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A Critical Review of Environmental Governance, Land Restitution, and Tourism in Protected Areas

Takalani Ramukumba*
Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Walter Sisulu University, Butterworth,
Email, tramukumba@wsu.ac.za
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1176-1641

Corresponding Author

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Abstract

Natural areas, when protected, conserve the natural environment and function as social spaces in which tourism brings increased income, employment, and financial support for conservation. The inclusion of local community members in the planning and management of protected areas has been on the rise since the early 1900s. Tourism has been advocated as a strategy that can help in achieving economic development, especially in rural areas. However, governance issues and potential negative impacts of tourism development have been under inspection. Conservation efforts in Southern Africa especially in the late 1800s and early 1900s had negative impacts on the local communities since this led to many communities being displaced or having limited access to these protected areas. This has seen the need for ways and efforts to get local community members' despondency and attitudes towards protected areas change such that in the 20th century, there were efforts to use conservation models that included community members in the decision-making and benefit-sharing process to garner their support for protected areas. This paper reviews literature on environmental governance, land restitution in protected areas, tourism in protected areas, co-management, and the importance of community participation. These concepts are reviewed using Manyeleti Game Reserve as a case study.

Keywords: Tourism, land restitution, environmental governance, wildlife resources, and stakeholder participation

Introduction

The management of wildlife resources has always been a contentious issue especially in areas where they are surrounded by poverty-stricken communities. This has seen many authors, see Marion and Reid (2007) and Pearce and Dowling (2018), suggesting solutions for finding a middle ground for community needs and conservation of resources. In the same vein, these authors acknowledged that development cannot afford to disregard the rights of the environmental rights/limits because if that happens, such development will be doomed, however, at the same time, the needs of the human population should not be disregarded for the sake of conservation (Makombe, 1993). Similarly, the world has seen a more complex and changing nature of environmental problems and these require pliable and translucent decision-making that clasp an assortment of knowledge and values. This, therefore, calls for a variety of ways and approaches in dealing with these environmental problems. Given the magnitude of the environmental problems, many have suggested a way in which these challenges can be addressed over the last few decades.

The above has led many scholars to suggest ways and means of finding the balance between the two and they have suggested approaches such as governance which later led to environmental governance. Several authors have provided a variety of definitions of the concept of governance. Despite the varying definitions provided, what has become clear is that the term governance is based on a political field and political activity. According to Halfani, McCarney and Rodriguez (1994), "governance is defined as an action, method, or function of

governing". The views of Landell (1991) denotes that governance refers to "how people are ruled, how the government regulates and administers its affairs". Governance suggests the interface amongst assemblies, procedures, and customs that regulate how control and accountabilities are implemented, how decisions are taken, and how members of the community and other stakeholders' voices are included in decisions that are taken (Graham, Amos & Plumptre, 2003). In this regard, we can then suggest that governance is all about control, rapport, accountability, and as such it discourses who has the influence, who makes the decision, and how those who make the decision should be held accountable for such decisions which they make.

Environmental governance

According to Graham, Amos and Plumptre (2003:1), the term governance refers "to how crucial decisions are taken collectively within a complex world through interactions between civil society, social organisations, and governments". The views of Wessels and Müller (2011) suggest that good governance is dependent on finding the right equilibrium over issues of social, economic, and environmental over a while. Hardallu (2001) noted that good governance is always connected with the continuance of working together, the capability for information, conciliation, and resource distribution and implementation. Müller (2009) proposed overlapping philosophies of decent governance as the following: legality and voice, leadership and route, transparency, fairness, and sustainability.

According to Demas and Young (2009), the issue of effective environmental governance has become pressing since human beings have been dominating ecosystems and as such, governments around the world are battling to meet the demands of effective environmental governance. Bridge and Perreault (2009) noted that at its core, environmental governance is about how institutions as an extension of the state find the right balance in caring for the environment whilst taking care of the social life of the communities. This is so much true in areas where the environment is cared for has tourism potential that could help communities around it. The management of environmental and developmental problems in the last few decades saw the involvement of not only governmental and non-governmental institutions but also the civil society and the community at large entering the fray.

Collaborative governance and collaborative natural resources management.

