Exploring a Collaborative Approach to Wildlife Conservation in Malawi

‘Reborn to be Wild in Majete’

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“Malawi will become one of the most complete destinations in Africa – lake, landscape, culture and now wildlife experiences of the highest quality. Warm, welcoming and unspoilt, Malawi really is just waiting to be discovered”

MARAVI POST, 2017
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Being able to return to Africa after 10 years, a place I used to call home, was special and marks an incredible end to my studies. As a child I grew up living in different countries in Africa, including Ghana, Sudan, and Zambia. I was fortunate to be able to experience other cultures and see new countries at a young age. Due to these experiences, I gained a passion for Africa and hoped that someday I would be able to return. During my studies in tourism, I became more interested in the sustainability and development phenomena. Collaborative management and community based initiatives surrounding tourism and environment attracted my attention and made me curious to learn more about how this works in practice. This interest, combined with the knowledge about tourism and research methods gained during my studies, provided a unique opportunity for this thesis research.

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Zikomo (thank you) and enjoy the read!

Barbara Waltmans
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Summary

Conservationists have been debating about devolved governance schemes for protected areas for many years. Due to conservation crises occurring in Africa, many places have suffered from a loss of species, destruction of wildlife and at the same time human populations are experiencing high levels of poverty (African Parks, 2017). To cope with these issues, several policy arrangements have come about over time, experimenting with ways to decentralize political control and decision making to alternative degrees of government (Boudreaux et al., 2011). Governments, civil society and private parties have developed (partnership) arrangements that aim to protect wildlife and in many cases also improve community wellbeing.

This research has investigated the policy arrangement at Majete Wildlife Reserve, a public-private partnership between the NGO African Parks and Malawi Government Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW). The aim of this research was to identify and explain the main characteristics of the policy arrangement at Majete Wildlife Reserve in Malawi. The policy arrangement was analyzed using a policy arrangements approach (PAA) to understand dynamic relations between actors, resources, rules and discourses in Majete. Semi-structured interviews, field observations and documentary research were conducted and transcripts were analyzed by means of a coding technique (thematic analysis). This provided deeper insight into the situation in Majete and enabled a comparison to other conservation approaches.

The main characteristics of the policy arrangement reveal that African Parks has taken over the role of the government. African Parks formed a partnership with the DNPW in 2003 and has since then been given full responsibility for the management and funding of the reserve. This means that African Parks plays a leading role, and can be seen as a new type of government within this policy arrangement. Other important players in the reserve are tourism operation Robin Pope Safaris that attracts tourists and thus generates revenue for the park, communities for their support in anti-poaching and conservation initiatives, donors for their large financial support and other NGOs for their community development projects. Communication structures (such as committees) exist for all actors to be able to share opinions and problems but African Parks has a final say in decision-making. A shared discourse states that communities need to be educated in return for their support. This has meant that several projects are created to provide opportunities for communities to receive jobs, gain education and make use of resources. African Parks, however, remains in control of these resources.

The arrangement is proven to be highly successful in terms of wildlife conservation but the dominant position of African Parks within the policy arrangement raises questions as to whether this is truly a collaborative approach. The arrangement rather tends to depict a new type of top-down approach; an arrangement that differs entirely from other conservation approaches.

Key words: Wildlife conservation; governance; partnerships; African Parks; Malawi
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1. Introduction

The Earth is currently experiencing a decline in species and wildlife due to human activity and climate change (Appleby et al., 2014). The rate of extinction is forecasted to increase even more in the next half century (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005; Appleby et al., 2014). Conservation is, and will become, a crucial practice for the future of species and wildlife. Without conservation, various species and wildlife will cease to exist. Not only is it important in terms of ecological values, it is also important for scientific and aesthetic purposes due to their rarity in certain environments (McElroy, 2015).

In recent decades, “conservation and central government control have been accompanied by policies and legislation” that strive for the inclusion of multiple stakeholders (Bluwstein et al., 2016: 218). This rather inclusive approach has been touched upon in several articles, which proves its importance and need for further observation (Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Ribot et al. 2006; Nelson 2007; Dressler et al. 2010). Different schemes and methods have been developed to include community members in conservation efforts or to allow non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) to receive the responsibility for wildlife management. Such schemes can be defined as “systems of resource governance, whereby the rules for resource allocation and management are primarily set by communities [or NGO’s] themselves” rather than by the state (Li, 2005: 435). One of the methods to include different actors in decision-making, for example to foster conservation tourism, has been to create partnerships between public and private actors (Lamers et al., 2014).

An example of a partnership created to conserve wildlife and foster local development is the public-private partnership between governments and NGO African Parks. African Parks is an organization that has taken over management of different national parks and reserves in a number of countries in Africa. African Parks believes in “centralized control over issues such as strategy, reputation, integrity, funding, standard operating procedures and selection of senior personnel, with strongly decentralized execution” (African Parks, 2017). Every national park and reserve in which African Parks operates has a separate arrangement with the host country and is governed by a group of local individuals that represent the key stakeholders for that park. The first park taken on by African Parks and currently praised as a success story, is Majete Wildlife Reserve in Malawi. As much research has been done in Africa about impacts of policy arrangements on local communities, this study will focus more on understanding the characteristics of a policy arrangement in devolved governance of wildlife reserves like Majete.

1.1. Context

1.1.1. Wildlife management

Finding appropriate policies for wildlife management has proven to be challenging over time (Gibson et al., 1995; Rosenau, 1997; Attwell and Cotterill, 2000; Rodger et al., 2009; Bello, 2015; Retief, 2016). “The prevailing socio-political and economic conditions in different [African] countries have influenced the management of protected areas leading to the emergence of several governance models for them” (Bello, 2015: 1). Examples of conservation models are the conservancy approach in Namibia and the Tourism Conservation Enterprises (TCE) in Kenya (Van der Duim et al., 2012).
Even though wildlife parks are extremely valuable in many African countries, in several places they remain poorly managed. Some programs, for example aiming to involve communities, lack skilled personnel. Their institutions lead to weak outcomes for both conservation and community participation (Gibson et al., 1995). As a result this may cause a loss of biodiversity and wildlife over time through uncontrolled poaching, traffic and trade in wildlife. Additionally, it can happen due to a dependence on resources and the sustainability of indigenous communities around wildlife parks, or the lack of awareness and poor funding of conservation (Suara Pembaca, 2016). This can impact tourism levels in the long run.

In the past, colonial governments created space for national parks, which sometimes meant local communities had to leave their land. The parks were mainly funded by the state and run by staff from the military or scientific disciplines. Governments had most power and influence regarding decision-making. As local communities were often poorly educated, they did not have the resources to influence park management and received little or no benefits from the national park. As a result this caused an alienation of local people from wildlife and conflicts with, among others, poachers. As national parks, including biodiversity and wildlife are affected, it becomes more and more difficult for local communities to develop economically and sustainable (Attwell and Cotterill, 2000).

Being a global market, the value of wildlife tourism should be recognized as a potential to generate revenue that can promote protection of local livelihoods, raise awareness about sustainability and nature tourists and improve animal welfare. Recently, conservation approaches aim to be sustainable and inclusive of local communities in management (Attwell and Cotterill, 2000). An example of a recent approach is the Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCA). In 2002, the first Transfrontier park was established in the Greater Limpopo region of South Africa. Removing the fences created a larger open area where several conservation areas were uninterrupted. From then onwards, more trans-border parks have been created. These parks aim to protect large areas supporting wildlife in their natural migration processes and as a result aiming to conserve biodiversity (Noe, 2010). It had been found that the fences at the Kruger National Park prevented natural migration towards areas where there was higher rainfall and as a result this led to 85% decline in for example wildebeest (Retief, 2016). Next to the conservation of biodiversity and wildlife, well-managed parks also support the development in terms of economic growth and poverty alleviation (African Parks, 2016a). National parks provide a range of different jobs such as the management of the park, in tourism or in private enterprises. In order for national parks to provide benefits to all parties, these parks must be managed responsibly. An example of an African country with beautiful landscapes and potential for wildlife tourism is Malawi.

1.1.2. Malawi

The Republic of Malawi is a small, landlocked country, located in sub-Saharan Africa. The country borders Mozambique on the east and south west, Tanzania on the north and is bordered by Zambia on the west. Malawi is located along the Rift Valley where Lake Malawi also lies (Novelli et al., 2007). The surface area of Malawi is 118,480 km². 94,270 km² of this amount is land and the rest is water. Of the land, 11% is national parks and wildlife reserves, 10% is forest reserves and protected hill slopes (Novelli et al., 2007). Overall, around 21% of Malawi’s land is protected. In the past, Malawi had strong state intervention systems for managing wildlife. The fence and fine approach, for example, was aimed to outlaw traditional methods of hunting that seemed to be wasteful. In this approach, restrictive regulations were
implemented because human populations in the natural areas were seen as a disadvantage for conservation. Personnel was sent into the field to monitor and penalize violation of resources. The idea was that people would not violate nature if they felt that there was a risk of being punished. It was different to participatory approaches that recognize the importance of making agreements between different users in order to manage wildlife effectively, including local livelihood concerns (Kubo & Supriyanto, 2010).

In 1954, Malawi’s Game Rules “prohibited any person from using or keeping in possession any hunting weapon” (Zuka et al., 2016: 42). However, conflicts between local communities and conservationists about wildlife management, for example relating to ownership of resources and land, meant that the fine and fence approach was ineffective and caused a shift from state-centered wildlife conservation to more community-based conservation approaches in Malawi. This shows that the history of wildlife in Malawi has concentrated on the interactions between the state and local communities (Zuka et al., 2016). Overall, Malawi’s national parks are spread across the country and have been developing over time, also with the help of increased levels of tourism. Protected areas, however, remain critical to the livelihoods of Malawi’s population (Novelli et al., 2007). Even though wildlife reserves in Malawi are not as large and developed as in some other African countries, they do have potential to foster economic growth. Malawi has a stable and democratic government which has helped to see the link that tourism and wildlife can provide in reducing poverty and contributing to conservation in Malawi (Cabral, 2005; World Bank 2017).

