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SOCIOLOGY | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The impact of wildlife hunting prohibition on the rural livelihoods of local communities in Ngamiland and Chobe District Areas, Botswana

Israel Blackie^{1*}

Abstract: The community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) programme in Botswana was developed to facilitate a partnership between local communities and government for the conservation of natural resources whilst giving local communities usufruct rights to natural resources. This study sought to establish the impact of the wildlife hunting prohibition on the livelihoods of rural communities. Data for this study was obtained through a cross-sectional survey. The findings of the study suggest that the wildlife hunting prohibition which was introduced in 2014 impacted on the livelihoods of rural communities in areas such as employment and income from community-based organisations (CBOs). Prior to 2014, CBOs had found themselves in a rentier-ship status without any direct participation in the operation and management of hunting safaris. The wildlife hunting prohibition, however, did not void existing leases such as leases for hotels and lodges or other natural resource uses such as gathering veldt products. Since its inception, the implementation of the CBNRM programme had been largely focused on the utilisation of wildlife resources with the result that wildlife hunting had generated revenues quickly and easily for local communities. This paper argues that

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The study found that the wildlife hunting prohibition introduced by the government of Botswana in 2014 has resulted in reduction of rural communities' livelihoods options such as employment opportunities, meat availability, income to community-based organisations (CBOs), and other essential social services. However, the livelihoods benefits from wildlife hunting safaris were never sustainable in the long term. The wildlife hunting practice under the then joint venture partnership (JVP) model had created dependency among local communities who were subsisted by providing cheap labour in professional hunting companies. This paper argues that the removal of the wildlife hunting prohibition should be considered for wildlife species noted for causing damage and/or whose population has shown an increase such as elephant and buffalo. The loss incurred by rural communities from the damage caused to property and crops by wildlife militates against the perceived earlier successes of the CBNRM programme in wildlife conservation and poverty reduction.

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Subjects: Sociology; Tourism; Development Studies; Politics & Development; Population & Development; Sustainable Development; Culture & Development; Development Policy; Rural Development; Environment & the Developing World

Keywords: CBNRM; human–wildlife conflict; wildlife hunting prohibition; household livelihoods

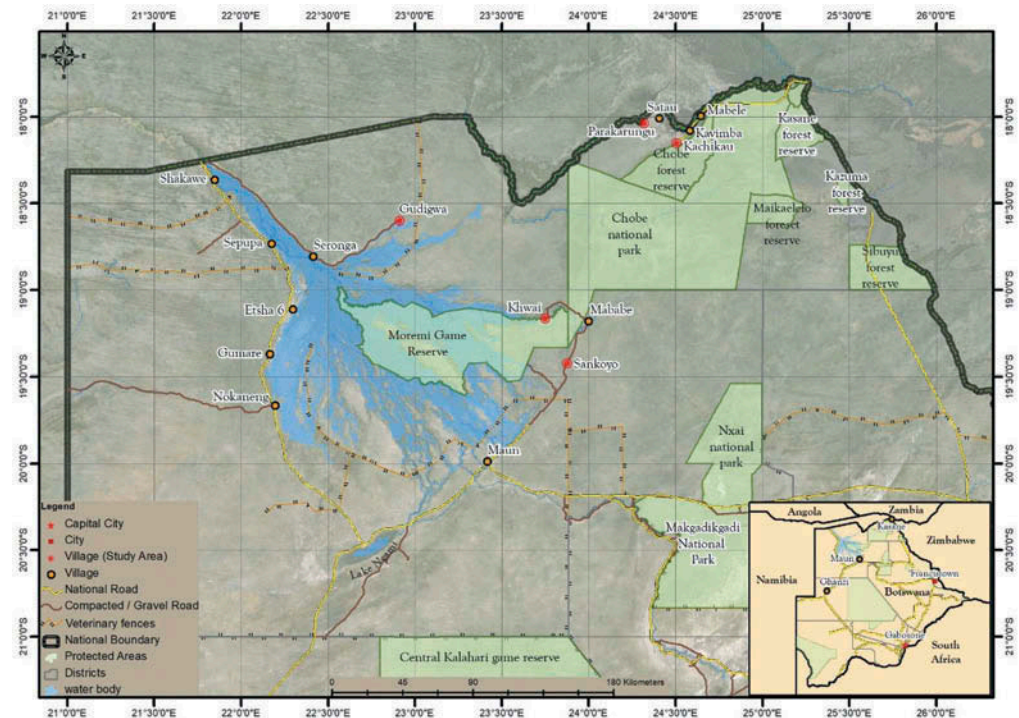
1. Introduction

The community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) programme was conceived as a programme to enlist community support in natural resources conservation through the promotion of sustainable utilisation of the natural resources (i.e. both hunting and photographic tourism) by local communities (Jones & Murphree, 2001; Agrawal & Gupta, 2005; Blaikie, 2006; CBNRM Policy, 2007). The main focus of the CBNRM during its initial stages was on wildlife hunting where local communities were given hunting quotas in their delineated concession areas. Nonetheless, poverty has continued to increase in the rural areas of Botswana with the Ngamiland and Chobe districts recording the highest poverty levels at 30.1% against a national poverty level of 24.3% (Centre for Applied Research, 2016).

In January 2014, the government introduced a wildlife hunting prohibition, which effectively banned the killing or removal of wildlife animals in any defined areas. The prohibition on wildlife hunting was necessitated by evidence that suggested a decline in several wildlife species (Chase, 2011; Department of Wildlife and National Parks, 2012). However, other wildlife species such as zebras, buffalos and elephants have been noted for their exponential increase in the same period and beyond (Chase, 2011; Department of Wildlife and National Parks, 2012). Botswana's elephant population was estimated in 2012 to be about 207,545 individual elephants indicating an overall increase of 297% between 1992 and 2012 (Department of Wildlife and National Parks, 2012). Further, The Great Elephant Census (2016) observed that 58.9% of the African elephant population lives in Botswana and that this represents a third (30.1%) of the global elephant population. In instituting the wildlife hunting prohibition, the Ministry of Environment Natural Resources Conservation and Tourism cited a number of reasons such as anthropogenic impacts, including illegal offtake and habitat fragmentation or loss. The Department of Wildlife and National Parks Act of 1992 (Cap38:01) section 45 confers on the minister the powers to prohibit wildlife hunting for periods not exceeding 12 months at a time. However, at the end of the 12 months, the prohibition can be extended. Since 2014, the hunting prohibition has been extended four times in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018.

