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**Developing resilient collective identity in Doro  
!Nawas conservancy to sustain collective  
action**

**TECHNICAL REPORT  
2012**

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## DECLARATION

The authors of this technical report declare that this document contains raw data which have not yet been published and the main purpose of producing this report is to add a piece of art to the knowledge body of Namibian Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM). This report may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Conservancies are faced with multiple challenges that require research to advance knowledge and understanding of collective action to manage the collective use of common pool resources (NACSO, 2010). Nkhata and Breen (2010) identified the understanding of governance systems and how these are devolved as an obstacle to the performance of CBNRM in Southern Africa. The challenging circumstances in conservancies could cause conservancy members to lose interest and committees to stop functioning (NACSO, 2010). This situation could threaten the CBNRM sector and natural resources management in Namibia.

The goal of this study is to investigate the proposed collective identity framework, to understand and build a resilient collective identity in the management use of common pool resources (CPRs) in social-ecological systems. The objectives of the study are: (i) to examine the relationship between collective identity and collective action in building a resilient social-ecological system in Doro !Nawas conservancy; (ii) to investigate how the collective identity attribute *identification* varies over time in Doro !Nawas conservancy; how identification links conservancy members to the conservancy collective identity, and how changes in the conservancy may result in actions that are consistent or inconsistent with the conservancy's collective identity; and (iii) to study how the collective identity attribute, *affective commitment*, varies over time in Doro !Nawas conservancy; how affective commitment links conservancy members to the conservancy collective identity; and how change in the conservancy may result in actions that are consistent or inconsistent with the conservancy's collective identity.

The study takes the position that the adaptive cycle model offers an approach for understanding the continuous dynamic processes inherent in collective identity and the collective action to manage the use of CPRs. Thus, the study incorporates the collective identity framework of Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe (2004) into Hollings' adaptive cycle (2001) to provide an approach to understand change in collective identity and the implications for resilience of social-ecological systems.

The methodological framework used is a case study approach. A single case study is an appropriate method for understanding complex social phenomenon like identification and affective commitment within its context (Yin, 2004). In this study, Doro !Nawas conservancy is selected as a representative or typical case of the 59 registered conservancies in Namibia. The lessons from Doro !Nawas conservancy are informative about changes in conservancy collective identity in other conservancies, but cannot be generalized. The study interviewed 47 conservancy and committee members, and nine non-governmental and governmental respondents.

In the formation phase of the conservancy collective identity in Doro !Nawas conservancy, the existing collective action of Versteendewoud Farmers Association used the notion of potential benefits for conservancy members and the process of establishing governance systems in accordance with the legislation to develop identification and affective commitment to the conservancy collective identity. The lesson from this study is that the consultation and information sharing process in the formation stage with community members is an important phase that needs nurturing over time. Establishing a stronger relationship between community members, conservancy collective identity and the conservancy in the formation phase of the conservancy collective identity is essential for future stability in the conservancy.

In accordance with the adaptive cycle, during the growth of conservancy collective identity phase, Doro !Nawas conservancy members had strong identification and affective commitment to the conservancy collective identity. The conservancy management committee members planned, implemented and managed conservancy activities according to the constitution. This translated the interests of the conservancy members into the conservancy's collective identity. This was put into actions of participation in meetings and other activities. Simultaneously, conservancy members expressed positive emotions and developed a sense of belonging to and ownership of the conservancy which consolidated affective commitment to the conservancy. Growing wealth in conservancies to deliver more benefits to members is dependent on consolidating conservancy collective identity, to develop a stable natural resource base which offers an appealing product that attracts investors.

In the collapse phase of the adaptive cycle identification with the conservancy collective identity is strong but the affective commitment is lost. The case of Doro !Nawas shows that management of the conservancy and the governance system contributed to lost affective commitment. The conservancy management committee was not managing the conservancy in the interests of

conservancy members and in accordance with the constitution. And, the governance system was not appropriate to guide the conservancy management committee in the administration of the conservancy. The delay in intervention influenced affective commitment of conservancy members to the conservancy collective identity and the conservancy.

The lessons from Doro !Nawas conservancy indicate the absence of a clear process to deal with a collapse in the conservancy could threaten the conservancy collective identity. Equally, there was no delineation of responsibilities from the policy perspectives as to who should intervene and give direction. The policy implication from the Doro !Nawas is that structures and processes need to be developed to address similar situations while they emerge so as to avoid large scale negative influences on conservancy member relationship with the conservancy collective identity.

In the reconstruction phase of the conservancy collective identity, identification with the conservancy weakened and the conservancy identity had the potential to transform into a completely new identity. Doro !Nawas conservancy members' identification declined when their dissatisfaction with the conservancy management committee was not addressed over a lengthy period of time. The lesson is that delay in intervention created potential for conservancy members to consider de-gazetting of the conservancy and establishing a new conservancy or a completely new collective action.

In the case of Doro !Nawas the conservancy collective identity proved to be resilient enough to reorganize, amidst challenges of breakaway to establish a new conservancy. The study assumption for resilience of the conservancy collective identity is because the conservancy has a strong resource base with the potential to deliver the benefits conservancy members' desire. This implies that were the wildlife resource base poor, as in the new conservancies, the chances are very high that the conservancy collective identity would be replaced by a completely new identity.

The study concludes that the conceptual framework illustrated how conservancy collective identity resilience could be developed based on identification and affective commitment. Based on these two variables, members of the conservancy could either change or stabilize the conservancy collective identity.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 CBNRM in Namibia

Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM), widely implemented in Southern Africa since 1980's is part of community based conservation approaches (Fabricius, Koch, Magome, & Turner, 2004; Hulme & Murphree, 2001). Namibia is renowned for its successful implementation of CBNRM. In Namibia, a conservancy is a formally established community based institution on communal land that gives local resource users consumptive and non-consumptive use and management of wildlife, including tourism (Hoole & Berkes, 2010; Jones, 1999; NACSO, 2010; Scanlon & Kull, 2009). Namibia's communal conservancy received international recognition for its contribution to devolution of decision making and the management of natural resources to local communities and poverty alleviation (Hoole, 2009; Hoole & Berkes, 2010). At present, 66 conservancies are registered, managing more than 132,697 square kilometers of communal land embracing 234,300 residents, with an additional 35 at various stages of development (NACSO, 2011). While some conservancies are in the initial stages of development, others are maturing after years of institutional support through the Namibia CBNRM Support Organization (NACSO) and its members. A few pioneering conservancies seem to be sustainable because they are at the forefront of adopting the principles of common property theory and governance. Governance in this study refers to how decisions are taken, who takes them and who is accountable to whom. It encompasses the interaction between structures and processes in the conservancy that determine decision making, responsibility and power as well as the voice of the conservancy members (Lockwood, Davidson, Curtis, Stratford, & Griffith, 2010).

Conservancies are fundamentally self-organized. Community members take collective action to manage wildlife and other natural resources. The conservancy constitution, developed and adopted by conservancy members is the most important tool in the management of the conservancy. The constitution thus stipulates the governance system for the management of the conservancy. The Conservancy committee is elected from the conservancy membership to manage the conservancy, guided by the conservancy constitution. NACSO members provided training and mentoring to conservancy members over the years to empower conservancy committees with the necessary skills to manage the conservancy. Conservancies in Namibia vary in geographic location, human population and culture, climate and resources. The flexibility of the legislation encourages adaptability to the different conditions.

The challenges of natural resources management facing conservancies' are diverse and opportunities for generating income are unequal in many conservancies. Over the years, conservancies tested a number of governance systems and many have been revised based on experience. Nacso (2004:34) observed, that "many conservancies are faced with the complex task of organizing, planning and implementing a range of management and development activities". A number of systems and procedures were introduced, including the conservancy management framework in response to this observation. The implementation of these systems and procedures required a wide range of skills and expertise which does not exist in conservancies. Training and support were provided to conservancies but the democratic process of elections after every 3 years contributed to the erosion of skills in conservancy management committees. The relationship between the conservancy committee and the community is essential and facilitates accountability to conservancy members and transparency in the management of the conservancy.

Conservancies are faced with multiple challenges that require research to advance knowledge and understanding of collective action to manage collective use of common pool resources (NACSO, 2010). Institutional support to strengthen collective action through governance in conservancies has been one of the core pillars of CBNRM for the past decades (NACSO, 2008). Few studies identified the understanding of governance systems and how these are devolved as an obstacle to the performance of CBNRM in Southern Africa (Nkhata & Breen, 2010). The challenging circumstances in conservancies could cause conservancy members to lose interest and committees to stop functioning (NACSO, 2010). This situation could be a threat to the CBNRM sector and natural resources management in Namibia. The expansion of CBNRM approach beyond wildlife, to forestry and water increases the scope for common property theory research in Namibia. Namibia thus presents an opportunity for innovative research in common pool resource and social ecological systems that can help direct these systems towards resilience. Namibia

as a leader in CBNRM could become a focus for testing various assumptions on CBNRM which makes it vulnerable to criticism.

In this study, a conservancy is a social-ecological system because of the emphasis on the integration of humans in nature. In conservancies there are strong links between the *social system* (resource users, land and resource tenure system and governance system) and the *ecological system* (ecosystem, natural environment, the state of the resource), hence the application of social-ecological perspective. The study, operationalizes resilience as the ability of the social ecological system to maintain its identity (Cumming & Collier, 2005). In the case of Doro !Nawas conservancy, it can be argued that the primary objective stated in the constitution defines the identity of the conservancy. The conservancy's collective identity is thus defined in terms of ability to deliver benefits and sustainable management and utilization of wildlife and other natural resources.

The goal of the study was to investigate the proposed collective identity framework to understand and build a resilient collective identity in the management and use of CPRs in social-ecological systems similar to those found in Doro !Nawas conservancy. The findings of the proposed research could contribute towards effective management of collective use of common pool resources such as wildlife, forestry and water in conservancies, and CBNRM in general. Effective management of the use of common pool resources could improve sustainability of livelihoods and the use of natural resources in conservancies.

The objectives of the study are:

- i. To examine the relationship between collective identity and collective action in building a resilient social-ecological system in Doro !Nawas conservancy;
- ii. Investigate how the collective identity attribute *identification*, varies over time in Doro !Nawas conservancy; how identification links conservancy members to the conservancy collective identity, and how change in conservancy may result in actions that are consistent or inconsistent with the conservancy collective identity.
- iii. Study how the collective identity attribute *affective commitment*, varies over time in Doro !Nawas conservancy; how affective commitment links conservancy members to the conservancy collective identity; and how change in conservancy may result in actions that are consistent or inconsistent with the conservancy collective identity.

## 1.2 Doro !Nawas conservancy

Doro !Nawas conservancy is located in the Kunene region, northwest Namibia and was registered in December 1999. The conservancy is named after the Doros crater which forms part of the mountain range in the conservancy. It is situated in an area that is semi dessert with an erratic and highly variable rainfall of less than 50-250mm annually (Mendelsohn, 2002). The landscape consists of rugged, folded hills of the Etendeka Plateau, with central western plains and wooded vegetation around the ephemeral river valleys (NACSO, 2010). The desert elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) and black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*), the abundance of wildlife species adapted to desert conditions, as well as the presence of natural geological features such as the petrified forests and the welwitschia plants are the cornerstone of conservancy enterprises. The conservancy has an estimated human population of 1,500 people with a human density of less than one person per square kilometers (NACSO, 2010). Residents are subsistence livestock farmers, farming goats, sheep and cattle which are the main source of livelihood (Mosimane, 2000; Shapi, 2003). Some residents are government employees and business owners in the neighboring town of Khorixas.

