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Private and public authority interactions and the functional quality of sustainability governance: Lessons from conservation and development initiatives in Tanzania

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Abstract

The changing shape of sustainability governance has been a key academic and policy concern in the past two decades, as part of a wider debate on the interactions between public and private authority in governing the economy, society, and the environment. In this article, we contribute to these debates by examining how these interactions operate locally and across jurisdictions in three conservation and development initiatives in Tanzania and what impact they have on the functional quality of sustainability governance. We find that clear division of responsibilities, coupled with material incentives for communities and equal and transparent distribution of benefits, are key positive contributors to functional quality. These factors underpin the complementary interactions (collaborative at the local level; institutional layering across jurisdictions) that are needed to successfully negotiate and implement the compromises needed to balance conservation and development goals. We also find that competitive dynamics are harmful to functional quality, especially those taking the form of local institutional duplication and of dominance by central government across jurisdictions. These tend to appear especially when sustainability initiatives involve multiple stakeholders with wide discrepancies in resources, interests, and power, which leads to compromises determined in a top-down manner.

Keywords: conservation, governance sphere, natural resources, private and public authority, sustainability initiatives, Tanzania.

1. Introduction

New governance initiatives and partnerships are emerging to address the sustainability of natural resource use in the Global South. These initiatives variously link donors, governments, community-based groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), business, consultants, certification agencies, and other intermediaries. High expectations and many resources have been invested in them. Yet, we still do not know whether more sophisticated organizational structures, more stakeholders involved (including the private sector), and more advanced participatory processes have delivered better social and environmental outcomes – and if so, in what places and sectors, under what circumstances, and with what distributional effects (Best 2014).

These public-private initiatives are taking shape as contexts of, and narratives about, resource depletion are changing – bringing new global audiences, alliances, and policies to bear on previously local and national issues. Linked to a growing sense of urgency, sustainability agendas now call for innovative measures and transnational and cross-sectoral cooperation and investments (Borras et al. 2011). Thus, wildlife resources now matter in the context of the severe increase in extinction rates due to human activities, wildlife crime, and poaching; illegal

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fishing matters in the context of the global decline of capture fisheries; and forest cover and forest degradation in developing countries matters in the context of global climate change mitigation and adaptation (Ponte et al. 2017). While conventional narratives on resource depletion place the blame exclusively on actors and processes within the Global South, emerging narratives increasingly link local and global factors and actors (Duffy & Moore 2011; Nunan 2020a).

Much research on the governance of natural resources so far has focused on the institutional features, potential, construction, and participatory elements of these partnerships at the local and national levels (Levine 2002; Brockington 2007; Nelson & Agrawal 2008) and transnationally (Cashore et al. 2004; Glasbergen et al. 2007; Pattberg 2007; Gulbrandsen 2010; Duffy & Moore 2011), and on ethnographies of conservation-development funding and of experts (Lund et al. 2017). The literature on local partnerships has shown that they can indeed promote conservation improvements, but often at the cost of local livelihoods due to restricted access to erstwhile available resources (Blomley et al. 2008; Agrawal et al. 2011; Persha et al. 2011; Van Wijk et al. 2015). The presence of many partners and linkages has often been reported as a feature of successful community-based initiatives (Berkes 2007), but with little in-depth analysis of whether and how socio-ecological contexts shape outcomes. The literature has also shown that the possible erosion of government authority opens up opportunities for entrepreneurial actors and alliances to take on the leadership of sustainability, but often without a specific mandate or clear guidelines. These actors may actually be the very same behind the erosion of public authority to begin with (Börzel & Risse 2010).

An important dynamic of local partnerships has been a degree of devolution of public authority to nonstate actors and/or more or less democratic decentralization to local government (Lemos & Agrawal 2006). While devolution and decentralization do not always provide the financial resources anticipated, they can empower local communities to effectively negotiate their claims over natural resources (Larson & Soto 2008) and help building new organizations for channeling opposition against resource extraction and impositions from central government. Yet, devolution and decentralization can also be appropriated by central governments, or unelected authorities, for their own purposes (Ribot 2004; Nelson & Agrawal 2008; Benjaminsen et al. 2013). We still know little about whether these processes are creating actually inclusive platforms for the negotiation of sustainable utilization and conservation of natural resources, given a long history of exclusive state control (Berkes 2007). We also need to better embed the analysis of different kinds of interactions between private and public actors and how these play out in the context of power struggles in different jurisdictions.

In this article, we examine the “functional quality” of various initiatives that involve various combinations, layers and forms of interaction of public authority (and its various jurisdictional layers) and private authority (imparted by civil society organizations, certification agencies, and/or business). This means that we forego a discussion of the environmental and socio-economic outcomes of these initiatives here – to focus on the procedural features of conservation and development initiatives. To illuminate functional quality, we ask the following questions: Is local participation meaningful thus leading to long-term engagement by communities in conservation and development activities? What is the nature of interactions among different stakeholders, and to what extent does it mirror existing power imbalances and struggles? How are the possible compromises between conservation and development negotiated and implemented? Do different stakeholders have a clear picture of their roles and responsibilities, and of the governance procedures and division of labor among different actors? Are adequate resources available to carry out governance functions and who controls these resources?