1.2. Research gaps

The practical and academic research interest in collaborative efforts in conservation has recently grown (Laing et al, 2008). Researchers can now study topics using multiple approaches and theories such as organizational theory, stakeholder analyses, network analyses and public policy research. Collaborative management through public-private partnerships, for example, is appealing and has gained popularity with policy makers. However, only a few studies have investigated the outcomes of such partnerships on-site. Even though some articles describe the positive impacts of these types of arrangements, others have also mentioned that partnership arrangements raise new challenges relating to how such systems can be kept in place and sustained. In this way it can be seen as “a more complex reality” (Ahebwa et al., 2012: 391).

A lot has been written about wildlife conservation that focused on the behavior of local communities, tourism and on governance (Rodger et al., 2004; Wilson et al., 2009; Ahebwa et al., 2012; Bello et al., 2016). However, there remain gaps in the literature where further research is required. Current literature about wildlife conservation efforts often focusses on separate parties. Research about multiple parties combined is lacking. In addition, in research about governance, little attention is paid to understanding how relationships between different parties are formed and why they develop in a certain way. How do different actors view the performance of others, and what makes these relationships interesting and sustainable? (Visseren-Hamakers, 2015). Further research about why and how change takes place as a result of policy changes, how people relate to this and where power lies is necessary (Carney, 2003). Additionally, some research has been done in Malawi, but in-depth knowledge about management models and policy arrangements of national parks in Malawi is limited (Zulu, 2012; Zulu, 2013). Particularly
the organization African Parks, which plays a large role in Malawi, is underrepresented in the literature. This creates a unique opportunity for research.

1.3. Problem statement and research question

Different policy arrangements have arisen to manage wildlife and protected areas (Van der Duim et al., 2012). According to Arts et al. (2006a: 96), a policy arrangement can be defined as “the temporary stabilization of the content and organization of a policy domain”. In other words, policies set rules in place, based on ideologies, which shape and steer the social. Policy arrangements are often created and developed at different levels and therefore take on a multi-level and multi-actor perspective of governance (Arts et al., 2006a). Some research on multi-actor and community based approaches in African countries has already been done, but limited research has been conducted in Malawi. Majete Wildlife Reserve is therefore the case study of this research. The reserve was managed through a public-private partnership approach which has existed since 2003. This means that actors have already experienced some effects of the policy arrangement which facilitates valuable discussions. Majete Wildlife Reserve is seen as a success story and has also received much positive publicity in media from, among others, Africa Geographic, National Geographic, Travel Weekly UK, The Independent and several safari companies (African Parks, 2016a; Watt, 2016; Birthwhistle, 2017; Gibbens, 2017). However, information about how the current policy arrangement has contributed to this success is lacking. By investigating the policy arrangement in Majete, this research will contribute to existing knowledge about partnerships and conservation of wildlife in Malawi and to a broader understanding of policy arrangements regarding conservation in Africa.

Particularly, this research aims to investigate the characteristics of the policy arrangement at Majete Wildlife Reserve, to understand the relationships between different actors, and how the arrangement contributes to positive or negative developments in the area. By understanding how the policy arrangement in Majete is developed and the impacts it has for different actors, practitioners can make informed decisions regarding policy interventions for a sustainable future. The outcome will have implications for future wildlife conservation, tourism and community based initiatives and debates in the area of Majete Wildlife Reserve.

To achieve this goal I have formulated the following overarching research question:

➢ What are the main characteristics of the policy arrangement at Majete Wildlife Reserve in Malawi and how can it be explained?

To investigate the formulated research question a policy arrangements approach (PAA) will be utilized. This serves as a useful analytical tool to identify key elements of how partnerships have been arranged politically and to organize data gathered (Arts et al., 2006a). Based on the elements within this theory and related concepts of governance and congruence, sub-research questions are created. These concepts and sub-questions are explained in the following chapter and will further define the focus of this research.
1.4. Thesis outline

This thesis is organized into six chapters. Chapter 2 describes the theoretical underpinning of this research, namely the transition from government to governance, the interest in partnerships, the policy arrangements approach and the concept of congruence. It explains how these concepts guided my research and introduces the questions which were derived from the literature. Chapter 3 describes the methods that were used in this research. It introduces the case study, how data was collected and analysed and touches upon issues of validity and ethics. Context to facilitate the understanding of the results is presented in Chapter 4. Results are provided in Chapter 5. Lastly, Chapter 6 provides a conclusion and a discussion of the results in relation to theoretical concepts.
2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Introduction
The following section explains the concepts of governance, (public-private) partnerships and congruence. It also introduces the policy arrangements approach (PAA), which will serve as a tool for analyzing the findings, processes and implications of the policy arrangement at Majete Wildlife Reserve. According to Smyth (2004), a conceptual framework is a starting point for analyzing and contextualizing the research problem. It helps the researcher to understand collected data and attach a meaning to it. It gives coherence to the research. This section provides an overall framework of the theory gathered from literature that functions as a basis for this research.

This research is grounded in a social constructivist paradigm. According to Gorton (2010), knowledge is based not only on observable phenomena, but also on subjective beliefs, values, reasons and understandings. It is value-driven and aims to provide thick descriptions which “make sense of the beliefs, norms, practices, and rituals of foreign cultures” (Gorton, 2010: 6). In this process, the researcher is involved and interpretations are influenced by different views. Social constructivism is a view whereby products or processes are shaped by the context it is surrounded and acted in. One’s development is influenced by the culture that he or she is involved in. This refers to the language spoken, the history, and social context. The rules and concepts that they are linked to already exist (Burr, 1995). Reality, in this perspective, is generally seen as a social construct. It is created and interpreted through external influences, experienced in our day to day lives (Etherington, 2009). Knowledge and the knower are interdependent yet also embedded in the context (Orey, 2000). This research will explore the multiplicity of meanings and interpretations without deciding whether they are right or wrong. The research will expose the diverse and possibly contrasting ways a policy arrangement is experienced, viewed, conceptualized and understood by different actors or networks.

2.2. Governance
Governance is a contested concept about the relations between actors from different societal domains. According to Stokke, governance may be defined as the “rules of conduct that define practices, assign roles, and guide interactions” (1997: 28, in Glasbergen et al., 2007). In the past, these rules and practices used to be defined by the state; a government-model. However, more recently we have been experiencing a shift towards governance approaches; approaches where rules and services are delivered regardless of whether a governing body is democratic or not (Fukuyama, 2013). The question is why these changes occur and what the implications are for actors involved. Additionally, what would the shift from traditional government towards multi-actor governance as well as multiple rules and interests, mean in terms of managing wildlife and fostering conservation?

Governance literature often studies the ongoing changes in the way society gets steered. In many of these cases governance is described as either a project or a process (Meadowcroft, 2007). When viewing governance as a project, focus is on the separate role of public and private actors. In this view, the state is responsible for all public issues that are relevant to society and are of interest to the public. Private actors are only addressed when rules are imposed by governments that demand input from private parties. When viewing governance as a process, it introduces a more inclusive approach whereby different actors are involved in decision-making. In this case, the government is not the only actor tackling society’s
problems. Multiple actors are taken into account in the context of decision-making, including both the market and civil society (Dubbink, 2003). Over the last decades, governance mechanisms have been changing and developing, increasingly aiming to include multiple actors (Visseren-Hamakers, 2012). Governance is shifting from hierarchical state-led towards networks. Commonly, governance is therefore defined as the “steering and coordination of interdependent (usually collective) actors based on institutionalized rule systems” (Benz, 2004 in Treib et al., 2007: 3). The ontology of decision-making in society is evolving and developing into a “complex, multicentered, multilayered and diffuse structure of relatively autonomous but coexistent public and private rule systems” (Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992 in Glasbergen, 2007).

Relating to wildlife conservation, governance includes “the overall rules about such issues as ownership of wildlife, roles of private and public conservation areas and organizations, the involvement of local communities in conservation projects, the weight given to animal welfare/rights concerns, and the relative authority of central versus more local state authorities” (Rogers, 2002: 6). In this research, governance is viewed as a process whereby different actors collectively make decisions in a policy arrangement. An important question to focus on is what actors’ roles in the governance of Majete Wildlife Reserve are and whether there is coherence between these different actors. It will also be valuable to understand how these roles are perceived as people give their own meaning to social processes using what they learn and experience in everyday life.

2.3. Partnerships and sustainability

A large part of governance literature is focused on partnerships. Partnerships refer to a large range of organizational forms of intersectoral collaboration that vary from global policy networks to partnerships between individual companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local communities (Van Huijstee et al., 2007). In the last few decades partnerships have increasingly been accepted as steering mechanisms for sustainable development and management. The number of partnerships has grown rapidly since the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 (Visseren-Hamakers et al., 2012). Sustainable development is a concept that aims to ensure the provision of lasting and secure livelihoods, while minimizing resource depletion, environmental degradation, cultural disruption and social instability (Brundtland, 1987). Around the 1970s, the exploitation of natural environment gained concern and links were made between environment and development. This is because economic development models did not yet take into account the negative consequences of economic growth for the environment. The World Conservation Strategy then gave rise to the sustainability concept in the 1980s. Especially the Brundtland commission gained international support in 1987. They defined sustainable development as: “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Tilbury, 2002: 2). Ecological processes needed to be preserved and this required holistic planning and strategy making. Over time, there is still not much agreement on the exact definition of sustainable development due to the fact that it is ambiguous, sectorial, mythical and possibly even cliché (Tilbury, 2002). The definitions are socially constructed by different people and organizations in different ways. Language relating to sustainability is often used to promote activities that are in reality not sustainable. In some cases it could be delusional (Robinson, 2004). Particular skepticism concerned the way in which the ‘development’ of sustainable development was associated with economic growth. “In 1991, as opinion polls from around the world were reporting an
unprecedented level of public concern for the environment” (Robinson, 2004: 373). However, after the Earth Summit in 1992, the Brundtland report received universal acceptance by governments. This was also further discussed and confirmed at the World Summit in 2002 (Tilbury, 2002). The sustainability concept received bureaucratic and business support because it did not reject economic growth fully. It suggested that economic growth could be one factor to enhance environmental protection. The notion of sustainable tourism development arose as a possible solution to the environmental and social degradation of the industry’s resources (Ruhanen-Hunter, 2006).

