\$500, received overalls and got a yearly allocation of resources from the forests. These gifts confirm the identity of RMC committee members as quasi employees of the FC. *'FC created us, they should tell us and guide us on what to do.'* Based on the interviews, we gained the impression that the FC was forcing the community to implement projects under the guise of community choice. Thus one researcher commented, *'as long as the community views the FC as the Godfather, they will be bonded (mortgaged) to that organization'* and may never be real partners in the joint management project. Further, the researcher noted that the RMC needs emancipation from the belief that because the FC initiated the RMCs it is entitled to have a say in everything they do, especially as regards how they spend their money. At the village meetings, local people expressed ignorance of the role and functions of the RMC. One statement frequently repeated at these meetings was *'what is the RMC, I don't even know what it is.'* According to the RMC committee respondents, local people pretend ignorance because it suits their purpose to do so. We explored some of the reasons for this ignorance and found that there were genuinely ignorant people in the village but there were also some people who resent the RMC for one reason or another who also pretend to be ignorant of its purpose or existence. The ignorance expressed by the latter group merely disassociates them from the committee. The subcommittees are the bee and the nursery committees. Villagers state that they are not aware that such subcommittees exist or who is on the executive.

No positive remarks were made about the RDC, the councillor or the MP. A local respondent states, *'it is a title only, once elected they do not come back, they do not serve the electorate.'* The councillors are not representing their communities and demand payment to perform their duties. Even NGOs have become wary of inviting councillors, as they demand allowances for their time. One example is the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) meeting where councillors demanded allowances similar to those paid to government officials. Local people believe *'the position of councillor here in Gokwe is a very lucrative one, people are killing each other for the position, because of the financial benefits that can be gained.'* Many councillors live far away from their constituencies. Many informants allege that councillors are imposed by the political parties and therefore are not legitimate. The individuals who hold office in Batanai RMC are not members of the community, but government officials who work in the area. One of the councillors is an employee of the Department of Agriculture Technical and Extension Services (AGRITEX), another is a teacher

and another is a retired police officer. These individuals are not regarded as legitimate members of the village and some reside in other areas. There is little interaction between councillors and their constituencies. As one respondent suggests, *'a councillor is a councillor in his home, he does not represent his constituency, we haven't seen him here this year.'* Though councillors are elected to their positions many are not seen by their electorate or visit their constituencies.

One of the researchers in Gokwe observed that councillors appear to have been 'subsumed by the RMC' because the members undertake various duties to monitor harvests of products from the forests and spearhead development. Many councillors therefore resent the control of funds by RMCs. Councils also want to get their hands on these funds but because there is no definite relationship between the Village Development Committee (VIDCO) and the RMC, they are unable to access the revenue. The people detest the council and characterize it as being exploitative. Local people observe that they *'are the forgotten people, because the council only dreams of milking them through endless levies, making them poorer.'* The relationship between the council and local people was described thus by a village respondent:

'look here, let me ask you a question, say you have two children living in Harare, they both come to visit, one leaves but gives you money and the other asks for bus fare and gives nothing, which son would you prefer, this is the same thing that we see from these organizations, no one likes an extractive organization that comes to take money from people, council is like that.'

In this metaphor, the council is viewed in extractive terms—never giving, always taking, while professing to have the interests of the community at heart. The respondent states categorically that they are anti-council because it comes to take money out of the community.

The RDC were said to have participated in the early stages of the joint forest management project. They saw it as a possible extension of their CAMPFIRE Project hence they suggested the establishment of a Roan Antelope breeding component. The breeding component was not acceptable to most communities, as it would have resulted in a conflict with livestock. Since the project was rejected the participation by the council has declined. The RDC have indicated that they have very little to do with the project. Many council officials are ignorant of the roles and functions of RMCs.

CIFOR-Forestry Commission relations

Most of the data presented here is gathered from local people or stakeholders who have come into contact with CIFOR field staff during their consultation period. For example, the respondents who attended a formal consultative workshop stated that they did still not understand what CIFOR was or what its intentions were with regard to the forest or the people. One government official questioned CIFOR's presence in the area thus:

'We don't understand what they are doing here, is this another ruse by researchers to justify their job? What is this learning, you think if we do not understand what they are doing here the people will?'

This comment on learning was referring to CIFOR's project which is aimed at facilitating social learning among the stakeholders involved in the Mafungautsi Joint Forest Management Project and among villagers involved in selected key activities such as

beekeeping or thatch grass harvesting. In follow-up meetings with other stakeholders, the confusion over the role of CIFOR appears widespread, including among the Forestry Commission respondents who were introducing CIFOR to the area. That the FC should publicly acknowledge its own ignorance of what CIFOR is doing actually works in CIFOR's favour as they would not necessarily be associated or linked with the FC. However the fact that FC introduced CIFOR, to the area suggested closer lines. Respondents suggest that many stakeholders are beginning to see a disassociation between the two stakeholders. One government respondent questioned why the Forestry Commission that was meant to be CIFOR's partner were trying to dissociate themselves from CIFOR or appearing not to understand the purpose of CIFOR's work in the area. Thus the respondent states that

"For the Forestry Commission to get to a point where they are saying they don't know CIFOR and they say they don't know what CIFOR are doing; this situation is similar to when a mother rejects its own child. This is unheard of. I can only say this means there is something wrong with CIFOR and Forestry Commission relationship, there is definitely something there".

Another official, attributed the ignorance by Forestry Commission staff to the fact that projects signed at head office often are imposed on local stuff without much consultation. However, at present being introduced by the FC tends to link CIFOR to the FC, and therefore ascribes certain FC characteristics to CIFOR. Until, stakeholders are clear about CIFOR's activities or until the relationship between CIFOR and FC is clarified this type of confused identity can influence project activities.