The current study was guided by social exchange theory which argues that human beings are consciously and/or instinctively rational beings and form social relations on the basis of calculated cost–benefit analysis (Blau, 1964; Collete, 2010; Homans, 1961). Several studies have shown that the development of tourism in an area can have both positive and negative impacts on the host community (Andereck, Valentine, Knopf, & Vogt, 2005; Vareiro, Remoaldo, & Cadima-Ribeiro, 2013). Some of the positive impacts of tourism development are employment creation and income generation (Andereck et al., 2005; Ko & Stewart, 2002). While overcrowding and traffic congestion as well as increases in crime (including wildlife poaching) are the likely negative effects (Látková & Vogt, 2012; Tosun, 2002). The founding premise of the CBNRM programme is in line with the tenets of social exchange theory. The CBNRM is premised on the notion that local communities take a

Figure 1. Map of Botswana showing study areas. (Source: Blackie).



keen interest in natural resource conservation when the utilisation of natural resources leads to perceived improvement in their livelihoods (Jones & Murphree, 2001; Agrawal & Gupta, 2005; Blaikie, 2006; CBNRM Policy, 2007). Thus, local communities are more likely to cooperate in natural resource conservation if they perceive a derived benefit to their households (Andriotis, 2005). The current study sought to examine the impact of the wildlife hunting prohibition on rural livelihoods among communities in the Ngamiland and Chobe districts (Figure 1).

2. Study areas

The study was conducted in two districts, namely the Ngamiland and Chobe. The Ngamiland district study areas included Gudigwa, Sankoyo and Khwai villages all located adjacent to the Okavango Delta. The Okavango Delta World Heritage Site sustains robust populations of some of the world's most endangered large mammals such as cheetah, white and black rhinoceros, wild dog and lion. The Delta's habitats are species rich with 1,061 plant types, 89 fish species, 64 reptile species, 482 species of birds and 130 species of mammals (IUCN, 2014). With Botswana having the largest population of elephants in the world (i.e. 30% of elephants found in Botswana), the Okavango Delta is the second largest area (after the Chobe region), for these species in Botswana (Department of Wildlife and National Parks, 2012). The three villages of Gudigwa, Sankoyo and Khwai were also selected for this study because of their experience with the CBNRM programme. Additionally, their populations almost entirely consist of marginalised ethnic (Basarwa/San and Bayeyi) groups in the Ngamiland district.

The second phase of the study was conducted in the Chobe district villages of Kachikau and Parakarungu which are part of the Chobe Enclave Conservation Trust (CECT). These villages are located in low-density rural settlements along roads skirting the wetlands in the north-west side of the Chobe district and are along the main road that connects the Chobe and Ngamiland districts through the Chobe National Park (Figure 1). The Bambukushu, Basubiya and Batawana minority ethnic groups are the majority population in most of these study villages. Wildlife abounds in these areas, moving to and from the wetlands as the Chobe river system ensures the availability of water as a critical resource. The availability of water ensures the presence of rich and diverse wildlife

populations as a resource that has supported the livelihoods of local communities for many years. Even though traditional economic activities in the areas vary across ethnic groups, the majority of people depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. Other livelihood activities include dry and wet (*molapo*) farming, subsistence fishing and harvesting of thatching grass and reeds for domestic use. Veldt products generate income through basketmaking using palm tree leaves, mats from river reeds, as well as the harvesting of wild fruits, thatching grass and wood carving. It is important to note that all of the villages chosen in both districts were involved in the CBNRM before the hunting ban.

3. Methodology

The data for this study were collected through the use of a three pronged cross-sectional approach that used a head of household questionnaire (101 locals), focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders. Respondents were interviewed face to face at a single point in time (i.e. cross-sectional survey). Households were arranged into a linear scale starting from one through to the last household. The researcher then began by counting the first (k) household and proceeded to interview respondents in every second household. The process was repeated in each village until the requisite (101 respondents) sample size was achieved. For the structured household questionnaire, the head or most senior member of each household who was found to be present at the time of interview was interviewed in the five villages included in study sites (Gudigwa, Sankuyo, Khwai, Kachikau and Parakarungu). The Ngamiland and Chobe districts were selected as study sites because the initial implementation of the CBNRM programme in Botswana (1990s) was largely concentrated in these two districts due to the rich wildlife and diversity of species in those areas (Bowie, 2008; Mbaiwa & Stronza, 2010). A total of 18 key informants (8 from government, 6 from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and 4 independent researchers) were selected using a purposive sampling approach. A list with contacts of these key respondents was availed from the Botswana Symposium on Wetlands and Wildlife 2015 and 2016 as well as the National CBNRM Forum report of 2014. Qualitative interview data were used as commentaries to capture the mood and perceptions of respondents.

The majority (59%) of the household heads or their representatives were aged between 30 and 60 years (60 out of 101 respondents). This age group is known to play an important role in poverty reduction as its members are usually engaged in gainful employment (Centre for Applied Research, 2016). While age is one of the critical socio-demographic factors in poverty reduction, the timing of labour participation may vary from the stated 18 years officially recognised in the Botswana Employment (Amendment) Act 2010 (Act No. 10 of 2010). AJones (2002) found that employment in the CECT was limited to individuals who had attained the age of 18 years or older, while a similar study focusing on the leadership level among NGOs in Botswana (CAR 2016) found that the youth aged below 30 years were under-represented in CBO board memberships. In Botswana, youth unemployment and poverty have been identified as “twin problems” which government seeks to address (His Excellency Eric K. Masisi, 5th President of the Republic of Botswana, State of the Nation Address, 5 November 2018:1). The current rate of youth unemployment (35.8%) is estimated to be twice the rate of adult unemployment (17.6%) (Statistics Botswana, 2018).

The majority (55%) of household heads were male with 45% being female. This finding is consistent with that of Mbaiwa and Stronza (2010) who also found that women were less represented in decision-making in the wildlife and tourism sector. Similar studies in Nepal by Khadka (2000) and Rai-Paudyal (2008) also concluded that while women comprised 30% of the total membership of the community forest user group executive committee, there were no women represented in the Buffer Zone Management Council as the key decision-making body. This gender disparity has a negative bearing on rural poverty since majority of households in Botswana are female headed and are generally more likely to poverty experience high rates of poverty than male-headed households (Moepeng & Tisdell, 2008). The gender imbalance gives rise to a situation where rural development strategies such as CBNRM do not achieve their goal of poverty reduction as a significant portion of the intended beneficiaries (women) which are

excluded or fail to access the programme. Anderson and Mehta (2013) found that the inclusion of women in development planning and decision-making increases the effectiveness of grassroots and rural development programmes such as CBNRM. Botswana's rural developmental journey has been faced with a number of challenges, key among them being the inequality associated with social and culturally constructed norms and rules that shape gender relations and lead to unequal power relationships between men and women. Gender disparities have resulted in unequal access to and control over resources and other socio-economic and political opportunities. Consequently, the 2012 gender index of 0.6744 places Botswana at number 77 out of 135 countries from which data were available (Global Gender Gap Report, 2012).