Since then, partnerships are being viewed as arrangements that can enhance sustainable development and are a response to societal progress. On the other hand, partnerships also bring up other political questions such as to what extent public goods and services can or should be privatized (Glasbergen et al., 2007). This form of multi-actor governance had already been discussed in previous conferences such as the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio in 1992. In this conference the responsibility of corporations and their social responsibilities were discussed. These responsibilities also affect public issues. Therefore, joint activities between public administrations, businesses and NGOs were set up to tackle public affairs.

According to Glasbergen et al. (2007) partnerships are created between actors who aim to collectively fulfill each of their goals, which becomes feasible and more effective through a partnership. In the process, partners share their knowledge and objectives, improve their partner relationships and satisfaction. As a result partners provide each other with useful recommendations on how to arrange the management process. Additionally, partnerships aid to raise awareness through multi-stakeholder platforms, debates, shared experiences and joint research (Glasbergen et al., 2007). Next to the benefits of partnerships for stakeholders, multi-stakeholder collaboration can also lead to positive environmental and social effects. Such effects refer to, for example, a move towards more sustainable tourism involving local communities (Bramwell & Lane, 2000; de Lacy et al., 2002 in Wilson et al., 2009).

In this context, there has been much discussion about the term used for partnerships such as collaboration, networks and joint management. The unifying characteristic for all terms is that “it involves a relationships among stakeholders, where some kind of pooling resources time and energy occurs with the aim to achieve similar goals” (Bramwell & Lane, 2000 in Wilson et al., 2009: 270). Whether these goals are achieved in a more effective way, remains uncertain and is hard to predict. In this research the following definition by Bramwell & Lane (2000 in Wilson et al., 2009: 271) of a partnership will be adopted: “[Partnerships are] regular, cross-sectoral interactions over an extended period of time between parties, based on at least some agreed rules or norms, intended to address a common issue or to achieve a specific policy goal or goals, which cannot be solved by the partners individually and involving pooling and sharing of appreciations or resources, mutual influence, accountability, commitment, participation, trust and respect and transparency”. Partnerships in this research are operationalized as both ‘official partnerships’ which are identified in agreements and policy documents as well as ‘formal relationships’ in which actors work closely together without an official agreement on paper.
2.4. Public-private partnerships

Partnerships have developed in different forms. In the context of this research, the main focus will be on public-private partnerships. Scholars have been debating their opinions about public-private partnerships as they have become more prevalent in the last decades (Buckley, 2004; Hodge and Greve, 2007; Wilson et al., 2009). The benefits of private service provision as opposed to government service provision and intervention drove this continuous debate. Some scholars believe that public-private partnerships are a tool for governance that can replace traditional methods where hierarchy and the state played a larger role, whereas other scholars view it as a method that can include both old and new procedures of private organization when delivering public services. Some even view it as a way to organize infrastructure projects that often include land of private parties (Hodge and Greve, 2007). For many, public-private partnerships are “institutional arrangements for cooperation expressed through the establishment of new organizational units” (Hodge and Greve, 2007: 546). Overall it seems to relate mostly to finance and organization. The first, questions how public and private actors are financially engaged in public-private partnerships and the second focuses on how tightly public and private actors are organized (Hodge and Greve, 2007). In the case of wildlife conservation these are interesting questions as national parks are either directly or indirectly affecting local communities through, for example, increased tourism arrivals or (alternative) use of private land for wildlife.

Public-private partnerships are supported by governments and private parties by arguments about cost and staff efficiency, improved services and the spreading of risks. This perspective has arisen from neoliberal government paradigms such as ‘new public management’ that require a new way of thinking and emphasizes opportunities for natural resources (Wilson et al., 2009). Protected-area management agencies increasingly feel the pressure to form public-private partnerships with a variety of different stakeholders (Buckley, 2004; Darcy & Wearing, 2005; Wilson et al., 2009). Several government and academic reports have stressed the benefits of protected-area tourism public-private partnerships (Haycock, 2000; Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, 2003; Wales, 2003; Buckley, 2004). Public-private partnerships are said to be interesting for both protected-area managers and private tourism operators as they generate funding that is additional to what the government already provides. This type of self-sufficiency is valuable. Additionally, certain risks and responsibilities, for example in the case of commercial tourism activities, can be transferred to other parties. According to Buckley (2004), collaborating with different stakeholders gives each stakeholder extra time to devote to other important practices. For example, by sharing responsibilities, protected-area managers have time to develop and offer other types of services to visitors which ultimately will improve their experience. This could lead to increased spending or a higher return-rate of visitors (Wilson et al., 2009). However, there is still a debate to what extent protection is prioritized over profit and whether increased tourism might lead to over commercialization which is often what is discussed in media (Darcey & Wearing, 2005 in Wilson et al., 2009). In this research, it is interesting to understand how different actors discuss such debates by getting to know the context and history of Majete Wildlife Reserve.

2.5. Policy Arrangements Approach

The policy arrangements approach (PAA) is a tool that may guide the analysis of an arrangement. In this research the policy arrangement investigated is the public-private partnership, formed to manage Majete Wildlife Reserve. As described in previous articles, the PAA is a tool to understand shifts in governance (Van Tatenhove et al., 2000; Arts and Van Tatenhove, 2000; Leroy et al., 2001; Arts and Leroy, 2003). In other words, it helps to explore the context in which, for example, partnership arrangements are
implemented and developed over time. According to Arts et al. (2006: 99), the PAA is a framework to “describe and characterize policy arrangements and to interpret and understand their relative stability or change, and the mechanisms behind these dynamics”. The policy arrangement offers a tool for analyzing substance, change and stability at different geographical levels (Arts et al., 2004). Substance refers to the principles and objectives involved in the arrangement and how it is constructed in a certain context. Policy arrangements are always dynamic and influenced by external pressures such as innovations and modernization. Change therefore refers to what these influences on the arrangement are and how this has caused the arrangement or the effects of the arrangement on different actors to change over time. This may involve the formation of policies or the opinions and values of actors regarding the policies. Lastly, stability refers to the power relations of an arrangement regarding allocation and management of resources, achievements of actors and relationships among actors. It also relates to the success of an arrangement and how actors benefit from it (Arts et al., 2004). According to Arts et al. (2004), policy arrangements emphasize multi-actor processes, globalization, power and the importance of continuity in policy practices, which make the PAA useful for in-depth research analysis.

The PAA touches upon four important dimensions that are taken into account in this research. Each of the four key dimensions, namely the actors, resources, rules of the game and discourses, are important to be analyzed. Yet they are not always unique. The dimensions are interwoven and one will find that changes in certain dimensions have consequences for others (Ahebwa et al., 2012). For example, a change in the rules of the game will influence the distribution of resources and power of actors and a change in actors involved could introduce new discourses (Liefferink, 2006). These are interesting dynamics which allowed for new themes to continuously emerge in the research process. The four dimensions will be explained below.

2.5.1. Actors

Actors are defined as the people and organizations involved in a policy arrangement, and in the case of this research, the policy arrangement at Majete Wildlife Reserve. Actors determine who are involved in the policy arrangement and the role of other actors within this arrangement (Arts & Tatenhove, 2004; Liefferink, 2006). Examining ‘actors’ includes a thorough analysis of the benefits and roles that actors play. This dimension also involves ‘coalitions’ which can be formed when different actors join together to achieve similar goals (Arts et al., 2004). This group of actors can also share resources. Additionally interpretations can be formed based on discourses and rules of the game. As a result, coalitions might support or challenge dominant policy discourses or rules of the game together (Arts et al., 2004). In this research, actors are defined as the persons and organizations that are involved in managing Majete Wildlife Reserve or persons and organizations that may have an influence on, and have opinions about the management of Majete Wildlife Reserve. Understanding coalitions helps to explain how different actors discuss the policy arrangement and how coalitions construct meaning collectively.

2.5.2. Resources

‘Resources’ include finances, knowledge, political legitimacy and land available in the specific context. The idea is that actors receive a policy issue and are dependent upon each other for the aforementioned resources. This links the dimensions of resources or power and actors. By understanding the resource dependencies, certain actors are linked to each other due to the fact that they share control over important resources. This ultimately creates ‘resource coalitions’. In each policy arrangement a different resource may be central or crucial (Liefferink, 2006). Essentially, resources are linked to power as the
access to resources by different actors is caused by and leads to differences in power and influence (Arts et al., 2004). According to Rhodes (1986: 20, in Liefferink, 2006) resources “can be seen as weapons as they try to improve situations by changing the distribution of resources to their advantage”. The resources dimension can also cause changes related to perceived power relations (Arts et al., 2006).

Looking at the case of wildlife conservation at Majete Wildlife Reserve, the policy arrangement can also be understood from the perspective of resource dependencies. Actors involved in the management of the national park are a resource coalition as they bring together actors with a shared aim to conserve wildlife resources and to increase the involvement of the local communities. Within this research, the analysis will focus on the power relations that exist between actors with regard to resources. The resources in this case are defined as the financing of conservation, the financing of community benefits and it refers to knowledge gained from projects designed to include different members.

