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Partnerships for wildlife protection and their sustainability outcomes: A literature review

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Abstract

The rhetoric of a 'win-win-win' situation – which represents simultaneous achievement of economic growth, environmental protection and social development – is central to the emergence of community-based wildlife protection efforts that involve new partnerships between actors such as local communities, businesses and government agencies. The win-win rhetoric furthers the logic that the more partners, the more wins – yet the current knowledge base lacks clear criteria for evaluating partnerships. This working paper uses political ecology as a conceptual lens to propose such criteria. We suggest examining partnerships not only based on their complexity, but also how they are formed and gain legitimacy in different contexts and how various partnership configurations engender particular kinds of ecological and socio-economic outcomes. Based on a review of the literature about partnerships and their impacts, and drawing on insights from Tanzania's wildlife sector, we establish three groups of literature that emphasize the benefits of partnerships: one focusing on landscape conservation, another on governance reforms and the last on tourism related businesses. In these three groups of literature, partnerships are claimed to improve the effectiveness of biodiversity governance by securing land, facilitating local developments and by creating business links. Building on critiques from political ecology we conclude by questioning this win-win-win rhetoric arguing that partnerships only lead to wins for specific actors thereby indirectly aggravating local power struggles. They do so by supporting rent seeking and the rise of local elites while simultaneously concealing the marginalization of other actors and thereby effectively contributing to the continued loss of local land rights.

Key words: partnerships, wildlife, community-based conservation and sustainability

1. Introduction

The rhetoric of a 'win-win-win' situation – which represents simultaneous achievement of economic growth, environmental protection and social development – is central to the emergence of community-based wildlife protection efforts that involve new partnerships between actors such as local communities, businesses and government agencies. The win-win-win rhetoric furthers the logic that the more partners are involved, the more 'wins' a partnership will achieve. Yet, the current knowledge base lacks clear definitions of success and criteria for evaluating partnerships (Van Huijstee et al., 2007). This working paper aims to use political ecology as a conceptual lens to propose such criteria. The political ecology lens pays particular attention to the politics of struggles over the control of, and access to, natural resources, and the role of social constructions of the environment and power relations in shaping partnership dynamics and outcomes (Jones, 2006). Political ecologists have actively engaged in many of the debates surrounding human-nature relations with some of the these studies examining biophysical processes alongside social and economic factors (Bryant and Bailey, 1997) leading to numerous studies that question the relationship between social relations of production, their influence on community choices and access to environmental resources (Peluso, 1993, Fabinyi et al., 2014, Pedersen, 2016). Accordingly, we suggest examining partnerships not only based on their complexity (in terms of number of actors, actor categories, the decision-making structure and the degree of sharing of resource access rights (Ponte et al., 2017), but also how they are formed, gain legitimacy in different contexts and the way various partnership configurations engender particular kinds of ecological and socio-economic outcomes.

Based on a review of the literature about partnerships and their impacts, and drawing on insights from Tanzania's wildlife sector, we establish three groups of literature that emphasize the benefits of partnerships. The first group of contributions focuses on landscape conservation and how partnerships have proliferated from the need to establish large-scale areas that accommodate wildlife but must remain human habited zones. Subsequently, the institutional architecture adjacent to these large conservation areas needed natural resource governance reform across the Global South – mainly to create structures for the operationalization of community-based conservation.

The second group of literature focuses on partnerships that have emerged through tourism-related businesses, which are considered key ingredient for bridging conservation and local development. In these two groups of literature, partnerships are claimed to be improving the effectiveness of biodiversity governance by securing land, facilitating local development and creating business links. Building on critiques from

political ecology, we conclude by questioning this 'win-win-win' rhetoric, and by observing that partnerships reinforce protection for wildlife but mainly lead to wins for only some actors, thereby indirectly aggravating local power struggles. Political ecologists have analysed how this happens through, among other things, supporting protected area expansion, rent-seeking and the rise of local elites, while simultaneously contributing to the continued loss of local land rights. Drawing from different theoretical perspectives – conservation scale, governance reforms and market-based conservation partnerships – we seek to add new dimension to the discussions about partnerships in natural resource management, namely, the ways that different partnership configurations emerge, whether and how their degree of complexity might influence both wildlife conservation and livelihood outcomes.

2. Perspectives on wildlife conservation partnerships: Theoretical insights

Actions to protect biodiversity (whether through protected areas or community-based approaches) are inherently political (Bryant and Bailey, 1997, Adams and Hutton, 2007). One of the cornerstones of political ecology is to illuminate such links between environmental protection and political dynamics. The field has supported the emergence of literature on the politics and economics of the creation of protected areas (see for example Neumann, 1998, Ramutsindela, 2004, Brockington and Igoe, 2006, West et al., 2006, Bryant, 2015), the role of the state in providing direction, legitimisation and exercise of power and control, and the convergence of non-governmental actors in supporting conservation (Levine, 2002, Igoe and Croucher, 2007, MacDonald, 2010b, Adams et al., 2016). Recently, however, there has been a shift in focus to the micro-politics of peasant struggles over access to resources (Watts, 2013, Gardner, 2016, Wright, 2017) calling for the need to further examine how multiple actors with complex and overlapping identities, affinities and interests continue to shape local social and ecological relations of power (Rocheleau, 2008, MacDonald, 2010a).

Understanding multi-level actions of different actors is key if we are to make a nuanced contribution to the analysis of conservation partnerships. This requires acknowledging that political and social processes relate to each other at a number of nested scales, from the local to the global (Bryant and Bailey, 1997), and that control over nature starts from the construction and manipulation of these scales (Swyngedouw, 2004). Many of the themes that weave together political ecology approaches are essentially scalar in their nature and rest on the central importance placed on the role of power relations in shaping access to, and control over, environmental resources and space (Neumann, 2009). Engaging comprehensively with scalar processes is called for in the assessment of multi-

level actions of different conservation actors whose funds and expertise have re-configured African landscapes (Ramutsindela and Noe, 2015, Green, 2016). This engagement is necessary because conditions that redefine access and control over the local space are inherently embedded in the scale construction processes that partnerships are called for. Zulu (2009) supports this further with the case of community-based natural resource management (CBRNM) in Malawi – arguing that it is in the making of new conservation scales that strong patterns of winners and losers are created, local livelihoods disrupted and tensions brewed between modern and traditional institutions (Zulu, 2009)

These observations support the view held by Crawford (2003) on the rhetorical and instrumental use of 'partnership' by international actors. These partnerships have subsequently supported governance reforms only to disguise and legitimise the interventions of external agencies in domestic policy reforms that mystify power asymmetry. Contrary to the official discourse of encouraging locally-formulated reform strategies, partnerships reflect conspicuously the power of neoliberalism, its reshaping of landscapes and profound alterations of the lives of rural people in areas targeted for conservation. The agenda of international agencies remains relatively unchallenged, both in terms of what is included and what is excluded (Crawford, 2003). It is becoming clear that conservation is an organized political project in which private sector businesses and their networks are dominant, hence transforming conservation in ways that accommodate the interests of global capital (MacDonald, 2010). At the same time, despite the cloying and deceitful rhetoric and the adverse outcomes of new partnerships for some of the local partners, they can still provide institutions and resources for otherwise marginalised rural groups to challenge powerful interests (Wright, 2017).