We provide two novel contributions to existing debates on the interactions between private and public authority. First, we offer new insights on a specific kind of problem/solution combination approach to sustainability governance, which conceptualizes a specific problem *ex ante* and locates its approach in a specific historical interpretation of best practice (Cashore & Bernstein 2018). Specifically, we show how sustainability initiatives, by seeking compromises between conservation and development objectives, may end up embedding forms of “checkbox participation” from local communities, which in the long run harm their functional quality. Second, we interrogate the typology provided by Cashore et al. (2021) that distinguishes between: *complementary* interactions (which can include collaboration, coordination, isomorphism, and collusion); *competitive* interactions (e.g. displacement, co-optation in its different forms, such as domination or convergence of norms and values); and *co-existence* (arising from institutional layering and resulting in a functional division of labor or simply confusion). However, we do not take this classification as given, and will identify additional (sub) typologies as

relevant. We analyze these interactions within a larger “governance sphere” that includes formal policy frameworks, various organizational setups, and the political economy and ecology of conservation and development.

Empirically, we analyze natural resource governance in forestry, wildlife, and fisheries in Tanzania. These three sectors are formally regulated under a common policy framework, thus allowing us to focus on internal variation. In other words, we use Tanzania as an illustrative, but not necessarily representative case, of sustainability governance interactions in the Global South. Tanzania is an appropriate illustrative case of these interactions because it has been an early mover in implementing several policy reforms involving new forms of sustainability partnerships (Ramutsindela & Noe 2012; Rantala & Di Gregorio 2014). We draw on the results of an ongoing research project (New Partnerships for Sustainability, NEPSUS) which assembles a multidisciplinary team to analyze public-private sustainability initiatives in three key natural resource sectors in the country: forestry, wildlife, and fisheries. A team of 15 researchers (including the authors) carried out fieldwork between February 2017 and August 2018, which included: several hundred key informant (semi-structured) interviews with government officials, representatives of the sustainability partnerships, officers of national and local-level NGOs, private sector operators, and local stakeholders (e.g. fishers, wildlife hunters, gatherers of forest products); the collection of secondary documents (policy documents, project documents, secondary data, meeting attendance records, minutes of meetings, etc.); focus groups (with men and women separately in each location); participant observation; and a large-scale survey of 1,062 respondents. This rich and diverse set of data allows us to assess the functional quality of these initiatives from the bottom-up and from a variety of actor perspectives.

In Section 2, we highlight our novel contributions in the context of broader debates on private and public authority interactions. In Section 3, we trace the emergence and consolidation of community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) in the Global South, and in Tanzania more specifically. In Section 4, we provide a necessarily brief analysis of three CBNRM initiatives (on wildlife, forestry, and fisheries) in southern Tanzania. In Section 5, we reflect upon these findings in view of improving our understanding of the interactions between private and public authority in governance spheres of sustainability.

2. Theoretical and analytical contributions

The changing shape of sustainability governance has been a key academic and policy concern in the past two decades, as part of a wider debate on the putative advance and limitations of private authority in governing economy, society, and the environment (Bush and Osterveer 2019; van der Ven 2019; Cutler et al. 1999; Hall & Biersteker 2002; Bartley 2018). Many contributors have highlighted that while there has been a massive emergence of market-based forms of authority (Cashore et al. 2004; Bartley 2007; Pattberg 2007; Büthe & Mattli 2011), this development has not led to a withering away of the state (Gulbrandsen 2010; Gale & Haward 2011; Green 2013; Auld 2014; Bartley 2014; Gulbrandsen 2014). Rather, we are witnessing the birth of hybrid governance forms where business, civil society, and public actors interact at different levels, in parallel and intersecting arenas where domestic and international legal orders can also apply (Levy & Newell 2005; Bäckstrand 2008; Abbott & Snidal 2009; Andonova et al. 2009; Bair 2017; Grabs et al. 2018) and where governments can choose to repurpose or replace private governance initiatives (Marques & Eberlein 2021).

The main argument for the need of sustainability governance emerging from this massive literature is that no single institution alone is capable of addressing wicked problems effectively and equitably, and thus that the engagement of various stakeholders representing various layers of government, business, and civil society is essential, together with the involvement of local communities (Ansell & Gash 2007; Rana & Chhatre 2017). But the functional quality of these initiatives has been shown to also depend on how networks of actors and institutions are structured, how power and responsibility are shared and devolved, and what flows within them (Fransen et al. 2016; Fransen et al. 2018; Henriksen & Ponte 2018). Values, principles, and goals are articulated and developed as public and/or private individuals and institutions, engage in social exchange, with goals that are not given but negotiated, and that are not stable but vary according to the strength of participants who come and go (Jentoft & Chuenpagdee 2009). The concept of “governance sphere,” as a broad politico-economic space where the very nature of the problem definition is constantly debated and challenged, can help making sense of these interactions and negotiations (Cashore et al. 2021).

In order to understand how problem definitions and related solutions have emerged and changed in conservation and development circles, we need to first underline that the importance of democratic decentralization, local participation, and market approaches to sustainability governance had already been observed back in the 1970s and 1980s (Heynen et al. 2007). This realisation emerged from genuine reflections on the limits of top-down conservation approaches, but also from increasing pressure by international conservation organizations and financial institutions regarding the failures of resource-constrained and newly independent states. These failures partly arose from the actions of former colonizers and of international financial institutions keen to offload risk onto their developing country partners (Agrawal & Gibson 1999; Brockington 2005; Best 2014).

Existing research highlights trust as a key aspect of functioning quality, both in relation to initiating a trust-building loop, and in sustaining it (Beierle & Konisky 2001; Schuett et al. 2001; Vangen 2003) and that partnerships are more likely to be successful when there is alignment between actors in terms of resources, interests, power, language, and culture (Huxham et al. 2000; Vangen 2003). Other facilitating factors highlighted in previous research are the presence of a supportive external environment; situations where all stakeholders can connect their own interests with the common objective of the partnership (Glasbergen et al. 2007); and relevant actors bringing in not only specific resources and histories to the partnership, but also an appropriate mix of resources, knowledge, and capabilities (Pattberg & Widerberg 2016).