2.5.3. Rules of the game
The third dimension, ‘rules of the game’, relates to procedures of decision-making, rules and interactions that specify what actors are allowed to do with their resources. Rules define the way the ‘game’ can be played through stabilized or formalized discourses. In other words, it is the norms which are valid, the way issues can be raised, how agendas are to be set, how opinions are shared and policies are formulated. Overall, actors use rules as guidelines to act appropriately (Arts et al., 2004). In the context of this research, rules of the game is defined as the agreements and procedures for the participation of actors. It also refers to the operations and management of resources at Majete Wildlife Reserve; the sharing and preserving of resources. Additionally, it refers to how procedures influence the relations among actors in the park, and whether rules and agreements improve the involvement of local communities at Majete Wildlife Reserve.

2.5.4. Discourses
Lastly, the fourth dimension ‘discourses’ refers to narratives, ideas and perceptions of actors about a particular policy, resource or partnership (Arts et al., 2006). Discourses are communications that can influence an understanding of a topic; the ideas which are produced in certain practices that give meaning to realities (Arts et al., 2006; Hammett et al., 2014). Hajer (1995: 44) defines a policy discourse as “a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that are produced, reproduced and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities”. Policy discourses are interpretations that range from policy concepts to story lines to which meaning is given to a specific arrangement (Arts et al., 2004). Different actors may view practices in different ways, which shows that different discourses exist about similar issues (Hammett et al., 2014). Regarding management of Majete, different actors could discuss the practice in different ways. For example, in terms of conserving wildlife, in terms of generating economic revenue or the engagement of communities.

Figure 1 below presents a visualization of the PAA. It portrays the interrelations between the four dimensions (i.e. actors, resources, rules of the game and discourses) which together form a dynamic policy arrangement. According to Liefferink (2006) the visualization emphasizes that any change in one dimension will result in changes or implications for other dimensions. A new composition of actor coalitions can for example lead to a redistribution of resources. At the same time, a redistribution of resources can cause an attraction of additional actors and so forth.
2.6. Congruence

Several scholars have discussed the strength of policy instruments as being dependent on the congruence of internal and external factors through co-management. In their work, they stress the importance of congruence between rules, resource availability, livelihood strategies and institutional arrangements (Carlsson & Berkes, 2005; Lamers et al., 2014; Wiering et al., 2017). While the policy arrangements approach first of all provides tools to describe governance arrangements, it also enables one to analyze the congruence of these arrangements (Wiering et al., 2017).

Congruence refers to coherence between the policy arrangement and the connection with the wider context it is placed in. Boonstra (2004) introduced three types of congruence, namely strategic, structural-internal and structural-external. Strategic congruence refers to the extent to which actors share discourses and common interests when implementing their actions. Structural-Internal congruence discusses the coherence between the four dimensions of the PAA; that these dimensions do not contradict each other. For example, it could mean that there are enough resources for all actors to share, the rules of the game do not change the behavior of the actors, and lastly that discourses about the policy are shared (Arts et al., 2006b). Structural-External congruence looks at similar practices in other policy fields and the broader context overall (Van der Duim, 2012; Arts et al., 2006b; Ochieng et al., 2017). This means that social and political demands in the country or in other fields are in line with the demands that the policy arrangement fulfills. “The degree of internal and external congruence of an arrangement can be an important variable for explaining its stability and its viability to change” (Wiering et al., 2017: 7). For example, when discourses do not align with the rules of the game, an arrangement is internally incongruent. Similarly, when a policy arrangement does not match broader societal demands it is externally incongruent (Wiering et al., 2017). According to Arts et al. (2006b: 80), “a certain level of congruence is needed for any policy arrangement to perform. A failure to realize this certain level of congruence will imply a governance failure”.

In this research, the three types of congruence are adopted to explore internal and external challenges, to explain changes in its specific context, the role of actors ensuring coherence, and ultimately in what way the policy arrangement at Majete Wildlife Reserve is developed based on societal and political demands.
2.7. Redefining research questions

Overall, the PAA is a useful tool to map out political arrangements. It enables one to create an overview of the four associated dimensions (i.e. actors, resources, rules of the game and discourses) and how for example resources become partially arranged by established institutions and actors. The PAA is not a method to evaluate and determine policy making. It rather gives a static overview of the themes surrounding the research topic (Arts et al., 2006b). In this research, the approach functions as a tool to organize, describe, understand and explain policy practices (Arts et al., 2006b). It is also used to understand the governance of the park.

The following sub-research questions (SRQ) are examined in this research using the PAA:

1. **Which roles do actors and coalitions play in the policy arrangement at Majete Wildlife Reserve?**

SRQ1 examines partnerships and informal relations that exist between actors and for which reasons these actors do or do not work together.

2. **How does the policy arrangement influence the distribution of resources in Majete and how do resources influence the policy arrangement?**

SRQ2 looks at ownership of the park resources, how the policy arrangement is financed and to what extent tangible resources in the park can be accessed by different actors. It also examines how knowledge and benefits from the arrangement are distributed and how this has an impact on or is caused by the policy arrangement.

3. **How and by whom are policies and rules set and implemented in the policy arrangement?**

SRQ3 investigates the policies and rules, both formal and informal, that play a role in decision-making for the park. In addition it examines how these procedures have influenced the relations in terms of actors, resources and discourses.

4. **What are typical discourses in Majete and how do they influence the development of the policy arrangement?**

SRQ4 looks at how different actors discuss topics, for example conservation, sustainability and community development. It focuses on the opinions of actors and whether these are coherent. Furthermore, it evaluates similarities and differences in discourses for different conservation arrangements.
3. Methodology

The following chapter provides insight to how this study was designed and conducted. Firstly, the choice for a case study is explained and the research area of this study is defined. Secondly, the research methods applied in data collection and data analysis are introduced. Finally, it reflects on limitations of the chosen methodology, validity of the research, ethical considerations and my positionality.

3.1. Research design

The aim of this study was to investigate the characteristics of the policy arrangement at Majete Wildlife Reserve and thereby analyze the implications of the arrangement for different actors relative to its context. First of all, qualitative research seemed to be most appropriate to address the research questions. Qualitative research can provide “an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives and histories” (Ritchie et al., 2003: 3). A qualitative methodology which relies on interviews and observations allows for a rich and rather nuanced account of the opinions, attitudes and experiences of stakeholders (Neuman, 2000). It enables participants to share experiences and express opinions in their own words (Wilson et al., 2009). Secondly, the PAA was chosen as a conceptual framework in which the research was designed. The nature of this approach, namely the four dimensions (i.e. actors, resources, rules and discourses), helped to identify important aspects to focus on when researching a policy arrangement. The four dimensions of the PAA guided the construction of sub-research questions and interview questions. As these dimensions are often interlinked, it allowed for dynamism in the results (Chapter 5).

According to Selin et al. (1995), most research in protected-area partnerships literature is conceptual and typological. There seems to be limited empirical research exploring the opinions of actors. It is important, however, in partnership research that voices of all actors are heard. Some authors state that dominant actors’ opinions are more emphasized, limiting the knowledge of other actors’ views (Friedman & Miles, 2002; Laing et al., 2008). Qualitative research offers a wider and richer understanding of different actors’ voices. This could ultimately help to reduce this concern (Wilson et al., 2009).

3.2. Case study and area profile

A case study approach was chosen for this research to examine the policy arrangement in African context. De Vaus (2001) believes a case study can provide a holistic understanding of a situation within a wider context. According to Yin (1994: 1), a case study is an interesting method typically when the research aims to answer a ‘how’ question and when one wants to study “a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context”. Yin (1994) further describes that case study research can be differentiated between single or multiple case studies. A single case study is appropriate if one aims to investigate a rare or unique event. Multiple case studies are often chosen when “a ‘replication logic’ is supposed to reveal support for theoretically similar or contrasting results” (Yin, 1994: 3). This is often associated with multiple experiments (Gustafsson, 2017).
If only a single group, organization or location needs to be studied, then the best choice is a single case study (Yin, 2003 in Baxter et al., 2008). With a single case study, theoretical relationships can be questioned and new relationships can be explored. It is therefore important in single case study research to create both general questions about a specific case, as well as specific questions adapted for each interviewee (Yin, 1994). A single case study was suitable for this research as the purpose was to explore and describe the relations between different actors at a specific wildlife reserve in Malawi. Focusing on one case study created an opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge about the specific policy arrangement chosen. It further creates a possibility to compare this site-specific information to other approaches, ultimately helping policy makers to adapt their arrangements respectively.

The case of Majete Wildlife Reserve seemed appropriate due to the fact that a public-private partnership between NGO African Parks and the Malawi government for management has already existed for more than 10 years. It was the first wildlife reserve in Malawi that adopted this type of management (Zuka et al., 2016). Therefore, effects of this partnership and further policy developments were most likely visible and the chance that actors involved have gained opinions about it by now was high. This is valuable for a social constructivist approach. Additionally, the park has received much positive publicity due to its projects, making it an interesting case for in-depth analysis.

3.2.1. Majete Wildlife Reserve

Majete Wildlife Reserve is a protected area in the Lower Shire Valley, situated in the south-west of Malawi in the southern part of Africa (Figure 2). The reserve covers an area of around 700 km². The Lower Shire Valley is characterized by a semiarid climate, with average temperatures of around 23 degrees Celsius and with seasonal rainfall occurring between November and May. The reserve has two natural water sources, the Shire and Mkulumadzi rivers, both located on the north-eastern border. It also has five artificial waterholes which were constructed between 2003 and 2009 (Staub et al., 2013). “The reserve is made of mature miombo woodlands and granite topped hills that contrast with picturesque river valleys and lush riverine forest” (Robin Pope Safaris, n.d.). The western region is especially hilly, with a flatter terrain on the east, close to the river (Wienand et al., 2013).

