



Wildlife Management and Village Land Tenure in Northern Tanzania

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March 2005

TNRF Occasional Paper No. 6



**Sand County Foundation Community Based Conservation Network,
Arusha, Tanzania.**



Paper prepared for the Land Symposium held in Dar es Salaam, March 1 & 2, 2005

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Introduction

Northern Tanzania's landscape is characterized by extensive semi-arid rangelands where rural communities, mostly pastoralists or agro-pastoralists, use large tracts of lands and widely distributed resources in a climatically unpredictable environment. Securing access to the land base which such livelihoods depend on in these savannah rangelands is critical for these people, and has been the central socioeconomic and political issue in northern Tanzania during much of the past twenty years.

Northern Tanzania's communities share their environment with some of the most substantial remaining populations of wild animals remaining in the world. This wildlife is the subject of long-standing conservation efforts and is the basis of a tourism industry valued at around 10% of Tanzania's national GDP (World Bank/MIGA 2002). The interaction between wildlife management on the one hand, and rural land tenure, on the other, is a complex one. On the one hand, much of the wildlife in northern Tanzania remains widely dispersed across the region's rangelands because of the traditional co-existence of pastoralist land use practices with wildlife (Collet, 1987; Homewood and Rodgers, 1991; Boone and Coughenour, 2001). But at the same time, the establishment of state protected areas for wildlife and tourism has been a major cause of local land loss and alienation in northern Tanzania during the past fifty years (Parkipuny, 1991; Neumann, 1998; Igoe and Brockington, 1999).

Today the tensions between wildlife management and village land tenure continue, albeit with new nuances, legal issues, and contesting parties over access to lands and resources. The focus of local land tenure contests has shifted from the core state protected areas- the National Parks and Game Reserves- which in most cases were removed from local control decades ago, to the village lands themselves. The issue is no longer the black-and-white one of evicting local people and establishing exclusive parks, but centers around numerous local contests over degrees of control of access and rights to land and wildlife.

This paper explores and analyzes these contemporary contests over land tenure in northern Tanzania's village lands as they relate to wildlife management and land policy and legislation. It details the nature of the contests and conflicts, including their legal aspects, and further seeks to diagnose the underlying political economic reasons behind these endemic conflicts. It concludes by relating these underlying issues to the broader macroeconomic environment and efforts to improve the security of local land tenure in the region for both livelihood and environmental concerns.

Background: Rural Land Tenure and Wildlife Management in Northern Tanzania

Interactions between wildlife management and local land rights in northern Tanzania can be traced back to the colonial period. Initial wildlife laws and regulations passed by the German colonial regime in the 1890's and early 1900's focused primarily on restricting the use of wildlife (killing animals), and where reserves were set up with conservation purposes in mind the rights of local people to live in and use them were retained. It was

not until the 1930's under the British protectorate that wildlife management strategies in Tanganyika began to emphasize setting aside areas solely for wildlife and where local people's land rights would have to be extinguished in the interest of conservation (Neumann, 1998). By the 1950's this push to set aside *exclusive* protected areas free of human habitation had grown and debate centered on the management of the Serengeti National Park. In 1959 the debate was concluded with the gazettelement of Serengeti National Park and removal of the resident communities therein, which provided the precedent for what National Parks in Tanzania would be henceforth: conservation areas without people living in them (Neumann, 1998).

In the years after independence wildlife conservation would continue to receive strong backing by the government and the approach would become more and more exclusive and restrictive in terms of local people's land and resource rights. The number of National Parks and Game Reserves rose from 10 to 32 from 1964 to 1994 (Swai, 1996, Wildlife Sector Review Task Force, 1995). Numerous additional evictions of people from lands set aside as parks and reserves followed, ranging from Tarangire in 1970 to Mkomazi in 1988 to Ikorongo and Grumeti Game Reserves in 1994. The impacts of wildlife conservation on local land tenure, particularly in wildlife-rich northern Tanzania's pastoralist areas, were obvious- people simply lost their lands and important resources such as grazing areas and water sources (Igoe and Brockington, 1999).