However, these conditions are rarely found in practice, and especially in the Global South where appropriation of land and resources under the guise of conservation is rampant (see the literature on “green grabbing,” e.g. Benjaminsen & Bryceson 2012, Fairhead et al. 2012) and where sustainability partnerships often fail to meet their stated goals due to lack of organizational capacity and resources (Pattberg & Widerberg 2016; van der Ven et al. 2018). In these contexts, variety of actors in sustainability initiatives and therefore a multiplication of interactions among different stakeholders does not lead per se to better functional quality, as each partner represents specific interests, may embody different world views, yields different degrees and kinds of power, and brings with it specific hopes, expectations, and claims (Glasbergen et al. 2007). Actors may have irreconcilable interests, no matter how much participants agree on basic values and principles – leading to different perceptions of problems and their solutions (Jentoft & Chuenpagdee 2009). Different capabilities of actors often result into power imbalances. Smaller and weaker actors – especially those who do not have capacity, organizational skills, and resources to participate as equals in partnerships – are prone to marginalization in decisionmaking (Bennett 2017).

In the rest of this article, we seek to provide two novel contributions to a better understanding of the interactions between private and public authority within larger governance spheres of sustainability. First, we provide new insights on one specific kind of problem approach to sustainability governance, which conceptualizes a specific problem deductively and locates its approach in a specific historical interpretation of “best practice.” Cashore and Bernstein (2018; see also Cashore and Bernstein 2018) have advanced a typology of four sustainability problem conceptions, distinguishing: (i) whether they are conceived as universal and generalizable or whether they are historically specific set of norms; and (ii) whether the initiatives are designed inductively from the targeted problem (ends determining means) rather than the other way around (means determining ends). A combination of these two distinctions yields four problem conceptions. *Type 1* are problems that are generalizable and inductively derived; they draw attention to problems that if left unaddressed lead to everyone becoming worse off in the long run (e.g. tragedies of the commons); and that entail solutions based on designing the “right” types of rules and procedures. *Type 2* are problems that are generalizable and deductively derived; they seek to optimize tradeoffs between different problems (e.g. ecosystem service approaches seeking to balance economic and environmental outcomes). *Type 3* are problems that are historically contingent and deductively derived; they seek to avoid hard tradeoffs between environmental, economic, and social values through compromises and integrative solutions (e.g. “sustainable development”). *Type 4* are problems that are historically contingent and inductively derived; they seek prioritization of some issues over others, without the possibility of tradeoff (e.g. climate change, species extinction) (Cashore & Bernstein 2018). Here, we seek to offer new insights on Type 3 problems, and in particular question whether the surface of “avoiding hard tradeoffs” through compromises is actually enacted in practice, especially in situations where strong power imbalances between different groups of actors prevail – a situation more likely to result in key redistributive outcomes (a trait of Type 2 problems).

Second, we assess the salience of a typology of interactions between private and public authority developed by Cashore et al. (2021)¹ that encompasses: *competitive* interactions (including displacement and co-optation),

complementary interactions (including collaboration, coordination, isomorphism, and collusion), and *co-existence*. In our empirical material, we interrogate these categorizations and provide new insights on competitive interactions (by highlighting instances of “institutional duplication”) and situations where “co-optation,” rather than leaning toward convergence of norms and activities, is a sign of outright dominance (as distinguished in Eberlein et al. 2014).

3. The emergence and consolidation of CBNRM in the Global South

In many countries in the Global South, the natural resource sector was historically known for its top-down state-centric form of governance. However, recent developments in participatory natural resource management have called for multiple stakeholders and for greater roles to be assigned to the private sector and to local communities. This has come with a plethora of changes to policy and legal frameworks governing natural resources. A more complex set of interactions among various actors is evident as the state, conservation, and development partners negotiate compromises for the distribution of decisionmaking powers and benefits accrued from different natural resources. The “imperative of participation” (a historically contingent factor) has been accompanied by a set of sustainability initiatives where “the problem” is formulated deductively and the means of participation trump the end objective of conservation development. All these traits suggest the presence of what Cashore and Bernstein (2018) define as a Type 3 problem formulation.

International donors, including the World Bank, the Global Environmental Facility, various bilateral donors (especially Finland, Norway, Denmark, and Germany), and international conservation NGOs, such as WWF, UNESCO, IUCN, Care International, and Africare, have played significant roles in facilitating conservation reforms and in creating local instruments and institutional setups in which decentralized powers were (supposedly) placed. They have done so through funding national overall budgets and conservation budgets in particular, and through projects carried out directly in local communities and/or through national government institutions. These actors were also instrumental in moving away from vague policy formulations concerning community involvement in natural resource management to enable them to actually become the legal owners of resources. These formulations emphasized in particular the role of public-private partnerships as a vehicle for delivering the expected benefits for communities.

Reform processes, however, seem to have pushed governments to transfer powers to local parallel institutions rather than to representatives of local government, and to transfer resources that have no commercial value while also making decentralized decisionmaking 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 decentralization and delegation of authority to public-private partnerships, as we will discuss below (see also Ribot et al. 2006; Benjaminsen et al. 2013). Rather than decreasing, bureaucracy and state interference continue. Central governments seem to be reinforcing upward accountability by transferring obligations to local authorities without sufficient funding, essentially setting them up for failure. They are also keeping significant control and supervisory roles over the allocation of important commercial opportunities (including revenues from permits and licenses) (Mandondo & Kozanayi 2006, Muhereza 2006).