Doro !Nawas conservancy is governed by a 17 member conservancy management committee which holds office for three years. The committee is elected from the general conservancy membership during an annual general meeting and represents various stakeholder groups in the community (DNC, 2008). The current conservancy management committee is the third committee to manage the conservancy, various community members served on the committee over the years. The conservancy manages its operations from the conservancy office and has more than 10 employees in various capacities. The conservancy enterprises are the joint venture tourism lodge with Wilderness Safari (Doro Nawas Lodge), trophy hunting, own use hunting and community owned campsite (Granietkop campsite). The lodge and campsite provides employment to conservancy members. Trophy hunting also provides temporary jobs to trackers and skimmers. Members of the conservancy have constitutional power to approve or disapprove the conservancy annual budget and related annual work plans, benefit distribution plan, development plans, financial statements and utilization and allocation of wildlife, as well as natural resources management plans.



## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Collective identity and collective action

Most natural resources that are subject to joint-use and support human wellbeing across multiple levels of social organization are increasingly being viewed as common pool resources (CPRs) (Agrawal, 2001; Berkes & Farvar, 1989; Fernandez-Gimenez, 2002). CPRs are those from which it is difficult to exclude potential users (weak or low excludability) and where use of the resources by a potential user reduces availability for other users (subtractability) (Fernandez-Gimenez, 2002). In this way, management of the use of CPRs such as grazing, water, forests, fisheries and wildlife requires collective action that supports coordinated responses to the challenges of excludability and subtractability (Araral Jr, 2009; Berkes, 1989; Burger, 2001; Ostrom, 1999; Poteete, Janssen, & Ostrom, 2010; Wade, 1987). Examples in CPRs literature (Berkes, 1989; Chabwela & Haller, 2010; Dietz, Ostrom, & Stern, 2003; Ostrom, 1999) show that people tend to cause destruction through over-utilizing and under-investing in maintaining commonly owned resources where there is no confidence to invest in collective activities. Collective action embodies the organizational endeavors of a group of individuals in the management of the use of CPRs for collective benefits. This understanding essentially entails that collective action requires the involvement of a group of people that voluntarily engages some kind of coordinated action based on their shared experiences and expectations towards the achievement of a common interest (Meinzen-Dick & Di Gregorio, 2004).

The concepts of collective action and collective identity have long been a focus of social science research. The relationship between collective identity and collective action has been extensively explored particularly in social movements literature (Holland, Fox, & Daro, 2008; Melucci, 1996; Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Snow, 2001). Elsewhere, social psychology has been helpful in clarifying the connection between the individual and the collective as they relate to collective action and collective identity (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Klandermans, 2002; Klandermans, Sabucedo, Rodriguez, & De Weerd, 2002; Simon & Klandermans, 2001).

This literature suggests that in order to achieve collective action, members of a user group need to develop a collective identity. This study adopts the notion that effective management of common pool resources through collective action is dependent upon the collective identity that differentiates a group of people – in other words, the collective – from other similar social units. Such an identity, which we herein refer to as collective identity, is defined by a common meaning which directs the behaviors of joint-users of CPRs (Araral Jr, 2009; Berkes, Feeny, McCay, & Acheson, 1989; Ostrom, 1999). Collective identity essentially denotes the shared meanings that individuals in a user group hold as members of the collective. The shared meanings in turn define and underpin the actions of the members who act on behalf of the collective. A shared understanding enables members to contextualize their appreciation and expectations of the collective as it grows and evolves. It allows for continuous self-organization as the collective identity adjusts to reflect variability in supply of benefits due to diverse and changing demands on CPRs. This implies that where it is necessary for collective action to be sustained in the long term, as in the use of CPRs, it is important for members of a user group to be conscious of and responsive to change in collective identity.

Collective action is facilitated and sustained where there are shared interests which are actualized and reinforced through collective identity. However, collective action may not last when those interests are no longer shared and thus the group loses its collective identity. This is because collective identity facilitates a degree of homogeneity and transforms individual experiences into collective experience (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). Collective identity confers on the group unique characteristics based on shared meanings, experiences and expectations around which the group members coalesce (Cerulo, 1997; Snow, 2001). Such characteristics are expressed through the unique attributes of a resource user group, the resource it exploits, and the governance system that regulates use.

Essentially, the construction, maintenance and collapse of collective identity can be understood as a dynamic system nested within the larger social-ecological system defined by the resource, its users and the institutions. In such a context, accepting the importance and vulnerability of collective identity in directing behaviors of resource users highlights the need to develop understanding of how to foster resilience in collective identity. This is particularly necessary if we are to identify those attributes

that can help us recognize, interpret and manage change in collective identity (Ashmore et al., 2004; Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Roccas & Brewer, 2002).

Collective identity continuously changes in response to discrepancies that may develop between individually held meanings (self-meanings) and collective meanings (Burke, 2006). Changes in collective identity may also occur in situations where multiple identities that share similar sets of meanings emerge and activate at the same time (Burke & Cast, 1997). For example, in wildlife conservancies in Namibia resource user groups have been shown to have different collective identities each defined by a different pattern of resource use (Mosimane, 1998, 1999, 2003; NACSO, 2006). Such groups include divergent resource users ranging from livestock farmers to users who engage wildlife tourism. While each of these groups represent a distinct collective, some users align with more than one collective identity. In such situations, when change is slow or actions are taken to ensure that the discrepancies between collective meanings are small, collective identity may evolve slowly and remain relatively stable most of the time. When developing collective identity, strategic and conscious changes of behavior can be used to reduce discrepancies between self-meaning and collective meanings.

Collective identity can be considered as a precursor that facilitates or impedes collective action in the use of CPRs (Melucci, 1996; Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Snow, 2001). While the literature in natural resource studies has in the past few decades focused on collective action under conditions in which groups of resource users self-organize to govern resources on which they depend (Agrawal, 2001; Araral Jr, 2009; Dietz et al., 2003; McGinnis & Walker, 2010; Meinzen-Dick, DiGregorio, & McCarthy, 2004; Ostrom, 1999; Ostrom, Burger, Field, Norgaard, & Policansky, 1999; Poteete et al., 2010; Wade, 1999), appreciation of the role of collective identity in understanding collective action has been largely missing. Collective action to manage the use of CPRs occurs in a complex and uncertain biophysical environment, involving diverse and conflicting human interests that tend to change over time (Dietz et al., 2003). Based on this understanding, one would argue that collective action needs to evolve simultaneously with change in the collective identity.

## 2.2 Resilience Approach

The concept of resilience has many interpretations and is applied across various scientific disciplines (Adger, 2000; Brand & Jax, 2007; Nkhata, Breen, & Freimund, 2008; Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche, & Pfefferbaum, 2008). While some authors (Brand & Jax, 2007) consider that the ecological meaning of the concept has been broadened and the term has become ambiguous, its positive influence in facilitating communication and research across disciplines is generally acknowledged (Anderies, Walker, & Kinzig, 2006; Cumming & Collier, 2005; Folke, 2006). In broad terms, resilience refers to the ability of a complex system to maintain its identity in the face of internal change and external shock disturbances (Brand & Jax, 2007; Cumming & Collier, 2005).

A resilience approach has been adopted in social-ecological systems studies as a useful way of organizing a collection of ideas for interpreting complex adaptive system (Anderies et al., 2006; Folke, 2006). For example, Holling (2001) writes that adaptive cycle has been used to interpret the dynamics and resilience of complex ecological and social systems. In an adaptive cycle, four phases – exploitation, conservation, release, and reorganization – are recognized and may or may not follow one another sequentially in the development of a complex system. Essentially, an adaptive cycle reflects discontinuous change in two dimensions of a complex system: capital that is inherent in accumulated resources; and connectedness among the elements that make up the system (Holling, 2001). Change in the two dimensions is thought to determine the evolution of the four phases of the adaptive cycle.

In the exploitation phase, a complex system accumulates capital that allows it to grow and mature. While capital accumulates slowly, strengthening connectedness leads to enhanced stability thereby transforming the system from the exploitation phase to the conservation phase. As the conservation phase develops, and more capital accumulates, connectedness becomes more rigid exposing the system's vulnerability to disturbances which may trigger the collapse of the system into a release phase in which accumulated capital is lost. The release phase is followed by reorganization where the potential for capital accumulation is high but connectedness is relatively low. Depending on circumstances, the system would either resume the adaptive cycle or possibly

change some of its properties to transform it into a new system altogether.

Resilience theory has been useful in understanding how a system responds to change when a component of the system changes (Duit, Galaz, Eckerberg, & Ebbesson, 2010; Folke, 2006; Holling, 1973, 2001; Nkhata et al., 2008). The researcher adopts a resilience approach (Holling, 1973) to help in understanding the dynamic role of collective identity in collective action as it relates to the management of CPRs as social-ecological systems. The researcher suggests that two key variables – identification and affective commitment (Ashmore et al., 2004) provide the premise for interpreting, tracking and directing change and fostering resilience in collective identity.

### **2.3 A framework for understanding collective identity change**

The study embraces the notion that the adaptive cycle model offers an approach for understanding the continuous dynamic processes inherent in collective identity and the collective action to manage the use of CPRs. It provides a useful perspective for understanding stability and change insofar as the resilience of collective identity is central in collective action directed at CPRs. This study incorporates the collective identity framework of Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe (2004) into Hollings' adaptive cycle (2001) to provide an approach to understanding change in collective identity and the implications for resilience of social-ecological systems.

Identification and affective commitment are two dimensions that are helpful in understanding change in collective identity. In literature reviewed the terms identification and self-categorization have at times been used interchangeably (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). Identification is the process in which people come to view themselves in relation to the collective. This study views such a process as an attribute of collective identity arguing that at first people have to identify with the collective before developing other dimensions of their identity. Identification is the first and most basic attribute of collective identity, which gives people a sense of meaningfulness (Ashmore et al., 2004). Identification may not be sufficient for people to behave in terms of the collective because they might not necessarily feel committed to a particular collective identity (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Ellemers et al., 1999). Thus, the extent to which people identify with the collective determines the inclination to behave in terms of the collective identity.

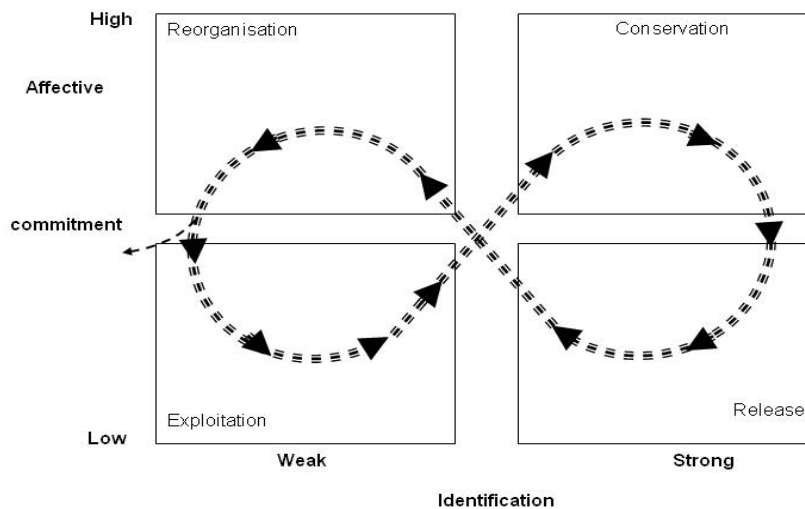
On the other hand, affective commitment refers to a state in which people feel emotionally involved with the collective identity and members of the collective. It is defined in terms of emotional attachment and sense of belonging (Ashmore et al., 2004; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). In other words, the extent to which individuals feel affectively influences how they respond to the collective identity (Ellemers et al., 1999). Emotional attachment is an outcome of a process through which individuals merge their sense of self with the collective identity (Ashmore et al., 2004). The basic fundamental need to belong allows people to form positive and stable relationships that conform to the collective identity (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Such relationships are much more than identification and are developed through strong ties, bonds and a sense of interconnectedness (Ashmore et al., 2004; Jackson, 2002).

Although the two dimensions do not necessarily provide the only perspective for examining the resilience of collective identity, the study suggest that they provide a useful approach for analyzing the essence of change in collective identity and its influence on the management of CPRs. This study envisages that an adaptive cycle reflects how collective identity varies over time based on the two dimensions. As such, the two dimensions are also important in understanding how collective identity links members of the collective to a set of meanings, which if stable would produce consistent actions aimed at the collective (Burke & Reitzes, 1991). Conversely, a change of meanings may result in actions that are inconsistent with the collective.