The majority (37%) of the household heads were from the San (Basarwa) ethnic group. Across strata, the second largest ethnic group was Bayeyi (27%), followed by the Basubiya (20%), and fourth the Batawana (16%). There was only one Mombukushu head of household respondent from Kachikau village in the Chobe district. Previous studies (Good, 1999; Nthomang, 1999; Molosi, 2015) have found that the San is the most impoverished ethnic group in Botswana. (The term San refers here to diverse one ethnic group of former hunter-gatherers found in Southern Africa and sharing historical and linguistic commonalities.)

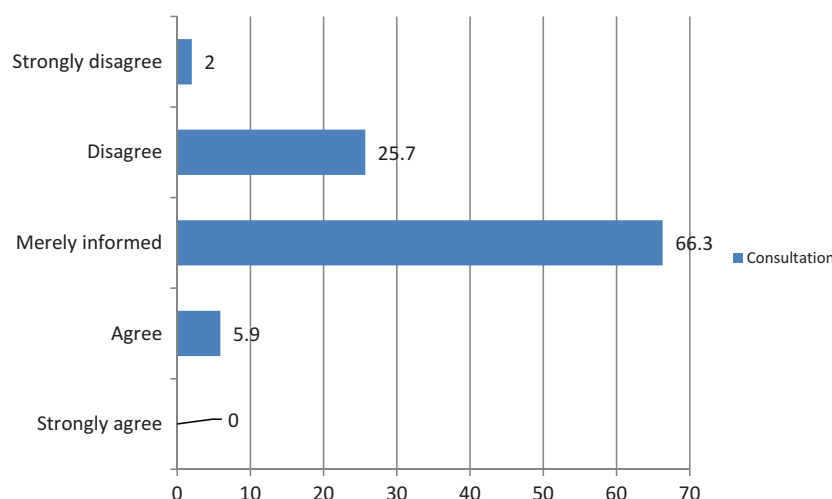
4. Research findings

4.1. Consultation with local communities

The decision to prohibit wildlife hunting has been received with mixed feelings by local communities and various stakeholders in the natural resource conservation and tourism management fraternity (Onishi, 2015).

Respondents were asked to show if they agree or disagree with the statement suggesting that they were consulted regarding the introduction of the hunting prohibition and their responses are shown in Figure 2. Among respondents, 5.9% agreed that they had been consulted while 27.7% disagreed that they were consulted before the wildlife hunting prohibition was introduced by the government in 2014 (Figure 2). In its justification for the hunting prohibition, the government indicated that notice and further facilitation to CBOs were undertaken prior to implementing the hunting moratorium. Yet, the majority (66.3%) of respondents indicated that even though they were aware of the wildlife hunting prohibition, they were "merely informed" instead of being consulted i.e. they interpreted the government consultation process as merely stating that which would happen. As evidenced by the following quotation, government's perception of consultation was to give notice and facilitate a transition which speaks to the issue above on the

Figure 2. % Agreement or disagreement on being consulted (101).



meaning of consultation. Local communities were, however, worried about the potential impact of the hunting prohibition:

“My Ministry is cognisant of the fact that Community Based Organisations (CBOs) that have primarily benefited from consumptive utilisation are anxious about the potential impact of this decision. However, my Ministry has given prior notice and facilitation to ensure a smooth transition of CBOs to photographic tourism”, (Minister of Ministry of Environment Natural Resources Conservation and Tourism, BOPA, 13 August 2014).

Respondents noted that government had failed to consult them as had been the normal practice with other government programmes when they were either being introduced or disbanded. The mean for stakeholder consultation is 3.3 indicating that 66% of the respondents were merely informed of the decision to prohibit hunting instead of the normal consultative policy process. In Botswana, constituents are normally consulted to solicit their views before a national policy is announced, particularly one that affects people's livelihood such as wildlife hunting. The lack of consultation on the wildlife hunting ban is inconsistent with the founding premise of CBNRM which sought to avoid “centralized, command and control systems which were not succeeding in conserving natural resources” (Motsholapheko & Erdmann, 2011, p. 9). Botswana prides itself on the “principle of consultation—*therisanyo*” which is among the four principles that have guided the country since its independence. The *therisanyo* or consultation principle is rooted in the democratic ideals for citizen participation and inclusiveness in policy discourse (Ngcongo, 1989). Botswana has always upheld the practice of consultation to afford the general public an opportunity for an open dialogue and mutual respect leading to the crafting of sound policies and strategies (Stredman, 1993).

In Tswana tradition, community consultations were often held in front of a chief's residence even though there has now been a gradual move to have *kgotla* (traditional public-gathering point in a village) physical structures built at a designated place and at a distance from the chief's residence. Modern chiefs are either appointed and/or earn a salary from government. This arrangement often puts tribal chiefs in an incongruous position as they are tribal leaders who are also expected to bear allegiance to government as its employees. Also, debates in *kgotla* settings are increasingly seen as biased towards issues of implementation of government policies vis-à-vis gathering public opinion to inform policies (Mwansa, Locas, & Hwedie, 1998). For example, attempts at consulting the affected local communities and tourism operators before the wildlife hunting prohibition was instituted in 2014 could easily be characterized as informing the attendants on the coming of the hunting prohibition (Mbaiwa, 2017). Respondents indicated that government resources were expended on addressing the public in a number of key tourism centres such as Gumare, Shakawe, Maun and Kasane but viewed the consultation as being informed of a decision that had already been taken at central government level. The deliberations entailed informing the public about what would happen versus what could happen. This perceived unilateral government decision-making policy has had a significant impact on and weakened civil society which has largely generally become dormant (Maundeni, Mpabanga, Mfundisi, & Sebudubudu, 2006). Debates on policy issues between government and civil society have been declining over the years. Nonetheless, the private media in Botswana is viewed as playing a pivotal role in exposing the social inequalities that characterise the tourism industry in the country. Balule and Maripe (2000) noted that the active participation by the media in exposing the inequalities in natural resource management complements the promotion of good governance functions which had been the preserve of other weakening oversight institutions such as the chieftaincy. Since the wildlife hunting prohibition began in 2014, the international media had been awash with headlines depicting both the positive and the negative aspects of Botswana's wildlife tourism and conservation. Below are the examples of such stories' headlines:

Table 1. Socio demographic characteristics of the respondents (N = 101)

Socio demographic characteristic	Males (%)	Females (%)	Total number of respondents (actual)
Age			
29 years and below	80.0 (4)	20.0 (1)	5
30–60	58.3 (35)	41.7 (25)	60
61+	44.4 (16)	55.6 (20)	36
N	(55)	(46)	101
Gender			
OCT	52.6 (10)	47.4 (9)	19
STMT	40.0 (10)	60.0 (15)	25
KDT	55.6 (10)	44.4 (8)	18
CECT	64.1 (25)	35.9 (14)	39
N	(55)	(46)	101
Ethnicity			
Mosarwa	51.4 (19)	48.6 (18)	37
Mombukushu	0.0 (0)	100 (1)	1
Moyeyi	44.4 (12)	55.6 (15)	27
Mosubiya	65.0 (13)	35.0 (7)	20
Motawana	68.8 (11)	31.2 (5)	16
N	(55)	(46)	101

OCT: Okavango Community Trust; STMT: Sankuyo Tshwaragano Management Trust; KDT: Khwai Development Trust; CECT: Chobe Enclave Conservation Trust.