Village respondents also confirmed the confusion over CIFOR activities thus: *'we don't know which corner CIFOR are coming through because they don't want to come out in the open.'* The suspicion being directed towards CIFOR is not unique but reflects the age-old habits of people who have been forced over time to be cautious of any externally packaged village research projects. Such comments are important in this project formative phase. CIFOR needs to explain clearly what its role and purpose will be. In the words of a villager; *'they must clarify their position and explain what their role is, at the moment we don't know how participatory they are.'* Further, CIFOR will need to clarify their research ethics as people believe that researchers are extractive, i.e. *'research organizations take their results and go away and never return.'* As CIFOR starts its project, there will be a need for confidence building with the local people and other organizations.

Relations between villages in Batanayi RMC

In general, positions in the committees are monopolised by members from one village (Figure 1.2). People from Mrembwe village hold the key positions. Respondents note that these individuals, i.e. the chairperson and the treasurer often make decisions without consulting the whole committee. Few individuals on the committee are rarely challenged because meetings are infrequent and far between. Closer analysis of the subcommittees also shows that members of the elite family in one village—Mrembwe—dominate most RMC committees (Figure 1.1). Out of the discussions of networks of relations we identified the most influential person in the community as the wife of traditional leader of Mrembwe village (Figure 1.2). Compared to other women in her area, this woman holds many positions. She is the most vocal woman in the study area.

Figure 1.1 Control of key positions on different RMC committees by the traditional leader's family in Mrembwe village

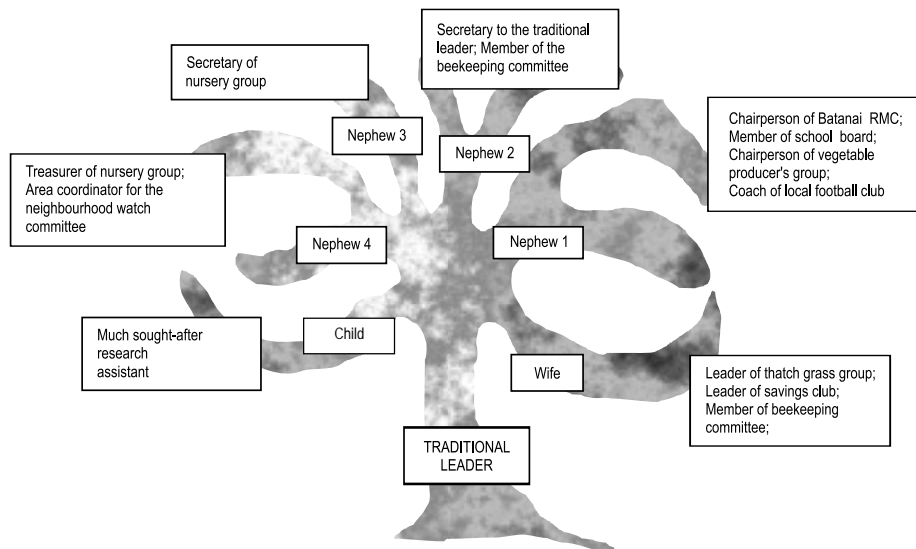
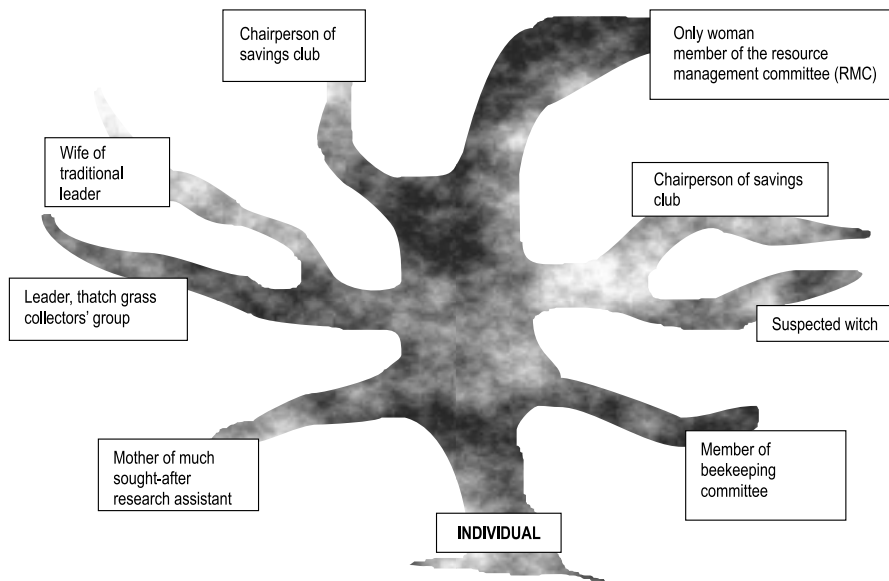


Figure 1.2 Positions held by the most influential person in Mrembwe village



Overall she holds more posts than her husband. She is rumoured to be the real influence on her family members in their various positions. Her children are the much sought-after research assistants of many development and research organizations. She is also suspected to be a witch. Of all the different roles she holds, this is one of the most useful attributes. Being a suspected witch means most of her decisions go unchallenged. The belief in witchcraft is quite strong in this area relative to other parts of Zimbabwe. In the project the use of witchcraft is common. For example, local people refer to a situation in the

RMC when a former treasurer used the revenue to purchase a cow for his own use without authorisation from the RMC. Local people suggest that he was able to make the purchase and use the cow exclusively because other committee members feared being bewitched. In this instance, the woman is also suspected to have great witchcraft powers. However, she does draw on wide ranging sources for her power. We noted that other stakeholders are reluctant to challenge such an individual or stakeholder in any one place knowing or fearing that the individual may exact retribution in another place. Respondents suggest that the monopoly of power by families is an accepted fact.