While pastoralist communities lost access to numerous areas in the colonial and post-independence periods, other more contemporary forces came to impact the land tenure security of rural communities in northern Tanzania as well. The economic liberalization and structural adjustment reforms that began in the mid-1980's led to widespread 'land-grabbing' in many of the agro-pastoralist rangelands in the northern part of the country (Shivji, 1998). This was driven by the increase in private investments coming into the country at this time and the attendant focus on allocating land for such investments, set against the background of generally weak customary land tenure going back to the early colonial era (URT, 1994, Shivji, 1998). An additional factor was increased demand for land resulting from overpopulation and economic pressures in the highland areas, leading to migration from highlands (e.g. Mount Meru) to semi-arid areas (e.g. Simanjiro District). The migration of farmers to pastoralist areas, coupled with population increases and land pressures among pastoralist communities, led to increasing conflicts between communal and individual tenure systems at both regional and local scales. Transfer of land from local community uses to outsiders- both large scale private investors and small scale immigrant farmers- was facilitated by village government leaders operating with low degrees of accountability and with little apparent understanding of the implications of selling communal lands (Igoe and Brockington, 1999).

As a result of these factors, by the land tenure reform period of the mid-1990's, the situation in terms of local land tenure security in northern Tanzania can broadly be summarized as follows:

Community lands had been greatly reduced during the previous century due to alienation of rangelands for wildlife protected areas, and expansion of parks and

boundary disputes between villagers and protected area managers perpetuated this process of alienation and attrition;

Village lands were under pressure from alienation for outside investors resulting from both state allocations and local sales often carried out in a corrupt or non-transparent manner.

The conflicts between local land tenure security and wildlife management received some attention in the Land Commission report of 1992 (URT, 1994). Problems with land tenure security in northern Tanzania influenced components of the National Land Policy (1995, 1997) and the Land Act and Village Land Act. General objectives of the policy and the law include better securing customary rights and providing greater local security.

Contemporary Interactions between Wildlife Management and Land Tenure on Village Lands in Northern Tanzania

One of the basic aspects of the framework for land tenure and management in Tanzania following the passage of the new land laws in 1999 is the division of all the lands in the country into three categories: general, reserved, and village land. Reserved lands are defined by the Land Act as areas established under sectoral legislation such as the National Parks Ordinance, Marine Parks and Reserves Act, and the Wildlife Conservation Act of 1974 which continues to be the country's principle wildlife legislation today. The Wildlife Conservation Act (WCA) contains provisions for establishing three types of protected areas: Game Reserves, Game Controlled Areas, and Partial Game Reserves¹. In Game Reserves human entry and habitation is forbidden without express permission of the Director of Wildlife; these areas function much as National Parks in that they are exclusive protected areas managed for wildlife.

Game Controlled Areas (GCA's) are a different type of protected area and one which is surrounded by considerable confusion and ambiguity with regards to its management. The formation of GCA's originated in the pre-independence era, when certain stretches of country were designated as 'controlled areas' with respect to wildlife hunting. This meant that wildlife utilization in such areas required a license from the government; at this time wildlife uses outside of controlled or reserved areas was not regulated except for certain species.

Provisions for creating and managing GCA's were contained in the WCA which repealed the colonial wildlife legislation. GCA's as defined by the WCA remained, however, as protected areas where only the utilization of wildlife was restricted and regulated; human use and settlement, cutting of vegetation, and grazing of cattle were not regulated in any way in these areas. Since the WCA generally provides that wildlife use anywhere in the country, except for species classified as vermin or not listed on schedules to the Act, requires a government license, wildlife in GCA's does not actually receive any more protection than wildlife in nominally unprotected areas. It is for this reason that the

¹ Partial Game Reserves have not been created under the WCA so this category of protected area is irrelevant for purposes of this discussion.

GCA's have themselves been referred to as 'unprotected' areas. The Wildlife Sector Review Task Force (1995) convened by the Ministry in the early 1990's concluded that GCA's were "totally ineffective" as in terms of conserving wildlife.