In the rest of this section, we engage further with the literature on specific theoretical aspects of partnerships in relation to conservation scales, governance reforms and economic development (specifically through tourism). Our focus on these areas relates to the patterns emerging in the literature, which suggest that partnership configurations in wildlife are determined by how threats are defined, and their solutions reconciled for action by different global actors. In recent literature, concerns that wildlife is continuously threatened by increasing human population and related activities have been accompanied by further threats arising from climate change and illicit exploitation for domestic and international markets (Breuer et al., 2016, Shaffer and Bishop, 2016), and by alternative models for restoration of ecosystems (some focusing on specific species requirements for habitats).

Three of these alternative models are important for our discussion. The first is an emerging consensus that conservation actions must be scaled up to secure large landscapes for wildlife protection. Securing large landscapes for wildlife is closely related to the need for re-establishing ecological connectivity (and network of protected areas) that has been broken by humans. The logic here is that stand-alone protected areas that are already threatened and isolated have lost their ability to offer protection and refuge for wildlife hence the need to redefine the appropriate scale of conservation (Adams et al., 2016). The second alternative model is the shifting of centres of power from central governments to accord greater responsibilities for wildlife protection to local institutions and communities through community-based conservation. This alternative is closely linked to the first one mentioned – as it is the means through which land is secured for wildlife protection outside core-protected areas. The third model is that nature should be marketed in order to pay for its own protection while also serving local development objectives.

These alternatives entail significant shift of practices and policies that govern conservation of natural resources (Ribot and Oyono, 2006, Berkes, 2010, Adams et al., 2016) calling for the private sector and development agencies to play major facilitation roles. Support is also mobilized for actions that cover a large spatial scale, usually addressing a range of development objectives, conservation processes and land uses (Clark et al., 2014). As the focus shifts from traditional protected areas towards socio-economic landscapes, for example, changes occur also in the number and composition of actors and institutions involved in finance, and in technical and management responsibilities. In the following discussion, we expand on how different theories inform these alternative models and what actions and impacts have resulted from their implementation.

2.1 Partnerships for constructing conservation scale

Theories of conservation biology support the redefinition of scale when emphasizing that meta-populations - spatially structured populations - are affected by spatial patterns of habitat loss hence reducing the ability of species to persist in the fragmented landscapes (Clark et al., 2014). So too, landscape ecology theories emphasize that conservation outcomes are determined by spatial heterogeneity, linkages, and interactions between ecological patterns and processes as well as their variations with scale (Lindborg and Eriksson, 2004, Lindenmayer and Hobbs, 2008) (Lindborg and Eriksson, 2004, Hilty et al., 2006, Lindenmayer and Hobbs, 2008). These two ecological perspectives suggest that contiguous and un-fragmented habitats support ecological processes and meet the habitat requirements of wildlife species that have extensive home ranges or migrate over

large territories. These species and their requirements for migration and dispersal corridors differ but range from jaguars in South America, orangutans, wolves, tigers and elephants in Asia and Africa (Steinmetz et al., 2006, Boitani et al., 2007) as well as various types of migratory birds. Due to their charisma and/or perceived levels of survival threats, protection of these species have attracted global attention hence calling for action plans that legitimate constructing structural and functional connectivity through the concept of buffer zones and migratory corridors (Boitani et al., 2007).

Over time, these theories have been the basis for policy-oriented partnerships that have effectively changed discourses on the scale of conservation across the global south. Whereas the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) builds on these theories and remains the general framework for biodiversity conservation worldwide, international organizations have converged to form policy-oriented partnerships – some of them focusing mainly on international policy processes that determine how activities of other actors are organized to support the achievement of the desired landscape connectivity. For example, cultural landscapes are identified and accorded protection status as World Heritage Sites through the World Heritage and Man and Biosphere Reserve programs (MAB) of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Breymeyer, 2000, Rossler, 2000). In addition, UNESCO guided the establishment of Biosphere Reserves based on a geographical zoning scheme, which comprises clearly delineated and legally protected *core areas, buffer zones and cooperation areas* (Ajathi and Krumme, 2002).

The idea for this zoning is that core wildlife areas are secured by international laws while partnerships are developed to facilitate protection of the neighbouring socio-cultural landscapes (recognized as cooperation zones). While UNESCO has retained the mandate to monitor and assess what is reserved – irrespective of whether it is managed by the government, trusts, private individuals or institutions at national, regional and international levels (Green and Paine, 1997) – it has also built an integrated landscape management strategy that guides coordination, planning and management of buffer zones and other land uses around protected landscapes, thus providing cross-jurisdictional consistency (Brunckhorst, 2000).

In 2003, IUCN proposed a conservation category called Community Conservation Areas (CCAs)[1], which was adopted in the Fifth World Parks Congress held in Durban during the

[1] Officially defined as natural and/or modified ecosystems containing significant biodiversity values, ecological services and cultural values, voluntarily conserved by indigenous and local communities through customary laws or other effective means (IUCN, 2005).

same year. The congress recommended that the recognition of CCAs be an urgent necessity and a tool for strengthening the management and expansion of the world's protected areas, promoting connectivity at landscape and seascape level and enhancing public support for protected areas (Pathak et al., 2004, IUCN, 2005). Specific recommendations were thus made for governments to recognize CCAs as legitimate conservation tools, and to assign them to national and international protected area categories as appropriate. Today, CCAs guide the establishment and management of community-based wildlife management areas across the world. Conservation organizations and funding agencies have facilitated partnerships with states and local communities to establish Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) in Ghana (Parren and Sam, 2003, Baruah et al., 2016), communal and private conservancies in Namibia and community-wildlife management areas (WMAs) in Botswana and Tanzania (Schuerholz and Baldus, 2007, Gallo et al., 2009, Noe and Kangalawe, 2015).

Based on the cross-jurisdictional scale defined by UNESCO and IUCN – and coupled with other binding agreements on international cooperation in wildlife protection, including the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) – conservation organizations and funding agencies around the world have developed diverse approaches to conservation planning at the scale of landscape and seascape. Some of these large landscape projects in Africa include WWF's ecoregions [2] (Jenkins and Joppa, 2009), AWF's African Heartlands [3] (Burgess et al., 2004, Muruthi and Frohardt, 2006) and Peace Parks Foundation's (PPF) trans-frontier conservation areas[4].