According to Conley and Moote (2003), the complex and contended natural resource issues have seen collaborative approaches/models being predominantly advanced to deal with natural resource management. This has seen these collaborative efforts being incorporated into official policies around the world to deal with the multifaceted conservational management difficulties through a two-way process of planning and management (Conley & Moote, 2003). Various authors have highlighted several common characteristics of collaboration. Innes and Booher (1999) contended that collaboration is about the involvement of a variety of participants who represents several organisations, interest groups, and persons who believe they have a vested interest in the outcome. Collaboration is also seen as a procedure that engages stakeholders in a rigorous and ingenious process of consensus-building (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000), and this process should result in more inspired elucidations and better prospects of reception by the stakeholders (Weber, 2000). The views of Weber (2000) suggest that collaboration works towards achieving compromise on challenges, glitches, objectives, and planned activities, whilst Weber (2000), advanced that collaboration necessitates a constant pledge to finding solutions to the problems.

Collaborative governance has given birth to collaborative natural resources management and this has seen many authors suggest different views on this matter. The

opinions of Ansell and Gash (2007) posits that collaborative governance is about bringing governmental and non-governmental stakeholders together through formations of aids with public organisations to take part in undisputed-orientated decision-making. Collaborative efforts have been described in various forms, see Williams and Ellefson (1997), consensus groups (Innes, 1999), community-based collaboratives (Moote, Conley, Firehock & Dukes, 2000), and alternative problem-solving efforts (Kenney & Lord, 1999). Collaborative models/learning models were developed and there is no consensus on the names of these models, therefore these names are not interchangeable (Anderson & Baum, 1988; Clearly & Phillippi, 1993; Daniels & Walker, 2000), however, it is important to note that these models share several common characteristics (Ansell & Gash, 2007). In this regard, it is important to note that overall, collaborative natural resources management denotes a cooperative natural resource management ventures, courses, or decision-making process through the implementation of a participatory approach and exploring through a process of evaluating a variety of tactics that have been applied to such efforts, Ansell and Gash (2007).

Webber (2000) noted the growth of collaborative efforts as a response to a variety of resource management challenges that were developed both independently and concurrently around the globe. Collaborative efforts to resource management have also attracted spoken detractors (McCloskey, 1998). Many of these descent voices argue that the efforts around resource management have been solely focussed on local economic development interests and as such, public interests are not appropriately considered when decisions are taken. Ansell and Gash (2007) noted that those who feel that they are outside the "inner circle" project would feel that their inputs were never taken into consideration and in the same vein, agencies would always question whether resource management approaches can be applied in other communities with similar outcomes. It then becomes obvious that participants who take part in practices that miscarry to achieve the planned results will always query the stint and exertion they have put into the process. Kenney (2000) in a nutshell provided an outstanding synopsis of these condemnations which are making many people think twice about the idealised chronicle of collaborative natural resource management. The momentum around natural resource management has necessitated the need for both definite creativities and the comprehensive drive to be evaluated (Kellert, Mehta, Ebbin, & Lichtenfeld, 2000). This has seen collaborative groups introducing observing and self-evaluation procedures themselves, in many cases as a hands-on approach to co-management. The collaborative process as advanced by Ansell and Gash (2007) has been applied effectively to allow community participation in natural resources management more so where tourism as an economic sector is seen as having the potential to improve the socio-economic conditions of the local communities.

Collaborative governance model

The collaborative model was developed by Ansell and Gash (2007) and has four broad variables and they are starting conditions, institutional design, leadership, and collaborative process. These elements are considered central influences to or for the collaborative process. These authors indicated that 'the level of trust, conflict, and social capital that become resources or liabilities during the process of collaboration is set at starting conditions whilst the basic ground rules for collaboration to take place are set at institutional design, whilst essential mediation and facilitation for the collaborative process are set under the leadership'.

Starting conditions

According to Ansell and Gash (2007), collaboration can either be facilitated or discouraged by the level of cooperation between stakeholders and agencies at the initial stages of the collaboration process. The level of trust or conflict between stakeholders and the agencies is

largely influenced by disparities amongst the assets or power of different stakeholders, the motivations that stakeholders have to work together, and the antiquity of conflict or cooperation amongst the stakeholders (Warner 2006). The difficulty in establishing trust during the collaboration process mainly stems from issues such as lack of proficiency and capability to participate in deliberations that involve exceedingly nominal problems, lack of organised stakeholder groups to represent groups that do not occur to exemplify the distinct stakeholders jointly, and stakeholders seem not to have available time and effort to participate in time-intensive collaboration processes (Yaffee & Wondolleck 2003).