In Tanzania, the main authority for resource protection, management and utilization (in the regions, districts, and villages) was historically vested in the central government – and particularly the office of the President, relevant line Ministers and Directors, and the officers who were appointed to administer legislation. Governance reforms were called for in the past few decades with an overarching objective of assigning greater roles to the private sector and local communities rather than the state. The spirit of this new approach was to promote delegation of powers to public-private partnerships in natural resource management (GTZ 2003; Nelson et al. 2007) and decentralization to local government. While obliged to respond to new global-driven demands of delegation and decentralization, Tanzania found itself in a difficult situation where it had to rely on financial and technical assistance from global actors to support its policy and legal formulations. Additionally, reforms were to scale down the powers of the state at the time when the country did not have well-developed resource policies in place. The central government engaged in these processes in parallel with the development of a new set of natural resource policies on land (1995), minerals (1995), forests (1998), wildlife (1998), and fisheries (2003, 2015). Although the government maintained the overall ownership of resources, it had to provide access rights to

different users and stakeholders. In the three resource sectors we examine in this article (wildlife, forestry, and fisheries), policy reforms have led to setting aside portions of village lands and waters for conservation, and to placing management responsibilities on local and (putatively) participatory initiatives – Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) initiatives, Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), and Beach Management Units (BMUs).

However, several studies on wildlife conservation have provided evidence for the inadequacy of WMAs citing the lack of transparency and accountability in revenue collection and sharing as main obstacles (Brockington 2008; Wright 2017), and lack of meaningful participation and empowerment of local communities (Mariki et al. 2015; Noe & Kangalawe 2015). As a result, community participation across resource sectors seem to have either generated limited benefits or presented significant opportunity costs for local communities, further exacerbating land use and other natural resource use conflicts (Mariki et al. 2015; Bluwstein & Lund 2016; Wright 2017). In the case of forestry, the literature highlights that CBFM has enhanced community participation with more transparent mechanisms of revenues collection, distribution, and expenditure (Kalonga et al. 2015; Corbera et al. 2017). However, evidence is also emerging that conservation efforts on reserved forests has increased pressure on unreserved forests land (Sungusia & Lund 2016). In fisheries, several studies (Kanyange et al. 2014; Nunan et al. 2015) have documented that BMUs lack support from government, and that their enforcement power at the local level has been weak. In the next sections, we provide new insights and comparative evidence into these three forms of CBNRM initiatives in three regions of southern Tanzania.

4. Community-based natural resource management initiatives in southern Tanzania: A comparative analysis

As discussed in the previous section, new forms of public-private authority interaction in Tanzania have been embedded in a variety of CBNRM setups, which were designed with the objective of transferring authority from central government to local governments (decentralization) and to private actors (delegation) in view of improving both conservation and socio-economic outcomes. By comparing how these setups have been operating in three different natural resource sectors (wildlife, forestry, and fisheries), we can start identifying possible differences in organizational and interactive dynamics that we will then examine comparatively in view of interrogating two aspects. First, we provide nuance into the dynamics of Type 3 problematization, as in Cashore and Bernstein (2018), given that all three cases problems have been defined in historically contingent ways and deductively derived. They have all been designed in view of means (delegation and decentralization, participation) justifying the ends of conservation and socio-economic development, and they all seek at least on paper to avoid hard tradeoffs between environmental and socio-economic values through compromises and integrative solutions. Second, we examine the three case studies to assess the factors that can explain why interactions end up competitive, complementary or co-existential (Cashore et al. 2021) and with what results for the functional quality of these sustainability initiatives.

4.1. Wildlife Management Areas

The overall policy objective of WMAs is to delegate wildlife management responsibilities to local communities in participatory ways, while also ensuring that these communities obtain tangible socio-economic benefits from their participation in conservation (United Republic of Tanzania 1998). The Village Council (VC), the most local level of government in Tanzania, is responsible for village land administration and the Village Assembly (VA) – a periodic meeting of all villagers above 18 years of age, to which the VC is formally accountable – is a legitimate organ through which approvals are sought for any development initiative including investments on village land. Before the establishment of WMAs, VCs did not always set aside land for conservation purposes but the need for a new local institutional setup meant that NGOs and other organizations became heavily involved in facilitating community-based conservation in villages bordering protected areas. WMAs are highly formalized structures with clear descriptions of responsibilities at various levels of governance.

The original plan, which responds to global conservation objectives, is to have as many WMAs as possible to improve ecological connectivity of protected area as much as possible. Currently, 38 WMAs are in various stages of establishment countrywide (USAID 2012). Once in place, they will cover 7% of Tanzania's total land

(Moyo et al. 2016). However, only 20 have so far been completed (Bluwstein et al. 2018). Our case study involves two WMAs bordering the Selous Game Reserve in Rufiji district: MUNGATA (Muungano wa Ngarambe na Tapika) and JUHIWANGUMWA (Jumuiya ya Hifadhi ya Wanyamapori Ngorongo, Utete na Mwaseni). These WMAs share a similar governance structure and have the same objective of protecting wildlife while generating economic benefits for local communities, but they are supported by different global actors and contribute differently to the land that makes up buffer zones and wildlife corridors around the reserve (Noe et al. 2017; Noe 2019; Noe et al. 2019).

Business operations for the two WMAs in our study area are dictated by their location relative to that of the game reserve. MUNGATA borders the hunting section of the game reserve hence its business plans must be compatible with those of the game reserve. This implies that the WMA only attracts hunting tourists and, for that matter, the entire area of MUNGATA is a hunting block. Only one hunting private investor obtains the contract through a tender procedure. Hunting tourism is lucrative, but it is seasonal and attracts only few, wealthier tourists. This implies that few employment opportunities are available, mainly in transport, carriage, trophy preparation, and campsite management (cleaning, guarding).