There is an element of packaging and fundraising concern in these projects. Sachedina (2008), for example, has shown that the AWF heartlands idea was so-named in order to appeal to US donors for whom the heartland concept resonated. Yet these concepts also hit the ground in ways which require concrete actions and multiple forms of partnership (Sachedina, 2010). Due to different kinds of land use, tenure and ownership systems across landscapes, these organizations and their projects have without exception depended entirely on establishing partnerships with states, local communities and private landowners to secure contiguous cross-jurisdictional land for wildlife protection.

[2] Defined as terrestrial or aquatic areas that are characterized by distinctive large or groupings of regional landforms

[3] Defined as large landscapes of exceptional wildlife and natural value extending across states, private, and communal lands

[4] Defined as conservation landscapes that straddle borders of two or more countries and include state, private and communal lands

The main argument here is that managing the transition from planning to practices that facilitate the reorganization of land and other resource tenure and ownership systems calls for participation of landowners (states, local communities and private trusts), conservation actors, donors and development agencies (Baldus et al., 2003, Bluwstein et al., 2016). In Tanzania, development agencies such as the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), the German, Danish and US governments (through GTZ/KfW, DANIDA and USAID) and international conservation NGOs such as WWF, AWF, Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS), Care International and Africare, have all converged to facilitate this transition.[5] How specifically these and other actors formulate partnerships for intervention in particular local contexts is captured well in the case of Tanzania's Selous Game Reserve:

> *The Stephenson Report (1987) proposed a multi-donor approach, which was adopted by all parties concerned. Frankfurt Zoological Society supported the Selous Game Reserve with an aircraft and road-building machinery. The African Wildlife Foundation assigned a mechanic, equipped with a mobile workshop in the reserve's headquarters. The Worldwide Fund for Nature provided an elephant and rhino biologist. Together with the Wildlife Division the four donors jointly planned the necessary activities and implemented them in a coordinated and coherent way. In retrospect it can be said that this partnership venture led to a fast but thorough rehabilitation of the reserve and contributed greatly to conservation success. In 1999 the European Union joined the partnership by supporting the Selous Rhino Trust, a Tanzanian NGO. For administrative reasons, GTZ became the facilitating agency for this aspect (*Baldus et al., 2003).

2.2 Partnerships for governance reform

Interventions by powerful actors as those mentioned above have pushed for governance reforms in different contexts. Governance theory recognizes the importance of different stakeholders (state, market and civil society) in solving problems and in creating opportunities. Analyses of conservation partnerships represent a prominent part of the governance literature. Existing work suggests that following numerous sets of actors in the management of natural resources, governance (in the sense of authoritative setting and implementation of rules) can no longer be exerted exclusively by the state or public actors but through multi-stakeholder partnerships (Edwards et al., 2001, Berkes, 2010, Visseren-Hamakers et al., 2012). Accordingly, many discussions have revolved around the link between the formation of partnerships, the role of local institutions and communities, and the transfer of powers (Ribot and Oyono, 2006, Adams et al., 2016) – generally

[5] These actors sponsor up to 40% of the total national budget and 90% of conservation activities (URT, 1998, Levine, 2002; Nelson et al, 2007)

arguing that partnerships have reinvented conservation governance by setting the agenda and leading discourses and rules that govern wildlife protection (Mercer, 2003, Martin et al., 2011, Visseren-Hamakers et al., 2012). In this review, we focus mainly on how reforms in the wildlife sector are both the agent and the outcome of partnerships, and how power plays out in the relevant interactions.

Since the Agenda 21 of the Rio conference advocated for shifting governance from the national to the local level, concerted efforts to decentralize natural resource governance tool place, with almost all developing countries undertaking decentralization reforms (Ribot, 2002, Larson and Soto, 2008). In place of top-down management, principles of 'grassroot' or bottom-up planning and management, such as public participation and co-management, became entrenched. Despite some differences in their formation and outcomes, public participation, collaboration and co-management related largely to devolving management powers to local-level governments and other institutions (Ribot and Oyono, 2006, Berkes, 2010). Hence, devolution (the transfer of rights and responsibilities to local groups, organizations and local-level governments that have autonomous discretionary decision-making powers) and decentralization (the transfer of rights and responsibilities from the central to the local branches of the same institutions) have been common subjects of discussion in relation to the outcomes of governance reforms (Agrawal, 2001, Larson and Soto, 2008).

Decentralization in Africa and other developing regions is closely linked to the current discussion about formation of partnerships particularly because natural resources are a necessary point of conflict and cooperation between central, local and peripheral authorities in any attempt to transfer powers from the centre (Ribot and Oyono, 2006). As 'decentralization is demand-driven' (Mandondo and Kozanayi, 2006), external actors collaborate to put pressure on governments to prepare policy frameworks that allow the shift from centralized management systems to one that devolves management and ownership responsibilities to the local communities as well as allowing a greater role for private sector involvement (Nelson et al., 2007, Schuerholz and Baldus, 2007). As most developing country governments lack legal and institutional mechanisms to translate this global-driven orientation into workable situations, they find themselves relying on the same source for assistance in policy and legal formulation. This was, for example, the case in Tanzania's natural resource sector where until the 1990s the country did not have policies (for land, wildlife, forest and mining) at the time when the management responsibilities were to be transferred from the central government. The old forest policy (1953) and Wildlife Conservation Act (1974) did not provide for participation and ownership of these resources by local communities. The first policies of the mid 1990s

were prepared with significant influence from conservation NGOs, which meant that in some cases, decentralization started with an insufficient policy and legal environment.

There is evidence suggesting that policies and laws resulting from the decentralization process in Africa are a result of pressure from donors - the most active being the World Bank. Demand-driven decentralization has consequently forced governments to transfer powers to sub-groups rather than representatives of local populations (Bazaara, 2006), and to transfer resources that have no commercial value while also making decentralized decision-making more cumbersome through excessive oversight and approval processes (Namara, 2006, Kiwango et al., 2015). In practice, governments have placed imaginative obstacles in the path of decentralized institutions and choices (Ribot et al., 2006: 1881). Rather than decreasing, bureaucracy and state interference continue – to the point of leading to full re-centralization of conservation efforts in some cases (Dressler et al., 2010: 13). Instead of decentralizing power, governments seem to be reinforcing upward accountability by transferring obligations to local authorities without sufficient funding, as well as keeping significant control and supervisory roles over the allocation of important commercial opportunities (including revenues from permits and licenses) (Mandondo and Kozanayi, 2006, Muhereza, 2006). Our interest is in investigating how decentralization conceals politics, and how partnerships are sites of power struggle are – these are visibly playing out in decisions about which powers to transfer and which institutions in the local arena to entrust with these powers (Shackleton and Campbell, 2001, Ribot and Oyono, 2006, Berkes, 2010).