Incentives to participate

Neslon and Weschler (1998) noted that the incentives together with the elements that outline the incentives for participation during the collaboration process are important to understand since participation is voluntary. Recognition has been given to power and resource imbalances as factors that may influence and disturb the incentives for clusters to play a part in the collaboration process, and as such, preparedness to be part of the collaboration process is determined by power differences amongst the different stakeholders (Imperial 2005). The incentives to participate will always increase if stakeholders see direct benefits accruing from their participation whilst it will decrease if stakeholders have the perception that their ideas and inputs will not be given due attention and inclusion in the process (Brown 2002; Futrell 2003). Therefore, the success of the collaborative governance process is hugely dependent on the incentives perceived by stakeholders for their participation.

Face-to-face dialogue

Face-to-face amongst stakeholders is necessary to build collaborative governance since, during this process, stakeholders can ascertain opportunities for shared gains. According to Bentrup (2001), face-to-face discussion is central to removing typecasts and other obstacles that may avert the investigation of shared gains in the first place. This was further supported by Warner (2006) where he projected that face-to-face discussion is at the centre of trust-building, shared respect, and common understanding as well as a pledge to the process.

Trust building

Weech-Maldonado and Merrill (2000) believe that it is not surprising to find that there is a lack of trust at the start of the collaborative governance process. This, therefore, imply that the collaborative process is vital in trust-building between stakeholders (Imperial 2005). In cases where there was resentment in the past from stakeholders, the process of building trust can be difficult in the early stages of the process (Murdock, Wiessner, & Sexton 2005). This implies that collaborative leaders must acknowledge that they need to build trust with their opponents to avoid stakeholder manipulation.

Commitment to the process

The intention to participate in the collaborative process is linked to the novel incentive to participate. The views of Burger et al. (2001) are that to achieve desirable policy outcomes, it is vital to establish mutual gains during the process of establishing a commitment to the process. In this regard, up-front willingness to abide by the results of the deliberation regardless of whether such decisions end in outcome not supported by stakeholders is required in the collaborative process (Putnam 2004; Saarikoski 2000; Gray 1989; Plummer & Fitzgibbon 2004). This situation can be aided by a situation where there is consensus in the process and this reduces the risk for stakeholders (Saarikoski 2000). The implication is that trust in the process makes stakeholders feel that their contributions will be noticed, they feel confident that

the process will have integrity, it will be fair, and it will be transparent. This also leads to stakeholders feeling a sense of commitment and ownership and this enhances their prospects of participation (Gilliam et al. 2002).

Shared understanding

Tett, Crowther, and O'Hara (2003) posit that stakeholders must develop a common understanding collectively during the collaboration process. In this regard, shared understanding may infer stakeholders agreeing on what knowledge is required to address a particular problem, see: (Roussos & Fawcett 2000; Wondolleck & Yaffee 2000; Huxham 2003; Padilla & Daigle 1998; Manring & Pearsall 2004; Waage 2001; Roberston & Lawes 2005; Margerum 2002; Heikkila & Gerlak 2005; Bentrup 2001; Daniels & Walker 2001; Blatner et al. 2001).

Intermediate outcomes

Warner (2006) noted that when small wins are possible from collaboration, it is most likely that stakeholders would want to participate in the collaboration process. The small wins, therefore, provide a platform for feedback into the collaboration process but also allow for the building of trust and pledge to the process (Rogers et al. 1993).

Stakeholder participation

The views of Reed (2008) are that there is a need for a translucent decision-making process that is bendable and that accepts an assortment of information and ideas to changing circumstances due to environmental problems which are in the main, multifaceted, unclear, and impact on many players and organisations. Stringer et al., (2007) noted that to achieve this transparent decision-making process, calls have been made for stakeholder participation to be entrenched into the environmental decision-making processes both at local and worldwide scales. The need for extensive approval and advancement of participation has largely stemmed from public doubt about the scholarship, increasing knowledge, interest in environmental decisions, and ongoing policy trends that focus on sustainable development and partnership (Younge & Fowkes, 2003; Richards, Blackstock, & Carter, 2004). Fischer (2000) noted that it is now acknowledged that the right to participate in environmental decision-making is now considered as a self-governing right and as such environmental interest and pressure groups are using this right at an incremental rate.