The use of resources within defined areas controlled by each RMC is problematic. Though areas under RMCs are clearly defined administratively, concerns have been raised about who has rights to benefit. The RMC derives its revenue from payments on permits to harvest products from the forest. For example, out of 40 bundles of thatch grass a person collects, 16 go to the RMC and 7 go to transporters. Though each village is part of an RMC and has a designated area it should use, distant villages far from their designated areas sometimes get their permits from RMCs that are closer to their homes. People from these villages argue that they *'can't walk 20km to get resources from Batanai, when they live close to another RMC.'* These villagers therefore generate revenue for those other RMCs. In Batanai RMC, Mrembwe village uses resources without much competition from Chanetsa and Vizho which are far away. Mrembwe villagers argue that the villages that fail to generate revenue for their RMC should therefore not be included in projects financed by that revenue.

Currently the revenue is used for development projects that benefit all villages under the RMC. Those people generating revenue feel that *'it is unfair that people from distant villages to benefit from the income generated in Batanai, when they harvest resources from another RMC and send their money to those RMCs.'* This problem demonstrates the bureaucratic tendency to use boundaries that bear no relation to the actual resource use patterns of the villages involved. That specification that use of RMC resources should be linked to access to dividends within the same RMC underlines the need to recognize that administrative boundaries are not always appropriate units in community-based management

Relations between the Forestry Commission and other state departments

The Forestry Commission likes 'playing alone' they do not do enough to involve other stakeholders. However, more interviews with researchers and other FC officials suggest that the level of FC involvement is gauged on the performance of the project coordinator who has shown little interest in the project. One government informant stated, *'Since she took over nothing has happened, she just does not seem to be interested. Forestry Commission participation in the project is dead.'* 'She' refers to the project coordinator. There are indications that collaboration is being hampered by what another government respondent described as *'personalities in the project are problematic, especially working with that woman; the relationship is simply, not working out!'* Because other stakeholders feel so strongly about the participation of an individual, this demonstrates how the lines between project and the individual can become blurred. Respondents outside the village insist that the problem is *'that woman'* and claim that *'the project coordinator has always shown suspicion towards other stakeholders, fearing that they are up to picking on her alleged disinterest in doing work on the ground.'* (Interview with a stakeholder at a workshop). Further evidence of lack of interest in the project was captured in a statement a participant at the stakeholder workshop thus: *'If the project coordinator continues to run away from her roles, it is feared that she will be overtaken by events, possibly fail to cope with demands from the project and also fail to learn from the process.'* Cooperation among organizations involved in the forest is far from perfect. There are varying degrees of participation by members of different organizations.

1.4 Dynamics of the relations among stakeholders at Mafungautsi Joint Forest Management Project

Methods and process notes

To assess the dynamics in the relations among stakeholders over time, we used general group discussions among stakeholders and key interviews. With the early groups we were able to determine reasonable time periods that could be used consistently throughout the assessments as reference points. First we constructed a very general time line and then, on the basis of key interviews, we focused on changes and relations observed in Mafungautsi.

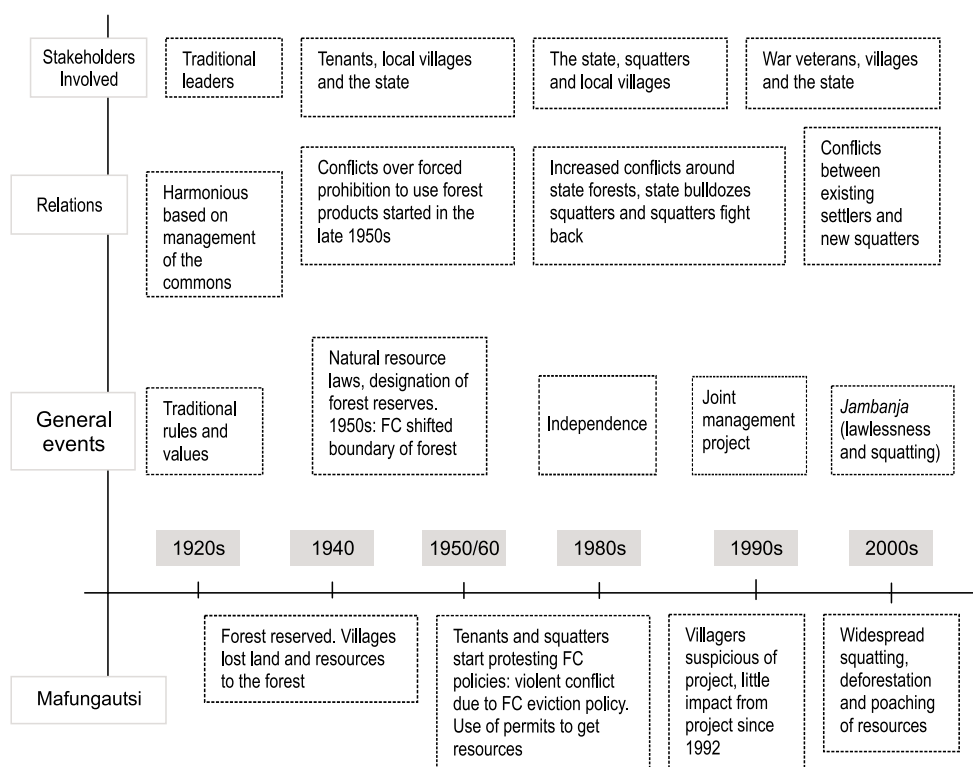
While the relations between the FC and the local communities have changed little over time, the relations between local people and political stakeholders have undergone a dramatic shift since the presidential elections in early 2002 to the present. Data on these relations is presented here.

General developments in forestry management over time

A general time line was constructed on the basis of information reviewed or gathered through key and focused group interviews (Figure 1.3).

The historical analysis must give sufficient detail to indicate significant events; factors driving them and their outcomes. This type of analysis could also give some idea of the dynamism or shifts in relationships.