2.3 Market-based conservation partnerships

The proliferation of market-based strategies in wildlife conservation is considered to be an implicit success of neoliberal ideology, which links biodiversity conservation with economic growth (Van der Duim et al., 2015) and glorifies tourism as a global economic champion of development. Intuitively appealing, the pairing of tourism and conservation seems a convenient pathway out of the contradiction between the mantra of continuous growth and the reality of finite resources (Duffy, 2014), offering an apparent perfect fit for delivering 'win-win-win' solutions for conservation, poverty alleviation and tourism (Igoe and Brockington, 2007). By covering both conservation and human development, tourism becomes an integral part of the neoliberal conservation-development nexus (Igoe and Brockington, 2007). The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has reinforced this message globally for nearly three decades, often in tandem with the UN Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The consistent efforts of UNWTO have earned worldwide recognition for tourism as a pivotal sector in global development. As one of world's largest economic sectors, tourism generated almost 10% of global GDP and 284 million jobs in 2015 (World Travel Tourism Council, 2017). It is often mentioned as one of the key sectors in the path to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The potential of tourism to reap economic benefits has a mesmerising effect on private and public actors active in various sectors, and this effect is rather visible in the way conservation is organized in Africa, and in Tanzania in particular.

By shifting the focus from use to conservation of wildlife, neoliberalism enables the extension of commodification beyond land and labour to include nature and the environment (West et al., 2004, Igoe and Brockington, 2007). As nature becomes 'capital', human-wildlife encounters as well as animals become 'products' ready to be sold to local and international markets (Duffy, 2014). In effect, tourism operates as a form of governance by shaping how visitors see the destination country, its nature, people and culture (Ooi, 2005). This is done through a process of *generification*, which involves reshaping local landscapes and values to fit preconceived Western-rooted categories of nature, locality and diversity (West & Carrier, 2004). In order to pay for values that they derive from experiencing nature and wildlife, tourists need to 'fall in love' with it. This perspective predicates the dependency of tourism on biodiversity, and links its success (or decline) to aesthetic values and the ability to attract tourists. A recent initiative of UNWTO of providing training on tourism and biodiversity in Africa shows how this point of view is promoted from high level of authority and with a relative sense of urgency:

> *With the rapid growth of the tourism sector in West and Central Africa, tourism has become an important pillar for local economies in many destinations in the region. Challenges in preserving the biodiversity in an appropriate and quality environment may in the long run affect visitors´ satisfaction which ultimately would result in lower income generation from tourist related activitie*s (UNWTO, 2015).

Through commodification, conservation plays a key role in making tourism profitable. The institutional pressure created by tourism leads to the 'flattening of nature' (Duffy, 2014) and a restructuring of conservation practices – transforming conservation actors and local communities into market actors, regardless of whether they have the will or the capacity to perform such functions in a meaningful way. Whereas tourism operators become influential gatekeepers of incoming tourist flows (Wearing and McDonald, 2002) and tourist choices turn into political power (West et al., 2004), public-private partnerships and participatory processes are promoted as a way of balancing the influence of powerful business actors.

In essence, participatory structures that cumulate priorities for conservation and poverty with tourism, are meant to uphold the democratic involvement of all parties and secure a just distribution of responsibilities, costs and benefits from tourism development. The active involvement of local communities and public groups in participatory decision-making is intended to provide social accountability (Nelson, 2012) and deter opportunistic appropriation of tourism benefits by politicians and business organizations. However, consortia of government and business organizations are able to create an illusion of partnership to local communities and legitimize pre-arranged plans, through clever manipulation of time and information (Anderson and Prideaux, Forthcoming). When local communities do not have the time or capability to develop their own vision for tourism developments, businesses have open space for imposing their own, and tend to boost their own economic interests over local social or environmental priorities (Moscardo, 2011).

Successful governance of natural resources is often connected to plurality and democratic participation, and conditioned by the devolution of state authority to private actors or communities (Anderson and Leal, 2015). For the past couple of decades, African governments have reformed their governance structures – devolving land management rights to local communities as a key conservation policy approach. At the same time, tourism has been widely promoted on the premise that the economic benefits it generates can induce local communities to become supporters of conservation, and transform the livelihood activities that have undermined conservation, including poaching and grazing (Buckley, 2010, Elliott and Sumba, 2011, Spenceley and Snyman, 2017). The fast uptake of partnerships for conservation that involve wildlife-based tourism business and communities throughout sub-Saharan Africa (Table 1) can be seen as an illustration of how neoliberalism has opened up the global South to tourism as an important source of economic wealth (Kent, 2003, Duffy and Moore, 2011).

Table 1: Diffusion of conservation partnerships in Africa

Institutional arrangement	**Numbers over time**		
	→		
Conservancies in Namibia	1 (1995)	4 (1998)	79 (2012)
CBNRM in Botswana (registered community trusts)	1 (1993)	2 (1995)	105 (2012)
Private game ranches in South Africa	10 (1960s)	5,000 (2000)	11,600 (2012)
Designated areas for hunting in Uganda	1 (2001)		16 (2014)
Trans-frontier conservation areas in southern Africa	1 (2000)		18 (existing and potential) (2013)
AWF's conservation enterprises across Africa	1 (1999)		> 60 of which 65% is tourist related (2013)

Source: Van Wijk et al. 2014, p. 245

Arguments in favour of governance reforms in wildlife management point out that moral responsibility is insufficient for deterring opportunistic behaviour by individual actors (Anderson and Leal, 2015) and natural resources must be placed under market mechanisms in order to create additional monetary incentives for conservation (Van der Duim et al., 2015). Reflecting principles of marketing environmentalism, proposals for market-based wildlife conservation are often grounded on critiques of state agencies' chronic inefficiencies and limited competences for handling complex transboundary issues such as poverty, inequity and environmental degradation. The pragmatic efficiency and management skills of business organizations, pitted against limited capabilities of local communities to coordinate conservation, offer, in theory, a winning proposition for conservation dilemmas. The result is a veritable proliferation of hybrid governance structures as popular models for addressing global sustainability challenges, in private and in public arenas of governance (Hall, 2011).

In essence, hybrid governance models are institutional innovations that emerge by involving private actors in conservation (previously under the control of the state), by creating new regulations and standards for social behaviour, and by creating a scope for business models geared towards social and environmental goals (Van der Duim et al., 2015). Various forms of hybrid governance coexist and are situated on a continuum between free markets and hierarchical forms of governance. Still new in research as in practice, the emergence and functioning of hybrid governance in the context of conservation and tourism are unclear and require further research. However, known is that instead of empowering local communities to take charge and preserve natural resources, market-based conservation seem to reinforce existing structures of power and authority – excluding communities or reducing their input to policy making to a symbolic presence (Beaumont and Dredge, 2010, Moscardo, 2011).