“The only places we talk about in Africa are the ones where there is war or Ebola. Botswana has neither. Instead it has wonderful safaris, beautiful countryside, and great people”, Karen Bass (Democratic Congresswoman, California, United States).

“The involvement of His Excellency President Khama demonstrated the real African leadership on this issue that the UK was looking for when we launched the Illegal Wildlife Trade Initiative in London in February 2014”, (Pyle, British High Commissioner to Botswana).

“Botswana MPs want wildlife ban lifted, News 24, March 2015. Botswana’s hunting prohibition: Bushmen starve, trophy hunters carry on” (Survival International [France], 2014).

The above quotations reflect how the conservation agenda has been and continues to be shaped by the international community though with sharply contrasting sentimentalities. The first and second quotations from an American Congresswoman and British High Commissioner to Botswana, respectively, show how Botswana’s conservation policies are influenced by the international community. At the same time, some sectors of the international community seem to denounce the country’s internationally acclaimed conservation policies seen as privileging the international community at the expense of its local communities as shown by the third quotation.

4.2. Wildlife monitoring by local population groups

Table 1 outlines the percentages of wildlife occurrence in ranked order as observed by local populations in their CBOs. The data show that elephants are the most dominant (74.4%) wildlife species in all study sites, followed by zebras (11.7%), buffalos (11.2%) and, lastly, lions (2.8%).

These findings from wildlife monitoring by local communities’ are consistent with results of scientific aerial surveys which also found that elephants were the most dominant wildlife species in the northern region of Botswana (Chase, 2011; Department of Wildlife and National Parks, 1999).

Table 2. Local communities' knowledge of wildlife species in their localities

Respondents CBO	Most prevalent wildlife species			
	Elephant	Zebra	Buffalo	Lion
OCT	78.9	15.8	5.3	.0
STMT	76.0	12.0	12.0	.0
KDT	55.6	11.1	22.2	11.1
CECT	87.2	7.7	5.1	.0
Average	74.4	11.7	11.2	2.8

The CBNRM Policy (2007) encouraged communities to participate meaningfully in monitoring of natural resources. The findings (Table 1) suggest that community monitoring of natural resources through management-oriented monitoring system is effective.

The data (Table 2) show that (on average) 18.3% of household heads indicated that the wildlife hunting prohibition had resulted in job losses for their communities. Across the strata, this was 44% in Sankuyo village, followed by 42.1% in Gudigwa village. The two villages of Kachikau and Parakarungu each reported 0% on wildlife hunting prohibition having resulted in job loss. Nonetheless, field interviews with the CECT manager showed that the CECT had retrenched about 20 employees working as escort guides, hunting trekkers and skimmers by 2016. The CECT had not retrenched some of its full-time staff at the time of the study, even though the CECT manager indicated that the CBO was finalising plans to retrench about 35 employees since the CBO was no longer generating enough revenue to pay salaries. The escalation in human–wildlife conflict was cited by heads of households as the second (17.8%) most prevalent impact of the wildlife hunting prohibition, followed by the scarcity of game meat and finally an escalation of social ills (6.2%). The two villages of Gudigwa (15.8%) and Khwai (11.1%) reported high-level social ills as a consequence of the hunting prohibition. These two villages also share the distinct feature of having San inhabitants as the majority of their populations.

For respondents in these rural communities, particularly those of the San ethnic group, the implementation of the hunting prohibition has not only led to a reduction in their livelihood activities but has also given rise to cultural decay. San respondents argue that the prohibition on wildlife hunting prevents them from transferring their tracking and hunting skills to their children. One of the village elders in Gudigwa expressed this dissatisfaction with the hunting prohibition as follows:

“Government wants to eliminate the San culture so that maybe we could be the Batswana like them. We are no longer allowed to hunt even though our culture is intrinsically embedded to wildlife hunting. I wonder what kind of children we are going to raise who will not know even how to track down nor hunt wildlife. Gudigwa village is like a death trap. If we go to the north (NG22) of our village, we are prevented from doing so by the Wildlife and Botswana Defence Force under the pretext that we will otherwise be tempted to poach the wildlife. Yet again we are also prevented by the Bambukushu ethnic tribe to access developments which are located to the south en-route to townships such as Shakawe and Maun which are the modern centres where major developments are located. That's why our children seem to be drinking lots of alcohol because they do not have much to do since introduction of hunting prohibition”, (80-year-old man, Gudigwa village).

The residents of Gudigwa lament that their village had become to them “a death zone”, a situation that leaves them with little to do and an increase in excessive alcohol consumption among the youth. At the time of the fieldwork, most able-bodied men who were retrenched from the hunting safari companies could be seen in the villages. However, government insists that a range of socio-economic welfare measures including the provision of food rations and employment opportunities has been availed to the Basarwa even before hunting prohibition so that they can also lead a

healthy and dignified lifestyle like the rest of the citizens. Government's position is that hunting has not made the Basarwa any richer as they continued to be amongst the poorest groups in the country.

"Poverty is nobody's culture, government is not taking away people's culture but wanting to lift them out of poverty. Even the current President of Botswana has gone all-out to declare war against poverty through his strategic road map". (Government official, Gaborone).

4.3. Scarcity of game meat

Prior to 2014, local communities living in proximity to wildlife management areas (WMAs) benefitted from readily available meat from animals that were shot in their concessions. CBOs had entered into agreements with hunting safari companies so that all the carcasses from hunted animals would be given to local communities through their trusts. The CBOs sold the most valuable meat from the buffalo and impala which were the most preferred while meat from less preferred animals such as elephants and lions was given to locals for free. Onishi (2015) reported that STMT raised \$600,000.00 in 2010 from the sale of meat from the 120 animals that were its government allocated hunting quota. Local communities made biltong which they later sold. For households, the proceeds from the sale of biltong provided an income with which they could buy household essentials such as school uniforms and pay school fees for their children.