The second WMA we researched (JUHIWANGUMWA) is largely bordering the photographic section of the game reserve, and hence is highly attractive for a range of nonconsumptive tourism activities (such as walking and boat safaris, camping, photography). These activities create spin-off effects in member villages, making this side of the game reserve more active in the provision of goods and services to tourists. Photographic investment partnerships involve the construction of permanent or semi-permanent accommodations for tourists. These can be built within the WMA or in village land (through a separate agreement between the investor and the VC). JUHIWANGUMWA allows both options. One of its member villages has attracted over 30 private investors on its land. Various fees are charged for photographic tourism activities to generate revenue for WMAs, which are determined by government through a revenue sharing formula. As villages have a choice on how to use their funds, most invest in community development projects as opposed to direct distribution of resources to local residents. It is important to also note that the use of this revenue locally is still subject to central government control.

WMAs are legal entities with responsibilities for wildlife protection and the management of daily interactions between villagers, business partners and donors. However, this has not involved the transfer of wildlife ownership from the central government to WMAs. Therefore, the compromises typical of Type 3 problematizations, in this case seeking to balance conservation and socio-economic development, are heavily skewed by the ownership structure of wildlife and the fact that central government controls the allocation of hunting and photographic tourism licenses. Interactions between WMAs and business operators are also characterized by unequal power relations, especially in hunting tourism where only one operator holds the exclusive license. In other words, the compromises that are typical of Type 3 interactions actually mutate into implicit Type 2 optimization exercises, with the more powerful actors (business operators and central government) obtaining the lion's share of benefits.

What could superficially be interpreted as complementary dynamics (Cashore et al. 2021) between government, WMAs and business, are actually characterized by competitive interactions taking the form of dominance by government (Noe et al. 2017; Noe et al. 2019). At the same time, WMAs have also created tensions at the local level because VCs used to have exclusive responsibility for the management of village land and related resources. As such, WMAs and VCs have become parallel local institutions, leading to power clashes and disagreements over wildlife-related revenues. These examples suggest a mix of co-existence and competitive interactions. But instead of engendering displacement, co-optation, or simple co-existence, they characterize "institutional duplication" in the sense that both VCs and WMAs seek to govern the same set of issues in the same jurisdiction. These tensions are amplified by the fact that conservation efforts for the purpose of hunting and (to a lesser extent) photographic tourism have not led to substantial socio-economic benefits for local villagers, who have in the meantime been restricted in their hunting activities for own consumption and have to deal with a larger number of wildlife damaging their crops (Benjaminsen & Svarstad 2010; Bluwstein et al. 2016; Moyo et al. 2016).

In sum, WMAs have been promoted as a genuine representation of village interests in wildlife protection. But villagers in these rural areas have no choice over the top-down processes that create new resource partnerships, despite the participatory claims embedded in them. WMA governance follows a logic of centralized control over resources (Bluwstein et al. 2016) and regulates access in a way that disempowers villagers (Noe & Kangalawe

2015). Revenue can also disappear through corruption that involves local and national level leaders as well as private investors (Benjaminsen et al. 2013). Finally, tourism-related revenues are still highly regulated and optimized toward ensuring wildlife protection, rather than people's welfare, making a mockery of notions of community-based conservation (Moyo et al. 2016, p. 232) and the potential utility of Type 3 compromise-based problematizations.

4.2. Community-Based Forest Management

Tanzania is regarded as among the earliest pioneers of Participatory Forest Management (PFM) in Africa (Trupin et al. 2018). PFM represents a paradigm shift from state-centric forest governance to participatory forms of management in which nonstate actors are involved in creating and implementing conservation actions toward sustainable outcomes. The National Forest Policy of 1998 and the National Forest Act of 2002 encouraged the establishment of PFM across Tanzania. PFM has two possible paths, Joint Forest Management (JFM) and Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM). JFM is implemented within National Forest Reserves by the state and the adjacent local communities. Relevant guidelines require that the state or any organization on its behalf and adjacent communities sign a joint management agreement specifying the roles of actors and a benefit sharing formula. CBFM instead allows communities own and manage their forests and is implemented through the establishment of Village Land Forests Reserves – which are managed by democratically elected Village Natural Resources Committees (VNRCs).

In Kilwa district, PFM was supported by a donor-funded project in 2001, the Utunzaji wa Misitu Project (UTUMI) (Woodland and Forest Management Project). Before UTUMI, inhabitants of villages with forests were not formally engaged in forest management. Forest management was perceived to be a state affair, and villagers and other nonstate actors were considered to be mere observers. At the end of the UTUMI project, the Kilwa District Council continued to receive financial support to implement CBFM activities through NGOs, especially the Mpingo Conservation Program (now the Mpingo Conservation and Development Initiative, or MCDI), which took over these activities with the aim of facilitating certified sustainable harvesting of blackwood (*Dalbergia melanoxylon*, Mpingo in Kiswahili) and of enabling communities to benefit from forest conservation in their village lands. MCDI has managed to sustain one of the former UTUMI villages and has enrolled many more villages in its CBFM program. Between 2010 and 2014, in collaboration with the Kilwa District Council and other actors, MCDI piloted the UN framework initiative for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) in the villages implementing CBFM in their land forest reserve. MCDI also secured a Group Certification Scheme from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in 11 villages in Kilwa District. These activities have generated the first FSC-certified timber exports in Africa and led to important revenue streams for CBFM activities in these villages.