The perpetuation of inequities that accompanies hegemonic power structures generates conflicts that deepen the negative effects on the wellbeing of local communities and on conservation. The combined effects of multiple regulatory transformations seem to lead to the consolidation of power and control by state and private actors over natural resources. While public and private actors control the economic benefits, local communities are left with the responsibility of managing wildlife and their own livelihoods (Nelson, 2012). Top-down governing, under the influence of transnational conservation organizations, and the absence of conservation models that are rooted in and based on values of local communities are likely to lead to poor conservation and livelihood outcomes (Nshimbi and Vinya, 2014). Since it is unlikely that public and private actors relinquish some of these powers, further research is necessary into exploring under what

conditions can communities reclaim an active role in policy-making.

3. Wildlife protection and tourism promotion in Tanzania

> *The overall coverage of terrestrial protected and conserved areas – broadly understood here as areas conserved de facto, with or without the intervention of a conscious managing body – may be substantially larger (exceeding 35.5% of total land). These conserved territories ought to be taken into consideration as a system, as they are mutually supportive and beneficial. For instance, village forest reserves and community conserved wildlife habitats interact with state protected areas to provide areas for ecological connectivity and wildlife dispersal. While also meeting gaps in protection, these enhanced areas for conservation also provide opportunities for the development of tourism and other livelihoods* (IUCN, 2017: 3)

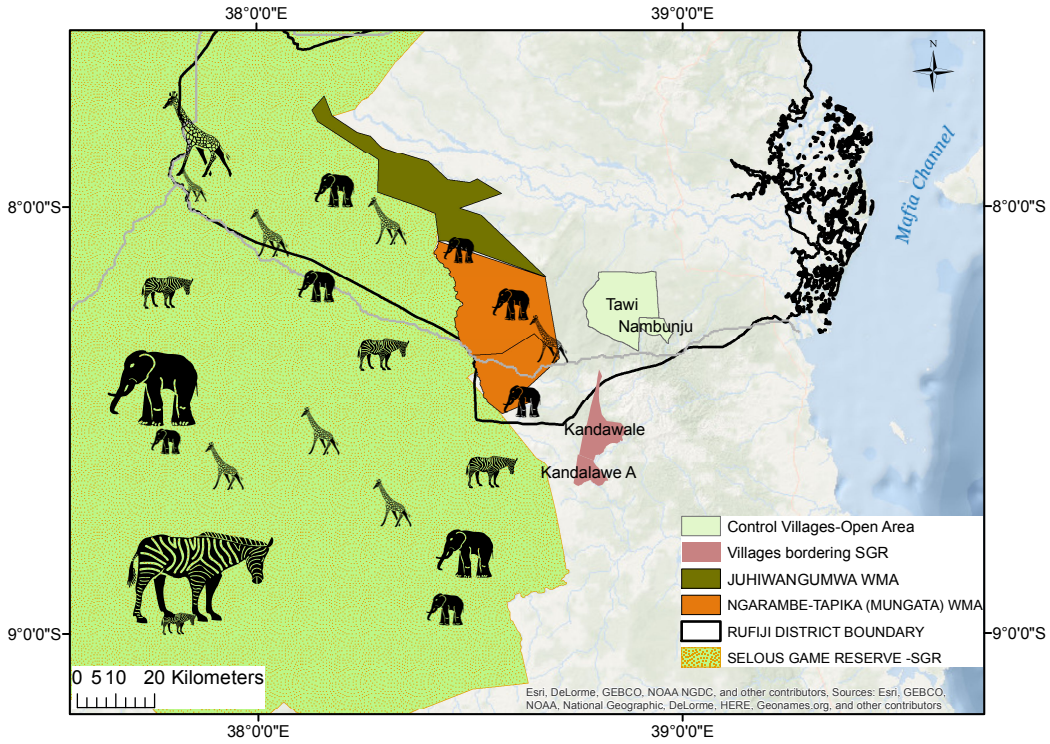
The passage above is part of the report of the IUCN-facilitated workshop for the assessment of actions and governance for conservation and sustainable livelihoods in Tanzania (21-22 March 2017). It speaks widely to the various issues of this paper, most importantly, on how conservation actors associate their activities with local development through tourism, and the importance that vast protected landscapes that are surrounded by community-conserved areas are considered mutually beneficial. It points to the fact that conservation and tourism in the case of Tanzania are highly interdependent. Indeed, the same legal and institutional framework under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism guide the two.

Our specific empirical focus is the Selous game reserve and its surrounding landscapes, including two WMAs and an open hunting area in Rufiji district (see Figure 1). We investigate how conservation and tourism are negotiated in the landscape and what partnership networks exist and with what conservation and livelihood impacts. A more detailed presentation of the institutional environments and arrangements that operate in the selected cases will be made in future working papers. For the scope of this paper, it suffices to point out that the legal and institutional frameworks that govern conservation and tourism regulate activities beyond protected areas, to also cover communal lands that include wildlife management areas in village lands.

The harmonisation of human and non-human landscapes is an act of scale construction that has been shaped considerably by consecutive waves of decentralization and devolution of rights over land and wildlife, with de-concentration and privatization playing a secondary role (see details of these reforms in Nelson et al., 2007, Nelson, 2012, Kiwango et al., 2015). Accordingly, policy reforms in the Tanzanian conservation-tourism nexus are better understood as *reregulation* (Castree, 2008), a process associated with

neoliberalization of conservation (Igoe and Brockington, 2007), which designates the use of public authority to transform previously untradeable things into tradeable commodities. This is achieved through different forms of territorialisation, such as the privatization of land (e.g. for private game reserves), the sub-division of collectively-held land or the issuing of collective legal titles to rural communities, which enable private partners to enter business ventures with outside investors or with NGOs (as in conservancies), and by delivering rents *and* issuing concessions to investors on state-controlled territories (Igoe and Brockington, 2007).

Figure 1: Selous game reserve and surrounding landscape in Rufiji District



Source: authors

Despite claims of decentralization, the ownership and control of wildlife in Tanzania remains firmly in the hands of the government. This allows the central government to control financial resources generated through tourism activities (hunting, photographic and safari tourism), and enable the appropriation and distribution of most benefits. As Nelson (2012) points out, Tanzanian political elites run the conservation-tourism nexus

through formal and informal relations shaped to extract private benefits. At the same time, responsibilities for managing land that accommodate wildlife outside protected areas are left to the local communities. Although policies declare interest in sharing costs and benefits between the state and communities, in fact the state controls (and retains) most benefits, while communities are mostly left with the costs of conservation (Igoe and Brockington, 2007).

The success of policy reforms depends on the type of rights created, the types of land and wildlife use, and the capacity of local communities to organize the management of resources (Meinzen-Dick and Knox, 1999). Citing collective action as a fundamental condition for successful devolution programs, Meinzen-Dick and Knox (1999) emphasize the importance of identifying the conditions that enable local communities to organize and manage natural resources. However, in Tanzania, the inequitable distribution of benefits from wildlife-based tourism is a source of conflict between state agencies and local communities, and between communities and private investors (Nelson, 2012). What research does not address explicitly is the cumulative effect of multiple policy reforms on the outcomes of conservation and whether they are fostering cooperation and local development.