"Even though we used to get small sum of money, the little amount came handy particularly for needs such as buying school uniforms and paying school fees for our children as well as community developments. We, the poor, used to get meat and sometimes income when we would have sold some meat" (FGD in Kachikau).

The above sentiments suggest that hunting tourism had benefitted local communities as the proceeds from hunting played a significant role particularly for very poor households since hunting provided access to game meat with some families generating a cash income from the sale of game meat. Poor households were severely affected by the decision to prohibit/ban wildlife hunting as they are not in a position to deal with crop and cattle depredation due to the increased presence of wild animals especially elephants. Among all the respondents were households who depended on crop production and cattle rearing as their main livelihood, with 25% of the households indicating that access to meat was their main benefit of hunting tourism. However, the importance of wildlife meat in these communities is reflected in the following quotation from a Sankuyo resident:

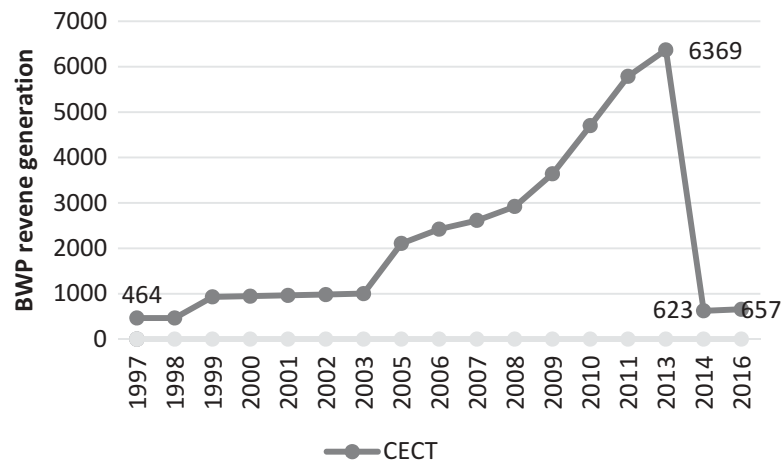
"The name of our village 'Sankuyo' comes from an idiom that goes to show that anyone in need (hungry) will surely find something (food) i.e. a land of opportunities. We used to eat lots of meat but the animals were never extinct as you can see that we coexist with them", (Elderly man Sankuyo village).

The above comments by the Sankuyo respondent who used to work at the now obsolete Sankuyo's Shandereka Cultural Village located at Kazikin campsite repudiate the view held by the state that the locals' ways of life regarding natural resources utilisation are unsustainable. Income from hunting was also used to pay salaries of traditional dancers who provided entertainment to tourist during hunting period. The respondents view the wildlife hunting prohibition as a deprivation of their daily livelihoods. This is particularly so because respondents indicated that hunting prohibition deprived them of protein which they used to get from wildlife meat since they are discouraged from keeping livestock because of their villages being located within or adjacent to WMAs.

4.4. The loss of income

Figure 3 shows that the revenue accruing to CBOs had been steadily increasing during the years between 1997 and 2013, when the wildlife hunting prohibition was introduced their revenue plummeted drastically. The revenue for CECT had increased from about P464 000.00 to P6, 369 000.00 annually between the years 1997 and 2013 before the advent of the wildlife hunting

Figure 3. CECT Revenue Generation between 1997 and 2016.



prohibition in January 2014. The manager of CECT noted that the wildlife hunting prohibition was responsible for the observed downward trend in the revenue accruing to them.

Could these figures suggest deterioration in the general standard of living and hence increase in poverty for rural communities such as the CECT villages? Participants in FGDs decried the lack of a trickle-down effect from the CBOs to the individual households. Perhaps the government is correct that the CBOs were mismanaging funds since villagers also indicated that they were not benefitting financially from the money that came from hunting safaris. Rather what they lost was some access to free meat and for those who made biltong an income from that. Ngwira, Kolawole and Mbaiwa (2013) found that despite a number of CBOs making significant revenues from utilisation of natural resources, the problem of funds mismanagement posed challenges to the sustainability of the CBOs and hence the minimal trickle-down effect to individual households.

4.5. The effect of joint venture partnerships in CBNRM

The Wildlife Conservation Policy (1986) allowed rural communities living in proximity to wildlife areas to conserve and utilise local natural resources. Even though government allowed communities that reside in the controlled hunting areas (CHAs) to sustainably utilise natural resources, government quickly realized that most of those communities had limited skills and experience to operate profitable business ventures. As a consequence, a joint venture partnership (JVP) model was introduced to allow rural communities to partner with the private sector in natural resources management in order to create income and employment for the rural population. A joint venture in terms of the Botswana Department of Wildlife and National Parks Joint Venture Guidelines is “... a business activity undertaken between two or more partners for their mutual benefit. Partners in a community joint venture will be rural people, who have user rights to the natural resources occurring in an area, established private sector companies that recognise an area’s potential for business development”, (DWNP, 1999, p. i). Rural communities have expressed dissatisfaction on the JVP, arguing that the model tends to promote private sector interests rather than empowering them to operate tourism enterprises themselves.

“We were never involved in the daily running of joint venture businesses and hence limited skills transfer to local community members. I think this was a calculated move by joint operators so that we could never replace them by taking over the running of these joint businesses. Our joint partners used to further sublease their areas to other agents who never wanted locals to neither see their books and their marketing strategies nor train staff since they feared that we could run them out of business. If government can reinstate hunting, I think we should change our model so that we can directly participate in the management of our tourism businesses since we now have the requisite experience. Temporary jobs created through hunting inhibited communities from realizing and training in other valued skills such

as tourism managerial training which could facilitate smooth transition in management of tourism enterprises from foreign to citizen owned as espoused under the CBNRM Policy of 2007", (Participant at focus Group Discussion, Sankuyo).