![Figure 2. Malawi and Majete Wildlife Reserve (Operation World, 2017)](image-url)
3.3. Data Collection

Methods to collect the qualitative data included in-depth semi-structured interviews, informal conversations and field observations, as well as document analysis. Building on the PAA, these methods were used to understand the characteristics of the policy arrangement in Majete and ultimately how this policy arrangement has developed and affected Majete Wildlife Reserve and actors involved. I travelled to and lived in Malawi during the course of data collection which took place from mid-May 2017 until the end of June 2017. Data was collected in Lilongwe (capital city of Malawi), Blantyre (Malawi’s second largest city and center of finance and commerce), and most time spent and information gathered was in Majete Wildlife Reserve.

3.3.1. In-depth semi structured interviews

Sampling

Key informants were identified by researching online and through communication with organizations located in Majete Wildlife Reserve, such as ‘Robin Pope Safaris’ and ‘African Parks’. Representatives of different parties within the policy arrangement were selected and contacted via email and/or telephone. This can be referred to as purposive sampling as the “sample is intentionally selected according to the needs of the study” (Boeije, 2009: 53). In qualitative research, cases must be studied intensively, generating a large amount of information (Boeije, 2009). Key actors were selected prior to the research based on information found in articles about the public-private partnership at Majete Wildlife Reserve. African Parks and the Malawi government (Department of National Parks and Wildlife) were key actors specifically chosen as they would most likely provide most important information related to the overall problem of the research. Selection of additional participants occurred during the fieldwork through the network of other participants. This strategy is called snowball sampling and is useful when access to participants is difficult or impossible (Boeije, 2009). After gaining trust from participants during interviews and informal conversations at the research location, participants were very willing to help me find additional actors and provided me with names, email addresses and telephone numbers. Sampling through such a network is useful because it easily provides actors. This is important in the limited time available on-site. However, it also limits the research to a specific network meaning that there is a chance some other important actors outside of this network are not approached; a limitation of this type of sampling.

Interviews

In-depth semi structured interviews were held with 17 key informants, members involved in the policy arrangement or other actors of interest that could provide valuable information. Interviewing was a useful method of data collection as it provided insights that document analysis would not provide. Engaging in a conversation with a participant meant that the researcher could ask further questions, clarifying vague responses and possibly revealing hidden meanings. The open approach of a semi-structured interview allowed respondents to speak freely. The contact between an interviewer and participants can result in an increased response rate as respondents do not have to put in extra effort to write down their thoughts. On the other hand, interviewing can also be time consuming as the researcher is dependent on the
availability of respondents. Answers received could have therefore included bias and some important information might not have been asked due to the time and atmosphere (Clifford et. al., 2010). Overall, the semi-structured nature of interviews was useful as it unfolded in a conversational manner. Questions prepared prior to the interview guided the conversation and helped to remain close to the research question and topic. Additionally, being semi-structured, conversations always lead to new insights which were incorporated into the interviews that followed. An exact number of interviews was not planned prior to the research. Interviewing too few participants would not have provided me with enough information that would allow for a full understanding of the case study. Planning too many interviews, however, would have required additional time that was not available. A goal was set to structure my time wisely.

Interview guide
An interview guide was created to assist the interview procedure. It was constructed by converting the research questions into themes that could be discussed during an interview; deductive codes that emerged from the theory such as ‘actors’, ‘resources’, ‘rules of the game’ and ‘discourses’ (Mason, 2002 in Boeije, 2009: 87). The interview guide functioned purely as a guide and was adapted during the process of data collection as each interview provided fruitful inspiration for following interviews. The interview guide, with general and participant specific questions, can be found in Appendix 1 and 2. From an ontological viewpoint it is worth mentioning that all participants during this research were viewed as active participants constructing their own realities or constructing realities within their organizations based on the developments that have taken place. As a researcher, I nevertheless reconstructed such realities into my own based on the information gathered, as it aimed to understand the socio-cultural context of Majete Wildlife Reserve. Table 1 below presents a list of interviewees.

Table 1. Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview</th>
<th>Organization (abbreviation in report)</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Location of Interview</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>African Parks (AP₁)</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>South African</td>
<td>Majete Wildlife Reserve</td>
<td>26-05-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>African Parks (AP₂)</td>
<td>Communities coordinator</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Malawian</td>
<td>Majete Wildlife Reserve</td>
<td>27-05-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>African Parks (AP₃)</td>
<td>Country director</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Malawian</td>
<td>Blantyre</td>
<td>31-05-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>African Parks (AP₄)</td>
<td>Community extensions officer</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Malawian</td>
<td>Majete Wildlife Reserve</td>
<td>01-06-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Malawian Government (DNPW₁)</td>
<td>Current director</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Malawian</td>
<td>Lilongwe</td>
<td>24-05-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Malawian Government (DNPW₂)</td>
<td>Scout</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Malawian</td>
<td>Majete Wildlife Reserve</td>
<td>03-06-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Malawian Government (DNPW₃)</td>
<td>Previous director</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Malawian</td>
<td>Lilongwe</td>
<td>26-06-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Robin Pope Safaris (RPS₁)</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Lilongwe</td>
<td>22-05-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name of Organization</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Nationality</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Date of Visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Robin Pope Safaris (RPS)</td>
<td>Chef at Mkulumadzi Lodge (and local community member)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Malawian</td>
<td>Majete Wildlife Reserve</td>
<td>12-06-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ng’ona lodge (Ng’ona)</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Swiss</td>
<td>Majete Wildlife Reserve (outside the gate of the park)</td>
<td>27-05-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>EGENCO (EGENCO)</td>
<td>Manager Kapichira power station</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Malawian</td>
<td>Majete Wildlife Reserve</td>
<td>28-05-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Clinical officer (Clinical officer)</td>
<td>Doctor (and local community member)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Malawian</td>
<td>Majete Wildlife Reserve</td>
<td>29-05-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Wildlife Environmental Association of Malawi (WESM)</td>
<td>Chairman Blantyre Branch</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Blantyre</td>
<td>31-05-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The Hunger Project (THP)</td>
<td>Monitoring, evaluation and education employee</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Malawian</td>
<td>Majete Wildlife Reserve</td>
<td>09-06-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The Dutch Postcode Lottery (Dutch Postcode Lottery)</td>
<td>Management service</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Contact via e-mail</td>
<td>29-09-2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.2. Field visits and informal conversations

Next to semi-structured interviews, direct observations and informal conversations were undertaken in the field. I visited different sites in Majete Wildlife Reserve, local villages around the park and other relevant national parks. Direct observation of the subjects was possible by taking part in the actors’ daily activities. During my stay, I for example I participated in various game drives, dinners with staff at the lodge, visited the research center in Majete and other sites. This allowed me to have informal conversations with staff members and tourists and better understand the parks’ operations and visitors’ experiences.

Local villages

In order to get a better idea of what the area surrounding Majete Wildlife Reserve looked like and how people are currently living, it was important to visit places in the area and see different villages for myself. Two field visits were planned during an interview with the communities coordinator at African Parks. Together with the community extensions officers (local employees) I visited two village projects. The first visit was to a village in which a new school was going to be built. I participated in an official meeting with African Parks staff, chiefs of all the villages, the senior chief, the government education officer and school management committees. In this meeting, a new committee was set up to coordinate the development of the school. A local translator from African Parks joined me so that I could understand what was being said. During this visit I was able to have informal conversations with several actors, see the village and the environment outside the park. The second field visit was to another village on the other side of Majete where a school was already built and prepared for opening. Again, I joined in a meeting together with a
translator, where the chiefs and local community members discussed the opening day of the school. It must be noted that these field visits could also influence my results as the actors spoken to were in some way involved or in contact with African Parks. Besides these two field visits, I also drove through other towns around Majete with a local staff member of the lodge to get a better idea of the surrounding environment and community projects. A more extensive description of the village visits (field notes) can be found in Appendix 3.

National parks
Besides the area around Majete, it is also interesting to see other national parks, to get a wider understanding of Malawi national parks and to be able to place Majete in context. I visited two national parks. First, I visited Liwonde National Park in Malawi. The choice to visit this park was based on the fact that it is also managed by African Parks and it is another well-functioning park in Malawi (Bell, 2016; IFAW, 2017). This would allow comparisons between the different parks. Additionally, Liwonde is located ideally in between Majete and Lilongwe. The second park I visited was South Luangwa in Zambia. The choice to visit South Luangwa is because of its location, size, development in terms of tourism and thus its difference to Majete Wildlife Reserve.

Table 2 below shows the planned field visits.