The views of Reed (2008) are that since stakeholder participation is a vital code in collaboration, the type of stakeholders involved will highlight a key functional difference across a variety of collaboratives. Richards et al. (2004), purports that participatory processes will be perceived as transparent if they consider conflicting claims and views and as such, they will upsurge public reliance in decisions and civic trust. It is suggested that stakeholder participation can empower stakeholders through the production of knowledge together with researchers and this will allow the stakeholders to capacitate themselves through the usage of this knowledge (Wallerstein, 1999). The views of Richards et al., (2004) points to the idea that stakeholder participation may create a situation where environmental decisions are recognised as all-inclusive and just as well as accounting for a variety of ideals and desires and encouraging the complication of human-environmental interplay. Other views based on benefits of stakeholder participation point to claims that through engagement with stakeholders, quality and durable environmental decisions are made (Reed, 2007). This argument was further advanced by Reed, Dougill, & Baker (2006, 2008) who noted that stakeholder participation may lead to research being vigorous by providing advanced eminence information contributions. If these contributions from the local interests are considered at an early stage,

the project design may be developed in such a way that it enhances the successful meeting of the local needs and priorities (Dougill, Fraser, Holden, Hubacek, Prell, Reed, Stagl, & Stringer, 2006).

According to Koontz and Thomas (2006); and Newig (2007), stakeholder participation provides opportunities for unexpected outcomes to be eliminated before they occur since it provides higher quality decisions grounded on more comprehensive information. Participatory procedures ideally can provide the capability to alter negative interactions and discover new ways for participants to graft together if collective ground and trust is established amongst participants and they are allowed to learn to escalate the acceptability of each other's viewpoint (Stringer, Reed, Dougill, Rokitzki, & Seely, 2006). Stakeholder participation may result in the nous of possession of the process and result through the wide-ranging alliance of stakeholders, long-term support and active implementation of decisions may be heightened (Richards et al., 2004).

Whilst the preceding paragraph focussed on the benefits of stakeholder participation, it is also important to note that some authors have raised concerns about stakeholder participation. Kothari (2001) suggested that stakeholder participation may not live up to too many claims of benefits that are made and as such, it is vital to note that these stakeholder participations do not take place in power vacuity since the empowerment of formerly excluded communities normally would have unforeseen and hypothetically undesirable exchanges with existing authority structures. It is suggested that some forms of participation may strengthen prevailing freedoms and cluster subtleties may lead to discouraging marginal viewpoints from being articulated (Nelson & Wright, 1995). This may result in creating dysfunctional consensus and consultation exhaustion may set in as stakeholders are requested to participate in processes that are not executed. Stakeholders would therefore observe that their participation affords them a slight incentive or ability to effect decisions that affect them (Burton et al., 2004). In this regard, Vedwan, Ahmad, Miralles-Wilhelm, Broad, Letson, & Podesta (2008) suggested that participatory processes can be converted into talk shops that produce ambivalences and hold up pivotal action. The above may be impacted due to the existence of non-negotiable positions or actors with refusal power that restricts the scope to which the process can empower participants to effect the decision.

According to Child (2019), there are indications that matters of democratic decentralisation and local democracy are now receiving attention in the conservation literature. This is done through the establishment of emblematic forms of governance, accountability through the electoral process as well as the establishment of mini-natural resource agencies within district councils, and plural forms of governance that include co-management. This kind of move has seen an improvement in the strengthening of the use of public resources and reduction in corruption.

Co-management

Berkes, George, and Preston (1991) explained the term co-management as "the sharing of power and responsibility between the government and local resource users". Singleton (1998) defined co-management as "the term given to governance systems that combine state control with local, decentralised decision-making and accountability and which, ideally, combine the strengths and mitigate the weaknesses of each". Co-management was also defined as the sharing of responsibilities, rights, and duties between the primary stakeholders, in particular, local communities and the nation-state; a decentralized approach to decision-making that involves the local users in the decision-making process as equals with the nation-state (World Bank, 1999). According to Borrini-Feyerabend, Pimbert, Farvar, Kothari, and Renard (2004) co-management is rooted in the fundamentals of two-fold or more communal players who

participate in the procedures of discussions of sharing responsibilities, and reasonable distribution of management functions of a set of natural resources.