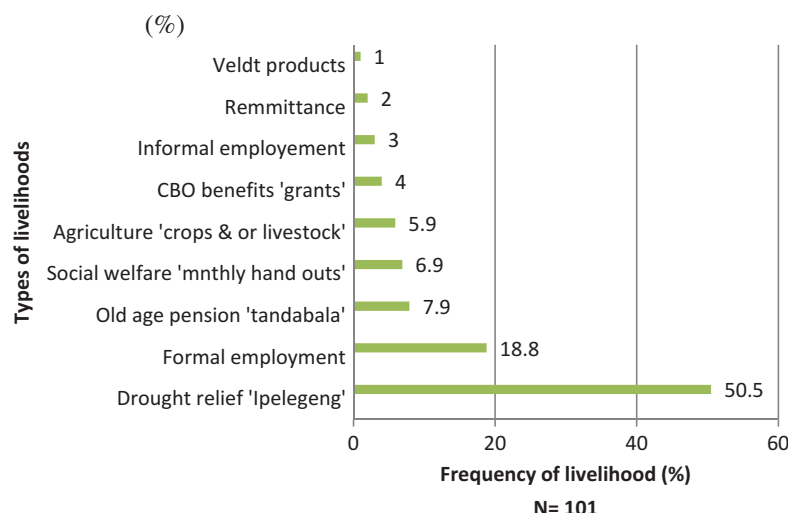
There was an overreliance by CBOs on the government's preferred community-based hunting safari model promoting JVPs in which local communities were obliged to partner with experienced private hunting safari companies. Communities only produced usufructs in the form of leases to the natural resources, while the private sector was required to bring on-board capital investment, management and marketing resources (Gujadhur, 2001). (From the quotation above and some field interviews, it appears CBOs seem to have "rested on their laurels" due to rental money from the JVP arrangement without requiring much activity on the part of the CBOs though being business partners [Shackleton, Willis, Brow, & Polunin, 2010].) JVP as experienced by rural communities is a "misnomer" since the arrangement does not offer a sustainable benefit for the livelihoods of local communities and falls short of the meaning of the noun "joint". The joint venture model is also a misnomer in the sense that private safari investors operated the hunting safaris on their own without or with limited influence from the communities as joint venture partners. It appears communities even forgot that JVPs were to be phased out as communities gained experience and confidence in operating tourism enterprises (Department of Wildlife and National Parks, 1999). Consequentially, communities were turned into rentiers even though the original JVP guidelines had sought to guard against possible community exploitation by safari hunting companies. This exploitation is also in part because CBOs failed to build up resources for these communities to have a greater stake in these tourism enterprises.

The JVP guidelines sought to restrict contract agreements to initially short-term contracts with the possibility of renewal on condition of good performance and positive working relations with the host community. The JVPs were expected to translate into income generation and skills transfer to locals. The subleases between communities and private safari hunting companies were, therefore, developed according to the following ratio 1–1–3–5–5. This ratio means that the initial contract period is limited to two one-year leases, followed by signing of another three-year lease. The community can then enter into another two terms consisting of a 5 year period each if they are happy with their JVP. The hunting safari outfits, however, tended to employ local staff as assistant managers even though their roles were merely for fronting purposes. This is because assistant managers were only partially responsible for sales and reservations, with the actual management of the business especially marketing and handling of accounts being done by the private companies with business accounts being held outside the country. A former hunting guide and escort described the transition from wildlife hunting to photographic tourism as a matter of *pouring old wine into new wine bottles* as private companies will benefit from photographic tourism as they did under hunting tourism because locals only provide cheap labour in these tourism set-ups. There is growing agitation around the future of tourism in these study areas. The respondents noted that photographic tourism is likely to be started by foreign companies who have both capital and experience to operate such businesses, at the expense of local CBOs.

"It is only the whites who are going to start the photographic tourism business for the next 15 years or until they finish our wildlife since they are the ones said to be with enough capital investment and the requisite skills to start the photographic businesses" (Key male respondent in Sankuyo village).

It is also important to note that Botswana has operated a dual tourism system even though hunting safaris became the most popular perhaps because of it being the easier income generation stream especially that private companies were willing to service this type of activity. Government, however, did not guarantee wildlife hunting quotas for local communities as the availability of hunting quotas was dependent on the outcome of the annual hunting quota reviews. Photographic tourism is resented by local communities mainly because it requires extra marketing and substantial capital investment to break even which local communities often do not have. In

Figure 4. Main sources of income in study areas.



terms of demand, big league trophy hunters are almost readily available unlike starting photographic ventures which requires concerted lead time. Thus, the latency between initiation and breakeven in photographic tourism is higher than in hunting safaris as encapsulated in the above quotation by a key respondent in Sankuyo.

4.6. Preparedness of households in dealing with the impact of the hunting prohibition

The question about households' preparedness for the hunting ban yielded equivocal answers about their future livelihoods. Over time community members have acquired skills that facilitate paid employment especially in tourism-related outfits. It is worth noting that even though locals had gained tourism-related skills, such skills have been rendered irrelevant in the absence of wildlife hunting which had provided an avenue for their employment.

Figure 4 shows the current sources of livelihoods among respondents.

The *Ipelegeng* programme which is a government initiative meant to alleviate the impacts of drought on livelihoods is increasingly becoming the major (50.5%) source of income in the Ngamiland and Chobe districts. At a national level, the *Ipelegeng* programme, despite its problems, has become a major source of livelihood for local communities with high rates of unemployment (BIDPA, 2010). Some respondents viewed their work on the *Ipelegeng* programme as a temporary measure to alleviate their unemployment.

"This is my first time to work under government drought relief programme, and we now compete with elderly people in the village since there are no other employment opportunities in the village ever since government enforced hunting prohibited. However, I consider my employment here under government drought relief programme as only temporary since I believe that government is likely to reverse the wildlife hunting prohibition and or issue photographic leases so that we can get employment". (36-year-old female resident of Sankuyo village).

The introduction of the CBNRM programme in some communities has created a dependence on the tourism sector among local communities. The sentiments expressed by the middle-aged man who is a resident of Sankuyo village were later shared by the village chief:

"Prior to the wildlife hunting prohibition, we never had multitudes of community members competing for government drought relief programme 'namulo leuba'. STMT used to provide enough employment for all able-bodied persons in the village to a point where drought relief programmes were relegated to elderly persons, and they could easily be given longer terms

of engagement since there were fewer or no competitors for such employment” (Key informant in Sankuyo village).

The respondents were hopeful that either the wildlife hunting prohibition was going to be reversed or that the government would implement the photographic tourism in a short period of time. Members of these communities wanted to gain paid employment. Despite the CBNRM policy (2007) and the revised Wildlife Policy (2013) having been designed to encourage local populations to venture into commercial tourism enterprises, very little, in terms of local entrepreneurship or commercial tourism, has been achieved to date as people prefer to be employed rather than venture into tourism enterprises. Most respondents in the head of households’ interviews still wanted to be employed instead of taking advantage of empowerment programmes to start their own tourism enterprises.

There is anticipation among the San that the hunting prohibition will be reversed by the government. The San hope to regain their social identity which was lost through the imposition of the wildlife hunting prohibition in their communities. The respondents see their cultural heritage and ethnic identity through hunting and the consumption of game meat and blame government for trying to eliminate their way of life.

“Historically, we have always subsisted through eating game meat and there has never been a period when the wildlife was decimated as purported by government. Government deprives us of hunting even the smallest wildlife species such as springhare which would otherwise go a long way in meeting our dietary needs. Notwithstanding the fact that government understands that a Mosarwa cannot survive without game meat just like other Tswana speakers cannot subsist without sorghum. Since government is paying them compensation for crops damaged by wildlife, why can’t they also be made to forgo arable farming and have government provide sorghum meal to them as they are doing to us?”
(Translated interview transcript of a middle-aged female head of household from Gudigwa).