Table 2. Field visits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field visit</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Informal conversations</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Village outside reserve</td>
<td>01-06-2017</td>
<td>Community extensions officer, government education officer, village school teacher, chief of village</td>
<td>To participate and witness local meetings: ‘setting up a committee of local community members to steer the building and development of a new school’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Village outside reserve</td>
<td>09-06-2017</td>
<td>CBO member chairman, community extensions officer</td>
<td>To participate and witness local meetings: ‘organizing the opening of a new school’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Liwonde National Park Malawi</td>
<td>20-06-2017</td>
<td>Robin Pope Safaris operations manager</td>
<td>To see another national park in Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>South Luangwa National Park Zambia</td>
<td>18-05-2017 19-05-2017</td>
<td>Robin Pope Safaris Director, Game drive guide</td>
<td>To see a larger and more developed national park</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.3. Document Analysis
The last method is documentary research, which was performed to gather additional data both prior to the interviews and after the interviews took place. Documents included tourism and wildlife policy related documents (from government departments in Malawi), newspaper articles, and academic reports about conservation partnerships and policy arrangements in Africa. The value of having performed documentary research prior to the fieldwork was that some questions were already answered. This allowed for more focused interviews and site-specific observations (Maxwell, 2005). Performing documentary research after the fieldwork was helpful to place data into context. Some data that was unclear became more understandable after analysis of the transcribed interviews in combination with document analysis. It is
also useful to confirm information gathered through interviews by comparing this information to existing documents and extending the knowledge by identifying new information. Documents were analyzed to understand which actors and to what extent were involved in the policy arrangement, ownership of and access to resources, rules of the game and perspectives of actors regarding conservation.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data gathered from semi-structured interviews was recorded and transcribed for analytical purpose. Observation notes taken during field visits were fully written out and taken into account during the analysis. A qualitative data analysis technique, namely thematic analysis, was performed to transform the large amount of data into valuable findings. This analysis technique is also known as a coding method which helps to name, categorize and connect the data for interpretation (Boeije, 2009). Generally, coding involves three steps. The first step is open coding, whereby the text is summarized by segmenting rather large parts of the text and labelling them with codes, both the deductive codes created prior to the interviews and newly derived inductive codes. The second phase is axial coding. This is where the codes are assessed and rearranged to create main and sub-codes, as well as relations between codes. The last phase is selective coding in which core categories are found that represent the data best. Furthermore, empirical findings become connected to deductive codes that were retrieved earlier from the literature. Relationships between codes are then identified to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data (Boeije, 2009). An advantage of thematic analysis is that it is flexible and provides rich and detailed data. It is a method that “unravels the surface of reality” (Braun et al., 2006: 9). The meaning and experience of data is socially produced by the participants (Braun et al., 2006). This means that information gathered from the data as a whole provided insight in the socio-cultural context of wildlife management in Malawi.

Before the fieldwork in Malawi, deductive codes were created based on theory (e.g. ‘actors’, ‘resources’, ‘rules’ and ‘discourses’). During and after the fieldwork inductive codes were created as the interview process and eventual analysis brought in new insights. The final coding was done by hand on printouts of the transcribed interviews. This method was chosen due time constraints and personal preference as the paper allows one to add additional comments for explanation.

To summarize, interview transcripts were first marked according to pre-determined deductive codes (open coding). During the process of data analysis, inductive codes were identified and attached to deductive codes. In other words, codes were redefined and clustered to form axial codes, narrowing down the research into more specific themes. Lastly, relationships between the codes were found, and important codes were selected for comparison to theory (selective coding). Overall, data collection and data analysis were conducted simultaneously as new themes were formulated and adapted for each new interview. This method can be referred to as ‘constant comparison’, which is a process of induction, deduction and verification until a point of saturation is reached (Boeije, 2009).

Table 3 below presents a list of codes created in this research.
3.5. Limitations

Every research has limitations. Being a qualitative and exploratory study, it was inevitable for this research to have limitations too. One of the limitations of this research is possibly the approach itself. The research was based on a single case study, which meant that it was dependent on access to the location and all actors that are involved in the policy arrangement. Flights to Malawi had to be booked, meaning that limited time was available at the research site itself. I was lucky to be able to stay at Mkulumadzi Lodge inside Majete Wildlife Reserve. This gave me more time and flexibility to meet with actors in the area during my stay. On the other hand, the location of any stay can also influence the process of data collection as most time is spent within a certain perimeter of the lodge.

Even though I was able to speak to most key actors, a few were unfortunately not available or accessible during the time I was there. This included The Malaria Program and a number of community members. When a segment of the research population cannot be reached, this could be a threat to validity as a part of the case may be left out (Boeije, 2009: 197). Another limitation is the language spoken during field work. As this case study was situated in Malawi, where many local languages exist, there was a chance that not all actors would speak sufficient English. Fortunately, I only ran into this problem during my village visits. All other actors, during semi-structured interviews, spoke sufficient English.

3.6. Validity

For the quality of a research study, a critical indicator is validity. Internal validity refers to the fact that researchers are describing what they “had set out to describe and explain” beforehand (Boeije, 2009: 197). For this research, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted so that the core questions
were constant for each interviewee. This meant that the main goals could be achieved, and also left room for additional information provided by the interviewee during conversations. Sufficient interviews and observations were made in order to reduce unsystematic errors, or in the case of qualitative research, the lack of relevant data gathered (Boeije, 2009). To reduce bias or limitations in the research, several different sources were examined, such as government reports, academic articles, discussions with different stakeholders and conversations with local community members. Viewing a variety of data sources and methods of data collection to examine a phenomenon is commonly referred to as ‘triangulation’. Triangulation helps to improve internal validity and enables a better generality of research outcomes (Maxwell, 2009).

3.7. Ethics

For this research, when approaching vulnerable groups or participants, such as local community members and local organizations, there are ethical concerns involved. As a Western university student it is important to consider the cultural differences and possible (language) barriers that might cause participants to feel uncomfortable. Individuals must feel free to participate and express their opinions to the extent that they feel comfortable with. Issues such as harm, autonomy and privacy must be taken into account as well. When visiting local communities, a local employee at African Parks assisted me and joined in the conversation when necessary. This was an ethical consideration as community members could have felt more comfortable and less intimidated when someone familiar or someone who speaks their local dialect is present. During the research I reflected on possible power and authority differences between local employees at African Parks and local community members and how this could influence the way local community members speak about the policy arrangement. However, these conversations were informal and in most cases I could sense that it was appropriate to talk to local community members by myself. The semi-structured interviews with employees at the organizations did not require assistance. Before all interviews, a number of issues were discussed with the participants. First, the approach and purpose of the interview was explained. Secondly, participants were asked if they felt comfortable with recording the interview and whether their names should be kept anonymous. This gave participants the right and space to join or leave if they wanted to. Additionally, participants were assured that they could speak freely and tell honest in-depth stories anonymously. For the research this was essential as some political aspects that are critical to my research might not have been shared if participants felt uncomfortable (Boeije, 2009). In qualitative research it is important to reflect on the relationship that is established between the researcher and participant as this can raise different ethical concerns (Sanjari et al., 2014). In this study, dilemmas such as respect for privacy and establishing honest interactions was ethically challenging as the respondents had complete different backgrounds to me. This had to be carefully assessed and adapted during the analysis process.

3.8. My positionality

A social constructivist approach was chosen for this research, as it acknowledges that research and interpretation are subjective. According to Tribe (2006), researchers are always influenced by surrounding factors such as power, geography or other phenomena. Opinions and perspectives can never create a justified representation of reality (Tribe, 2006). Even though realities exist differently for individuals,
partnerships that are formulated for shared reasons can also create a shared reality between a group or coalition of actors.

As students, we learn about topics and issues and use the knowledge that is created to reflect on what we experience in our daily lives. We are still ‘outsiders’ and reflect on what is ‘out there’. As Tribe (2006) discusses, the ‘self’ is commonly ignored and seen as external to the research. The Western view and socio-economic background that I have, however, do shape the way I make sense of the world and is an issue that must be reflected upon. I should mention that having met people from different walks of life due to my upbringing in developing countries, I had an idea prior to my trip what spending time in Malawi and speaking to local community members would be like. Next to these past experiences, my reality today is also based on the discipline I study at university. Both the experience of physically living in Africa and having had academic education in the Netherlands about sustainable tourism influenced the approach that I took in this study and shaped the way I interpreted situations. This is also what convinced me of the importance of choosing a topic that required a multi-actor contribution.

During my travels in Malawi and after speaking to local actors that had different socio-economic backgrounds and life experiences to me, I noticed that I experienced reality in a different way. It is important to reflect on the way I acted and interpreted situations in Malawi as this was shaped by my experiences. A minor example is that prior to my trip, I had planned to provide participants with a small gift from the Netherlands to thank them for participating in the interviews. During an informal conversation with a staff member at a lodge upon arrival, I was told that providing gifts is not common in Malawian culture. It might cause respondents to feel as if they should provide socially desirable answers which could then influence my results. Based on these concerns I decided providing gifts would only be done if it felt appropriate.
4. Context
This section provides context for understanding the results. It first presents background information about the management of national parks in Malawi and in particular Majete. Secondly, an actor map is presented showing the relations between actors. Following this, important actors in Majete Wildlife Reserve are introduced.

4.1. Management of national parks in Malawi
Managing protected areas in Africa, including Malawi, is and has been a challenge (DNPW3). Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world and is compounded by a large population and lack of financial resources. “The government of Malawi is so depressed financially” (DNPW3). Therefore it has to prioritize its finances. Looking at the human needs, departments such as health, education, community services and food are priority and therefore take up a large part of the country’s budget. In addition, wildlife has never been highly valued and has commonly been taken for granted by inhabitants of Malawi. These inhabitants were not educated about wildlife being a valuable resource in the past and therefore local inhabitants did not understand the importance of conserving it. “So wildlife in most parts of Africa and even in Malawi, suffer from what is called the tragedy of the commons. People think it is a god given resource and therefore nobody should control its utilization” (DNPW3). A respondent from the Lilongwe Wildlife Trust (LWT) mentioned that Malawi over time has struggled with significant cases of poaching, trafficking and wildlife crime. The government in the past was never inclined to do something about it. This is largely due to the fact that there was no adequate policy in place. Therefore, the Malawi Wildlife Policy was introduced in 2000. This policy, however, included some items that were not in practice in conservation in Malawi, such as the correct addressing of biodiversity issues and the implementation of collaborative management (MNREE, 2010). For that reason the policy was followed by a revision of the National Parks and Wildlife Act in 2004, “which is a legislation governing the management of protected areas in Malawi. In this way, the issues that were brought up in the policy could be now operationalized in the act” (DNPW3). In this act, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) aimed to promote collaborative management through revenue sharing with communities who use the land on which wildlife occurs and through a resource use program allowing adjacent communities to make use of certain resources inside the protected areas (MNREE, 2010). Following this, the subsidiary legislation, referring to rules and regulations that govern protected areas as well as the overall management of wildlife including a focus on communities, was also revised. This new policy empowered the government to enter into agreements or partnerships with wildlife management authorities. According to DNPW3, authorities are “entities that have knowledge of wildlife, that have financial resources to be able to manage either their own protected areas or take part in the management of protected areas”.