Certified forests in Kilwa district are mainly for timber production and earn income from timber sales (Kalonga et al. 2015). Selling timber earns a village 40–50 percent higher profits than selling logs. The income earned is divided up equally between the VC and VNRC. The VC usually invests this income for development priorities approved by the VA, while VNRC uses it to cover the costs of forest conservation (e.g. allowances for meetings, forest patrols, and gear and equipment for patrolling). Timber buyers pay a 5 percent levy and other fees to the Kilwa District Council when securing a permit for buying timber from a specific village land forest reserve. After the purchase is carried out, the village then returns 5 percent of the sales value the Kilwa District Council. The village also pays MCDI 5 percent of the sales as part of partaking their technical facilitation expenses. In sum, villages retain 85 percent of the sales value.

Differently from the case study of WMAs above, MCDI (an NGO) has worked closely with both the district council and VCs in interactions seeking to include a variety of existing institutional setups, instead of displacing or ignoring them. This is a clear instance of *complementary* interactions of the collaborative kind – both between different layers of government and between private and public actors. This experience also suggests that the existence of tangible resources (in this case arising from the FSC premium) is necessary for complementary interactions to occur. However, resources per se are not sufficient – as the conservation and livelihood improvements that we observed in this area are less likely to have occurred had there been collusion between private and public

actors (e.g. MDCI and the district council) to control material resources and disenfranchise other stakeholders (e.g. VCs) (Kalumanga et al. 2018; Mwamfupe et al. 2019).

Our forestry case study also signals that Type 3 problem formulations can lead to improved functional quality in conservation and development initiatives. However, this is more likely to happen when: compromises are made as close as possible to the ground; power imbalances among stakeholders are less pronounced; and the additional resources arising from conservation are directed to address socio-economic goals – making compromises more readily acceptable for the key actors involved. It should also be noted that these lessons are based on a special circumstance – the availability of resources arising from the FSC certification of a highly prized tree species. Thus, they may not readily apply to other forestry situations in the country or elsewhere. At the same time, a clear division of labor among stakeholders and complementary interactions clearly facilitated a relatively inclusive and balanced trajectory of conservation and development.

4.3. Beach Management Units

BMUs are organizations that seek to facilitate community participation and collaboration in the management of fisheries in Tanzania. BMUs bring together a group of stakeholders (local government, community representatives, NGOs, researchers, boat owners, fish traders, and money lenders) in a fishing community – whose task is to manage, protect and conserve fisheries. Their jurisdiction is usually limited to one (sometimes a few) villages. The BMU guidelines list the following tasks: enforce the Fishing Act, prepare by-laws, ensure sanitation and hygiene, collect fish data and information, educate fishers, prepare and implement livelihood projects, and ensure the security of people and property. These tasks were previously assigned exclusively to the District Fisheries Office and locally to the Village Environmental Management Committee (VEMC). BMU regulations require each person in a village who engages in fishing activities such as fishers, fish processors, gear repairers and suppliers, and boat builders to register as members (URT 2003). BMU members form their own management committee, executive committee and committees on statistics and information, patrolling and finance. Every BMU is supposed to hold a general assembly quarterly, while BMU committees are supposed to meet once a month.

The BMU system emphasizes community responsibility and accountability for managing resources, including private sector participation. Like many other community-based systems for managing natural resources, BMUs are supposed to empower local fishing communities to develop and enforce locally appropriate rules within village boundaries to improve the management of a fishery (Nunan et al. 2015; Nunan 2020b). The primary responsibility of BMUs is to cooperate with and assist fishery officers in law enforcement, landing station development and sanitation, collection of fisheries data, conflict resolution and welfare matters (Ogwang et al. 2009).

BMUs in Tanzania were first established on Lake Victoria starting in 1997, following the decline in fish catches and stocks there (Jentoft and Chuenpagdee 2015). The government started to involve local communities in the management of fisheries in view of curbing the use of destructive fishing gear. From 2006 onwards, the implementation of BMUs was extended to the marine coastline (Cinner et al. 2012) and is taking place mostly where there is active donor support. In Mtwara region, BMU formation started as a pilot project (2008–2011) under the Ministry of Livestock and Fishery Development, the World Bank-financed Marine and Coastal Environmental Management Plan (MACEMP), and in collaboration with WWF Tanzania. However, the introduction of BMUs in Mtwara was not welcomed in all villages, and within villages many fishers were resistant to their establishment. This led MACEMP to promise fishers access to new and legal fishing gear and boats, as well as alternative income generating activities, such as goat breeding, poultry rearing, and fish farming. However, many of these projects either never took off, or folded soon after external support ceased (Katikiro et al. 2017; Kweka et al. 2019).

According to fisheries regulations, there are supposed to be 739 BMUs in Tanzania. However, many exist only on paper and a considerable number have not been effective in implementing the management guidelines and hence have become inactive (Katikiro et al. 2017, Kweka et al. 2019). We studied four BMUs in our research project, all located in Mtwara Rural District. Two were selected among those which were established early in the process (Mgao and Msangamkuu), and two which were established more recently (Namela and Kisiwa). Ex ante, we expected to find significant differences between these two groups, but this did not materialize (Kweka et al. 2019).

Since 2014, WWF has been revamping older BMUs and forming new ones, while other NGOs have been carrying out trainings on alternative income generating activities and sustainable use of fishery resources. One of the barriers to BMUs being more broadly established is the condition of being registered with the national fisheries department (Nunan et al. 2015), which leads some communities to perceive them as additional arm of government, thereby hampering active local involvement (Kweka et al. 2019). Therefore, despite being designed to actively include private sector actors and local communities, in their daily management BMUs have become essentially a parallel institutional structure to village government. Just like in the case of wildlife, this has led to conflict, especially between BMUs and VEMCs, which have substantial overlap of functions and activities.