Among San communities, the hunting prohibition is not just construed to mean the absence of meat alone but is seen as a political decision by the Tswana speaking groups to assimilate the Basarwa into their identity (Thapelo, 2002). The respondent above indicated that government prohibits them from hunting the smallest wildlife species such as springhare which could go a long way in meeting their dietary needs yet the same government provides payment of compensation for wildlife damage in arable fields. The San interpret this practice of paying compensation as undermining them since members of the main ethnic group are assisted to sustain their livelihood yet no similar compensation is provided to the San. Government provides them with food rations to substitute their dietary, while for the San people, meat is symbolically more significant than its nutritional value. Among the San people, hunting is irreplaceable as it contains some unique and incorporeal features of their culture which cannot be reproduced for market nor bought like any other commodity such as millet among other non-Sarwa ethnic groups.

As shown in Table 3, an overwhelming majority (91.9%) of respondents would like to see the wildlife hunting prohibition introduced by government in 2014 reversed or lifted. The results of this study indicate that local communities would like to see a reversal of the hunting prohibition. A number of reasons were advanced by respondents which included employment opportunities, availability of game meat and provision of social services such as housing to the needy and elderly.

A few (5.4%) respondents were indifferent, while only 2.7% felt that the wildlife hunting prohibition should not be reversed. One respondent who disagreed with reversing the hunting prohibition noted that hunting tourism had created a dependency among his community:

“I think wildlife hunting prohibition should not be lifted because hunting had made CBOs to be more dependent on the meagre millions of pula they got without putting any effort, and thus the system failed to translate into skills transfer. Now CBOs have paid the price as they

Table 3. Impact of wildlife hunting prohibition on rural livelihoods (101)

Villages	Job loss (%)	HWC (%)	Scarcity of game meat (%)	Community alienation from NRC (%)	No longer get tips (%)	Escalating social ills (%)
Gudigwa	42.1	5.0	26.3	0	15.8	15.8
Sankuyo	44.0	26.0	12.0	32.0	8.0	4.0
Khwai	5.6	9.0	38.9	0	27.8	11.1
Kachikau	0	34.0	4.3	26.1	4.3	0
Parakarungu	0	15.0	0	18.8	12.5	0
Average	18.3	17.8	16.3	15.4	13.7	6.2

cannot afford to continue providing the social services such as old people grants and funeral assistance as they did in the past with money from hunting. In the event that hunting is brought back or they are able to make money from photographic, they will know how to invest wisely in income generating projects like expanding Kazikin Campsite". (Unemployed middle aged man of Sankuyo village, who worked as a hunting escort guide).

"The people had accepted the predicament posed by hunting prohibition and I believe there wouldn't have been serious challenges when hunting prohibition was introduced had photographic tourism been introduced immediately so that people don't lose their jobs. I would still suggest that hunting prohibition be lifted. Leased land should then be zoned into high and low value areas with hunting safaris practiced in the latter". (Male, key respondent in Sankuyo village).

It also appears that the real issue, at least for those respondents who were either indifferent or against lifting, the hunting ban has to do with the time lapse before its replacement is instituted. They argue that government should have planned for photographic tourism to take over immediately as soon as hunting ban came into force. These respondents suggested that they want employment but (with the exception of the San) do not really mind what form of tourism gives them that employment. Photographic tourism operators also now feel that the hunting prohibition has had negative impact on rural livelihoods.

"There is need for controlled hunting as it benefits the locals, but I'm not going to do it (hunting) myself. Hunting should be brought back as long as it improves the lives of the locals and it brings tourists who augment our photographic businesses". (Key stakeholder in Chobe district, photographic tourism business owner).

5. Discussion

This study found that the implementation of the wildlife hunting prohibition was carried out without adequate consultation with local communities. Rather it was conveyed to local communities as a government policy directive. Consultation at grassroots level would have been consistent with the principle of decentralising decision-making in community-oriented natural resources management programmes. DeKock (2010) noted that the first CBNRM principle calls for decision-making at the lowest relevant level within the community where capacity to implement communal programmes or initiatives exists or can be built and thus create a sense of ownership. Similarly, Ngwira et al. (2013) also found that government plays a critical and major role in decision-making regarding the utilisation of natural resources in most southern African countries. They found that in many cases, usufruct rights are conferred by administrative decrees and management agreements instead of legislation and a right-based approach. Decentralising natural resource conservation creates an avenue for local communities to become more democratic and encourages effective participation unlike in centralised settings where leadership consolidation and

Table 4. Possibility of lifting wildlife hunting prohibition

Respondents CBO	Should wildlife hunting prohibition be lifted? (%)				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly disagree
OCT	52.6	42.1	.0	5.3	.0
STMT	76.0	24.0	.0	.0	.0
KDT	22.2	61.1	11.1	5.6	.0
CECT	.0	89.7	10.3	.0	.0
Average	37.7	54.2	5.4	2.7	0

organisational elitism are inevitable (Michaels, 1958). Decentralisation of decision-making in natural resources management to community levels is premised on the notion that greater participation in public decision-making is a positive good in itself and that it can improve efficiency, equity, development and resource management (Agrawal & Ribot, 1999).

Given that, local communities' awareness of the natural capital around them matches or surpasses that of scientific enquiry (Table 4). Progressive conservation policies can be reinforced by taking into consideration the depth and wealth of indigenous ecological stewardship. The results of this study lend credence to the CBNRM policy's claim that "local populations have greater interest in the sustainable use of natural resources found in their locality than a distant government or private management institution which may lack understanding and genuine interest in local environments" (CBNRM Policy, 2007, p. 1).

Discussions on why respondents want the hunting prohibition reversed revealed that the incessant appeals to lift the hunting ban are at the very least meant to provide the locals with employment opportunities as a livelihood option. The respondents suggested that livelihood needs could have been met through the immediate implementation of photographic safari tourism in 2014 when the ban on wildlife hunting came into effect. The wildlife prohibition, however, did not invalidate existing leases such as leases for hotels and lodges or other natural resources use such as gathering veldt products. The views of respondents that the hunting prohibition be reversed largely arises from the fact that tourism product diversification has had limited success even though the CBNRM programme and policy have never explicitly presented wildlife hunting as the only natural resource that can be used within the confines of the tourism industry. The study also found that CBOs failed to move into the hotel and accommodation sector even though such enterprises are the biggest revenue sources in tourism. For example, out of a total of 198 (156 Ngamiland and 42 in Chobe) accommodation facilities in the study area, local communities own about 10 (5%) through their JVPs (Department of Tourism, 2013; Centre for Applied Research, 2016). Most CBOs own campsite grounds which also provide accommodation facilities for tourists though campsites usually attract lesser fees than hotels and lodges. The 198 accommodation facilities in the study areas translate to 37.5% of the national accommodation facilities with a 25.3% national employment rate in the tourism sector. Local CBOs could be generating sufficient revenue and employment had they invested in hotels and lodges since employment generated by CBOs is often reserved for local community members.