Thus, the study contends that the degree of identification and the amount of affective commitment influences how people relate to the collective identity and in turn impacts on the collective action to manage the use of CPRs. The degree of identification is a measure of how closely the meanings held by an individual or sub-population of individuals align with the collective meaning (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Ellemers et al., 1999). However, when there is a discrepancy the individual or group may not willingly identify with the collective. Affective commitment is a measure of how emotionally involved an individual or group of individuals are with the collective meanings, identity and associated actions (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). In this way, the more

emotionally involved people are the more committed they are to collective action.

Figure 1 illustrates a representation of an adaptive cycle of a collective identity system. Change in collective identity can be interpreted through understanding the extent of identification and affective commitment. The dimension identification represents connectedness and affective commitment capital when applied to Hollings adaptive cycle. Identification and affective commitment provide the basis for interpreting how collective identity may remain quasi-stable for long periods while going through phases of an adaptive cycle. The two dimensions show how collective identity evolves, matures, collapses, and reorganizes as it adapts to reflect changing context. The extent to which people identify and feel affectively committed to the collective determines the direction and pace of change and thus the state of the collective identity. Change in identification and affective commitment is controlled by either fast or slow changes in the dimensions (Abel, Cumming, & Anderies, 2006).



**Figure 1:** A framework based on identification and affective commitment analyzing change in collective identity adapted from (Holling, 2001; Nkhata et al., 2008).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The methodological framework was a case study approach. A single case study is an appropriate method for understanding complex social phenomenon like identification and affective commitment within its context (Yin, 2004). In the study, Doro !Nawas conservancy was selected as a representative or typical case of the 59 registered conservancies in Namibia. The lessons from Doro !Nawas conservancy are informative about changes in conservancy collective identity in other conservancies, but cannot be generalized. The study is an embedded single case study because the unit of analysis is the conservancy members (sub-unit of analysis) in Doro !Nawas conservancy and the conservancy (larger unit of analysis).

#### 3.1 In depth Interview (IDI)

The study used an *in-depth Interview (IDI)* as the primary data collection method and *documentary analysis* as the supplementary method. IDIs were preferred to study an exploratory and subjective issue such as identification and affective commitment. The method was most effective and appropriate for the ontology of the study that allows for conservancy members words to be actively present in developing the meaning and understanding of concepts identification and affective commitment within context. The words of the conservancy members were thus the centerpiece of the research findings and reflected the richness of the data as well as the understanding of the concepts and how these varied over time. The study interviewed 47 conservancy

members and committee members and 9 nongovernmental and governmental respondents.

An interview guide with semi-structured, open-ended questions was used for interviews to generate data from the unique experiences and perspectives of conservancy members. The interview questions were supplemented by several probing questions developed in advance and during the interview. The order of the questions differed from interview to interview and in some cases, not all questions were asked because the interview was dependent on the rapport that developed between the researcher and the conservancy members (Gray, Williamson, & Karp, 2007).

### **3.2 Documentary analysis**

*Documentary analysis* was used as a supporting method in the study. Conservancy documents were a source of historical information and were accessed at the conservancy office, at the University of Namibia library, from the Rural People Institute for Social Empowerment (RISE-Namibia) and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) Resource Centre. The documents were analyzed. Data collected was important for data triangulation, to corroborate and augment data collected during the interviews to enhance the quality of the study. According to Patton (2000), multiple methods with different types of data create an opportunity for triangulation of data to contribute to validation and consistency checks (data quality). Documentary analysis was also useful to develop a list of possible conservancy members to interview.

### **3.3 Sampling**

The research is qualitative and therefore used non-probability sampling, which according to (Berg, 2007), tends to be the norm in qualitative studies. Gibbs et al (2007) suggest that sampling is critical in determining the quality of qualitative research, therefore more information should be provided about sampling for other scholars to assess the quality of the study. Sampling allowed the researcher to use his knowledge and documentary evidence to select conservancy members with long interaction with the conservancy. Category one interviews were conducted with current and previous conservancy committee members. Conservancy members and other leaders who are knowledgeable about change in conservancy collective identity were category two. Category three were non-governmental organization staff who worked with the conservancy, government officials and private sector partners who were involved in the conservancy.

Purposive sampling was used to select conservancy members in category two because of their experience and knowledge of the conservancy. Conservancy members were selected on the following criteria: must have lived and participated in conservancy activities since its formation to have acquired the necessary knowledge and experience; willingness to participate in the study; must have the time to be interviewed and must have the capacity to reflect and articulate about conservancy collective identity and collective action. The study assumption was that these specific conservancy members have developed knowledge about change in conservancy collective identity through years of participation.

The study used archival documents to select previous committee members in advance but started interviews with present conservancy committee members. The availability of selected past committee members was verified with the present committee members during interviews. The study recognizes its limitation in that the findings cannot be generalized (Berg, 2007) when using the purposive sampling. However, the focus was to use the conservancy information richness for a detailed and in-depth understanding of conservancy collective identity change within a changing context.

Snowball sampling (Berg, 2007) was also used to select category two participants. The list of conservancy members was developed during interviews of present and previous committee's members, who recommend conservancy members who are knowledgeable about the conservancy and the history before it was established. Conservancy members who were interviewed were requested to suggest other conservancy members who are knowledgeable. This information was used to develop a list to compare with the list developed during committee members' interviews. In this way, the study extended and diversified the sample. The study interviewed conservancy members recommended by various groups to purposely seek divergent

views to strengthen the understanding of the research problem (Gibbs et al., 2007). The researcher interviewed as many conservancy members as possible until the study reached a situation of 'saturation' when information became repetitive and no new issues and understanding were emerging. The understanding of various experiences related to conservancy collective identity demonstrated the saturation of the study.

## **4. RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The study presents the findings of a longitudinal study from 1999 to 2010 of the resilience of conservancy collective identity in Doro !Nawas conservancy. The findings are presented following the four phases of Holling's adaptive cycle. The exploitation phase is defined as the formation of conservancy collective identity. The conservation phase is the growth of conservancy collective identity. The release phase is the collapse of conservancy collective identity. The reorganization phase is the reconstruction of the conservancy collective identity. Interview excerpts are used to describe conservancy member's perceptions of change in conservancy collective identity over the past 10 years. The citations explained how conservancy members view themselves and feel emotionally attached to the conservancy collective identity and what influences the change.

### **4.1 The formation of conservancy collective identity**

#### **4.1.1 Engaging the community on the conservancy concept**

Before the conservancy concept, the community of Ward 7 consisted of agricultural subsistence farmers. The community estimated to be about 1500 people inhabiting the area was primarily a homogeneous Damara ethnic group, although few other ethnic groups settled in the area through intermarriages and employment (Mosimane, 2000; NACSO, 2004). The community shared a language, culture and family bond. According to the Damara Traditional Authority demarcation in the 1980's, the area was then referred to as Ward 7 (Mosimane, 2000). The demarcation into wards put each ward under the control of a traditional headman, to facilitate traditional administration.

In 1988 the community of Ward 7 with the support of agriculture extension officer self-organized to establish the Versteendewoud Farmers Association. The farmers association through collective action developed a constitution and elected a committee to provide leadership. The objectives of the farmers association were to support and promote farming activities amongst the community, improve farmers' livelihood and raise awareness about livestock diseases (Garoeb, pers. comm., 2010). The farmers association through collective action was able to arrange auctions and organize meetings to share information with farmers on their respective farms with the agriculture extension officers. Annually, the farmers association hosted a farmer's information day where farmers could interact and share knowledge about farming (Aebeb, pers. comm., 2010). Farmers demonstrated farming identity through their participation in farming activities organized through collective action. The farmers association was the only community based organization that existed in the area to address challenges that impacted subsistence livelihood of the community.

After Namibia's independence in 1990, the government reviewed several pieces of legislation to address the injustices of the past. The Nature Conservation Ordinance No. 4 of 1975 was reviewed to give communal area farmers, conditional and limited rights over wildlife, previously enjoyed by commercial farmers. The review allowed for the establishment of conservancies on communal land (MET, 1995). Before the review, the communal farmers were alienated from wildlife resources and all benefits from wildlife were accrued to the private sector and the national treasury. Communal farmers had no opportunity to participate or benefit from the management of wildlife resources in their area. Wildlife numbers were declining, due to drought and inability of the state to control poaching (MET, 1995). Communal farmers experienced human wildlife conflict, and had to endure the costs of living with wildlife without compensation.

*"We were not happy as predators were attacking our livestock. The baboons would get in the kraals and eat the small animals. Elephants killed livestock and caused major damage to infrastructure". (Interview 16)*

*We had problems with animals destroying our crops or attacking livestock but we did not have guidelines to manage these animals. (Interview 35)*

*The government implemented conservancies because in the past, most of the people did not have benefits from wildlife, and therefore poaching was too high. For the government to prevent poaching, they gave the responsibility to the community to take care of wildlife. (Interview 49)*

Cabinet approval of the Nature Conservation Amendment Act No. 5 of 1996, the policy on wildlife management, utilization and tourism in communal areas and the policy on the establishment of conservancies created an opportunity for the Versteendewoud Farmers Association to diversify to wildlife management. In 1996, members of the farmers association accessed the CBNRM toolbox which provided guidelines on the establishment of communal conservancies. The citations affirm the process of how information about the conservancy concept was shared and discussed within the farmers' association committee, and consultations with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), before farmers were informed.

*In 1996 while serving in the committee of the farmers association, the former governor of Kunene region, Mr. Tjongarero explained the conservancy concept to me. He gave me the toolbox and explained the use of the toolbox to me. We (the farmers association) went through the toolbox and we went back to the community of Ward 7 and informed them. (Interview 44)*

*The idea of conservancy was new to us when we received the regulations (toolbox). (Interview 27)*

*I was involved in the conservancy idea in 1996, while serving on the farmers' association committee which started the conservancy. We studied the toolbox and discussed. (Interview 29)*

The farmers' association committee after developing an understanding of the concept collectively agreed to inform the farmers about the conservancy concept. A subcommittee of the farmers association was established in 1996, to inform the farmers and the broader community about the conservancy concept (Gawiseb, pers.comm., 2010). The policy on the establishment of the conservancy requires the majority of the community members to support the formation of the conservancy (MET, 1995). The policy requirement insists on those facilitating the process of establishing a conservancy to involve the broader community, a mandate which is broader than those of the farmers association. The interview excerpts assert that raising awareness about the conservancy concept was a long consultative process, of meetings, which community members initially did not want to accept.

*After two months of farmers' association familiarisation with the CBNRM toolbox which explained the conservancy concept, we held a consultative meeting with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) and then established a subcommittee. (Interview 44)*

*We (the subcommittee) visited the farmers and informed them that we must start a conservancy and they must get involved. (Interview 21)*

*We (subcommittee) visited the farmers to hold meetings every month, to convince them to accept the idea about the conservancy, but people were not interested in the beginning. (Interview 38)*

*It was difficult to explain the conservancy idea to the community but the CBNRM toolbox and the guidance from MET officials made the process easier. (Interview 29)*

*The farmers association called a series of meetings to discuss the formation of the conservancy with the farmers (Mosimane 2000)*

According to the adaptive cycle, at this stage of the conservancy formation community members did not identify with the conservancy concept because the concept was new to them. The subcommittee visits and meetings with the community members

presented community members with an opportunity to develop interest in the conservancy concept. The interest community members developed in the concept allowed them to attend meetings with the desire to acquire more information. As a result, the information community members received motivated them to identify with the conservancy concept.

My interest in the conservancy came from attending meetings and listening to questions people were asking. (Interview 01)

I had interest in the conservancy because I wanted to know what the conservancy has for me. I attended meetings regularly. (Interview 38)

I attended a few meetings and heard what the conservancy was planning and decided to get involved. (Interview 47)

The conservancy policy states that communal area residents would be able to 'benefit financially from wildlife management and tourism' (MET, 1995:1). The subcommittee used the notion of potential new benefits articulated in the policies to create interests in the conservancy concept. Conservancy members were consistently informed of the different benefits they would potentially derive from wildlife and tourism development in the area if they established a conservancy. Based on the interview excerpts below it can be argued that expected benefits were the reason community members developed interest in the conservancy concept. The interests generated by benefits translated into identification with the conservancy.

