

Assessment of Community-based Natural Resource Management in the Savannas Using the Capacity Continuum - Multiple Drivers Model

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ABSTRACT In southern Africa, despite the enormous development effort and attention that Community-based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) has received there has been an increase in disillusionment with this approach due to its lack of conceptual rigour. In recent years CBNRM has received increasing criticism, with some scholars calling for its complete abandonment. This study employs a new conceptual model, the Capacity Continuum – Multiple Drivers (CCMD) model, to assess the conditions that are required for CBNRM to succeed at the local level. Interviews and a questionnaire survey were conducted at household level to determine the conditions which regulate the livelihood related choices and decisions among forest and woodland resource users. The results reveal that apart from institutional arrangements the success of CBNRM depends on the level of social utility, relative to individual utility. This revelation is important for designing CBNRM projects. The study concludes that instead of abandoning CBNRM as a resource management strategy, as suggested by some scholars, what is needed is a sound conceptual framework that helps to reshape the community's capacity continuum to enhance cooperation and foster a strong sense of community while simultaneously stifling resource use competition and social dissonance within the community.