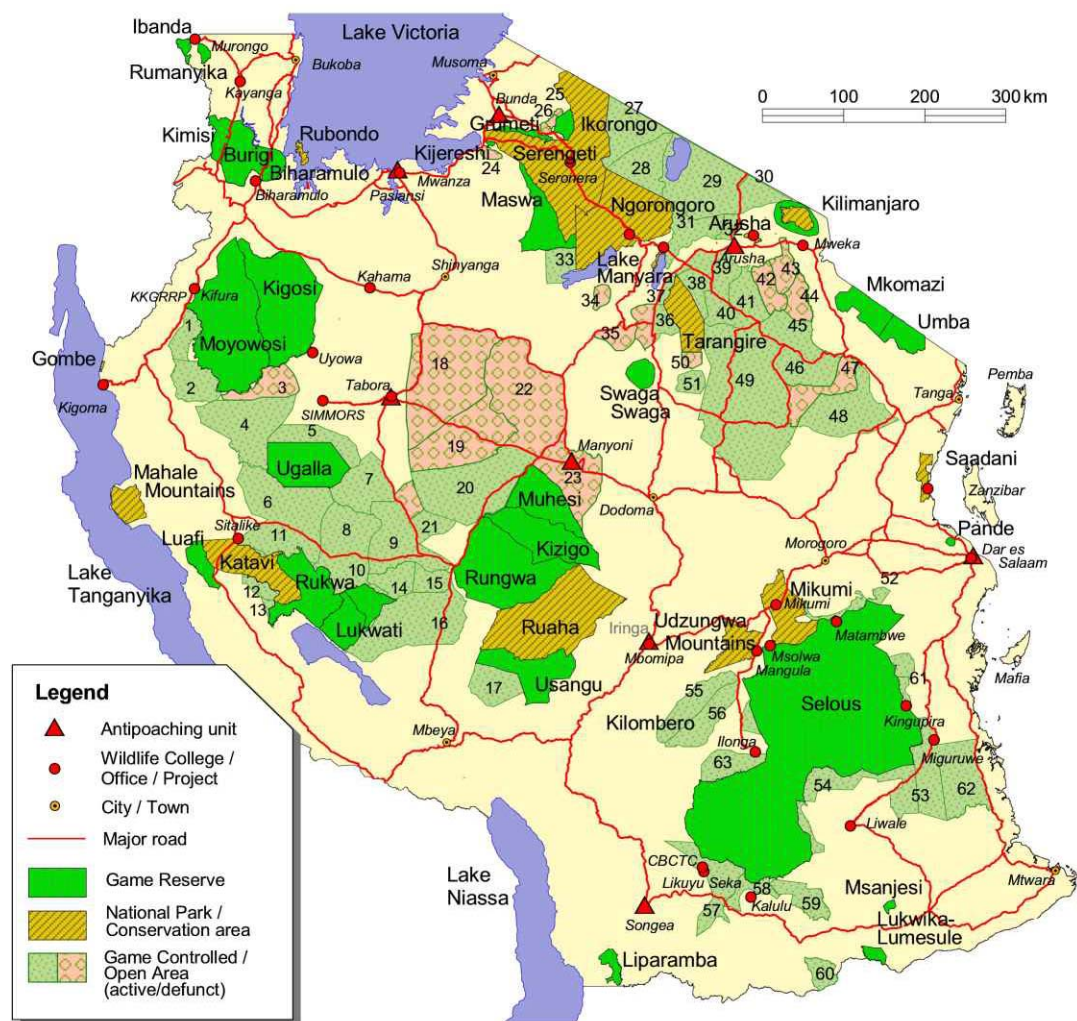
GCA's have thus been, both initially in the colonial period and following passage of the WCA, areas where the land rights of resident people are not extinguished or circumscribed. Thus people have generally lived in them and exercised their customary land rights; only the right to utilize wildlife was restricted (as it was everywhere else in the country after 1974). This dual and overlapping use of these areas as a nominally protected area under the wildlife legislation, on the one hand, and local community lands, on the other, was touched on by the Land Commission in their final report. The Commission categorized GCA's, covering almost 10% of the country, among the many lands in the country where confusion existed as to the status of land tenure (URT, 1994). As can be seen in Figure 1 below, a concentration of Tanzania's GCA's exist in the wildlife-rich north-central part of the country, largely in pastoralist areas.

The National Land Policy (MLHSD, 1997) recognized the conflict created by having GCA's and community lands existing in the same places. The Policy recommended that GCA's should serve as 'buffer zones' without agriculture or settlements where the GCA's were adjacent to important wildlife areas, and that they should be upgraded to Game Reserves or allocated for 'resettlement' in areas not adjacent to protected areas.² It is important to note that the Policy, by stating that GCA's will either be upgraded to reserves or allocated for *resettlement*, is implicitly interpreting GCA's as areas which are not settled and where customary land rights were not established. As stated above, this is not correct and customary land rights have always been established and never extinguished in GCA's; allocating such areas for resettlement is therefore not a realistic option and a misinterpretation of the situation on the ground.