*The subcommittee called the community together, to inform us that the conservancy is something we can make a living from, something that can help the community in the farming areas. (Interview 04)*

*The subcommittee visited the farmers to talk about the conservancy. They said all communities are starting conservancies, we should take ownership of our wildlife and if the conservancy becomes registered, we will be able to sell wildlife and generate funds which will benefit the community. (Interview 22)*

*The subcommittee told us lodges, campsites will be built and the income will come to us and our children as benefits. We had interest because we wanted to benefit, we heard of all the benefits we could get from the conservancy. (Interview 38)*

#### **4.1.2 Collective action to develop governance structures and processes**

Governance refers to the relationship between structures and processes that determine how responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken and who is accountable for decisions (Baral, Stern, & Heinen, 2010; Lockwood et al., 2010). The structures refer to the constitution and the conservancy management committee whilst the process refers to the guidelines for the management of the conservancy. The requirements for registration as a conservancy were: a defined boundary of the proposed conservancy, a legal constitution, a list of registered members and a representative conservancy management committee. Meeting these requirements assisted the conservancy management committee to develop governance structures and processes for the management of the conservancy.

The first requirement is that the conservancy must have defined boundaries which are discussed and agreed upon with neighboring communities and the regional council (MET, 1995). This implies that the community members have to collectively agree on the boundaries of the emerging conservancy, before they negotiate with other communities. In the case of Doro Nawas, community members and the traditional authority agreed to use the traditional authority demarcation of Ward 7 as the boundary of emerging conservancy (Gawiseb, pers comm., 2010). The subcommittee subsequently negotiated boundaries with Torra conservancy to the west which was already a registered conservancy, the community of Fransfontein to the north, as well as the Sorris Sorris community to the south and east (Naibab, pers comm., 2010). All these neighboring communities at a later stage also established conservancies. After an agreement with neighboring communities, a description and demarcation



of boundaries was submitted with the conservancy application to MET.

The citations demonstrate that regular meetings to share information and the collective action process of defining conservancy boundaries assisted in building identification and then affection to the conservancy concept. Boundaries define the conservancy, as a place with a particular identity which differentiates community members who belong to the conservancy from others. For example, those within the boundaries of the conservancy would qualify to be members of the conservancy through registration, and are expected to represent a particular identity, associated with the conservancy. Membership to conservancies is voluntary and although communities may live within the boundaries of the conservancies, the decision to become members of particular conservancy is optional.

*I was already living at my farm when the conservancy was established. I am therefore part of the conservancy because I live on a farm that was gazetted as part of the conservancy. In the past we just assumed that we who are on the farms that were gazetted as parts of the conservancy are members therefore I was a member without registering. (Interview 07)*

*I registered as a member in 1999, but was told that anyone in Ward 7 should register as a member of the conservancy, because, as a farmer in the area, you are already regarded as member. We registered mainly because our farms are in the conservancy area. (Interview 22)*

However, the subcommittee excluded some parts of Ward 7 during the application for registration due to lack of consensus about the boundaries within the community. Although, there was consensus to use traditional authority demarcation as boundary, the community of Bethanie farms and Twyfelfontein farms later withdrew from the agreement. First, the community of Bethanie farms did not agree to the conservancy concept, and therefore opted not to be included in the emerging Doro !Nawas conservancy. Almost 10 years after registration of Doro !Nawas conservancy, the community of Bethanie farms collectively decided to become members of the Doro !Nawas conservancy.

I lived in Bethanie, we were neighboring Doro !Nawas, Torra and Uibasen conservancies which had border disputes about our farms. Bethanie farms were declared dispute farms and we could not register ourselves as a conservancy. In 2008/2009 MET asked us to join any conservancy we wanted, and most members decided to join Doro Nawas conservancy. (Interview 40)

Second, the community of Twyfelfontein farms, although agreed to the conservancy concept, choose to separate themselves from the emerging Doro !Nawas conservancy and registered as the Uibasen conservancy.

The communities of Doro !Nawas and Twyfelfontein, started together to establish a conservancy with very good ideas. But the two communities divided before registration, to establish Doro !Nawas conservancy and Uibasen conservancy. (Interview 44)

The second requirement was the conservancy to have a list of registered members attached to the application for registration of the conservancy (MET, 1995). The policy requires that the majority of the people living in a communal area who apply for recognition as a conservancy should support the formation of the conservancy. Registering as a conservancy member is a voluntary process, anyone above 18 years living in the conservancy area could choose to register or not. The subcommittee was able to use the collective action of the farming association to engage farmers, as well as the new emerging identification with the conservancy concept to encourage community members to register as conservancy members. Registration of members differentiates members from non members, which allows for exclusion of non members from the benefits and activities of the conservancy.

At this stage of conservancy formation, affective commitment to the conservancy concept and the conservancy started to emerge. Registration as conservancy members demonstrated that identification with the conservancy concept had grown to enable community members to make such a choice. The quotations indicate the willingness community members had to commit to adjust their attitudes and behaviors to be compatible with those of other members and of the conservancy.

I am a farmer in the conservancy area. I attended conservancy meetings and decided to register as a member of the conservancy because I wanted to be involved. (Interview 01)

I registered as a member of the conservancy to be able to participate in the activities of the conservancy and ask questions in the meetings. (Interview 28)

The third requirement was for the conservancy to have a constitution that outlines its goals and objectives, as well as setting out rules for operation and the management and utilization of wildlife (MET, 1995). The drafting of the conservancy constitution was a long consultative process facilitated by the subcommittee. The subcommittee had the mandate to draft the constitution and to present the draft at community meetings, for discussion and input (Naibab, pers. comm., 2010; Gawiseb, pers. comm., 2010). The committee with the support of nongovernmental organizations and local MET officials facilitated the process to ensure community participation. After several revisions the first conservancy constitution was adopted on 28 March 1998 at farm Morewag (DNC, 1998). The drafting and adoption of the constitution was a collective action taken by members of the conservancy to develop governance structure and processes to achieve the primary objectives of the conservancy. The primary objective is, "the conservancy shall enable registered members to improve their standard of living through diverse benefits derived from sustainable management of consumptive and non-consumptive utilization of wildlife and natural resources within the boundaries of the conservancy" (DNC, 2008).

The constitution clarifies who could or could not be a member of the conservancy, and equally states the collective expectations in relations to the conservancy. Members of the conservancy are expected to adjust to the following collective expectations that are compatible with the conservancy objectives:

- To attend, speak and vote at any general meeting
- To have equitable access to conservancy benefits
- To elect members to the committee or remove committee members who violate specified principles, procedures and laws.
- To inspect minutes or any records of the decision making of any general meetings
- To inspect and make copies of the financial statements and records of the conservancy
- To abide lawfully to decisions taken
- To endorse and approve reports presented at the general meetings (Doro !Nawas Constitution 2008)

The quote describes the expected attitudes and behavior of conservancy members towards the conservancy. In addition, the citation articulates the primary objectives that define conservancy collective identity.

*As conservancy member I must benefit from the conservancy, participate and vote in the elections of the conservancy committee. I must be concerned about our natural resources and financial mismanagement in the conservancy. I must cooperate and give advice in the development of the community. (Interview 05)*

The fourth requirement was that the conservancy must have a management committee that serves as an executive body (MET, 1995). The CBNRM policy requires the management committee to be elected from the membership of the conservancy and be representative of the community it serves. The subcommittee existed from 1996 until 28 March 1998, when an emerging conservancy committee was elected at a meeting at Morewag, after the constitution had been adopted. Most of the subcommittee members were incorporated in the emerging conservancy committee (Naibab, pers. comm., 2010). The mandate of the committee was to facilitate the registration of the conservancy to meet the requirements stated in the legislation (Mosimane, 2000). The emerging conservancy committee elected in 1998 served as the conservancy management committee until the registration of the conservancy. The emerging conservancy committee transitioned into the first conservancy management committee when their names were submitted with the application for registration of the conservancy (Naibab, pers. comm., 2010). The first conservancy management committee was officially announced with the registration of the conservancy.

*The Ministry of Environment and Tourism, officially recognize the conservancy committee (MET letter, 16 December 1999)*

The conservancy management committee mandates were:

- Manage the wildlife and natural resources within the boundaries of the conservancy in a sustainable way for the economic and social benefit of the members of the conservancy;
- The powers of the conservancy committee shall be used in accordance with the overriding principle of transparency, fairness and equity, which shall require that the conservancy committee deal with the community property and rights in accordance with the objectives of the constitution and only for the benefit of the members;
- The conservancy committee shall endeavor to ensure transparent equitable benefit distribution, and that there is no unfair discrimination between members;
- The conservancy committee has a duty and responsibility to keep members regularly informed of its decisions, of financial status of the conservancy and of any matters of importance to the members (DNC, 1998, 2008).

The interview excerpts illustrate the community members identification was strengthening. Although the conservancy was not yet registered, community members were strongly identifying with the conservancy concept thus was able to take responsibility for executing conservancy activities.

*The conservancy did not have Community Game Guards (CGGs), we had to patrol ourselves. I looked after the wildlife and the well being of the conservancy. (Interview 20)*

*Before the conservancy was registered, we (subcommittee) regularly visited the conservancy members on the farms and did patrols to monitor our wildlife. I participated in wildlife counts in the conservancy. I had to balance my life between my work on the farm and the conservancy. (Interview 06)*

The conservancy collective identity was formalized with the registration of the conservancy. The Doro !Nawas conservancy was officially registered in December 1999. The citation shows the positive emotion of affection that the conservancy registration brought upon conservancy members.

*I was happy when the conservancy was registered. (Interview 37)*

*The recognition of the conservancy committee and declaration of the Doro Nawas conservancy was approved. (MET letter, 16 December 1999)*

## 4.2 Growth of conservancy collective identity

In this phase of the adaptive cycle, from resilience perspective, identification and affective commitment are consolidated, making the collective identity resilient. Resilience is operationalised as the ability of the social ecological system to maintain its identity (Cumming & Collier, 2005). In the case of Doro !Nawas conservancy, it can be argued that the primary objective stated in the constitution defines the identity of the conservancy. The collective identity of the conservancy is thus defined in terms of the ability to deliver benefits and sustainable management and utilization of wildlife and other natural resources. I explain how wildlife management, governance system, infrastructure development and benefits to members strengthened growth and maturation of identification and affective commitment of conservancy members to the conservancy. I then present issues that cause vulnerability in the management of the conservancy that rendered the governance system inappropriate leading to the collapse of conservation phase.

With registration of the conservancy, the Nature Conservation Amendment Act of 1996 conferred rights, privileges, duties and obligations to the conservancy management committee, on behalf of the conservancy members. The conservancy management committee accepted ownership rights of huntable game, the capture and sale of game, hunting and culling, and the right to use protected game after applying for a permit (Jones, 2003). In addition, the conservancy acquired concessional rights over commercial tourism activities, which enabled the conservancy management committee to establish tourism facilities within

the boundaries of the conservancy (Jones, 2003; MET, 1995). The conservancy management committee was thus able to enter into agreements with trophy hunting companies to use conservancy hunting quotas and tourism companies to develop tourism infrastructure in the conservancy. It is worth noting, that rights conferred to the conservancy management committee are conditional, the Minister has the ability to withdraw the rights, if the MET is convinced the conservancy is not utilizing wildlife and other natural resources sustainably or the management of the conservancy is not acceptable or beneficial to the community (Jones, 2003). However, the Minister can only withdraw the rights after written notification to the conservancy management committee and having considered representations from the conservancy management committee.