In terms of functional quality, BMUs face major challenges in collecting revenue. While BMUs can raise revenue through levy collection at landing sites, from fishing licenses, from fines from patrols, and/or other forms of local taxation on fishing-related activities, this task is often clashes with the mandate of the district-level fisheries division (Katikiro et al. 2017, Kweka et al. 2019). This creates another layer of conflict (Nunan et al. 2015). In BMU jurisdictions, VEMCs often work actively against what they perceive as a competitor institution, for example by not allowing BMUs to collect fees from fishers at the landing sites. Unclear division of labor between tasks assigned to District Fisheries Officers and BMUs compounds already conflictual situations at the village level. Finally, the BMUs that are located adjacent to the Mnazi Bay Ruvuma Estuary Marine Park (Msanga Mkuu and Namela) also face a conflict of jurisdiction, as the two partially overlap. In the Marine Park, fishing activities are (at least on paper) much more restricted than in BMU jurisdictions, creating confusion and frustration on what set of regulation should apply where (Katikiro et al. 2017).

Similar to the case study of WMAs, BMUs have essentially added a parallel institutional structure that has multi-stakeholder features but that clashes with the democratically elected organs of local government. In WMAs and BMUs, conservation efforts have been at loggerheads with established ways of ensuring livelihoods and failed to provide alternative sources of income. At the very least, some resources are retained by WMAs, while BMUs are essentially cash-strapped. Therefore, we cannot even really talk about Type 3-style compromises in problem formulation in fisheries management, as in practice the only activities carried out by BMUs relate to fisheries conservation, and even these are few and not particularly effective (Kweka et al. 2019). Again, we observe an instance of competitive interaction at the local level that arises from institutional duplication.

4.4. Comparative elements

In this section, we discuss what determining factors may have shaped the kind of interactions we observed in the three initiatives examined so far. We do so first at the local level, and then across geographic and jurisdictional scales. As we can see in Table 1, in all three cases the “problem” was defined deductively – the “means” of community-based approaches that include participatory elements justify the “ends” of conservation and development; and “solutions” sought to address this problem were nested in the current understanding of best practice – which includes delegation and decentralization processes at least formally embedded in multi-stakeholder forms of governance. Lack of variation on these aspects entails that our analysis is explanatory in relation to only one specific approach to problem formulation, what Cashore and Bernstein (2018) call Type 3. Within this type, we show that clarity in the division of labor and responsibilities between various institutional setups (one set of which are multi-stakeholder initiatives and the other set local public institutions) seems to be playing a key role in facilitating collaborative interactions at the local level. In wildlife and fisheries, institutional duplication and lack of clarity hampered the functional quality of WMAs and BMUs. In forestry, a clear division of labor and responsibility facilitated the functional quality of CBFM.

At the same time, the availability of material resources for conservation activities and the size and equity of distribution of the benefits that may arise from these initiatives have also been important. The case of CBFM in Kilwa clearly indicates the importance of drawing material benefits from conservation (the FSC premium in this case) and of distributing these benefits fairly through community-level projects that are selected in a (relatively) democratic manner. In other words, it suggests that Type 3 compromises should be made at the lowest possible jurisdictional level, thus potentially minimizing the power gaps that are more likely to open across scales and jurisdictions. These compromises are particularly important when new limitations affecting livelihoods are placed on resource access as a result of conservation efforts. Lack of material incentives in wildlife and fisheries severely

Table 1 Sustainability initiatives in forestry, wildlife, and coastal resources in Tanzania: Key features and findings

Natural resource sector	Wildlife	Forestry	Fisheries
CBNRM organizational form	WMAs	CBFM	BMUs
Specific initiative(s)	MUNGATA and JUHIWANGUMWA	MCDI	Namela and Msanga Mkuu
Problem definition (inductive or deductive)	Deductive	Deductive	Deductive
Solution definition (universal or historically contingent)	Contingent	Contingent	Contingent
Functional quality	Low	High	Medium
Local level factors (district- and village-levels)			
Clarity in the institutional division of labor in governance	Low	High	Low
Size of resources available to carry out conservation activities at the local level	Low	Relatively high	Very low
Value and inclusiveness of economic benefits	Low	Relatively high and inclusive	Very low
Type of interaction	Competitive (institutional duplication)	Complementary (collaborative)	Competitive (institutional duplication)
Across-jurisdiction factors			
Type of interaction	Competitive (dominance)	Co-existence (institutional layering)	Competitive (dominance)

BMUs, beach management units; CBNRM, community-based natural resource management; CBFM, community-based forest management; WMAs, wildlife management areas. *Source:* Authors' elaboration from data presented in Noe et al. (2019), Kweka et al. (2019), and Mwamfupe et al. (2019). [Correction added on 27 March 2020, after first online publication: In Table 1, the functional quality data for 'Wildlife' and 'Forestry' have been reversed.]

limited the buy-in of local communities and/or led to disillusion, in addition to duplication and friction between parallel institutional setups. Fishers and consumers of bush meat were affected by access restrictions, not to speak of previously available land that is now allocated to wildlife conservation. Alternative livelihood activities failed (in fisheries) or its benefits went to a small number of wealthy investors (in hunting tourism).

These observations are relevant for understanding interactions at the local level. However, in order to assess the functional quality of the overall governance sphere, we also need to examine interactions across scales of jurisdiction. Here, it is important to highlight how central government is trying to reassert its authority while paying lip service to decentralization and devolution. This is happening in Tanzania chiefly under the guise of improving ground surveillance to tighten natural resource protection and involves a transition from "lenient" security operations to the establishment of a proper "natural resource paramilitary" force.