Figure 1.3 Time line summarizing changes in forest relations over time



Forestry Commission and the communities

There are indications that the level of hostility varies across RMCs and within villages. For example, at Ndarire and Gababe RMC meetings the researchers were forced to cover the FC insignia on the car to dissociate them from the organization. Across Batanai RMC, attitudes towards the organization are very variable; some villages are more violently opposed to the FC than others. In most villages, the Forestry Protection Unit (FPU) is very unpopular. Some of these FPU are not from this area. They are responsible for enforcing rules and by laws for using the resources. The FPU is thought to have unorthodox ways of prosecution. FPU members are accused of soliciting for sex so they can ignore transgressions. They charge and apprehend the father for the crimes of their wives or children rather than the perpetrator of the crime. Local people condemn the use of guns by the Forestry Commission because the FPU shoot all dogs found in the forest. When the people are angry at the FPUs, they sometimes set the forest on fire causing further damage for the forest. Some respondents claim that in general poaching in the forest has increased rather than declined in the forest. One user explained that sometimes poaching is inevitable because the procedures for getting permits are so ineffectual and there is too much bureaucracy involved in getting the permit. Further, the fact that resources are not necessarily found in your RMC means that users from one can go to another RMC and poach there. Local villagers are still suspicious of the FC's intentions. Their actions and programs still put the forest rather than people first. Thus one local respondent observed, 'a leopard does not change its spots' suggesting that the FC would never change and that even if it did, local stakeholders would find it difficult to believe that it desires genuine collaboration.

Politicians

Local respondents described politicians, the war veterans and the youth brigade as very powerful. They were described as the new power elites. One respondent stated that *'This is their time. Now they are very powerful and their activities and decisions are unquestioned. We have to consult them over everything we do; the general atmosphere of fear and hate has been created to divide us.'* Some respondents described this group of stakeholders as 'untouchables, the new elites' while others reflected on the period immediately after independence in 1980 when this same group had held what was regarded as 'absolute power'. Thus in many respects many respondents predicted that this phase was part of a cycle that will wane like others before it.

1.5 Application of results for the CIFOR social learning project

One of the key areas of intervention for the social learning project is to facilitate effective collaborative relationships among stakeholders. To achieve this objective, the ACM research team need to have the following

- Some background on the policy and legal framework for joint forestry management in Zimbabwe;
- An appreciation of the range of stakeholders involved in the joint forest management project;
- A clear understanding of how power is configured in the project;
- A sense of how dynamic relations between and among stakeholders are in the joint forestry management project.

On the basis of the data collected in this phase of the work we can state that a clear framework exists for the successful implementation of joint forest resource management projects in Zimbabwe. However, in practice such projects rarely reflect the principles

upon which they are based and have been used to label situations where the state wants to pretend to collaborate to avert conflicts. We have CIDA giving money for “joint management” which exists only on paper and are unaware of the real issues in the project because they are never covered in the review documents; we have the Forestry Commission speaking about participation and being collaborative yet remaining essentially top down in their activities. One researcher working in the area described the relations thus:

‘on a good day the Forestry Commission is your partner, and wants to work with you and respect your views; and on a bad day they’re your enemy because they find you threatening to their established behaviour; and on another day they are your competitor; and on an even worse day they prosecute you for trying to earn a living or better still for trying to subsist.’ (ACM Harare Seminar 09/2001).

Though on paper, the project involves the state and the local communities, and the Forestry Commission has always tried to inform other stakeholders, their contact is clearly viewed as inadequate. Since the relations between the FC and other stakeholders are not formalized within the project documents, FC involves them when it suits the former. There is much confusion about the roles and identities of certain stakeholders. New stakeholders like CIFOR are still finding their feet, but at the same time are facing an identity crisis as they are alternatively confused with and rejected by the Forestry Commission. Stakeholders need to clearly identify and describe their purpose to others, particularly to local communities.

Relations between and among stakeholders are varied. In general all relations are defined in relation to the Forestry Commission. For the most part, past resentments and mistrust among stakeholders have persisted through time and predetermine present attempts to work together. After 10 years, there has been very little change in the FC’s attitudes and behaviour towards its partnerships with other stakeholders. However, current shifts in power to politicians suggest that not all events are predictable and the effects of these on existing relations are not easy to judge.

Data from Mafungautsi suggests that multiple stakeholder relations are complicated first by relationships between stakeholders and then by relationships within particular categories of stakeholders. The RMC is meant to be an intersection of interests between the state and local communities yet it is clearly not that. At the resource level, the Forestry Commission continues to wield power over the use of the state forest though they do so under the guise of a joint management project. At the level of the RMC we see how familial control of structures of governance permeates every avenue of development activity within the project. Consequently an analysis of the joint management project shows that in an RMC comprising three villages; one village has more power than other villages; and within that village one family controls activities in the RMC and its subcommittees. Going beyond that RMC; one finds a very powerful wife of a traditional leader who local people say is the real power behind the project and other related events and activities around the forest. Thus one can conclude that what was meant to be a community-level intervention has in reality been a family level intervention. The challenge for CIFOR is to find ways of facilitating the establishment of institutional arrangements that are truly democratic and representative of all categories of stakeholders involved and establishing effective links for genuine collaboration between and among stakeholders involved in the project.

Annex 2.

Simudzirayi Microcredit Scheme, Romwe, Chivi District

The second project is a multi-institutional participatory action research (PAR) for a United Kingdom Department of International Development (DFID) supported project on common property resources management at catchment level in Romwe, Chivi District, southeast Zimbabwe. The project is using PAR to develop rural development strategies to improve livelihoods in the catchment. Simudzirayi Microcredit Scheme is a component of this project. The Institute of Environmental Studies at the University of Zimbabwe coordinates the project. Other partners in the project include NGOs, government and other university departments. The data collected was as an input to the institutional dimension of the project and was aimed to provide insights on wider participation in democratically constituted organizations and to resolve the conflicts over the micro-credit scheme. Data was collected on the Simudzirayi Microcredit Scheme. The focus of activities to developing tools to understand the following:

- Understand why the micro-credit scheme was characterised by 'so much' conflict and often described as a 'hot potato'.
- To understand how power is configured between different stakeholders in the committee; the village and in the project.