#### 4.2.1 Wildlife management in the conservancy

With the support of Rural People's Institute for Social Empowerment (RISE Namibia) a local non governmental organization as a partner, the conservancy management committee initiated various conservancy activities. The conservancy management committee appointed Community Game Guards (CGGs), community members that are skilled and knowledgeable about nature and wildlife within their community were appointed as CGGs (Naibab, pers. comm., 2010). The mandate CGGs were to deter poaching and monitor wildlife, record and investigate human wildlife conflicts, mobilize community members to participate in the conservation of wildlife and reporting poachers. The CGGs were also trained to collect relevant information, using of the "Event Book Monitoring System", a management tool that supports planning and management of natural resources. The information the CGGs collected was complemented by the annual game counts to assist decision making when the conservancy management committee apply for a hunting quota. Wildlife management contributed to the increase in wildlife numbers in the conservancy (NACSO, 2004, 2010).

The management of wildlife resources strengthened identification with the conservancy. The interview insertions confirm conservancy members adopted the conservancy primary objectives and changed their attitudes and behavior to be compatible with the conservancy collective identity. The conservancy members' attitudes changed from being observers of poaching to taking actions that prevents poaching of wildlife in the conservancy. Conservancy members accepted collective expectations of conserving wildlife as their own with the understanding that they would benefit from wildlife.

*The farmers support conservation in our area because wildlife is community resource which we will benefit from. When someone poaches we report to the CGGs and the committee. (Interview 01)*

*We developed interest in the conservancy and decided to look after our wildlife. If I come across an injured animal, I would report it. (Interview 20)*

*When there was no conservancy there was poaching and people were hunting for their own households without control. Now with the conservancy we have CGGs that patrol the area for people not to hunt for own use. (Interview 03)*

*Since the conservancy formation we became aware that we cannot just hunt and eat like before, we know we have to conserve wildlife to benefit from it. We know that if we hunt these animals, we will be arrested for poaching as it is illegal and is punishable. (Interview 45)*

Although identification with the collective identity was growing, change in attitude in human wildlife conflicts situations, in particular elephants in the conservancy are controversial. While some conservancy members expressed attitudes that were compatible with the conservancy collective identity, others articulated negative emotion towards elephants. The interview quotes shows that although there is identification, some conservancy members have low affective commitment to the collective identity, in particular to elephants in the conservancy.

*People now realize that wildlife belongs to them and they should look after it. The only problem we have is accepting elephants. They cost the conservancy a lot of money as they finish the water and damage the dams. (Interview 07)*

Before the conservancy we were not aware that elephants also needed protection, we wanted them destroyed and taken out of the area. After, the conservancy we understood the importance of having elephants in our area. It is a huge animal and everyone is afraid of it but it brings in a lot of money for us. Tourists come to the area to see the elephants. (Interview 34)

We are not happy because of the elephants, the conservancy says we must manage and protect our elephants but the same elephant then destroys our water infrastructure. The community wants the elephants to be removed from the conservancy because although income is derived from the elephants the income is reinvested in repairing destructions caused by elephants. (Interview 03)

We realize that a conservancy is a great idea but if something negative happens like human wildlife conflict which is a major problem in the conservancy it influences perceptions about the conservancy, it brings negativity. (Interview 07)

#### **4.2.2 Conservancy governance system**

The constitution of the conservancy provides governance structures and processes for the management of decision making, responsibility and accountability in the conservancy. The processes addresses the management of the conservancy, meetings, financial matters, membership, dispute resolutions, plan for sustainable management and utilization of wildlife resources, benefit distribution plan and procedure for the amendment of the constitution (DNC, 1998). In order to implement provisions of the constitution the conservancy management committee, introduced additional draft policies and procedures which were not endorsed by the conservancy members. The Doro Nawas policy and operational guidelines was approved on 21 May 2004 to addresses personnel issues, vehicles and other assets and finances. The purpose of the financial administration guidelines was to make sure that the conservancy has a sound financial administration system to manage the finance and conduct proper financial recording (Doro !Nawas policy and operational guidelines, date approved 21.05.04). At this stage of the conservancy the management committee called meetings every three months to report on finances, activities completed and planned (Naibab, pers. comm. 2010). The primary objective of the draft benefit distribution plan was to provide solid base mechanism for benefit distribution procedures in order to operate for the greater advantage of all members as incentives for them for taking part in conservancy development (Doro !Nawas conservancy draft benefit distribution plan phase 1, 2005 -2006).

The manner in which the conservancy was managed strengthened identification with the conservancy. The interview citations illustrate the involvement of conservancy members in conservancy management in accordance with the constitution which in turn increased their interests in the conservancy. The conservancy management committee had regular meetings to share information with conservancy members and involved conservancy members in decision making. The increased number of participation in conservancy activities affirms the growth of members' identification with the conservancy. Mosimane (2000) noted in a study conducted a year after the registration of the conservancy that community participation in decision making was 58%, however Shapi (2003) reported 65% participation in conservancy decision making. As identification strengthened conservancy members developed a sense of ownership of the conservancy. Shapi observed that 90% of the respondents were of the view that the conservancy belonged to them. The citations affirm.

*If you compare farmers association meetings with conservancy meetings, the conservancy meetings are largely attended in comparison to farmers association meetings because our people see the conservancy as something that can develop them. The farmers association meetings do not provide much and are not financially sound but the conservancy generates lot of income through joint venture and trophy hunting. It is known that the conservancy has funds and people prefer to be associated with the conservancy that has money and can benefit them directly. (Interview 02)*

*Meetings were our means of communication that kept us interested in the conservancy and this is where we shared problems, conservancy projects and activities. Meetings were called as urgent matters came up and area meetings were held every 3 months. (Interview 37)*

*The committee managed the conservancy with a very good aim. We cooperated and worked together for the benefit of the community. The conservancy belonged to the community and the committee looked after it for the benefit of the community. The committee informed the community what they wanted to do and the community either approved or declined. If approved, the committee implemented and gave the community feedback. (Interview 33)*

*Committee members were transparent and the community were involved in conservancy activities. The committee was only there to execute the decisions made by the community. The community knew that they are the owners of the conservancy and took responsibility. (Interview 35)*

Conservancy management induced positive emotions that reflected high levels of affective commitment to the conservancy. The interview quotations assert that managing conservancy in accordance with the constitution increased affection to the conservancy. The conservancy members expressed happiness with the conservancy management because it was transparent and financial reports were presented on time.

*I was happy because the conservancy committee was doing things according to the conservancy constitution. (Interview 06)*

*The most important thing the conservancy members want to see is financial transparency, and how the finance of the conservancy is being managed. We were happy and willing to give advice on how the funds should be utilized, when we received figures and expenditure. (Interview 02)*

*We are happy when we receive financial reports on time. The members want to know the financial status of the conservancy and how the conservancy funds were generated and spent. (Interview 03)*

*We felt needed and welcomed by the committee. The committee had an open policy which allowed the community access to the conservancy financial books. (Interview 13)*

### **4.2.3 Infrastructure development**

The conservancy management committee built an office at farm Bloemhof within the boundaries of the conservancy. With the support of a donor organization, a slaughter facility and *biltong* house and cooling house for meat was added to the conservancy office. The conservancy committee entered into a joint venture agreement with Wilderness Safari for the development of a lodge at farm Rendezvous in the conservancy. The lodge was constructed in 2005 with several community members employed during the construction phase. The Doro Nawas lodge officially opened for tourists in 2007. The conservancy is a 45% shareholder in the lodge and have a revenue sharing agreement with Wilderness Safari. A community campsite was also developed at farm Granietkop to provide for self-drive and the self-catering tourists visiting the conservancy. These tourism facilities provide employment to conservancy members and provide a variety of in-kind benefits to employees such as food, housing, transport and medical assistance.

The development of infrastructure, in particular, tourism facilities in the conservancy strengthened identification with the conservancy. The excerpt below asserts that infrastructure development increased registration of conservancy membership with the conservancy because of the potential benefits of employment. Employment in the conservancy favored registered members. Conservancy membership increased from 45% (Mosimane, 2000) a year after the registration of the conservancy, to 82% when infrastructure development started in the conservancy (Shapi, 2003).

*Before the lodge and the campsite were constructed, people did not have interest in the conservancy but after a few developments, more people registered as members (Interview 23)*

The levels of affective commitment were high because of infrastructure development in the conservancy. Interview citations

confirm infrastructure development is a sign of progress in which conservancy members' take pride. In addition the benefits derived from infrastructure development enhanced positive emotions to the conservancy.

*I was proud of the conservancy because we built a lodge and campsite as development. Young people got jobs and at least they can look after their children and families. The conservancy office was constructed; the farmers association and the water point committee got an office to do their operations. (Interview 23)*

*I am happy with the conservancy office and the lodge because it offers employment to conservancy members. The camp site is small and therefore employs only three people. Some people got jobs and can look after themselves (Interview 09)*

*I am happy with developments in the conservancy and we will be in a better position in 10 years. We should make other projects so that those who do not benefit directly can also benefit. (Interview 47)*

#### **4.2.4 Benefits to the community**

Long (2002) classified benefits in conservancies into four separate forms, tangible cash benefits (e.g. cash dividends, and earnings from employment), direct benefits from improved natural resources management (e.g. meat distribution, better protection of wildlife, better access to grazing and water), benefits relating to rights, empowerment and capacity (e.g. developing legal institutions to manage resources and finances), and other benefits related to social development and livelihoods (e.g. improved social relationships, community cohesion and other localized values).

The most widely accessed benefits in Doro !Nawas conservancy are meat distribution and employment. The infrastructure development in the conservancy enabled the conservancy to provide benefits such as employment at the lodge, campsite and conservancy office. Employment in the conservancy increased from 6 CGGs when the conservancy started, to the current 35 employees at the Doro Nawas lodge, 4 people at the conservancy office, 2 people at the camp site and 10 game guards. (Hoeab, pers. comm., 2010). Long (2002) noted that employment in rural areas is a major benefit because it keeps young people in the community with their families. Trophy hunting agreements also provide employment and meat harvested during hunting is distributed to conservancy members. The trophy hunter brings meat to the conservancy office and the area representatives would collect the meat for distribution to conservancy members on the farms. The conservancy also supported poor household with meat during funerals when a conservancy member has died. The conservancy management committee provides food parcels to elderly conservancy members during the festive season.

Conservancy members expressed positive attitudes and behavior that reflects strong identification because of the benefits they were deriving from the conservancy. The benefits conservancy members received generated interests in the conservancy which strengthens identification with the conservancy. The benefits encouraged conservancy members' to support and participate in the conservancy activities. .

*We receive wildlife hunting quotas and when the trophy hunter comes to shoot an animal, the community members get some meat. We are benefiting from wildlife meat because the elderly people and the people farming in the wildlife rich areas are given meat. (Interview 01)*

*I am interested because I benefit from the conservancy resources. I receive a salary and meat from trophy hunting. (Interview 16)*

The delivery of benefits to conservancy members also induced emotions that reflect high levels of affective commitment because their expectations were addressed. The citations confirm that the delivery of benefits addressed the needs of poor families which conservancy members took pride in. Conservancy members acknowledged that the ability of good conservancy management in

facilitating the delivery of benefits which increases the level of affective commitment in the conservancy.

*The provision of benefits to the conservancy members made me happy. Working with the community makes it possible for the committee to deliver benefits. (Interviews 34)*

*I like working with the community and what makes me proud is when the conservancy committee distribute meat to poor people when the trophy hunter shoots an animal. (Interview 03)*

*We were happy because the committee was accountable, funds were well managed and benefits reached the community. (Interview 02)*

It is evident that in this phase that the conservancy collective identity was consolidated because of conservancy management actions such as wildlife management, a functioning governance system, infrastructure development and benefits to members. Conservancy members primarily expressed positive attitudes and behaviors that were reflective of strong identification and high levels of affective commitment. Conservancy members merged the primary objectives of the conservancy with their own and adjusted their attitudes and behaviors to the collective conservancy expectations. Conservancy members expressed attitudes and behaviors that reflect high levels of affective commitment. Pride and happiness characterized the emotions of conservancy members which signified the positive state of feeling and relation to the conservancy collective identity. The increased subsequent actions and attitudes of conservancy members which were in line with the conservancy collective identity affirmed the high levels of affective commitment of members to the conservancy collective identity.