As tourism in Tanzania is mainly wildlife-based, it remains an important source of foreign exchange for the government and also for ruling elites and their collaborators. Since the 1990s, earnings from wildlife-based tourism have registered sharp upward trends, rising from US$ 1.25 billion in 2010 (World Bank, 2012) to about US$ 2 billion in 2014 (Ndulu 2015:3). In 2015, about 1.1 million tourists visited Tanzania, generating about US$ 2 billion in revenue (URT, 2014). This revenue provides huge opportunity for rent seeking actors in the sector (Benjaminsen and Bryceson, 2012, Benjaminsen et al., 2013), while also making plans and actions related to conservation and tourism highly interdependent.

At present, Tanzania has the largest number of national parks in the world, with nearly 40% of its land reserved for conservation (IUCN, 2017). Known to be a stable and safe country, it attracts a significant number of tourist investors but about 70% of the 1,200 tourism businesses operating in or adjacent to national parks are foreign-owned (De Boer & Van Dijk, 2016). This has meant that a lot transactions take place outside Tanzanian economy and majority of profits are repatriated. Nevertheless, the World Bank cite Tanzania's per capita yearly income as one of the lowest in the world at US$529, with 28% of people living below the poverty line (World Bank, 2015).

What we derive from the literature generally, and the case of Tanzania's decentralization, privatization and devolution of wildlife conservation in particular, is the proliferation of

hybrid forms of governance, and the emergence of conservation-oriented business ventures and community-based partnerships (CBPs) (Igoe and Brockington, 2007). Popular in addressing global challenges such as conservation or poverty, hybrid governance models reflect principles of market environmentalism and neoliberal doctrines, by having the transfer of control from state to non-state actors, and particularly private actors, as a defining aspect. Hybrid governance models are also institutional innovations that emerge by involving private actors in conservation, creating new regulations and standards for social behaviour, and opening a scope for business models geared towards social and environmental goals (van der Duim et al., 2014). In the following section, we pay particular attention to how these business models shape the formation of partnerships in the context of Tanzania's wildlife sector.

4. Business-community partnership (BCP) in Tanzania's wildlife sector

Partnerships between local communities and private businesses are sometimes called business-community partnerships (BCP) – one of the several forms of institutional arrangements used for the purpose of wildlife conservation in Eastern and Southern African countries (Van Wijk et al., 2015, de Boer and Van Dijk, 2016). However, BCP is not a universally agreed and applied way of describing such arrangements. Castley (2010) offers a typology of joint-venture operations in conservation tourism in the African context. In his typology, partnerships and CBNRM have a specific land management arrangement, where the community has some form of ownership and devolved management authority over their land. Community members form a community trust (or some form of representative organization) that becomes the stakeholder representative in interactions with other parties, such as private enterprises. Land ownership is also an important criterion for Carter et al. (2008), who categorize management regimes in private protected areas[6] in Kenya and Tanzania broadly into two: managed solely by private entities; and managed jointly (Carter et al., 2008).

BCPs are seen as joint collaborations between community organizations and a host of other partners (such as corporate entities and/or NGOs). Taking a broader perspective, van Wijk et al., (2014) present different institutional arrangements for conservation in selected African countries, such as conservancies in Namibia, CBNRM in Botswana and tourism conservation enterprises in Kenya. In all these institutional arrangements,

[6] Private protected area is defined as 'an area of land of conservation importance that is directly under the ownership and/or management of a private sector conservation enterprise for the purpose of biodiversity conservation', while private sector enterprise being all non-state bodies such as companies and trusts (Carter et al., 2008: p. 178).

community-business ventures are possible, but their precise manifestations and operations depend on various factors, including the nature and degree of devolution of rights to local communities; the type of actors involved in administration and/or management of BCP; land tenure arrangements; legal standing of BCP; and the degree of devolution of land and natural resource use rights to local communities (Carter et al., 2008, Ahebwa et al., 2012, Van Wijk et al., 2015).

De Boer and Van Dijk, (2016) take their point of departure in acknowledging that a core principle in the functioning of BCPs is that conservation is required and local development is wanted. The distinction is important as it reflects the priorities set by the institutional set up of BCPs in Tanzania. Furthermore, they identify three models of generic BCPs distinguished by the number of communities participating in the partnership, the level of formal arrangements between the communities and the business involved. The three types are described briefly below, in order to describe the roles of different actors involved in BCPs.

Business-Initiated Agreements

In this model, the tour operator proposes to a community that an area of land be provided for tourist activities, and in return the village receives compensation in the form of a leasing fee and/or an agreed-upon fee per tourist/bed/night. The village is responsible for ensuring that the visiting tourists and their property are safe and that no activities are carried out that are harmful to the environment and incompatible with tourism activities, e.g. tree-cutting, cultivation and livestock grazing. These agreements typically involve a private sector investor and a village government, with village members being the direct beneficiaries of the agreement.

NGO-Initiated Agreements

Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) are generally placed under this category of agreements. Although these areas are initiated and continue to be facilitated largely by international NGOs concerned with wildlife conservation, the agreements that underpin them typically involve a private sector investor, central and local governments, a number of villages (and village representatives), and a civil society organization. As a matter of procedure, usually villages form a CBO to enter these agreements. Although villages should voluntarily join the CBO, once an area of the village is identified for conservation, a village has little choice but enter into an agreement to protect wildlife (Noe and Kangalawe, 2015, Bluwstein and Lund, 2016). In any case, usually member villages of the CBO contribute part of their land and agree to protect wildlife in place of prior uses such as cultivation, herding and settlements. The CBO in return receives a share of revenues

obtained from tourism activities carried out within their area. The Wildlife Division (WD) and the recently formed Tanzania Wildlife Authority (TAWA) regulate and monitor tourism activities outside protected areas, and collect revenues generated from tourism ventures. District councils are involved through a conservation advisory committee for the WMA. The District, in collaboration with the WD, also play a role in coordinating anti-poaching activities – while NGOs such as AWF and WWF contribute funds to enable the establishment of the WMA and CBOs, as well as building human and technical capacity for conservation in areas such as resource management planning. Tour operators usually make an agreement with a CBO that has user rights (through their Authorized Association) to use a portion of village land or a WMA for setting up tented lodges for tourists. These operators invest in physical property, and are involved in promoting the area for tourism activities. They offer compensation to villages, usually based on a fee per tourist bed night (in the case of photographic tourism) or hunting fee (in the case of hunting tourism). More details of revenue collection and politics of sharing and utilization are discussed further in Noe et al., 2017b.