Methods and process notes

Work to develop the framework in Romwe focused on applying some of the methods suggested in Step 3, particularly the use of meetings to observe dynamics and relations among stakeholders. Data collection was based on participant observations in three successive meetings held to decide on defaulters. We focused our attention on understanding relations between defaulters and other members of the scheme. As a follow-up to the participant observations we used focused group meetings and key interviews to understand relations outside the committee, i.e. relations within the larger group and relations within the project.

2.1 Relations among stakeholders in the microcredit scheme in Romwe

Generally people describe the microcredit scheme as a "hot potato". Some people seem afraid to openly discuss the scheme or to have their views documented. Some respondents would just sigh and say '*pane basa*' (there is much politics) or '*hatipindi mazviri*' (we don't want to be involved'), indicating an unwillingness to discuss or be part of the ongoing machinations among those involved in the day to day running of the micro-credit scheme. To understand the dynamics in the scheme one must have some background information on how it was started.

The scheme was set up following a donation by a well-wisher after a visit to the project. After an evaluation, the scheme was formally included as an important component of the project. The scheme was set up as a revolving fund to alleviate shortages of capital to

finance various inputs and requirements for those households without remittances. Over the years, despite the clear guidelines and procedures for getting loans and repaying the loans, fewer households are finding it possible to pay back the loans. Further, evaluations of the loan have revealed some discrepancies in the way the loans are being disbursed especially to elites. To succeed, the scheme must keep the defaulters at a minimum otherwise there is no cash to give out the following year. All the respondents value the fund and understand how the fund can be sustained, yet there are many defaulters. The challenge addressed in this data gathering exercise is to understand why the community is not acting against the defaulters as they are clearly undermining the viability of the fund.

When it was set up, the management of the fund was left in the hands of the local people, specifically the members of one powerful family - the Ngonyama family. Later in its second year, the management was supposed to shift to the newly elected committee that retained some of the members of this powerful family. But this handover of responsibility never actually took place as the old committee withheld its records and documents. The new committee is frequently challenged by members of the powerful Ngonyama family as illegitimate and therefore its resolutions are deliberately flouted. Consequently, to gain some power, this committee is closely aligned with the traditional leaders and the outside organizations like the Institute of Environmental Studies at the University of Zimbabwe which is coordinating the project.

Three meetings were observed for this analysis. For each meeting presented, we highlight the number of people attending, the actual involvement (i.e. who talks and who says what). The first meeting was held on 16 February 2001 by the microcredit scheme with the Institute of Environmental Studies (IES) of the University of Zimbabwe, which coordinates the project (Table 2.1). On the basis of the village meetings we observe how the committee tries to address the problems in the scheme. In particular, highlight the dynamics within the committee. In addition we explore how the committee relates to the Ngonyama family; the other local people, and to IES which coordinates the project.

It is clear that to understand the maze of relations among and between stakeholders one needs to have some knowledge of the stakeholders' background and the context within which they behave in different ways. The contributions by different individuals are clearly consistent with the background information that is provided. For example, in the meetings which were observed, the war veteran insists that the committee give him the power and authority to go and collect outstanding loans. No doubt he would achieve this as people fear him. However, it is important to note that when the committee plans the next meeting, they are strategic about who will speak and the order that they will speak. As people who speak in public or in specific situations can be designated it means sometimes the exchanges we witness in public arenas are choreographed or stage-managed and may often not be a true reflection of the dynamics over a particular issue. The more sensitive the issue the more strategic stakeholders can be in deciding who speaks and what is said. For exchanges that are less public (muttered, whispers, expletives, etc.), it is important that one works with other people located strategically among the stakeholders. These people can help in the analysis of the proceedings and give perspective on assessments.

Dynamics inside the committee

The new and current committee is constituted as presented in Table 2.2. However, its existence is contested by some of the old committee members who argue that there was no 'proper "hand over and take over" of responsibility from the old committee to the new committee. Further, the members of the of committee challenge the manner in which the new committee has been constituted, suggesting that the committee members were handpicked by IES rather

than that they were elected by the community. This allegation is made despite the fact that some of the committee members were re-elected from the old committee.

Table 2.1 Three meetings to discuss strategies to collect money from defaulters

	Purpose of meeting	Outcome
Meeting with IES	To review fund performance and finalise accounting before receiving new money for the fund	Committee used concern by IES as leverage to approach the traditional leaders and the community to resolve the issue of defaulters.
Meeting between the committee and traditional leaders	Coopting traditional leaders into a plan to address the community and make strong resolutions about defaulters	The one traditional leader with no kinship ties to the defaulters (especially from one powerful family) is asked to lead the community discussion, and minutes which are traditionally presented by the secretary, a woman, are presented by a feared man (a war veteran). Again at this meeting the committee and the leaders dissociate themselves from the issue and project the purpose of the meeting as a response to IES demands (or commands).
Meeting with the community (over 100 members)	To present the status of the fund and ask the community to make resolutions about defaulters	In this meeting, 7 people speak, mostly from one family, including the traditional leader designated to lead the discussion. In particular one woman seems to dominate the discussion and silences most people. No resolution is made to the problem; instead, the legitimacy of the current committee is questioned.

As shown in Table 2.2, the deputy chairperson (Chondoita) is the biggest defaulter in the scheme and even used an alias to get more money for himself. The deputy secretary is feared as a war veteran who has been participating in unlawful occupations and violence on private property in the past year. A retired headmaster holds various key positions in the community. He is sometimes ignored because local people regard him as an outsider because he is an immigrant. The chairperson of the committee is well respected in the community and was an officer in the army. There is one woman on the committee who is the secretary. She rarely speaks and is reluctant to speak in formal gatherings. In public the deputy secretary reads the minutes and performs her role. She is married to one of the four brothers in the Ngonyama family - Musodza, but does not get on well with her sister in law - Mavende, who is a powerful woman in the village. She tends to be sidelined in family discussions and often acts as if she is outside that Ngonyama family's influence and control. Her husband on the other hand is very much part of the Ngonyama family and features prominently in the political dynamics in the project.