According to a respondent at African Parks (AP3) several models for management of protected areas have been tested in Africa over time. However, a lot of them have not been successful. Firstly, there is a model whereby the government manages all national parks, such as the case in Malawi prior to the partnerships with African Parks. This refers to a rather centralized governance approach. “In this case, the government is both the manager and a regulator. And in almost all African countries this hasn’t worked” (AP3). A possible reason for the failure of such a model is because it is difficult to regulate your own operations.
This is because different parks and communities ask for different approaches, restricting the government from specializing and this could hinder operational efficiency. Law enforcement, funding and all other operations have been a challenge for the Malawi government to fully and effectively implement in this model. A second model is where the government appoints statutory corporations, companies set by the government, to run protected areas. This is common in Zambia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe and has been successful in some cases but also experiences some shortfalls. A third example is what is currently happening at Majete Wildlife Reserve, a joint responsibility where the state outsources full management to an NGO. In the end all models have its pros and cons (AP3), but both African Parks and the DNPW believed that collaborating with the private sector would be most beneficial. “If we can work with a private sector like African Parks, they will have the financial resources or the capacity to raise funds, and they have the capacity to manage, and that is what we in the department considered when they approached” (DNPW3). As financial resources were inadequate, a way to reduce the size of the state that the government is managing is to outsource management to other parties and thus work in a partnership with the private sector. This is how the partnership with African Parks originated. The responsibility of the state was reduced, as mentioned by the respondent from the government (DNPW3), so that focus could be concentrated on other protected areas that were not run by African Parks. Nyika Plateau, Kasungu, Lake Malawi National Park and Muave in the Lower Shire River for example, remained in the hands of the government. In addition, the government would focus on smaller nature sanctuaries in Lilongwe and Mzuzu, in urban areas. These smaller sanctuaries are meant to educate urban residents about the importance of conservation. Hence, schools can take students to visit and learn about wildlife as well. “Even if you manage little Lilongwe Nature Sanctuary you need to do excellent work to show people that you are there and you are doing good work as a demonstration to the town people that this is what the department can do” (DNPW3). This is important as the government does not have the resources to take people to larger reserves on the other side of the country like Majete Wildlife Reserve, Liwonde National Park and Nkhotakota National Park. These are examples of reserves for which the government has gradually outsourced management to African Parks.

A respondent at LWT mentioned that we are currently seeing “progressive steps being made to make conservation higher up the agenda, to understand the importance of conservation for Malawi and Malawians and wildlife and we are starting to see some improvements including the public-private partnerships with African Parks”. Additionally, the government in Malawi is “supporting and encouraging laws, new investigation units, establishment of core programs, improving core outcomes for wildlife crimes, stifling penalties” (LWT). In recent years the government has increased its commitment and interest in this field while in a way they are also taking more distance by outsourcing reserves to African Parks.

4.2. Majete Wildlife Reserve

Majete Wildlife Reserve is a protected area consisting of 700 square kilometers and situated in the Lower Shire Valley in South-West Malawi. It is made up of a hilly landscape covered in miombo woodland, savannah, baobab trees and ilala palms. Both the Shire and Mkulumadzi river pass through the area, providing magnificent landscapes and an ideal place for large game (AP Annual Report, 2003). Before African Parks Network arrived in 2003, the reserve was in the hands of the Malawi Government, Department of National Parks and Wildlife. Only a few rangers were managing the area. According to a
respondent from African Parks there were various problems with the government such as bureaucracy and lack of financial resources to motivate local residents to understand and help protect the area (AP$_2$). Another respondent from African Parks added that there was also little transport and infrastructure in place to do so. There was only one road in the area (AP$_1$). The number of rangers was below the required standard level and support in terms of equipment was not there. As a consequence, people felt it was an area for hunting, poaching, selling timbers and other activities as the rangers were not able to cope with the problem (AP$_2$, DNWP$_1$). “By 2003 everything in the park was gone and messed up” (AP$_2$). “The park was completely decimated” (LWT). Only a few primates were left (LWT). According to a respondent from African Parks there was a large refugee camp near the border with a lot of Mozambican refugees who were largely responsible for wiping out the game area (AP$_1$).

After a difficult period in management of Malawi’s wildlife, the government went into a public-private partnership with African Parks. The organization saw that many African countries were experiencing a conservation crisis. Land was being used for human demands such as timber, ivory, rhino horn, charcoal, firewood and bushmeat. Due to the high rise in population growth and the trends for the coming years which could increase problems with land use and resource depletion, African Parks realized it was important to come up with an alternative land use and to educate people living close to Malawian parks about “the importance of conservation as an alternative value” (AP$_3$). African Parks created a platform that aimed to set the course of thinking of conservation areas as epicenters for socio-economic development. This conservation discourse is “the motivation for this kind of model” (AP$_3$) and was shared with the government and NGOs such as The Hunger Project.

In order to bring Majete back into its former glory, translocation of various animals took place starting from 2004 until today. Wildlife had to be transferred from South Africa, Zambia, and other parks in Malawi. The DNPW contributed by assisting the translocation of around 60 elephants to Majete from Liwonde National Park and around 80 elephants from Mangochi. The reason for taking elephants from these parks is because Liwonde was experiencing an excess of elephants and in Mangochi the elephants were causing large conflicts with people; human-wildlife conflicts. “The elephants existed in Mangochi Forest Reserve but was not properly managed and it was encroached” (DNWP$_3$). This caused animals to move out of the reserve and live on communal land. That caused large problems as “people were being killed, property was being destroyed, crops were being damaged and there was intense conflict” (DNWP$_3$). With the aim to solve this problem, the elephants were captured and taken to Majete, providing them a safe environment and to show Malawi the value of this resource. This has shown to be successful as the elephant population has grown largely over time. Unfortunately it also means that the problem has returned in different places and as a result elephants are currently being translocated to larger parks.

Today, there is also a system in place to monitor animals. According to a respondent at the Malawi government, there are 36 rangers that go around and check the fence every day (DNWP$_2$). Another respondent added that these rangers in the field receive training and equipment to set up electrified fences, protecting local villages from making use of resources inside the reserve. In addition, they receive GPS mapping and monitoring to note important information such as new water sources, wildlife sightings and any illegal poaching or stealing of materials (DNWP$_2$; RPS$_3$). A respondent at N’gona lodge agrees that African Parks and the government have been successfully training scouts in South Africa (N’gona). A respondent at the local clinic in Majete mentioned that there have been no cases of poaching of big game since African Parks’ arrival. “This is great and shows that the patrolling system works” (Clinical Officer).
The clinical officer added that he saw African Parks arrive because he came to live in the area a year before African Parks started. “When Majete was being run by the government it was just a forest” (Clinical Officer). He mentioned that the animals remaining were moving into the villages around Majete. He also stated that he experienced the return of all these animals due to efforts by African Parks. First buffalos returned, later elephants, lions, smaller nyala, waterbuck, bushbuck, and in the end rhinos. Some were translocated from South Africa but a lot were moved from other parks in Malawi. This has been a huge success for Malawi (Clinical Officer).

4.3. Actors

African Parks was appointed to manage Majete Wildlife Reserve in a joint agreement with the government. Over time, other organizations have established in the park, also working in partnership with African Parks, following both the rules and sharing conservation discourses. In order to understand these arrangements, this section will firstly present the different actors that are involved and have been influenced by the arrangement in an actor map. Secondly, it introduces and describes the main actors in the arrangement.

4.3.1. Actor map

As seen from a policy arrangements approach, actors are people or organizations that are involved in or excluded from the construction and implementation of a policy arrangement. These actors are the ones who either benefit or experience costs of such an arrangement (Buizer, 2008). Arts (2006a) states that actors can also form coalitions through the sharing of resources and jointly supporting or challenging discourses. Actors and their coalitions can therefore have an influence on the policy domain (Arts & Tatenhove, 2004; Liefferink, 2006). The policy arrangement in Majete is formed by several actors. These actors are from the government, such as the DNPW, and from NGOs such as African Parks, The Hunger Project and Malaria Program. Other actors that are involved and/or influence the arrangement are local actors such as the community members, private (tourism) operators such as Robin Pope Safaris (RPS) and environmental organizations like the Wildlife Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM). Figure 3 below presents the actors that are working in and around Majete and the relations between them.
In Figure 3, the arrow indicates the public-private partnership which is the starting point from which the policy arrangement in Majete will be analyzed. This public-private partnership is formed between African Parks and the DNPW. The straight lines indicate additional partnerships. In this report partnerships refer to officially signed agreements as stated in policy documents as well as other relations that may not have been stated as such on paper but are considered formal by respondents. Lastly, the dotted lines indicate informal relations in which actors do have contact but no formal agreements. Understanding these different relations in terms of resource ownership, rules, and discourses will help to explain the characteristics of the policy arrangement in Majete. Actors that do not influence or take part in the policy arrangement will not be further discussed in this report.

4.3.2. Introducing key actors
To understand the context of the policy arrangement that will be presented in chapter 5, a number of key actors are introduced in this section.