Government-Initiated Agreements

The last category is one grouping agreements that are made between the central government and a tourism hunting company, where villages are involved on a voluntary basis. The tour operator pays for the use of a hunting concession directly to the central authority, and a portion of the revenue is delivered to the district government. Some of these funds are intended for local development purposes, but the amounts received by villages have been reported to be small (Mariki et al., 2015, Wright, 2017, Noe et al., 2017b). The district is expected to assist in anti-poaching activities, in collaboration with game rangers from the relevant wildlife authority. However, these local collaborations form part of the three types of agreements (as in De Boer & Van Dijk, 2016) which do not necessarily cover all institutional arrangements involved in conservation and tourism in Tanzania. However, they provide important distinctions in the way BCPs function, and why their legal status makes it difficult for them to fulfil their goals. Still, some of the literature suggests that business-initiated agreements are effective in achieving sustainability goals and are more equitable from the perspective of local communities (Farmaki et al., 2015).

Ahebwa et al., (2012) use the term private-community partnership (PCP) to describe 'a particular form of hybrid intervention in which local benefits are claimed to be guaranteed through shared ownership of the tourism venture … [which is] often mediated by public and third sector organizations'. Elliott and Sumba (2010) use the term introduced by AWF, *conservation enterprise*, to describe a commercial enterprise that generates economic benefits in order to support conservation goals. The important distinction emphasized by

Elliot and Sumba (2010) is the role of management expertise in dividing responsibilities for the implementation and running of the partnership. In this model, local communities maintain ownership, while business competences are brought in by the private partner to run benefit-generating activities, such as tourism, agriculture and natural products (e.g. harvesting and processing honey). Business services, such as business planning, legal contracting, community engagement and raising capital, which are brought in by private actors are usually missing in the community. This way, AWF argues, the community keeps their rights over the natural resources set aside for conservation and gain from tourism-generated benefits. According to Elliot and Sumba (2010) local ownership combined with private sector management is the most effective form of conservation enterprise.

Communities that enter WMA agreements face extra challenges compared to other BCPs, which is why we focus on them. In practice, partnerships in WMAs are not entirely voluntary. Rather, they are a function of the ecological significance of the village land. Indeed, the law requires that communities as entities can exit WMA agreements, but the land they allocate to the WMA remains locked in. This way, communities lose the ability to decide on the use of its land. Consequently, radical changes in the way WMA decides to enter in business ventures require a general agreement among village members. As wishes, needs and interests of villages are different, as are influences of local elites within each village, conflicts arise during negotiations and agreements take a long time to be concluded. Another aspect where community members of WMAs are quite specific is relation to the distinction between ownership and management. In business-initiated agreements, the management of land and financial resources is negotiated between private investors and communities, which seems to lead to more equitable outcomes for communities. However, the state retains the control of financial streams emerging from the WMA business ventures, hence enabling opportunistic behaviour by local governments and political elites (Nelson, 2012).

5. Unpacking partnerships: decision-making, power dynamics and benefit sharing

A large share of critical discussion regarding impacts of BCPs relates to the control of economic benefits of tourism enjoyed by local elites (Bluwstein, 2017, Wright, 2017). These critical studies essentially question the use of the term 'partnership' in BCP because in reality, decision-making and revenue sharing structures and practices are often lopsided against community members who are not part of any elite grouping (Sachedina, 2010, Ahebwa et al., 2012). A closer look within this discussion is needed to achieve a fine-grained understanding of how unequal and poorly distributed benefits arise from these partnerships.

Tourism BCPs essentially involve local communities and private tourism operators. A large number of BCPs also involve international NGOs that act as facilitators of the partnership process, helping local communities to review and select tourism operators, providing or finding funds for proposed tourism projects, and/or providing legal and administrative guarantees on behalf of the community vis-à-vis local and central governments and other stakeholders (Ahebwa et al., 2012, de Boer and Van Dijk 2016, Elliot and Sumba, 2010). Even when international NGOs are involved in good faith to facilitate tourism BCPs, this does not guarantee smooth and conflict-free collaboration between business and the community (Balint and Mashinya, 2006). In certain instances, NGOs actually exacerbate the power imbalance between business and the community, or within a community, by working together with (and hence legitimizing) a particular group of community members as local representatives (Simpson, 2008, Nelson, 2010). International NGOs themselves are powerful actors in the tripartite BCP arrangement because they hold financial resources and connections to local and central government offices and various stakeholders whom community members usually cannot access. This creates a situation where those representing the local community's interests may have 'a sense of indebtedness' to its NGO counterpart and 'a compromised ability to go against' options and choices preferred or suggested by them (Ahebwa et al., 2012).

This is not to conclude that the involvement of international NGOs (or any third party with genuine intention to facilitate the partnership process) inevitably leads to worsening power imbalances and unfair distributions of benefits. As Ribot's work has shown, local NGOs can have precisely the same effect because they are not downwardly accountable to any electorate but are instead accountable through means of their own choosing to specific interest groups they exist to serve, as well as being upwardly accountable to donors (Ribot, 2002, Ribot et al., 2006, Ribot and Oyono, 2006). However, understanding how a third-party or facilitator may impact the decision-making and benefit-sharing process within BCPs is crucial for the analysis of power relations in sustainability partnerships more generally. This requires a close examination of the community that constitutes a main actor of the BCP. In highly heterogeneous African societies in terms of ethnicity, clan identity, lifestyle, etc., it is erroneous to assume the community to be internally unified and coherent (Baker, 1997, Southgate, 2006). That means when a community is asked to form a representative body to take part in a BCP, it opens up to the possibility of elite capture, and the resultant body often fails to account for broad experiences and needs of community members. Too often, community members do not know how to hold this representative body accountable, not to mention what economic benefits they are entitled when their community enters tourism BCPs (Balint and Mashinya,

2006, Simpson, 2008). Those representing the community in BCPs have been criticized for being not transparent about their profit distribution and decisions that economically and politically empower their family members and close associates (Gibson and Marks, 1995, Balint and Mashinya, 2006). It is thus important to understand community agency, in particular whether and how villagers can oppose top-down conservation plans in their areas they disagree with, and whether they can hold community leadership accountable (Nelson, 2010, Nelson, 2012).

BCPs stand on the premise of community ownership or operating rights over land and wildlife residing on the land, but in Tanzania, BCPs and other forms of community-based natural resources management have been heavily undermined in recent years. This led Benjaminsen et al. to denounce that 'despite a decade of rhetoric on community conservation, current trends in Tanzania reflect a disturbing process of reconsolidation of state control over wildlife resources and increased rent-seeking behaviour, combined with dispossession of communities' (2013: 1087). Until recently, the Tanzanian government mainly controlled hunting tourism, while communities were left to organize non-consumptive tourism (e.g. photographic tourism). In 2008, the state issued a reviewed policy for Non-Consumptive Utilization (Wildlife Regulations), which requires all non-consumptive tourism operations at the community level to seek legal registration with the Director of Wildlife (Benjaminsen et al., 2013). This regulation also stipulates that private tour operators have to pay fees to the central treasury that will then disburse them to villages and districts, not directly to communities that are involved in BCPs (Snyder and Sulle, 2011). These changes have adversely affected revenue earning by local communities, as the state retains monopoly over hunting tourism and the allocation of hunting blocks that are within village lands.