We also observe at one of the committee meetings how members plan strategically on how they should address the issue of defaulters and who should say what and support

which statements. For example, the committee agrees that the deputy secretary - a war veteran, rather than the secretary - a woman, reads the minutes. Allocation of the task of reading minutes is given to a war veteran who they believe can read the minutes and is feared. The committee also agrees that the traditional leader Ndingadiwo should facilitate the meeting as he is the least scared of challenging the Ngonyama family of the Ngonyamas and since he is well respected by everyone. The other traditional leader, Chigora who is from the Ngonyama family agrees to speak against the defaulters and represent the voice of the majority. This strategising of plans for the meeting where the committee expects to be challenged by the Ngonyama family represents an attempt at counter-intimidation.

Table 2.2 Composition of the Simudzirayi Microcredit Scheme committee

Designation	Sex	Village	Education	Age	Other remarks
Chairperson	Male	Muroti	High school	30-40	Former bank employee. Well-to-do family, a close relation to the outgoing treasurer.
Deputy Chairperson	Male	Chinyoka	High school	30-35	Employed as field manager on the project in the first phase. Key person in the recruitment of personnel on the project. Related to influential people in the community and grandson to two of the traditional leaders in the project. His mother is a very powerful woman in the community, a suspected witch, who is also suspected of having extramarital relations with the third traditional leader in the project. Owes the loan scheme Z\$4000, the largest amount to any one individual since the scheme started.
Secretary	Female	Chinyoka	High school	35-40	Wife of the ex councillor, very active in development work.
Deputy Secretary	Male	Muroti	High school	30-40	Ex army officer. Related to one of the traditional leaders.
Treasurer	Male	Chinyoka	Teaching certificate, a retired headmaster	Over 60	A migrant, very well respected in the community.

The committee and the Ngonyama family

Many of the committee members fear the members of the Ngonyama family and are reluctant to challenge them at any level. The family has benefited the most from the scheme. Records show that some members of the Ngonyama family used aliases and other tactics to get as much out of the scheme as possible, with the result that some of the deserving households have failed to receive loans. Most of the family members are among the biggest defaulters. One key member of the family Manungo passed away before he had repaid the loan. His debt was cancelled. Another member, Chondoita owes the largest amount from the scheme. Other members of the family owe various amounts to the scheme, making the Ngonyama family the biggest debtor of the scheme.

No one in the committee is willing or ready to tackle the members of the family. A number of reasons are given for this reluctance. One of the reasons is that the family is 'too powerful' because they are very well connected. They are close kin to two of the traditional leaders (Muroti and Chinyoka) whose sister - Rondota bore the 5 children who are very influential in the catchment. One of the four brothers in this family is Chigora who has usurped the position of one of the traditional leaders, his uncle Muroti. However, Chigora does not attend meetings where traditional leader Muroti is expected to attend outside the catchment. Within the project, Chigora acts as the traditional leader and gets the relevant recognition for it. However, Chigora disapproves of the members of his family who have looted the fund, and gives the appearance of supporting the committee in their efforts to recover the loans. The eldest brother in the family is Manungo, a late councillor in the district who passed away recently. Through his political connections, the family was also able to claim political clout in the area. Another reason, suggested by local respondents for the influence of the family is related to the fear of witchcraft from the one sister to these four brothers. Mavende is very powerful. She is also the mother of Chondoita, the biggest defaulter in the scheme. She is generally regarded as a very powerful woman. She is involved in the decision making for most activities in the project and has assumed some roles in some committees without being elected to them. Further, she is rumoured to have had a relationship with traditional leader Ndingadiwo, the third leader in the project. All these individuals combined create a very powerful family indeed. Chondoita was the former field manager for the project before IES took over the project. Though he no longer is on the project payroll, he is still very influential in how the project is conceived by local people in the project.

In one of the village meetings we were able to see the kind of influence the family wields over the committee and in the community. In a meeting attended by more than 100 households only a handful of people spoke. And of those that speak, three individuals dominate the discussion. This is Chigora (the traditional leader); his sister Mavende (and also mother of Chondoita) and Chondoita dominate the exchanges. After the meeting we listened to numerous comments about the meeting as people moved away from the venue of the meeting (Box 2.1).

These comments explain local attitudes towards the Ngonyama family. Though meetings such as the one described here are useful as a data source, they must be used in conjunction with other methods to explore some of the observed dynamics.

Using a combination of key interviews and group discussions we decided to examine in more detail the source of the influence of the Ngonyama family. We found people very willing to discuss their views once they were assured of confidentiality or under informal circumstances in the course of making everyday conversation. Many people in the project believe that Mavende is very powerful because she controls all the key men in the project.

Box 2.1 Follow-up interviews after the meeting

Woman villager 1:

No, don't listen to the Chondoita, it's his habit to disrupt meetings, he wants to ruin things for us but we all know he has bought a stand in another area and wants to leave.

Woman villager 2:

I wanted to speak, I was going to tell them the truth, they know me, I am not afraid, I raised my hand many times and no one gave me a chance to speak.

Secretary of microcredit scheme:

There were some tense moments. You don't dare to speak when they are speaking (*'they' refers to Mavende mother of the deputy chairperson*). Today was nothing, often they are worse at other meetings (*referring to the latter's intimidating antics*).

Woman villager 3:

I wanted the list of the defaulters to be read, but I was silenced. Someone stopped me from asking that this be done. I wanted to insist that they pay the money. When I looked at you people from IES, I felt pity because I saw you were pitiful and angry, especially when you were talking. You should not get angry, it is just politics. That Ngonyama family do not want to pay their dues.

Woman villager 4:

These meetings are difficult. The rich people don't want to pay. I borrowed Z\$1000. I did not use it all; I was scared that I would not be able to pay it back. I don't owe anything, but this year, I want to borrow something. But there is nothing to borrow.