According to Berkes (2009), there has been development on the facets of co-management amongst government and local resource users over the last decade. The same author suggested that co-management is rooted in the understanding that it is about the partnership in knowledge since knowledge is attained at different scales from organisations at both local and international levels. This allows for the bringing together of these organisations to interact and share these different kinds of knowledge and the outcomes of this process bear fruits of trust-building, conflict resolution, access to resources, and schmoosing. The result of power and responsibility sharing amongst government and local resource users is partnerships (Pierre & Peters, 2000; Kooiman, 2003).

Holling (1978) noted that co-management works well when used together with learning-based approaches and learning by doing (adaptive management) can deal with uncertain and complex issues. In this regard, co-management and adaptive management have developed to a mutual ground: adaptive co-management. Carlssona and Berkes (2005), posits that empowerment, legitimacy, equity, compliance, and justice are ideas that resonate with co-management because their fundamentals are that individuals whose livelihoods are affected by management decisions must have a say in how these decisions are taken. However, many authors have warned against proclaiming that co-management is the cure-all for legitimacy (Mikalsen, Hernes, & Jentoft, 2007). This was further strengthened by the views of Be´ne´ and Neiland (2004), who suggested that the performance history of co-management is feeble in poverty lessening and enablement of the previously marginalised groups. In this regard, co-management has often led to a reinforcement of local exclusive power or to strengthen state control.

Protected areas and tourism

Dudley (2008: 8) defined protected areas as "a clearly defined geographical space, recognise, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystems services and cultural values". Valdivieso, Eagles, and Gil (2015) noted that the objective of protected areas is the protection of natural resources and provision of space for environmental education and nature-based tourism activities except where the protected areas are strict ecological reserves. The view above denotes the notion that protected areas serve two purposes, first, resource protection and second, of providing recreation (Marion & Reid, 2007; Pearce & Dowling, 2018). This dual mandate of protected areas has seen Whitelaw, King, and Tolckach (2014) contesting that the long-term stability of protected areas is dependent on tourist behaviour and allowing tourism activities in protected areas allows for tourism to generate funding that gets used to finance the conservation work (Valdivieso et al., 2015). McCarthy, Donald, Scharlemann, Buchanan, Balmford, and Green (2012), supported by Ardoin, Wheaton, Bowers, Hunt, & Durham (2015) posits that allowing tourism activities to take place in protected areas provides opportunities for tourism to generate increased income from financial contributions of the tourists, employment that benefits local communities, and direct conservation support. Tourism is known for fostering rural economies (Wilshusen, Brechin, Fortwangler, & West, 2002) and the ability to contribute to poverty reduction (Snyman, 2016). What becomes crucial for tourism activities taking place in protected areas is that such tourism activities should be practiced within the principles of sustainable tourism which is centred on the following issues: optimal use of environmental resources that protect ecological processes, natural heritage, and biodiversity; respect for the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities; providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders involved; and, providing meaningful experiences to

tourists to assure high levels of visitor satisfaction (World Tourism Organization, 2004). Given the above, protected areas, therefore, become simultaneously, nature conservation areas and social spaces that offer public services (Rodger, Taplin, & Moore, 2015) to tourists, for whom park management is expected to provide satisfying experiences (Taplin, Rodger, & Moore, 2016) and, consequently, visitors are seen as clients (Rodger, Taplin, & Moore, 2015).

Manyeleti Game Reserve

Manyeleti Game Reserve is a 22 750ha game reserve and is located in the western borderline of the Kruger National Park. This game reserve was claimed by 253 claimants as part of the land restitution who were under the leadership of the Manyeleti Conservation Trust. Manyeleti Game Reserve is known for its prime game viewing because there is free movement of the big five and other wildlife between this game reserve and Timbavati and Sabie Sands game reserves as well as Kruger National Park. There are currently nine tourist concessions in operation in the reserve which makes tourism well established in the reserve. The nature of the game reserve makes it a high tourism value destination and its medium biodiversity value make it a reserve that required co-management during the negotiations process of land restitution between the claimants and government. This issue will be discussed in detail under land restitution and co-management in protected areas in one of the sections below.

Planning domain for Manyeleti Game Reserve

The future of the Manyeleti Game Reserve is largely dependent on the active participation of the land claimants in both the management of the game reserve and sharing of the benefits that accrue through the co-management approach that has been adopted. Bell, already in 1987 had noted that the incorporation of biota conservation areas into local rural economies was acquiring momentum and was widely accepted in Africa. At the centre of this acceptance is the notion that financial resources that are produced by the game reserves are devoted directly to the communities surrounding the game reserve in the form of direct outlays or through investments in the building of schools, clinics, amongst other things. According to Child (1988) in Zimbabwe in the 1980s, communities were paid from hunting revenues to ensure the promotion of conservation of wildlife.