The reality at the local level is that many GCA's overlap entirely with demarcated village lands. Figure 2a and 2b show the overlap of GCA's and village lands in Ngorongoro District (Loliondo and Sale Divisions) and the northeast portion of Monduli District. Indeed, about 95% of Monduli District's total land area is contained in GCA's, while at the same time all of the district is divided into demarcated villages, many of which have been surveyed and are awaiting receipt of Certificate of Village Lands. In Loliondo Division some of the villages within Loliondo GCA (Figure 2b) received title deeds to their lands in the early 1990's during the national push for village titling.

There are both legal and practical implications to this situation of overlapping land categories. Administratively, the main use of wildlife in GCA's is as tourist hunting concessions granted by the Wildlife Division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (Leader-Williams et al., 1996; Baldus and Cauldwell, 2004).

² Section 7.4.1



Western Tanzania

- 1 Makere Forest
- 2 Uvinza OA
- 3 Gombe GCA
- 4 Luganzo GCA
- 5 Ugalla OA

- 6 Msima GCA
- 7 Ugunda GCA
- 8 Inyonga West GCA
- 9 Inyonga East GCA
- 10 Rungwa River GCA
- 11 Mlele North GCA

- 12 Mlele South GCA
- 13 Lake Rukwa GCA
- 14 Piti West OA
- 15 Inyonga East
- 16 Chunya OA
- 17 Utengule Swamp OA

- 18 Wembere OA North
- 19 Wembere OA Central
- 20 Wembere OA South
- 21 Itulu Forest East
- 22 Singida OA
- 23 Manyoni OA

Masailand

- 24 Maswa OA
- 25 Nyichoka OA
- 26 Sibora OA
- 27 Loliondo GCA
- 28 Loliondo South GCA
- 29 Lake Natron GCA
- 30 Longido GCA

- 31 Mto wa Mbu GCA
- 32 Monduli Juu
- 33 Maswa Makao
- 34 Yaeda Chini OA
- 35 Lake Balangida
- 36 Babati OA
- 37 Burunge

- 38 Lolkisale
- 39 Simanjiro West
- 40 Simanjiro Kitangare
- 41 Simanjiro Naberra
- 42 Simanjiro East
- 43 Sanya Lelatema
- 44 Ruvu Same

- 45 Ruvu Masai
- 46 Kitwai North
- 47 Kitwai Central
- 48 Kitwai South
- 49 Masai OA
- 50 Mkungunero
- 51 Kondoa OA

Selous / SE Coastal

- 52 Gonabis / Jukumu WMA
- 53 Liwale OA North
- 54 Liwale OA South
- 55 Kilombero GCA North

- 56 Kilombero GCA South
- 57 Namtumbo WMA
- 58 Tunduru WMA
- 59 Sasawara Forest

- 60 Tunduru Forest
- 61 Tapika OA
- 62 Kilwa OA North, Central & South

- 63 Mahenge OA South

Figure 1: National distribution of Game Controlled Areas and other protected areas and hunting block concessions. Source: Baldus and Cauldwell, 2004.