Most local communities have in the past 15 years (+) failed to utilise some of their prime and scenic community use zones in their delineated CHAs. For example, the Kazikin campsite, which belongs to the STMT, has a carrying capacity of 50 beds although only 2 accommodation structures consisting of 2 beds each have to date been developed. Also, the facility was constructed through a donation from the government of Japan and not from money earned through hunting. Discussions with STMT management indicates that STMT prioritised community social benefits such as building one roomed houses for the destitute, funeral assistance, construction of toilets,

sponsoring a football team as well as fitting stand pipes for the provision of clean running water. Even though the above services are important, investing in sustainable income generating projects such as constructing hotels and lodges would potentially have offered better returns. Development of community use zone areas such as in NG 34 and others have the potential to become profitable business ventures and possibly lead to improvements in community livelihoods.

As noted earlier, the wildlife hunting prohibition did result in a loss of employment and revenue accruing to CBOs. Local communities were also compelled to either suspend or abandon some of their social services to community members due to the unavailability of funds. In line with the tenets of social exchange theory, the study also established that allowing local communities to derive benefits from the utilisation of wildlife resource has a positive influence on local people's attitudes towards wildlife (McCool & Martin, 1994; Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011; Látková & Vogt, 2012; Mir et al., 2015). It should be noted that some of these communities, especially those of Ngamiland, are very poor, and their livelihoods are extremely vulnerable and their employment is at the lower end of the tourism sector. It could therefore be argued that hunting and CBNRM have failed to contribute to rural development at a larger scale. Tourism and hunting in these areas simply created dependency and now that has been extended to the drought relief (*Ipelegeng*) work programme. Vaughan, Katjiua, Mulonga and Murphy (2004) argued that countries should find a means of incorporating local hunting on a few select wildlife species as an incentive for local populations to actively participate in the conservation of their natural resources.

Through the tourism land bank initiative, government has taken upon itself to subdivide large concessionaires to avail tourism investment land for more citizen participation through tender advertisement of these tourism concessions. However, delays and perceived lack of transparency in the implementation of the tourism land bank initiative have led to grave speculation leading to unsubstantiated and pre-emptive disapproval of the initiative on the basis that it is an extension and replica of the then hunting tourism which favoured private hunting safari companies at the expense of local communities. Commentaries from Khwai FGD also attest to these fears:

“Foreign professional hunters who used to dominate hunting expeditions now dominate photographic guiding escorts since their hunters' permits allow them, and project them as highly qualified and experienced. The strict requirements for professional hunters discourage us [locals] from undertaking this course”. (Focus Group Discussion, Khwai).

The tourism land bank violated the Tribal Land Act (1968) which gives the land boards authority to govern and manage land in tribal areas. The current situation where the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources Conservation and Tourism has together with the Ministry of Land Management, Water and Sanitation subdivided and advertise tourism concessions in WMAs has been received with mixed reactions. Four years after the introduction of the tourism land bank initiative, none of the citizens have been allocated tourism sites in the prime tourism areas of the Okavango or Chobe districts. The land bank initiative seems to have further centralised the management of community tourism land. In essence, government has un-procedurally transferred tribal land into state land thinking that it is empowering local communities, something that is likely to further impoverish locals as they do not have the requisite financial capacity to attract and develop these high-end tourism sites. The tourism land bank initiative has essentially disempowered local communities from venturing into high-end and profitable tourism enterprise as they no longer have land rights as in the past before introduction of land bank. It is with facilitation and secure land rights that CBOs could attract investors who could in turn use it as collateral in formal credit markets to access funding. Perhaps a rural development policy should promote secure land rights so that CBOs could use the land rights to access financial assistance from private banks.

6. Conclusion

There is a growing scepticism about the state's perceived agenda of pleasing the developed world or global north at the expense of the local populace. The prevailing global norms as they affect

national conservation policies continue to shape citizens and state relations particularly those residing in the northern districts of Botswana where the livelihood needs of human beings and wildlife habitat overlap. The prohibition of hunting activities without immediately putting in place an alternative to address the impact of the hunting prohibition such as loss of jobs from safari hunting, loss of game meat and loss of revenue has exposed and rendered local communities more vulnerable. The respondents indicated that they were more likely to ignore government and/or connive with poachers.

The majority (91.2%) of respondents in this study who include local communities' heads of households and/or their representatives and key informants would like to see the wildlife hunting prohibition being reversed or lifted since they see wildlife hunting as playing a significant role in rural livelihoods. Even though they were aware that wildlife hunting has been dominated by foreign hunting safari companies, they noted that it had contributed to improvements in the rural livelihood. The losses include loss of employment, loss of revenue to both CBOs and individual households and loss of game meat. The hunting prohibition has also led to local CBOs abandoning the provision of community benefits such as old age, orphans and disability allowances as well as students' scholarships. Funding for these community benefits was mainly derived from revenue generated through the sale of community hunting quotas including the sale of wildlife by-products such as meat from hunting safaris.

The decision to prohibit wildlife hunting is not necessarily the problem but rather the manner in which the decision was taken and implemented. The decision to prohibit wildlife hunting was announced without prior consultation with local communities who were only informed of the policy change. This approach has "removed the sense of pride for owning land and natural resources" and thus created a perception that locals do not own the wildlife resources (including those in their CHAs). Local communities now view the wildlife as state property, and any costs that arise out of wildlife is attributed to the government and therefore they demand full compensation for such costs (crop damage, livestock predation and loss of human life). Lifting the wildlife hunting prohibition, therefore, could trigger an increased value chain as local communities partake in conservation of wildlife as it will generate employment.

Government should maintain both consumptive and non-consumptive tourism according to the suitability of the CHAs. This is mainly because the prevailing wildlife management statutes such as the Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act (1992), CBNRM policy (2007) and the Wildlife Conservation Policy (2013) promote inclusive management and utilisation of natural resources. Even when wildlife hunting was allowed, 322 elephants were successfully hunted out of the 396 elephant quota given by CITES (Botswana Wildlife Hunting Report, 2013). However, lifting of the hunting prohibition should be exercised with caution lest communities continue to be exploited by professional hunting safari companies as has been the case before the 2014 wildlife prohibition was enforced.

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