#### **4.2.5 Vulnerability of conservancy governance system**

With further developments in conservancy activities, the structures and processes, as well as additional policies were inappropriate to manage the conservancy. The conservancy committee had assumed the management of complex range of activities and diversified sources of income, with inappropriate governance system and a management committee that lacked skills (NACSO, 2004). This state of the conservancy management was perpetuated by the conservancy management committee inability to meet policy requirements of employing a suitable qualified person to act as a treasurer, to make sure there is proper bookkeeping and the opening of bank accounts in the name of the conservancy. In December 2004, an Annual General Meeting (AGM) attended by 78 conservancy members elected a new conservancy management committee where all previous committee members were replaced with new members, except for one (Conservancy meeting minutes 14 December 2005). This action eroded the skills acquired through training, within the conservancy management committee to manage complex range of conservancy activities. The constitutionality of this election was questioned based on the number of conservancy members present and the absence of the previous committee members (Conservancy meeting minutes, 14 December 2005). The citations assert the challenges and implications of inappropriate governance structures and process in making the conservancy management vulnerable to disturbances.

*The management committee must be assisted to develop policies, guiding tools, etc. We cannot manage the conservancy with the constitution only. (Interview 35)*

*Without clear guiding policy on benefit distribution which has been approved at the AGM, it is difficult. Only if we have an approved policy we can be fair and transparent in the distribution of benefit. (Interview 45)*

*Hampering the conservancy progress is lack of adopted financial policies. There is a need for such policies to enable the management committee to draw budgets and handle funds smoothly and avoid allegations of mismanagement of funds (Conservancy Chairman, AGM minutes 2010).*

*It takes a lot of time to build the capacity of leaders but because you also want to promote democracy, it is really a challenge. After 2-3 years, committees change and they have to be trained again to build capacity. Leaders that are*



removed could still be useful, they've got skills they have acquired, but it is a very critical factor, like within any other development. (Interview 55)

In appropriate governance structures and processes coupled with skills shortage disrupted the management of the conservancy, rendering it unable to deliver on its primary objectives that define its collective identity. Disturbance to the management of the conservancy and therefore its collective identity caused the conservation phase to give way to the release phase.

### **4.3 Collapse of conservancy collective identity**

In this phase of the conservancy formation the accumulated affective commitment that sustains the collective identity is lost, while identification remained strong. Strong identification presented opportunities for conservancy members to re-organize and build the lost affective commitment. In this section I show how an inappropriate governance system and declining benefits to members weakened affective commitment while identification of conservancy members remained strong.

#### **4.3.1 Inappropriate governance system**

The conservancy management committee was almost not functional as the committee failed to execute their mandate to the satisfaction of conservancy members and in support of the conservancy collective identity. The management committee did not hold regular conservancy meetings as stated in the conservancy constitution to inform and consult the conservancy members on conservancy issues (Disciplinary Committee minutes 23.09.2009). The Annual General Meeting (AGM) as prescribed in the conservancy constitution did not take place, due to a lack of quorum which the management committee claimed was not well defined in the constitution (Hoab, pers. comm., 2010). The AGM was also postponed on several times because of outstanding conservancy issues, in particular financial reports (Conservancy meeting minutes, 14 December 2005). The conservancy management committee did not prepare and present financial reports to the conservancy members and allegations of mismanagement of conservancy funds became the norm. Supporting nongovernmental organizations complained of funds been used for the unintended purpose and therefore suspended financial support to the conservancy (Namibia Nature Foundation letter, 13 October 2003).

The conservancy management committee failed to present the 2006, 2007 and 2008 audited financial reports to conservancy members (Concerned members' letter to MET dated 27.03.2008). Conservancy members were not satisfied with the financial reports presented for 2005, 2006 and 2007 and demanded 2008 financial reports to determine the financial status of the conservancy (AGM minutes 2010). After several complaints MET remarked, "it has come to my attention that Doro !Nawas conservancy does not adhere to institutional good governance principles therefore; the minister decided on the following measures against you and your committee. The conservancy bank accounts are suspended with immediate effect and the withdrawal of money from the conservancy accounts will only be done in the presence of the MET regional head with an approved work plan" (MET letter to conservancy committee, 7 August 2009). In a follow up letter MET directed the conservancy management committee to arrange for a financial audit of the conservancy books and accounts as a matter of urgency before the next AGM and for a copy to be submitted to MET (MET letter to conservancy dated 2 October 2009). However, the audit reports for 2006 and 2008 stated, "in our opinion the report has been prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the basis of accounting" (Report of independent auditors, Doro !Nawas conservancy, report on income and expenditure of the year ended 31 December 2006, prepared 04 March 2008 and year ended 31 December 2008 prepared 3 December 2009). Conservancy members observed that there were loopholes in the conservancy constitution that presented an opportunity for mismanagement and unaccountability in the conservancy (Doro !Nawas extra ordinary general meeting report, 08 March 2008).

Conservancy members continued to show strong identification with the conservancy collective identity. Conservancy members continued to be active in the conservation of wildlife without any increased observation of poaching incidences. The citations affirm the actions of conservancy members initiated to improve conservancy management due to strong identification with the

conservancy collective identity.

I am not in the committee but if I find someone poaching, I would report them, we are looking after the wildlife now. (Interview 23)

Due to the desire of conservancy members to maintain the conservancy collective identity a Disciplinary Committee was established in terms of the constitution sections 90-94 on 8 March 2008, to mediate in conflict situations during the AGM (Disciplinary committee minutes 13 October 2008).

Conservancy members established a concerned group to raise conservancy issues that were not acceptable to conservancy members with the conservancy management committee (Concerned group, 2 February 2005).

Conservancy members expressed attitudes and behavior that demonstrate low levels of affective commitment the conservancy collective identity. The excerpts assert the feelings of members characterized by resentment to the manner in which the conservancy was managed. The manner of conservancy management cultivated mistrust which is generally associated with low commitment. The negative emotions were followed by hostility to the conservancy management with conservancy members deciding not to attend meetings and demanding change of conservancy committee.

We decided not to attend conservancy meetings because we were tired and frustrated it was only the committee members that could talk in all the meetings. Conservancy meetings, were postponed because there was no quorum for the meetings. The community had a motion of no trust in the committee because the conservancy committee was not implementing conservancy activities according to the conservancy constitution. (Interview 05)

I was not happy with the conservancy committee because we do not know what happened with the income generated. Mismanagement of funds by conservancy members employed at the conservancy or serving in the committee is hurting me. No action is taken against people who mismanage conservancy resources as some conservancy committee members are related and cover for their relatives. (Interview 21)

We were not happy with the financial mismanagement and presentation of financial reports of the committee, these were the main issues we wanted change and we were of the opinion that the conservancy could be managed the way the community wants. We wanted the committee to leave office. (Interview 02)

### **4.3.2 Declining benefits to conservancy members**

Distribution of benefits to conservancy members is subject to the conservancy having a benefit distribution plan. The absence of a benefit distribution plan that conservancy members developed and approved creates feelings of uncertainty about benefits and fairness in the mechanism of delivering benefits. The absence of a benefit distribution plan and limited skills among conservancy management committee members reduced the ability of the conservancy to deliver benefits to community members, causing benefits to decline. Although, employment in tourism facilities and the conservancy remained constant, meat distribution decreased. The conservancy management committee used most of the own use quota, for "shoot and sell" to generate more income for the conservancy instead of providing meat to members. However, not accounting for the funds generated to conservancy members created misunderstandings between the conservancy management committee and the conservancy members (AGM minutes 2010, concerned group letter 26 June 2005).

Benefits are not constant but changes over time because of change in the supply. For example, the number of tourists that visit the Doro !Nawas lodge is not constant every year to guarantee the conservancy the same income (Chairman report, 05 March 2011). Equally the hunting quota allocated to the conservancy changes from year to year based on game counts (Hunting agreement 2003–2009). The citation below sums the implication of conservancy management committee failure to develop a benefit distribution plan that facilitates a fair and equitable distribution of benefits to conservancy members.

Benefits are a useful incentive. If community members don't see benefits from a particular intervention it will not get the support, therefore benefits are one of the key things in conservancies. But it is also one of the challenges the conservancies

are faced with, in terms of the benefit distributions mechanism that needs to be worked out, some have tried, there are few examples which are encouraging. I think benefits are at the heart, in terms of determining the success of the conservancy, if the conservancy does not provide benefits both tangible and intangible it will not attract any support. If the issue of benefits is not properly managed it will cause disintegration, it is useful that it be managed well, it's not just only that the benefit distribution must be there, but there must be equity in benefit sharing and that is probably a good principle, that need to be promoted. (NGO member, Interview 55)

Conservancy members maintained strong identification to the conservancy besides the declining benefits to members. The quotations confirm that although conservancy members recognized the decline in benefits, identification with the conservancy remained as they continued to support conservancy activities. However, there is clear indication that identification would not remain strong if the current status does not change.

We used to receive all benefits and the attendance of meetings was good but it is not the same today. We used to deliver meat at every household and they used to sign off. Now we only give hampers and the meat is not enough, therefore we are not satisfied with the benefits. (Interview 16)

Benefits were the reason why conservancies are formed, why people came together to form conservancies. We supported the idea of formation of the conservancy and observed for a while when we were not receiving benefits. (Interview 53)

There is interest in the conservancy but it is declining at the moment because the conservancy was there to support the communities but nothing is happening. (Interview 11)

The community wanted members to benefit from the conservancy. However, the promise made to the community never materialized and as a result interest was declining. (Interview 12)

Decline in benefits contributed to low levels of affective commitment to the conservancy collective identity. The excerpts assert the negative emotions conservancy members expressed to the conservancy management committee and the conservancy, for their inability to deliver benefits to the conservancy members. Feelings of unfairness in the distribution of the benefits to conservancy members were commonly shared adding to the resentment towards the conservancy management committee. The mistrust that conservancy members developed towards the conservancy management committee shows low levels of affective commitment to the conservancy management committee and the conservancy.

I thought the conservancy would be beneficial to the community as it would eradicate poverty and create employment but the committee broke the trust and enthusiasm the community had towards the conservancy. (Interview 25)

I am not very happy with the committee because we were not receiving anything from the conservancy while the other communities receive benefits from their conservancies. I became a member of the conservancy in 2002 because information and benefits never reached the community I decided to get involved. I became a committee member to know what the benefits are and make sure that all community members must benefit from the conservancy. (Interview 09)

I am not happy with the unfairness in the conservancy. Without proper management and administration, it will not be possible to provide the needed benefits. If decisions are made, it should be according to what the community decided and agreed, not what the individual wants. The decision making is done and activities are carried out without consulting the community. (Interview 36)

#### **4.4 Reconstructing conservancy collective identity**

According to resilience theory, reorganization is the phase when conservancy members through the emergence of new opportunities seek to renegotiate the collective identity of the conservancy. In this phase identification with the conservancy is

weakening while affective commitment to the conservancy is strengthening. Depending on the negotiations, the conservancy has the potential to reorganize and maintain its current collective identity or transform into a new configuration where the collective identity is replaced by a new identity with no similar configuration to the original collective identity. I outline the interventions conservancy members initiated to negotiate the conservancy collective identity through addressing management challenges that threatened the conservancy collective identity.