The government of Tanzania continues to recentralize its control over wildlife and natural resources. Nelson (2012) claims that politicians at the central level have been amassing political influence by acquiring exclusive business opportunities. This blurred boundary between politics and business, as well as widespread corruption, are commonly observed features of natural resource governance in many African countries. Power struggles also happen along personal and communal patronage, and patron-client relationships are thought to be pervading at all levels of governing wildlife in Tanzania (Nelson, 2012, Nelson et al., 2007).

Political ecologists are critical of livelihood impacts from conservation and tourism. Local elite's capture of economic benefits from tourism has been a frequently cited problem and culprit for the small and/or unequal distribution of tourism revenues to ordinary

villagers (Balint and Mashinya, 2006, Gibson and Marks, 1995, Simpson, 2008). When economic benefits do not materialize to the extent community members have hoped, they can grow mistrust in the tourism BCP arrangement (Balint and Mashinya, 2006), thus weakening its legitimacy and operational sustainability. These critiques evoke the sense of 'green grabbing' happening in conservation tourism (Green, 2016). It appears that not only governments and private enterprises engage in green grabbing, but also particular community members such as community chiefs with traditional authorities (Gibson and Marks, 1995) or highly-educated and business-savvy individuals (Southgate, 2006), who enact green grabbing by actively approaching private tourism operators and proposing tourism partnerships (Gardner, 2012, Green and Adams, 2015).

In addition to livelihood concerns, studies have highlighted other socially negative outcomes. Gibson and Marks (1995) demonstrate how safari hunting tourism on community-managed land in Zambia fails to consider the social role of hunting in assigning and reinforcing the identity of lineage hunters within the community – particularly after making community members give up unlicensed hunting. In Southgate (2006), ecotourism BCP led to drawing boundaries around a wetland as conservation area and this has eroded trust-based relationships between different clans who used to access and use this area on friendly terms. Similarly, Green and Adams, (2015) and De Boer and Van Dijk, (2016), report that when multiple communities are involved in conservation tourism projects with private enterprise partners, inter-community conflicts can arise over whether communities located far from the conservation area can claim the same amount of tourism benefits from those located within or in much proximity.

6. Conclusion

This review of the literature on partnerships for wildlife protection sought to re-examine the win-win-win rhetoric that drives emergent hybrid forms of governance, given their increased popularity in wildlife conservation throughout Africa. Grounded in neoliberal ideologies, this rhetoric promises simultaneous achievement of various economic and socio-economic benefits through appealing combinations of conservation and tourism as solutions to the conundrum of challenges typically involved by such ambitious goals. This review set to examine the emergence of partnerships between state agencies, businesses and local communities in wildlife conservation, and their contribution to delivering the 'win-win-win' promises. The analysis of the literature confirms that hybrid partnerships are the result of cumulative effects of political and institutional forces that active in conservation and in tourism. In Tanzania, successive waves of decentralization, privatization and evolution of wildlife conservation enabled the emergence of a wide

variety of formal and informal partnerships, but the outcomes of their functioning so far seem to have been skewed to benefit largely selected elites, thus aggravating local power struggles.

Theoretically, three main groups of literature inform further examinations into the functioning of conservation partnerships in the African context, and specifically in Tanzania. Perspectives grounded in landscape ecology theories argue for enlarged scales of conservation as a way to re-establish ecological connectivity. At the same time, governance theories – applied to conservation and tourism – provided arguments in favour of shifting responsibilities for wildlife protection from central government to local institutions and communities, and led to the creation of institutional fields that nurture the emergence of various forms of community-based conservation models. A third group of literature, informed by principles of market environmentalism, argues that market forces are most suited to offer strong incentives for conservation, by adding economic gains to its goals. What becomes clear from these three bodies of literature are the various rationalities that justify the emergence of a disjointed landscape of political and institutional forces which, while arguing for territorial unity, impose the fragmentation of ownership, management and responsibility for conservation outcomes at local levels. The state's tight control over benefits extracted from wildlife management is placed in stark contrast with the insurmountable costs incurred by local communities in charge of managing it – in terms of livelihoods, security and human development. For conservation-based tourism partnerships, success would involve a balanced distribution of benefits and costs associated with wildlife conservation and management among partnership members.

By trading 'use' for 'conservation' of wildlife, nature is being commodified to include labour, land and the environment. And through commodification, tourism overrides conservation priorities, transforming conservation actors into market agents, and placing the pressure of economic performance onto conservation structures. Despite principles of ecotourism and sustainable tourism that are politically promoted in conjunction with conservation, the absence of proper selection and monitoring criteria for tourism investors in conservation enables the emergence of models of tourism that perpetuate hegemonic powers, in isolation from local communities. Explicit analyses of the direct and indirect interferences of tourism business (and associated global value chains) in conservation ventures would provide beneficial knowledge to the understanding of partnership dynamics and their outcomes.

Despite ample criticism, the involvement of tourism in conservation thrives under neoliberalism and is a common feature in the global political economy (Ahebwa et al., 2012). This relative success demands more effort in studying the relationships between political rhetoric, the values of end-users (tourists) and the translation of these relationships into market practices (West et al., 2004, Farmaki et al., 2015). For tourism to fulfil sustainability goals related to conservation, poverty and human development, it needs consistent and non-extractive governmental intervention (monitoring, incentives) and the generalized adoption and application of sustainability values by the institutional frameworks and networks that organize its provision and consumption (Moscardo and Murphy, 2014). Further research is necessary in order to identify the conditions in which the global tourism market could support the flourishing of forms of tourism that have seek to meet profitability, conservation and poverty alleviation goals.

Through the critical lenses of political ecology, this review of literature highlighted important contradictions in the development and functioning of hybrid partnerships that are active in conservation, which require further examination. Interrogations of gains and losses have mainly provided indications of how partnerships legitimise processes of securing land and access to wildlife which intensify the marginalization of local communities thereby indirectly aggravating local power struggles. Drawing from different theoretical perspectives – conservation scale, governance reforms and market-based conservation partnerships – the paper brings a new dimension to the conceptualization of partnerships in natural resource management, namely, the ways that different partnership configurations emerge, whether and how their degree of complexity might influence both wildlife conservation and livelihood outcomes. Further analyses of the contextual aspects influencing these configurations and complexity as well as the resulting local struggles are provided in Noe et al., (2017b).

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