Land restitution and co-management in Manyeleti Game Reserve

According to de Koning (2010), the land restitution process lies in the hands of the State and the claimants and it should centre around issues of poverty alleviation and employment generation. It is more so in protected areas where there are issues of protecting the natural resources and the need to provide for communities who are claimants. To this end, the State prefers for the protected areas to remain as they are rather than giving it back to claimants to decide how to use the land. In this regard, de Koning (2010) noted that co-management becomes the only viable solution when communities opt for land restitution. Co-management of protected areas relies heavily on the great potential of tourism development, availability of investors, and efficient and effective management (Berkes 1997). The views of Berkes (1997) are that co-management becomes only feasible if there are four conditions in place and they are: ‘trust, appropriate institutions between partners, economic incentives for local people, and legal protection of local rights’. According to Carruthers (2007), it is therefore important that there are partnerships with the private sector for parties involved in co-management such that the expected reimbursements for the communities should include amongst others: equity stakes in tourism concessions, payment of lease fees or revenue shares to communities for the use of their land, preferential employment for local people, local outsourcing, and local enterprise opportunities and business training.

Co-management in Manyeleti Game Reserve took place in the context as explained by Berkes et al. (1991) because there was allotment of power and responsibilities amongst the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA) and the Manyeleti Conservation Trust that represented the community. This therefore allowed for a combination of state control with local decision-making and responsibility and this ensured the mitigation of weaknesses whilst promoting the strength of the stakeholders' working relationship. It is important to note here that the relationship between MTPA and Manyeleti Conservation Trust (government and local users) was based on approaches and learning by doing, which resulted in adaptive management (Pierre & Peters 2000) and Kooiman (2003). Manyeleti Game Reserve process, therefore, took adaptive co-management since there was empowerment, legitimacy, compliance, and justice done to the community members because their livelihoods were affected by the decisions taken but they were allowed to have a say on how to use the land that was given back to them (Carlssona & Berkes, 2005).

Manyeleti Game Reserve co-management agreements were negotiated between land claimant's representatives (Manyeleti Conservation Trust) and Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency (MTPA). This process followed a method of ranking primary and secondary stakeholders, participatory mapping with communities, exposure visits, role-playing, and socio-economic assessments. The participation of land claimants allowed for informed decisions to be taken, since their inputs were included in the process. This process was lengthy and costly to the MTPA, however, it provided foundations for improved communication, understanding, and trust between partners as alluded by Richards et al. (2004).

Stakeholder participation in Manyeleti Game Reserve

Stakeholder participation in the Manyeleti Game Reserve followed a rigorous negotiation process. Negotiations for both land claim settlement and co-management agreements were facilitated through the ranking of primary and secondary stakeholders (de Konning, 2010). In this regard, it was easy for the co-management committee to make decisions in line with approved management plans of the protected area. What is clear here is that the starting conditions and incentives to participate in the process were in line with suggestions by Ansell and Gash (2007) because the level of cooperation between MTPA and Manyeleti Community Trust at the initial stages of the collaboration process allowed for good facilitation of the process. As suggested by Warner (2006), there was a level of trust between the two parties as the incentives to participate were clear from the beginning which was communities have the land back and it was crucial on how they use the land from government perspective since the land was a protected area. These negotiations as starting conditions were crucial for communities to understand how they can use the land beneficially following government decision on co-management approach for all land given back to communities that are in protected areas (Neslon & Weschler, 1998). We can therefore conclude that the community of Manyeleti increased their participation because the incentives were clear to them and they saw an undeviating connection between their involvement and real, palpable, capable policy results (Brown 2002).