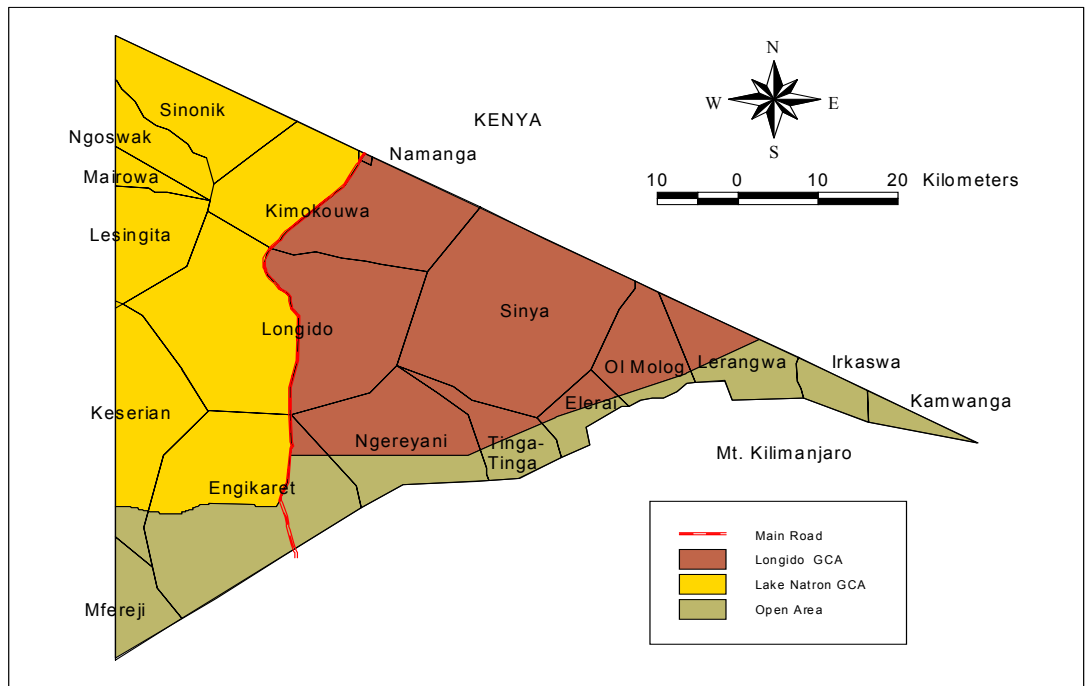


Figure 2a: Overlap of GCA's and village lands in northeast Monduli District.

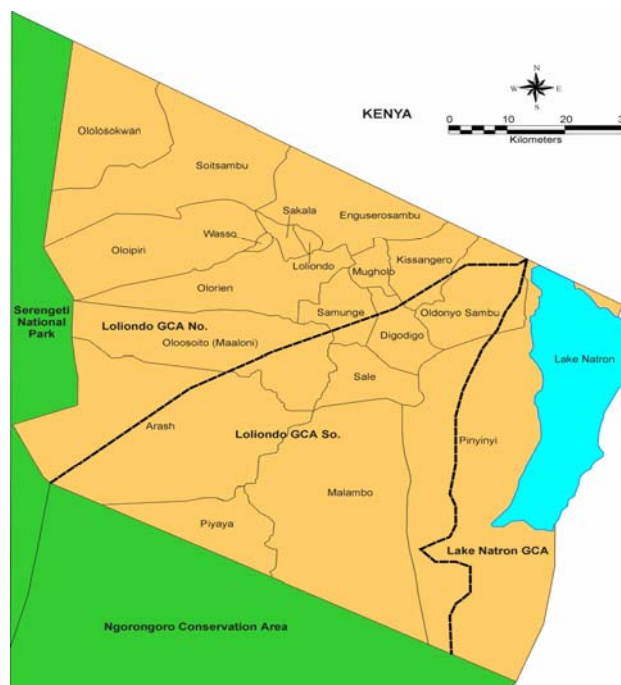


Figure 2b: Overlap of GCA's and village lands in Loliondo and Sale Divisions, Ngorongoro District. GCA demarcated by dotted line, solid lines are village boundaries.

Allocation of these areas to hunting companies has not taken into account the land rights of the communities resident in the GCA's. The WCA has a provision that hunting carried out on private lands requires the consent of the landowner³, and titled or certified village lands qualify according to the WCA definition of private lands, but this consent has never been sought when allocating hunting concessions and in general local communities have no role in the block allocation process (Majamba, 2001). The result is that tourist hunting is conducted extensively on community lands without the permission or involvement of the landholder. Some conflicts inevitably occur as a result of outsiders being granted access to village lands without the participation of the people living there. Hunting activities may conflict with livestock grazing or forest products collection or other local economic activities.

A more widespread conflict has erupted during the past five years between the tourist hunting concessions on village lands and non-consumptive tourism activities occurring in the same areas (Masara, 2000; Nelson, 2003). These tourism activities have developed on village lands as agreements between private companies and the local village governments whereby companies are granted access to the area and the villages receive set payments from the companies. In contrast to the centrally managed hunting concessions, these arrangements are developed locally based on the villages' status under the Local Government Act of 1982 as corporate bodies and their rights under the Village Land Act to manage land on behalf of the community (Nshala, 2002). Some communities have been able to earn up to \$50,000 annually from these tourism agreements, providing an important source of economic diversification in northern Tanzanian community rangelands (Nelson, 2004). But because these tourism activities conflict with the pre-existing hunting concessions, both hunting operators and central government have moved to preclude these agreements from continuing in these areas (Masara, 2000; Jones, 2001; Nelson, 2003). Regulations governing tourist hunting were issued in 2000 which specifically seek to prohibit tourism from being carried out in any hunting blocks, including those on village lands, without the express permission of the Director of Wildlife (MNRT, 2000; Nshala, 2002). At least one operator has been charged with violating these regulations and numerous villages in northern Tanzania stand to lose substantial sources of income from tourism should they be fully enforced.