In wildlife, officers are currently undergoing military training, after which they will operate with army ranks under the Tanzania People's Defense Force – with the purpose of creating a unified chain of command and control and establish full authority to punish, sue and handle suspected criminals. In one of our study villages, several interviewees reported having lost family members because they had been shot dead by game rangers when they attempted to enter the game reserve for fishing or hunting. Several others have been injured or killed by hyenas and elephants, which are moving increasingly close to settlements and farms. The situation is becoming increasingly tense and villagers continue to lose hope, life, and traditional livelihood options due to the prioritization of wildlife security and tourism over people's welfare (Noe et al. 2019). Although these dynamics may suggest that the interests of wealthy foreign hunters are conditioning the nature of public governance by state authorities (in what would be a competitive interaction akin to co-optation), a more likely explanation is one of an increasingly authoritarian regime seeking to enhance surveillance and control at the local level, thus indicating the existence of a complementary form of interaction of the collusive kind (between the central government and business) (see Table 1). This interpretation also suggests that complementary interactions do not necessarily

improve functional quality (as implied above for local-level interactions in forestry) if they are used to achieve different purposes than the formally stated ones (see also Cashore et al. 2021).

In forestry, officials of Tanzania Forest Services (a central government agency) have also received military training and have been arresting illegal loggers through patrols and inspections at check points. A problematic shift is taking place from supporting local communities in conservation efforts to punishing culprits after violations occur. This is not ideal, as illegal logging is actually declining in CBFM villages, and protection of forest resources has been more effective there than in forests where TFS operates. But all in all, interactions across jurisdictions have been of co-existence between the two systems (institutional layering), with only occasional conflicts flaring up (Mwamfupe et al. 2019; see Table 1).

Finally, in fisheries a concerted effort by an ad-hoc national-level task force has been active in military-style raids and confiscation of illegal gear and dynamite since 2015. At the same time, local BMUs have been unable to perform patrolling duties properly due to lack of resources and conflict with other layers of local government. Additionally, an initiative started in early 2017 by the District Commissioner in Mtwara has involved naming and shaming reported dynamite fishers, which are identified through a local network of informants and are required them to report to the police on a regular basis. According to the NGO that has been keeping records of dynamite blasts in Mtwara, there has been a major decrease in these instances since the start of this initiative (Kweka et al. 2019). In fisheries, interactions across jurisdictions can be characterized as competitive of a “dominance” kind, with the state hammering local actors into submission for the sake of conservation of natural resources but also for the (re)establishment of “law and order.” This kind of interaction is the opposite of the “displacement” kind, where a more lenient form of private governance displaces a stronger one by public authority (see Table 1).

5. Conclusion

New forms of public-private authority interaction in Tanzania have been embedded in a variety of CBNRM setups in view of transferring authority from central government to local governments and private actors. Problem definition in all three of these cases was framed in historically contingent ways and deductively. These characterize what Cashore and Bernstein (2018) define as Type 3 interactions, where compromises are sought between conservation and development objectives. This research design allowed us to focus on what kinds of interactions (both locally and across jurisdictions) are dominant in different settings, what factors may account for the emergence of these interactions, and to what extent they can explain different degrees of functional quality in these sustainability initiatives.

What we conclude from our analysis is that the functional quality of Type 3 sustainability initiatives improves when there is clarity in the division of labor and responsibilities between various stakeholders and institutional setups, and when it is possible to raise and equally distribute additional material resources. These factors underpin the complementary interactions (collaborative at the local level; institutional layering across jurisdictions) that are needed to successfully negotiate and implement the compromises at the heart of Type 3 sustainability initiatives. What is also clear is that competitive dynamics are harmful, especially those taking the form of institutional duplication locally and of “dominance” by central government across jurisdictions (a sub-category of “co-optation” to be distinguished from convergence of norms and values or meta-regulation; see distinction in Eberlein et al. 2014).

In terms of the larger sustainability governance sphere, we suggest that unequal power relations between key actors are less likely to engender truly participatory and democratic processes, as some of the powerful stakeholders involved may be even those whose practices caused the problem to begin with. These features make it difficult to achieve acceptable compromises between conservation and development objectives in initiatives where problem solving derives from means rather than ends (Cashore & Bernstein 2018). More specifically, we suggest that the pre-formulation of specific sustainability problems and related solutions embeds specific forms of “checkbox participation” that end up actually working against functional quality. This tends to happen especially when sustainability initiatives involve multiple stakeholders with wide discrepancies in resources, interests, and power, and where compromises between conservation and socio-economic goals are determined in a top-down manner.

Our analytical effort also sought to problematize existing binomial approaches to private-public authority interaction by highlighting the combinations, nested layers and multi-scalar ways in which central government, local government, community organizations, business, NGOs, and local institutions for conservation and development come together in an overall governance sphere. We confirmed the salience of Cashore et al. (2021)'s typology of interactions (competitive, complementary, and co-existence), and confirmed their observation that complementary interactions do not necessarily improve functional quality. At the same time, we provided new nuances on “institutional duplication” and different kinds of co-optation (e.g. the salience of “dominance”) under the umbrella of competitive interactions – which could be further explored in future research. Finally, we have shown that it is important to identify how different groups of actors leverage their interests and power at various geographic and jurisdictional scales in order to provide in-depth depictions of governance spheres of sustainability.

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Endnote

- 1 Cashore *et al.* (2021)'s typology is a further elaboration of Eberlein et al.'s (2014), who classified interactions along a “4C approach”: competition, coordination, cooptation, and chaos. According to Eberlein et al. (2014), competitive environments can relate to the regulatory area, authority, revenues accrued, and/or legitimacy. Coordination can span the range from emulation to deliberate collaboration or division of labor. Cooptation can range from convergence in relation to norms and activities, to meta-regulation, and/or dominance. Chaos characterizes unpredictable interactions without a clear logic or pattern.

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