#### **4.4.1 The process of negotiating conservancy collective identity**

In an attempt to maintain conservancy collective identity members established a Disciplinary Committee (DC) in terms of sections 90-94 of the conservancy constitution at the AGM. The DC was to mediate in conservancy conflicts situations and monitor elections of new conservancy management committee after the term of office (Disciplinary Committee minutes 13 October 2008). Core to the mandate of the DC was to maintain the conservancy collective identity through mediation. The DC was established in terms of the new constitution because the old constitution did not have provision for a disciplinary committee. In accordance with the constitution, a senior traditional authority member was appointed as the chairperson of the DC and the chairman of the conservancy committee also served on the DC. The DC observed that all was not well within the conservancy and a lot of activities were executed without the approval of conservancy members as required by the constitution (DC minutes 23 September 2009). The DC wrote several letters to the MET to inform them of management challenges experienced in the conservancy (DC minutes 23 September 2009). The DC wrote letters to the conservancy management committee informing them of complaints the DC received and requested a meeting to resolve the issues but the meetings were never realized (DC letter to conservancy committee, no date). The observations below illustrate the progress made and affection to the conservancy due to the current status of the conservancy.

What makes me proud is when I see the community calm and happy as in the last meeting and the development of the community in our conservancy. The conservancy is now quiet; we have not received any complaint from the community as the DC. If there are conflicts, between the community and the committee and between DC and Committee, or Committee and TA then you cannot be proud (Chairperson DC, 2010).

#### **4.4.2 Failing negotiations of conservancy collective identity**

In terms of the adaptive cycle with failed negotiations the conservancy collective identity was to transform into a new configuration where the collective identity is replaced by a new identity with no similar configuration to the original collective identity. However, in the case of Doro !Nawas conservancy the collective identity was being replaced with a similar collective identity with a similar configuration as the original identity. What was evident was to change with the new collective identity were the conservancy management and the boundaries.

The new proposed conservancy called !Garibasen conservancy and management committee was established on 2 February 2005 at Malansrus. The boundaries of the new conservancy committee were Granietkop, Witwatersrand, Driekrone, Malansrus, Rendezvous and Bankfontein which are part of Doro !Nawas conservancy. The members of the new conservancy, also referred to as the concerned group, were mainly farmers of the above farms who were signatory to the petition to break away from Doro !Nawas conservancy. It was estimated that 135 conservancy members were dissatisfied with the management of Doro !Nawas conservancy hence the desire to constitute the !Garibasen conservancy over an area which is part of the larger Doro !Nawas conservancy (Legal opinion 7 June 2005).

The concerned group was of the opinion that their views were not considered in decisions that the conservancy management committee was taking. The concerned group stated, "we came to the conclusion of setting up another conservancy of people who share the same sentimental value of indigenous environment, and understanding one another's reasons for preserving of natural resources for the future generation" (Ad hoc Committee !Garibasen letter to MET 26 June 2005). It is evident from this

statement that the concerned group was willing to maintain the conservancy collective identity.

After failed negotiations to bring desirable changes in the management of Doro !Nawas conservancy, the concerned group requested a general meeting of members of Doro !Nawas conservancy for de-registering Doro !Nawas conservancy to accommodate the establishment and registration of !Garibasen conservancy due to irreconcilable differences (Concerned group letter 9 June 2005). The concerned group tried at two separate meetings 9 February 2008 and 8 March 2008 to table a motion of no confidence in the conservancy management committee without success (DC letter 27 March 2008). The motion of no confidence would have allowed the conservancy members to call for new elections to replace the incumbent conservancy management committee. The concerned group could not secure sufficient conservancy members to enforce a vote of no confidence (Conservancy meeting 14 December 2005).

The Minister of MET after a visit to the conservancy, attended a mediating meeting between the concerned group and the conservancy management committee recommended the revision of the constitution and election of a new conservancy management committee instead of de-registering of conservancy to establish the !Garibasen conservancy. This recommendation was adopted as resolution of the meeting (Conservancy meeting 14 December 2005). The citations confirm the process of failed negotiation.

I belonged to a concerned group of people from the !Garibasen area. We wanted to break away from Doro !Nawas and establish our own conservancy, the !Garibasen Conservancy. We wrote letters to the Minister and we held a meeting with him, where we wanted to submit a vote of no confidence in the committee. The Minister understood our concerns but noted it would take a long time to resolve this issue. (Interview 24)

We were not happy with the financial management in the conservancy and we decided to hold meetings with the community and wrote a letter to MET. We met with the Governor of our region and MET authorities they advised us (the concerned group) not to divide the area by forming a new conservancy. (Interview 44)

Some conservancy members supported the de-registering of the conservancy for the same reasons as the concerned group, but with the intention to configure the conservancy collective identity back to farming identity.

The conservancy can just be cancelled and we can just live as we did before as farmers. I just feel that there is no need for the conservancy and the government can just de-register Doro Nawas conservancy. All the negative developments in the conservancy make me to just think the conservancy should be de-registered. (Interview 04)

Identification with the conservancy weakened during the process of negotiating conservancy collective identity. The quotes affirm that when the conservancy is not managed in a transparent and accountable manner the members' interest in the conservancy declined. Similarly, when the conservancy is not managed to deliver the benefits to members and the benefits are declining, members' interests in conservancy collective identity would decline.

The mismanagement of benefits, fraud and corruption made the people lose interest in the conservancy. The conservancy members gave up on the conservancy and some conservancy members suggested we might as well stop the conservancy and give it back to the government. (Interview 38)

The conservancy members still had interests in the conservancy but the number of people with interests was decreasing because of lack of financial accountability and transparency to the conservancy members. (Interview 04)

I have not received any benefits from the conservancy but I think over the years if it is well managed we will get something like other neighbouring conservancies that supports children with bursaries. I know my children can get such benefits in the future. (Interview 01)

#### **4.4.3 Review of conservancy governance structures and processes**

The review of conservancy governance structures and processes took two forms, the conservancy constitution was reviewed and

a new constitution was adopted, and a new conservancy management committee was elected.

The conservancy constitution was, revised after 10 years. Conservancy members noted that the conservancy constitution has several weaknesses that make it necessary for amendment and requested MET to help with the constitution review process (MET letter 27 01 2006). The Ministry of Environment and Tourism intervened to facilitate the review of the governance system and the election of a new conservancy management committee. MET and nongovernmental support organizations facilitated the process of the constitution review. The weaknesses identified in the first consultative meeting were, conservancy management structure (executive committee used but not in existence), financial management (signatory powers), AGM procedures not clearly stipulated and incompatibility of constitution with policies and regulations on the same aspects (Review process...www.nacso.org). The constitution was reviewed through a consultative process which lasted over 6 months while the actual drafting of the constitution with the conservancy members took seven days. The draft constitution required legal input through the Legal Assistance Centre, followed by the presentation of the draft constitution to the conservancy management committee and conservancy members for final input. The key issues addressed in the constitution were decision making structures, financial management, meetings and the disciplinary committee. Drafting the constitution was followed by finalizing some policies and procedures, training for conservancy personnel and the conservancy management committee of the use of the constitution, policies and procedures. The final process was conservancy members' education and awareness on the new constitution and procedures (Review process...www.nacso.org). The new constitution was adopted on 9 February 2008.

After the review of the conservancy constitution, the conservancy management committee was elected for two reasons, first to be elected in accordance with the changes made in the constitution. Secondly, it was due to the fact that the term of office of the conservancy committee members that were serving officers had expired, which called for new election. The conservancy DC had the responsibility to facilitate the election of a new conservancy management committee. In preparation for the elections the DC organized a consultative meeting on 12 December 2009 with all stakeholders to agree on procedures for the elections. The DC announced that on 12 January 2009, 20 candidates were nominated to stand for elections and the DC had the responsibility to screen the candidates in terms of agreed criteria for criminal records and in line with the constitution. The DC could suspend any candidate that did not meet the criteria.

In preparation for the 2010 AGM it was agreed at the conservancy meeting that a quorum is formed by 133 members present at a meeting from 527 registered members (Doro !Nawas conservancy extra general meeting, 12 December 2009). The elections took place on 13 February 2010 during the AGM in the presence of observers from government, nongovernmental organizations, neighboring conservancies committee members and the police to make sure the elections were free and fair (AGM minutes 15 February 2010). The elections during the AGM was attended by 351 registered members who elected a conservancy committee of 17 members, consisting of 7 executive members, one representative from each of the six areas and one representative each for the water point committee, petrified forest guides, farmers association and one representative from the traditional authority. The new conservancy committee was to serve for 3 years.

At the time of the interviews the conservancy management committee was in office for 8 months, and had not held its first annual general meeting. The opinion expressed by conservancy members was a reflection of the progress of rebuilding identification and affective commitment over the 8 months period. Identification with the conservancy collective identity started to rebuild as conservancy members expressed attitudes and behavior that were supportive of the conservancy collective identity. The citations confirm that regular meetings to involve conservancy members in the management of the conservancy were instrumental in growing identification with the conservancy. The members that were involved were willing to cooperate because they were convinced that the conservancy was managed in terms of the constitution. It is evident from the quotes that financial reporting to conservancy members strengthened identification with the conservancy.

It is now up to the conservancy members to compare and judge us on the financial report that the treasurer will present. Because you as members know the financial state in which we took over from the previous conservancy management committee. (Chairman report, 5 March 2011)

The current committee is new and we do not know how the committee will work with the community. But, at least the new committee is informing us about the conservancy income and it is giving hope. (Interview 21)

The current committee cooperates with the community and works according to the constitution and how MET requires a conservancy to be managed. (Interview 40)

The committee holds meetings and discusses feedback they must give to the community and prepare bank statements, make summaries of what was done and announce the date of meeting to the community. The committee informs us about conservancy activities and developments at the meetings. (Interview 30)

The interview excerpts affirm the increasing levels of affective commitment to the collective identity of the conservancy. Conservancy members started to express positive emotions towards the conservancy management committee. The affections were conditional on accepting that the new committee will manage the conservancy in accordance with the constitution. The financial reports of the new committee to conservancy members induced positive affections to the conservancy committee which demonstrated increasing levels of affective commitment to the conservancy. Meat distributions in the six conservancy areas by area representatives brought forth expressions of happiness and believe that benefits would be delivered to conservancy members.

Conservancy members' were happy about the balances in conservancy accounts since the current committee started with less than N\$2000 when they took over. The conservancy committee was applauded for their financial performance and transparent management of the conservancy. (AGM minutes 25 March 2011)

Conservancy members are currently very happy about the current committee because in the last conservancy meeting people said it is the first time to have a copy of the financial reports in our hands to take home. (Interview 01)

I am feeling happy because the new committee did their best to ensure that benefits are reaching conservancy members. The area representatives distributed meat to most conservancy members this year and the conservancy members were happy. (Interview 02)

The current committee changed many things especially financial management in the conservancy. The committee prepares financial report every 3 months and the treasurer provides us with the reports, provides copies to communities and everything are well done. We were happy to receive financial reports and applauded the committee, it was the first time to receive written financial reports which we can study on our own and keep copies. (Interview 03)

## 5. IMPLICATIONS FOR CONSERVANCIES AND POLICY

This paragraph gives a perspective of the implication of the study on the management of common pool resources based on social ecological system. The proposed collective identity framework emphasizes the connection between the individual resource user and how the collective impact the attitudes, behavior and actions of individuals in managing the use of common pool resources (Cole & Bruch, 2006). The collective identity perspective is one of multiple perspectives for understanding complex social-ecological systems (Berkes, Colding, & Folke, 2003; Gruber, 2010). The collective identity framework in terms of attributes of resource users and of the state of the resources is an influential driver in the collective action to manage the use of common pool resources. The study suggests that collective identity of resource users and the state of the resource provides an effective foundation for the management of behavior in social-ecological systems (Melucci, 1996; Polletta & Jasper, 2001). Collective identity gives the management of a social-ecological system an inclusive identity, constructing the collective 'we' sense of identity, which serves important psychological functions for members of the collective managing the social-ecological system. The study proposes that collective identity makes 'free riding' less attractive because it provides the rationale for participation in collective action (Gupta, Hofstetter, & Buss, 1997; Klandermans, 2002). The researcher believes that collective action in the use of CPRs with a resilient collective identity contributes to the resilience of complex social-ecological system, thus a resilient collective identity system has the potential to prevent a social ecological system from moving into an undesirable configuration.