She is the sister of one traditional leader; a niece of the other and is suspected of having had a relationship with the third leader. One example given to try and emphasise the extent of her power was recounted by a local respondent here:

'This is her habit, she never arrives on time. Sometimes people are brave and they make decisions, but she arrives before people disperse and she takes over as if there was no discussion before she arrived. She completely ignores everything they decided on and makes new decisions. People grumble but no one openly confronts her, so often her decisions stand. Once she even made people uproot the poles for a fence and put them in a different place. She is not even the real chairperson. We have tried twice now to remove her but failed, she just does not recognise the new people.'
(Romwe Field Notes 10/2001)

However, some respondents noted that sometimes, these powerful individuals don't need to even be present for their decisions to be adopted; other stakeholders will defer decisions until former are around or may even try to anticipate what the influential people would want or support. The process and data collected are presented in Box 2.2.

However, the process of relationship mapping is time consuming and at times sensitive, particularly where there are leadership disputes or threats of witchcraft. In most cases village level organizations tend to be controlled and constituted by a small group of individuals. These few individuals also monopolize key positions in other organizations. It is also important that one understands how stakeholders develop practices and techniques of legitimating, social control, confrontation and avoidance. In this case, other stakeholders in Romwe describe how the Marende raises her voice and gives people piercing looks, walks about threateningly or even gets involved in fist fights.

Box 2.2 Mapping relationships in overall project Romwe, Zimbabwe

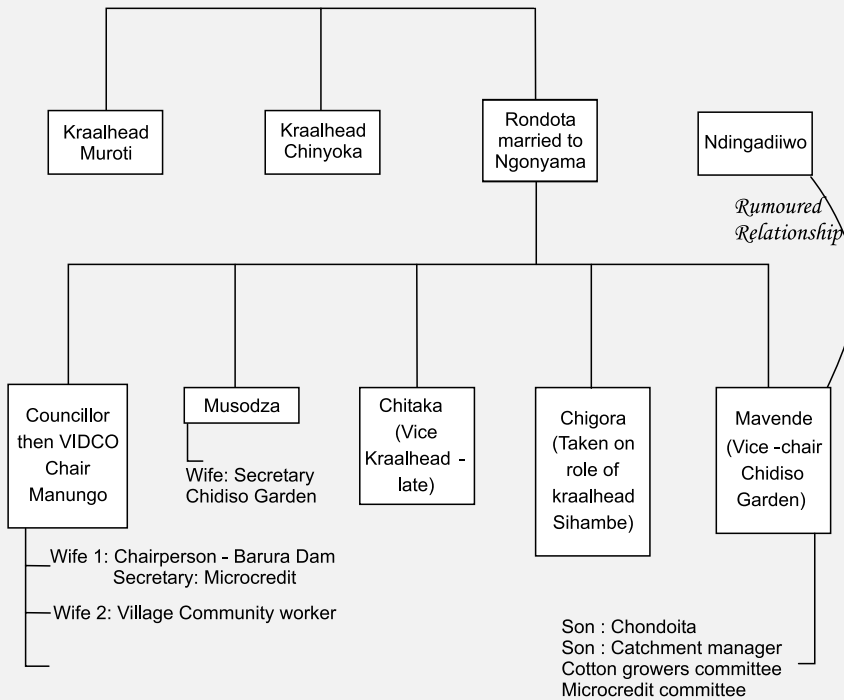
Data for mapping relationships was gathered by different researchers at different times. In the first instance, data was compiled in a PRA report prepared for the DFID project. In this earlier work, stakeholders involved in natural resources management are compiled on a list, which also rates the importance of that stakeholder to natural resources management (see Nemarundwe *et al.* 1999). Additional fieldwork using key interviews and focused group discussions showed discrepancies between reality and the data presented in the reports that were being prepared. There was nothing in the reports about the stakeholders who were powerful and made decisions in the microcatchment. These stakeholders did not even appear in the PRA report or in the Venn diagram presented in Campbell and Sayer (in press). In two cases identified, the traditional leader Muroti is listed but is known to have no interest in or control over events in the village. Chigora assumed power and acts in place of the legitimate traditional leader and does so unchallenged. Second, Mavende is thought to be very powerful in one sub project yet she does not hold any formal position on the project. She is however, clearly the defacto leader on that project. Traditional leader - Ndingadiiwo who holds the leadership position on the sub project is now a figurehead. He rarely participates or attends meetings or matters related to the component.

In the second part of the research we started our investigation with the simple question 'who are these people; what are they in the villages; and why have they become so powerful?' An analysis of meetings revealed that indeed the people who dominate public debates and make decisions publicly were not the same as those people designated to do so or who appear in the project reports. The analysis of the meetings revealed that the key players who dominated discussion monopolised resources and were entry points for outsiders in the community were not the traditionally accepted entry points, but just families with extensive networks in the village. Using the data from the first PRA, key interviews were undertaken with various members of the community. This exercise revealed a somewhat different and more detailed picture of relationships. In particular, the picture that emerged from the follow-on interviews showed clearly that all the powerful individuals in the project were from the Ngonyamas family. However, even this picture seemed unsatisfactory, as we still did not understand why one particular family was able to assume leadership positions in an area controlled by three traditional leaders. Though we established at this point that there were kinship ties between the Ngonyama family and two of the traditional leaders - Muroti and Chingoka there was no such relationship between the Ngonyama family and the third traditional leader - Ndingadiiwo. Also puzzling to the researchers was why people of one village were allowing the blatant takeover of the traditional leadership position role by one member of the Ngonyama family when the incumbent was alive. We wondered why Mavende had managed to attain such a powerful position to replace a very powerful traditional leader - Ndingadiiwo (Figure 2.1).

Using these questions as a starting point we went to do some more key interviews. There were suggestions that the traditional leader Ndingadiiwo had an extramarital relationship with Mavende. It was also hinted that this Mavende was a witch. This accusation is difficult to verify. When people believe in witchcraft then the witches are feared. In addition the woman's son was the first catchment manager for the project and a prime mover in its implementation. Some people in the village accuse the family of behaving as if they brought the project and therefore expecting others in the village to acknowledge this fact.

Continued to the next page

Figure 2.1 Relationship tree for key movers in Romwe catchment.