To ensure that the process of implementing co-management in Manyeleti Game Reserve was successful, it required facilitative leadership as alluded by Imperial (2005). Both MTPA and Manyeleti Community Trust provided facilitative leadership in the collaborative process that ensured that the process was steered correctly through rough patches in the beginning. This ensured that there was a collaborative spirit that brought stakeholders together (Reilly 2001). What is also clear as noted by Warner (2006) is that the institutional design (protocols and ground rules) was clear and this allowed for a successful collaborative governance process since the process was open, transparent, and inclusive. The Manyeleti

Community Trust representatives were given the permissible rights and opportunity to participate in the process by MTPA and this resulted in their commitment to the process. In line with the suggestions by Balyamujura and van Schalkwyk (1998), the stakeholder participation in the Manyeleti Game Reserve ensured that "conservation played a role in determining land-use systems, representative structures were established to serve as a forum for both the local communities and conservation agencies, the working relationship was based on effective and regular communication to ensure that all information is shared between the communities and conservation agencies, communities were involved in the prioritising of projects and at all levels of the project implementation cycle, options for community-owned projects were explored, a well-defined and fair system was set up for the sharing of all benefits and risks between the community and conservation agencies, and conservation was guided by law for clear decision-making powers".

Participation of stakeholders in the Manyeleti Game Reserve took the shape of claimants' interest being represented by Manyeleti Conservation Trust which was formed by the communities who were claiming their land back. This process is in line with suggestions made by Child (2019) where he suggested the adoption of participatory democracy. According to Child (2019), this kind of participatory governance concerning land claims in protected areas ensures that there are limits on poaching and there is adequate provision of infrastructure for tourism. The Conservation Trust was given the mandate to negotiate and take decisions on behalf of the claimants with MTPA. In instances where representatives of the claimants were not sure, they requested additional information and went back to community members to consult and for a decision to be taken. This process allowed for informed decisions to be taken as it considered both the benefits and the risks involved. In the end, the participation by the claimants through their representatives, allowed for the process to be transparent as alluded by Reed (2008); Stringer et al. (2007); and Richards et al. (2004). In this regard, negotiations for both land restitution and co-management agreements followed the collaborative governance model and face-to-face dialogue was extensively used between the representatives of the community and government representatives (Ansell & Gash, 2007). This process that was followed by Manyeleti Game Reserve ensured that trust-building, respect for both parties, and pledges to the process were achieved as alluded by (Warner, 2006).

Conclusion

Environmental governance is rooted in deep alliances and partnerships to attain maintainable use of natural resources and it is a long-term process. This long-term process is made complex due to swarm and a variety of socio-economic and political issues, the intergovernmental relations at national, provincial, and local government circles that influence the nature of environmental issues. This is further complicated by the improbability and capriciousness of environmental processes and functions, predominantly on a landscape scale. Manyeleti Game Reserve (a protected area) was given back to the community, indicate the challenges that parties had to go through in environmental governance to come to an amicable agreement on the land use but also serves as an indication of the biological, social, and economic diversity of the area. It was important that after the community was given the game reserve back, the land use ensured the continuous protection of the protected species. This was even more important to ensure the sustainability of the game reserve since areas where biodiversity is mainstreamed into all sectors require rigidity, tolerance, and tractability, including variations in customary policies, land use, and exchanges. The above are attainable through a process of stakeholder participation since there is evidence that through all-inclusive information inputs, quality environmental decisions can be achieved. The nature of the procedure of stakeholder participation ultimately determines the quality of the environmental decisions. Important here

is to accept that the underpinning philosophy of stakeholder participation is its ability to achieve empowerment, equity, trust, and learning. To achieve all of the above-mentioned aspects, stakeholder involvement must be measured as early as possible and during the process and all pertinent stakeholders must be part of the process. The inclusion of all relevant stakeholders ensures that exceedingly accomplished expedition is achieved including the inclusion of local and scientific knowledge such that there is a proper understanding of the all-inclusive complex and dynamic natural systems and processes. To ensure that the limitations of stakeholder participation are overcome, the participation process, the stakeholder participation must be institutionalised to enable the creation of organisational cultures which will facilitate the process of negotiation of goals and outcomes. Manyeleti Game Reserve claimants accepted the government call of adopting the co-management where land restitution was done in protected areas. In this regard, one can suggest that co-management in protected areas remains the best option to manage protected areas that have been redistributed through land restitution. It ensures that both stakeholders involved achieve their desired goals through the use of the land. In South Africa, in particular, it ensures that land restoration in protected areas is operated within the legal framework provided by the government. The sustained exertions of co-management, collaborative planning, implementation, and adaption in the Manyeleti Game Reserve demonstrate that preservation ingenuities can be efficacious if society's needs, most of which are socio-economic, are well-adjusted with the need for biodiversity fortification.

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