The overlap of GCA's and village lands is consequently a widespread source of conflict between local community interests and external government and private sector interests in accessing these areas to utilize wildlife and land in hunting concessions. These conflicts thus represent a contest over land rights and access in village lands between the various parties involved.

It was noted that the Land Commission identified the confusion engendered by the overlap of GCA's with areas held under customary rights of occupancy, as did the National Land Policy albeit with a confused understanding of the local realities of these overlaps. The Wildlife Policy of Tanzania, released after the Land Policy in March,

³ The Director of Wildlife can, in the "public interest", override this consent clause. "Public interest" is however not defined by the WCA.

1998, generally aims to promote the transfer of greater control over land and wildlife in GCA's and other unprotected areas to the local communities living there in order to promote 'community-based conservation' (MNRT, 1998).

Subsequent legislative efforts, however, have not functioned to resolve the problems of GCA's overlapping with community lands but have instead entrenched them. As was noted, the Land Act identifies reserved lands as those areas created under the WCA, including GCA's. A reading of Part II, Section 5.6, of the Land Act clearly leads one to the conclusion that GCA's are reserved lands under the jurisdiction of the Wildlife Division. Yet the Land Act also defines village lands according to the definitions laid out in detail in the Village Land Act. Clearly, given the customary use and occupancy of most GCA's, including all of the ones on pastoralist lands in northern Tanzania, these same areas are also village lands. It is obviously inimical to the aims of both the National Land Policy and the Land Act to improve the security of customary land rights, to have 10% of the country, including entire districts such as Monduli, defined in different ways as *both* reserved and village lands. It is this legal situation that facilitates the on-going conflicts on the ground, whereby both the villages and the Wildlife Division are able to interpret the laws as giving them control and jurisdiction over these areas. Legal confusion begets local chaos and insecurity among both rural communities as well as investors on both sides of the tourism-hunting conflict. None of the parties are able to clearly determine their rights because their rights are contradictorily defined in the law.

Understanding Entrenched Conflicts: Persistence and Resolution

The conflicts over wildlife management and village land tenure that result from the overlap of GCA's and village lands as entrenched by the Land Act is a widespread problem for local tenure security in most of rural northern Tanzania. This is in and of itself a significant problem, as it works to undermine the stability of rural economies including many livestock producers, and leads to conflicts that can result in human rights abuses. The situation also creates a poor environment for private investment in the wildlife and tourism sectors in some of the best lands for such investments anywhere in Tanzania.

It is important to emphasize that the principle cause of these conflicts and the cascading economic problems that they create is *not* a lack of understanding of the nature of the conflicts. As I have noted, the Land Commission identified the GCA-customary land rights overlap as a source of confusion, as did the subsequent Land Policy.

Yet the Land Act, rather than removing the statutory confusion surrounding these areas, entrenched them by defining GCA's as reserved lands and the same areas as village lands, which now overlap entirely in large tracts of the country. A draft Wildlife Act to better implement the Wildlife Policy has been the subject of extensive consultations nationwide during the past several years and is reportedly planned for tabling in Parliament during 2005. Like the land legislation, this bill does not resolve the GCA-village land conflicts but if passed would serve to entrench them further. The bill does

not change any of the provisions for establishing and managing GCA's from those in the 1974 WCA.⁴

Thus the conflicts between GCA's and village lands are fundamentally tied to problems of implementing policy directives and a notable divergence between sectoral policies and the laws which are drafted to give them force; one sees this divergence in both the land and the wildlife sectors. What then, are the underlying reasons for this divergence and the conflicts that ensue from such institutional confusion?

The conflicting provisions in the land legislation which result in the reserved-village land overlap in GCA's can be looked at as the state wanting to have its cake and eat it too. On the one hand, the Land Commission report and the national land reform campaign that ensued focused unprecedented attention on the insecurity of customary land rights (Shivji, 1998). The land policy and legislation, while not taking all the Commission's recommendations on board, does respond to some of these concerns, for example by making granted and customary rights legally equivalent. Providing more streamlined provisions for the demarcation and definition of village lands according to traditional use and occupation is further supportive of popular concerns over tenure security.