The remainder of the discussion concentrates on the implications of the study for CBNRM in Namibia. Conservancies in different

parts of Namibia are at different stages of development with unequal opportunities to generate income necessary for sustainable management of wildlife resources and delivery of benefits. This presents a challenge to the MET and the NACSO members to provide the necessary support while able to monitor progress in conservancies that are well developed. The conservancy collective identity is the same for all conservancies in Namibia because all conservancies hold the same meaning. The legislation defines the conservancy collective identity as; the conservancy shall enable registered members to improve their standard of living through diverse benefits derived from sustainable management of consumptive and non-consumptive utilization of wildlife and natural resources within the boundaries of the conservancy. Sustainable management and utilization of wildlife resources and benefits is core to the identity of conservancies in Namibia. The conservancy collective identity is defined in the legislation, what differs is the processes which different communities undertake to develop the conservancy collective identity. The study, presents a framework that helps to understand this process and how it influences the collective action necessary to have a conservancy. In this study, when talking about the conservancy it refers to the collective action the conservancy members entered into to establish a conservancy.

The framework also demonstrates that the social ecological system in which the conservancy collective identity is embedded is not constant thus changes all the time. This implies that with change in the social ecological system, the relationship of the conservancy members to the conservancy collective identity and the conservancy would change. Essentially the framework enables us to identify the phase in which the conservancy is, to be able to understand the implication of each phase on the relationship between the conservancy members, the conservancy collective identity and the conservancy. When the conservancy management committee, conservancy members, NACSO members and MET officials are able to identify the various phases of the conservancy according to the framework, they would be able to intervene at the right time, to maintain the conservancy in a desirable state.

In the formation phase of the conservancy collective identity, the conservancy member's identification is weak and affective commitment to the conservancy identity is low. In this phase the attitudes and behavior of conservancy members are inconsistent with the conservancy. This is primarily because the conservancy concept is new to the members. The process of establishing governance systems in Doro !Nawas conservancy in accordance with the legislation and the notion of potential benefits for conservancy members was core to developing identification and affective commitment to the conservancy collective identity and the conservancy. Studies (Mosimane, 2000; Shapi, 2003) confirmed the role the notion of potential benefits played in Doro !Nawas conservancy. Long (2002) observed that Namibian conservancies have a strong link between benefits and improved management of natural resources, where benefits provide a strong incentive to form a conservancy. In Doro !Nawas the existing collective action of Versteendewoud Farmers Association and the regional MET office personnel were instrumental in the formation of conservancy collective identity among community members. Although this study could confirm that the process took almost two years there is no evidence to confirm the consultation process with community members. However, at present with 59 registered conservancies, Namibian communities have gained experience on the processes that need to be completed to strengthen the relationship between community members and conservancy collective identity.

The lesson from this study is that it is necessary for MET personnel and supporting NACSO members working with communities in regions that are new to the conservancy concept to make sure that the process of establishing governance structures to meet the legislative requirements should emphasize developing identification and affective commitment to the conservancy collective identity in community members, rather than meeting the requirements. The consultation and information sharing process in the formation stage with community members is an important phase that needs nurturing over time. Establishing a stronger relationship between community members, conservancy collective identity and the conservancy in the formation phase of the conservancy collective identity is essential for future stability in the conservancy.

In accordance with the adaptive cycle, during the growth of conservancy collective identity phase Doro !Nawas conservancy members had strong identification and high affective commitment to the conservancy collective identity. Consolidating conservancy collective identity in this phase is fundamental in the success of the conservancy. In this phase the rights, obligations and the responsibilities of the conservancy stipulated in the Act is conferred to the conservancy management committee. The study shows that Doro !Nawas conservancy management committee was instrumental in consolidating the conservancy collective identity. Conservancy management committee members planned implemented and managed conservancy activities according



to the constitution. This translated the interests of conservancy members in the conservancy collective identity, into actions of participation in meetings and other activities. Participation is a key principle in community based natural resources management which needs to occur at all stages of CBNRM development (Gruber, 2010). It increases the involvement of resource users in the management and decision making of conservancy which is essential for its success. The findings of this study affirms Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) and Mael and Ashforth (1992) research that strong identification enhances the conservancy members support and cooperation with the conservancy. Conservancy members who strongly identify with the conservancy have a congruent identity with the conservancy (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001) thus stronger sense of oneness with the conservancy (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Such conservancy members expressed satisfaction with the conservancy (Bhattacharya, Rao, & Glynn, 1995) and adapted their behavior and actions in support of the conservancy (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986).

Simultaneously, conservancy members were expressing positive emotions and developed a sense of belonging to and ownership of the conservancy which reflected high levels of affective commitment to the conservancy. Our findings support Gruber (2010) that community participation builds trust within the collective and leads to local ownership. Most importantly, the conservancy management committee was able to uphold the overriding principle of transparency, fairness and equity, in accordance with the objectives of the constitution and for the benefit of the members. The management committee delivered benefits to conservancy members and entered into joint venture agreements for trophy hunting and tourism facilities development which delivered employment benefits.

In this phase conservancy members expressed attitudes and behaviors that were consistent with the conservancy. It could be argued that the growth of conservancy collective identity phase is the ideal phase for a conservancy to maintain albeit knowing that due to the changing social ecological system, in which the conservancy is embedded, the state would definitely change. However, the framework suggests that the phase could be prolonged if the management committee and conservancy members are able to address challenges with potential threats to the conservancy collective identity immediately.

Growing wealth in conservancies to deliver more benefits to members is dependent on conservancies staying in the conservancy collective identity consolidation phase, where the conservancy collective identity is strong. The findings of this study show that efficient and effective conservancy management and governance system in conservancies would allow the conservancy to build a resilient collective identity. Efficient and effective conservancy management committee manages and utilizes its wildlife and other natural resources in a sustainable manner whilst delivering benefits to conservancy members. Most importantly, efficiency and effectiveness could be achieved while meeting the interests of conservancy members and within the confines of the conservancy constitution. Conservancies that develop these characteristics would be able to grow wealth as they would develop a stable natural resource base which offers an appealing product for investors to consider. Conflict in conservancies erodes their ability to build a stable resources base that create conducive environment to grow wealth and deliver more benefits to conservancy members.

In this phase of the adaptive cycle identification with the conservancy collective identity is strong but the affective commitment is lost. The case of Doro !Nawas shows that management of the conservancy and the governance system contributed to lost affective commitment to the conservancy collective identity. The consistency in the behaviors of conservancy members is threatened. Growing wealth in conservancies has its own challenges it requires competencies of conservancy management committee members and the governance system to be in sync with the growth. NACSO (2004) recognized the challenges of managing the conservancy, natural resources and enterprises that result from the management of natural resources. With growth the activities and resources under conservancy management diversified requiring conservancies to manage different resources. In response NACSO (2004) suggested the need for an effective management system that integrates the management. The conservancy management framework was introduced to consolidate the conservancy management process. However, there was a need to build capacity and skills among the conservancy management committee to establish an effective management system. Training programmes were introduced to support conservancies management committee and the conservancy personnel. NACSO (2010) observed the complex range of activities that conservancy management committee has to manage and the changing structure and procedures in conservancies may not be in sync with the constitution.

The findings, in Doro !Nawas demonstrate that the conservancy management committee was not managing the conservancy

in the interests of conservancy members and in accordance with the constitution. The governance system was not appropriate to guide the conservancy management committee members in the management of the conservancy. Evidence suggest that the challenges in Doro !Nawas persisted for nearly 4 years whilst there were no meaningful interventions. The delay in intervention influenced affective commitment of conservancy members to the conservancy collective identity and the conservancy. Although there was no evidence of impact on the management and utilization of wildlife and other natural resources, the conservancy management committee was not able to deliver benefits to the satisfaction of conservancy members. NACSO (2010) noted the increasing number of conservancy members that are dissatisfied with their respective conservancy committees, and therefore the conservancies.

The lessons from Doro !Nawas conservancy indicates the absence of clear processes to deal with collapse in conservancy could threaten the conservancy collective identity. Equally, there was no delineation of responsibility from policy perspective as to who should intervene and give direction. The policy implication from the Doro !Nawas situation and similar others in conservancies across the country is that mechanisms needs to be developed to address similar situations while they are emerging to avoid large scale negative influences on conservancy members relationship with the conservancy collective identity. Correspondence between MET and the conservancy management committee in the case of Doro !Nawas conservancy suggests that the intervention by MET was not effective and enforceable in many respects to bring to an end the situation before it had much more impact. The example of Doro !Nawas brings in to question the policy and MET readiness to deal with the situation because as the number of conservancies that are financially autonomous increases, funding to NACSO members for hands on intervention decreases. This puts the responsibility for addressing the collapse phase of conservancy collective identity primary as the mandate of MET. The framework also shows that in a cycle where the social ecological system is dynamic, most if not all conservancies would go through this phase and there is potential for the cycle to repeat itself if not managed accordingly.

In the reconstruction phase of the conservancy collective identity, where identification with the conservancy has weakened the conservancy identity had the potential to transform into completely new identity. Doro !Nawas conservancy members' identification declined when their dissatisfaction with the conservancy management committee was not addressed over a lengthy time. In the case of Doro !Nawas the conservancy collective identity proved to be resilient enough to reorganize, amidst challenges of breakaway to establish a new conservancy. Although identification was weak, the conservancy members could use the strengthening affective commitment to rebuild the conservancy collective identity

The study assumption for resilience of the conservancy collective identity is because the conservancy had a strong resource base with the potential to deliver the benefits conservancy members' desire. This implies that where the resource base is weak, the chances are very high that the conservancy collective identity would be replaced by a completely new identity. The conservancy collective identity could reorganize because of the review of the constitution to allow for the establishment of the Disciplinary Committee (DC) and to address the loopholes that became evident in the old constitution. The process was followed by the election of a new conservancy management committee. However, the delay in intervention created the potential for conservancy members to consider de-gazetting of the conservancy and establishing a new conservancy.

The lessons from this research is that there is high potential for conservancy members to push for de-gazetting of conservancy in the future which will be a reversal of conservation gains made in the CBNRM sector. The Doro !Nawas case also suggests that conservancy members that reside in resource rich areas of the conservancy could seek for the de-gazetting with the intention to establish a new conservancy which will concentrate the benefits to those living closer to the resource. The Doro !Nawas de-gazetting failed because the number of conservancy members seeking de-gazetting did not meet the constitutional requirement. But it calls for interrogation of policies and regulations for mechanisms to deal with similar situations in the future. NACSO (2010) called for more government regulation and NGO supervision to address governance challenges. With the declining capacity of NACSO members to intervene and provide the necessary support, MET is challenged to put in place structures and processes to address similar challenges in the future.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The framework proposed in this paper facilitates the understanding and building of resilient collective identity in the management of use of CPRs in social-ecological systems. The framework helps us to think about the attributes that explain change in collective identity and how such an understanding contributes to effective management of the use of common pool resources through collective action. However, further research on other collective identity attributes is needed to deepen understanding of collective action processes in the context of CPRs and social-ecological systems. In particular, research is required to advance understanding of the dynamics and complexities that underpin the management of social-ecological systems from the perspective of collective identity change. Namibia CBNRM sector provides ideal situations for research to test CPRs propositions.

The conceptual framework illustrates how conservancy collective identity resilience could be developed based on identification and affective commitment. Based on these two variables, members of the conservancy could either change or stabilize the conservancy collective identity. Change in the degree of identification and amount of affective commitment have the potential to cause conservancy members to behave differently towards the conservancy collective identity (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Ellemers et al., 1999). The study suggests that failure to manage identification and affective commitment effectively could result in the collapse of conservancy collective action to manage the use of CPRs. Understanding conservancy collective identity change allows conservancy members and the conservancy committee to reinforce their identity in order to reduce the emergence of undesirable behavior, or to intervene to remedy undesirable behavior, or to facilitate change that makes the identity relevant to the conservancy members. Continuous slow change increases the resilience of the conservancy collective identity and the ability of conservancy members to develop a behavioral pattern that conforms to the conservancy collective identity. Dramatic change in the conservancy collective identity has the potential to cause a collapse of the management of conservancies which might lead to an undesirable transformation of collective action.

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