Continued from page 27

At the end of this part of the investigation we had the following questions: why was no one contesting the control by the Ngonyama family? In this phase of the investigation we found that there is indeed one other family the Muchationa that contests the power of the Ngonyamas. The reason why we never come across this family in our previous analysis was because they do not actively participate in public meetings. The interesting aspect is that on the few occasions when this family has attended meetings there was a completely different dynamic in the project compared to when they are not there. The Ngonyama family appear to cower in the presence of this one family. When the members of the Ngonyama family try to speak, the Muchationa family silences them. There are two explanations for this strange relationship. The first is connected to the history of settlement by the two families. We listened to the different narratives by these families and what we find are contradictory accounts of how the current leadership of the village came to be constituted. In the story by the Ngonyama family, their father was a foreman at a commercial farm where the present population came from. However, the story goes that because the father was Ndebele, the settler government argued that it would be impossible for a Ndebele to become a traditional leader in a Shona area. So they asked him to identify another who could lead the group. He selected his brothers-in-law who were given the role by virtue of having been recorded as Shona though they were also Ndebele. However, the father behaved as a defacto leader while he was alive. When he passed away, the real incumbents often worked and ruled with their nephews to maintain good relations. It is one of these nephews who seems to have effectively taken over from one of the uncles.

But the second story told by the Muchationa family is that the Ngonyama family was never offered the leadership; they manipulated the settlers to give the leadership role to the in-

laws when they were aware that the Muchationa family was the rightful incumbents. They state that the Ngonyama family voluntarily offered the leadership position to the in-laws, as in the Shona culture one can not rule over their in-laws. The Ngonyama family has no legitimate claim to power as long as the in-laws reside in the area. The counternarrative goes further to suggest that the story posed by the Ngonyama family rightly ignores the kinship hierarchy and emphasizes ethnicity to justify their usurpation of power from their kin. Further, to worsen already soured relationships one member of the Ngonyama family stole a cow from the Muchationa family and the dispute has never been resolved as the owner of the cow passed away. However, other relatives of the deceased have threatened the Ngonyama family with (Ngozi) vengeful spirits. Since the threat was made about seven people from the Ngonyama family have died, giving credibility to the threats of Ngozi. The Ngonyama family fear the 'suspected power' of witchcraft from the other family even though the Marende is also thought to be a witch. However, we have planned to do more interviews to understand how relations between these two families impact on relations within the village and in the project.

Relations with IES

For most part IES has strived to maintain a neutral role in the local politics of the micro-credit scheme. However, local respondents suggest that IES has not been so neutral, and they have tried to manipulate the dynamics within the committee and the relations between the committee and the Ngonyama family. Thus, in most of the meetings observed for this analysis, the role of IES is highlighted and questioned. In general, events over the micro-credit scheme seem to have pitted IES against the, the Ngonyama family. However the relationship between IES and this family is rather complex and has evolved in relation to the conflict surrounding the removal of the project manager - Chondoita from his position for alleged misconduct and failure to perform his duties. The Ngonyama family rallied behind Chondoita and from that time on, most issues and confrontation over other aspects of the project or the micro-credit scheme have become IES versus the Ngonyama family. The micro credit scheme has exacerbated the conflicts between IES and the Ngonyama family with their insistence that demands for repayments are made by IES and not by the committee. Thus in one meeting, the committee members kept referring to IES as the main push for the defaulters to pay. They also suggested that IES decision to continue supporting the scheme with additional funds was depended on the community taking action about the defaulters. Constant reference to IES in the dialogue reinforced IES's role as the key driver and power behind the committee. However, given the past history between the Ngonyama family and IES, this new conflict over defaulters resulted in the Ngonyama family suggesting that IES was persecuting them and other poor defaulters who could not pay. The family gained some support from other defaulters and using this line of argument managed to divert attention from the issue of repayment of loans, to the legitimacy of the new "IES driven committee".

2.2 Micropolitics in the microcredit scheme in Romwe and the implications for democracy

Power relations in the microcredit scheme in Romwe reveal the same pattern as that which has been described for Mafungautsi. Based on the meetings we see a dominance of a few individuals and when we investigate further we see that the same individuals are found in all spheres of the project and development in general. Data based on these

observations challenge the notion that wider participation is feasible in democratised institutions and that they are better than traditional organizations. We note that in Romwe, the microcredit scheme—as in the other organizations—is controlled by members of one family who have plundered the fund with impunity. At the time of this research, the community was involved in a process to try and recover money from the defaulters. The elected committee feels powerless to recover the money and to publicly address the community over what to do with the defaulters. Instead, the committee invites the traditional leaders to assist in the process and shamelessly exploits IES to present their case. In particular the committee requests that one of the powerful traditional leaders with no kinship relations to the powerful family leads the discussion. His involvement and that of a powerful political figure (the war veteran) is meant to combine different power bases to challenge entrenched views that the Ngonyama family is untouchable. At the community meeting, which was well attended by all villages included in the project, few people speak, and the meeting becomes an exchange between family members who appear to speak for various interests in the community. The disjunctions within the Ngonyama family reappear at project level as members like Chigora align themselves against the family. Unfortunately, even with family member's support, the committee or the involvement of IES is unable to shake the influence of the Ngonyama family. However, we did find that there is one family - the Muchationa family which appears to hold some power over the Ngonyama family. Perhaps one of the strategies to reduce the stranglehold of the family on the community would be to elect more members of the Muchationa family into project committees. Another is to make sure members of the Muchationa family attend more meetings and therefore silence the dominance of the Ngonyama family to allow more voices to be heard. The involvement of IES in the micro-credit scheme and their own relations with the Ngonyama family situates them right in the middle of the politics and therefore they are rendered ineffectual in what could have been a mediation role. Strategising before the village meeting shows that the combined voices of some key individuals within the community can be used to challenge the domineering elites. Consequently, to effectively deal with the defaulters, the committee needs to be strengthened by the formal cooptation of the traditional leaders in the affairs of the scheme.

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ISBN 979-8764-99-4