But on the other hand, there was a strong imperative in the drafting of the land laws to retain a great deal of discretionary power within the executive branch, a dynamic which Sundet (1997) has described in detail. Maintaining central jurisdiction in the GCA's as reserved lands through the wildlife authorities serves to legitimize central use and allocation of the resources- land and wildlife- found at the local level in these areas. This maintains central control over economic activities and investments, albeit often at the expense of local opportunities. One can also consider the increasing conflicts over the GCA's as an extension of the frontiers of contested resource uses and rights from the core protected areas to the rural landscape in general. Whereas the contests of the 1950's were whether or not to evict communities from areas that would be created as National Parks, today's conflicts center not on the parks, but on the village lands that the communities remain in possession of. The issue now is not whether communities may regain what they have lost to conservation uses, but whether they will be able to exercise control over what lands they still hold rights to. The contemporary GCA conflicts can therefore be looked at as a significant *expansion* of central control over economic resources into areas previously managed (according to both customary law and contemporary local government and land laws) at the local level. It is notable that such central expansion stands in marked contrast to the decentralizing and liberalizing rhetoric that surrounds many of the contemporary socioeconomic plans and strategies in Tanzania.

Beyond the provisions that maintain central authority over valuable resources as seen in the land legislation, another explanation of the conflicting provisions within that legislation relates more broadly to the *value* of laws which are confusing to certain vested

⁴ The draft act in general does not appear to be in conformity in its principles or in its details with the wildlife policy, and reflects a much more centralized framework for wildlife management including further expansion of protected areas and regulatory powers of the government, than is recommended by the policy (see PINGOs Forum, 2004).

interests. By this I mean that one can theorize, based on existing political economy analysis (e.g. Chabol and Daloz, 1999), that confusion such as seen in the land legislation with respect to GCA's and village lands is not an accident or a mistake, but serves certain purposes. More specifically, legal confusion creates chaos on the ground as different parties struggle to secure their rights and to access resources, and this chaos creates numerous opportunities for rent-seeking within the bureaucracy. Legal clarity, by contrast, reduces such chaos and rent-seeking opportunities, and is therefore inimical to many vested interests within the institutions responsible for drafting and implementing laws. It is important to consider the possibility that this is one of the factors behind the problems that are exhibited by the conflicts in the land laws, and that this also is emblematic of broader political economy dynamics within Tanzania today.

Conclusion

This paper has overviewed some of the historical interactions between wildlife management and local land rights in Tanzania, and the tensions between those two elements that have existed for many years in the country going back to the colonial period. These tensions continue into the present, not only through continuing evictions of local people for the establishment of state protected areas, but have been extended out into the rural landscape more broadly through wide-ranging conflicts over village land tenure and overlapping wildlife areas. Specifically, the overlap of Game Controlled Areas and village lands is the most prevalent land tenure conflict at present in most of north-central Tanzania, and it is a conflict which has escalated considerably in the past five years. The cause of these conflicts is a general contest between central authorities and rural villages to control access to village lands/GCA's. Villages seek to use these areas for livestock grazing and other livelihood activities including relatively new commercial tourism joint ventures, whereby central government leases these same lands out as hunting concessions. The result of these conflicts is land tenure insecurity, conflicts among different private investors, reduced incentives for wildlife conservation at the village level, and loss of revenue to rural villages.

These conflicts do not arise from a failure of *policies* to address them; rather they stem from the failure of laws to adequately address key issues raised by policies. By contrast, existing laws and in particular the Land Act entrench these conflicts through the propagation of directly contradictory provisions. These provisions may serve two main political economic purposes. First, to enable continued central control over valuable economic resources lying on village lands. And second, to create legal confusion which facilitates rent-seeking opportunities and limits the enforcement of local rights based on legal clarity.

Those seeking to improve the land tenure framework in Tanzania for economic, social, and environmental ends need to consider not only the proximate problems with the land legislation but these underlying political economic forces that create such conflicts. Conflicts are not necessarily a by-product of errors or omissions in the law but a function of the contesting political forces that influence the creation of laws, and of vested interests that benefit from confusion and ambiguity in the allocation of land and resource

rights. Land is the most important resource in the country, and it is therefore the locus of many political economic struggles that apply more broadly to the national macroeconomic structures and dynamics. It is important to use experiences with land rights and tenure to inform an understanding of these macroeconomic and political processes, but it is equally important to apply that understanding at the local level to devise ways of improving the processes whereby institutions like laws come into being. It is unlikely that the critical land tenure issues and conflicts that currently exist will be resolved without such an approach.

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