African Parks
African Parks is a “non-profit conservation organization that takes on the complete responsibility for the rehabilitation and long-term management of national parks in partnership with governments and local communities” (African Parks, 2017a). The organization was established in 2000 by a group of conservationists, skilled managers and international businessmen who were concerned with the survival of national parks in Africa. African Parks operates in Chad, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia (African Parks, 2017a).

African Parks refers to their model as a “business approach to conservation, looking at conservation as a business unit that it generates revenue to eventually sustain its operations” (AP3). According to a respondent at African Parks, the conservation model is anchored on four pillars: the government wildlife agency, the community, commercial investors and financial investors (AP3) which can be seen in Figure 4. The government wildlife agency is the governing body that can implement policies. The community is the
population surrounding a national park that needs to be informed and included in the process of development in order to minimize problems and maximize benefits for all. The community at Majete is included by involving CBO members in the overall organizational structure (further explained in section 5.1.1.). The commercial investors are tourism operators that build lodges and pay a contribution fee from revenue generation. Financial investors are donors who invest in the development of the park and conservation of wildlife. All ‘pillars’ have their own responsibilities which are agreed upon at the beginning of the partnership and are accountable to each other. Anchored on the four pillars is the local board of Majete, consisting of African Parks representation, government representation and a tourism representative for steering of the park management unit (African Parks management of Majete Wildlife Reserve). The local Majete board does not include community members. A separate board, part of the overall communication structure, is formed which does include community members (as explained in section 5.1.2.).

![Figure 4. African Parks Conservation Model (African Parks pp, 2017)](image)

**Department of National Parks and Wildlife**

The Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW) is a department of the Malawi Government that aims to raise awareness issues in wildlife legislation and conservation issues. It also manages or equips staff with tools to protect wildlife in protected areas and outside protected areas (DNPW; Bello et al., 2016). In total, Malawi has 12 protected areas, five national parks, four wildlife reserves and three nature sanctuaries. Three are currently managed by African Parks. The department is divided into three key sectors that together manage wildlife in the country. The first sub section is the wildlife management and utilization section which is responsible for law enforcement and divided again into several units. It includes a law enforcement unit such as scouts and rangers in the field of protected areas as well as an anti-trafficking unit that searches for trafficking activities in both rural and urban areas. A wildlife prosecution sub-unit with nine or ten prosecutors partner with police prosecutors to take wildlife cases to court. The problem animal control unit focusses more on human-wildlife conflicts around protected areas where some wildlife might have escaped and caused problems in surrounding villages. Lastly, this sector includes tourism management, responsible for handling concessions and partnerships in terms of managing tourism facilities. Almost all tourism sites in protected areas are managed by the private sector. The second sub-section is the research unit. This focuses mainly on surveying and assessing crop damage, park
planning and policy development. The third sub-section is the community education and extension unit which interfaces between communities and the government. It focusses on the promotion of activities in communities, stabilization of communities and working with schools (DNPW).

Robin Pope Safaris
Originally established in 1985, Robin Pope Safaris (RPS) offers luxury accommodations in Zambia and Malawi. In 2006, Robin and Jo Pope created a partnership with Dutch leisure company Molecaten. Molecaten Africa built several lodges in Zambia and Malawi, and recently in Zimbabwe (Robin Pope Safaris, n.d.). Robin Pope Safari’s aim is to “set up a financially stable company that serves our guests at the desired level” (RPS). Mkulumadzi Lodge is located in Majete Wildlife Reserve and was opened in 2011. This is one of the only two lodges located inside the reserve and thus an important tourism operator in Majete.

The Hunger Project
The Hunger Project is a global non-profit organization that focusses on alleviating poverty through grassroots and women-centered strategies (The Hunger Project, n.d.). The Hunger Project promotes a holistic approach to food security and improves the access to food for local community members. They strive to improve local community members’ diets through training, improving of soil types and variety of resources in local farms. The Hunger Project is active in 22 countries. In eight African countries, including Malawi, ‘epicenters’ for growth have been established. These are clusters of rural villages with a 10 kilometer radius, including 5,000 to 15,000 people. In these epicenters community-led projects are introduced to help villages further develop on their own (The Hunger Project, n.d.). In Majete Wildlife Reserve currently five epicenters have been built around the park. Several structures have been built in these epicenters and trainings take place to demonstrate farming techniques. It is also a place in which local community members can grow crops for themselves and to distribute to local schools for serving nutritious meals (The Hunger Project, n.d.).

The Malaria Program
The Malaria Program is a project set up by the Malawi College of Medicine, Wageningen University, The University of Amsterdam, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine Center and in relation with the Hunger Project to do research on the ongoing Malaria problems for local residents around Majete Wildlife Reserve. A research and prevention center was built in Majete with the aim of “reducing the incidence of clinical malaria by 80 percent in surrounding communities by 2018” (AP Annual Report, 2016: 22). Next to research, the program informs communities how to prevent malaria, provides nets, and manages still standing water (AP Annual Report, 2016).
5. Results
This chapter provides the main findings of this research. The chapter first introduces the policy arrangement at Majete Wildlife Reserve and elaborates on different relationships between actors as discussed by interviewees. Subsequently, developments in tourism, successes and challenges that actors face in Majete as well as suggestions that actors pose for improvement will be explained.

5.1. The Policy Arrangement in Majete
The policy arrangement at Majete Wildlife Reserve is comprised of partnerships. African Parks forms a public-private partnership with the Malawi government, which is the starting point for understanding the construction of the policy arrangement. Next to this partnership, African Parks also forms partnerships with other actors to fulfill its goals of conservation and management in Majete. The enactment and management of the policy arrangement in Majete is ultimately enabled by joint efforts of these actors. In this section the policy arrangement will be further elaborated and analyzed by looking at different relationships between actors in terms of rules, resources and discourses that influence the policy arrangement. First, the public-private partnership will be described, which marked the beginning of a new era for Majete. Following this, other partnerships between actors in Majete will be introduced.

5.1.1. Public-private partnership
How and why the partnership was formed
In order for the government to save its national parks it required support from other actors. As mentioned before, NGOs were seen as possible partners that could provide financial means to improve and redevelop national parks in the country. NGOs have the capacity to fundraise, improve security, motivate rangers, perform rapid monitoring and approach communities in ways that may be more efficient than those of the government. These were all contributing factors for engaging in a partnership with African Parks (DNPW1).

The government’s engagement with African Parks was initiated when the DNPW was approached by African Parks, asking for permission to manage a national park. To make the process fair and to see which other NGOs would be interested, the government openly requested for tenders. African Parks was the only organization that has always submitted proposals, which were perceived as promising by the government (DNPW1). At the time, African Parks already managed a protected area in South Africa and Zambia so the government knew that they were a suitable candidate. However, African Parks had initially requested to manage Liwonde National Park. Due to the fact that Liwonde National Park was the best functioning park in Malawi at the time, the government proposed Majete Wildlife Reserve first. If this would turn out to be a success, they would possibly be given more responsibility (DNPW3). Over time, it has shown to be a good decision as “slowly African Parks has gotten hold of the poaching pressure that was mounting” (DNPW1).

Next to the fact that African Parks was the only organization that has always submitted proposals, which were perceived as promising by the government (DNPW1), the organization also seemed favorable due to the nature of their staff (LWT). A respondent at African Parks mentions that the organization appoints its own park managers, meaning that if someone is not delivering what they should, they will immediately be taken out (AP3). “They have got incredible park managers and country director” (LWT). According to a
respondent at African Parks, “the uniqueness is that the other organizations don’t have the full control like we do” (AP1). In most cases, an NGO functions as an advisory type of capacity, whereas African Parks requires full control to be able to fully support and fund a project. This is a lot more flexible, meaning that when small things come up they can immediately be resolved or taken care of. “If it is just advising, funding and supporting, then we would never really have that direct accountability and the pressure. I think this is what makes African Parks unique” (AP1).

African Parks officially started working in Majete Wildlife Reserve when they signed a 25 year contract with the government on March 28th 2003. Anthony Hall Martin, who was one of the original founders of African Parks, had done a lot of work in Malawi early on in his career. He had good relationships and contacts with people in the country. According to African Parks (AP1) this is what originally paved the way for Majete to become a project. Even though all animals had been poached, “luckily the habitat was pretty much intact so we had something to work with when we came” (AP1). According to the DNPW3, “setting up Majete was not easy because it was the first partnership agreement in protected area management in Malawi”. It required a lot of networking between government departments to get the president cabinet involved and share the purpose and goals of the partnership. First a request was sent to the president with a description of the goal and subsequently NGOs were approached to engage with such as the Wildlife Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM), who has always been interested in conservation of protected areas. The privatization committee of the government, as it was originally called, had to be contacted as well. This committee eventually changed into the public-private sector partnership (PPP) commission. Once approved by all parties the government could engage with African Parks (DNPW3). “It was quite a process, realizing that we brought everybody on board and we were going to avoid people thinking we sold Majete to a private company, which is what the locals first thought” (DNPW3). As Majete Wildlife Reserve was located within 19 different villages each district council had to be informed of the partnership. They were informed about the benefits that would be provided by the partnership and which would also flow to the local communities. Benefits would be received from tourism revenues, sales of curious, art crafts but also through projects in the local villages (DNPW3). It seems as if the government and African Parks jointly made the decision to put up a fence and that communities simply had to accept this change and relocate their villages. The way that the government and African Parks talk about “locals” is quite notable; as if the proposed benefits would justify or approve their decisions. It is questionable to what extent surrounding villages were engaged in the decision to put up a fence and relocate their homes to surrounding areas of the park. In terms of conservation, the investment that has gone into redevelopment of Majete Wildlife Reserve after placing the fence around the park has shown a lot of improvement (LWT). Figure 5 presents a timeline of events that have taken place.
### Figure 5. Historical timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>The first historical mention of the area when David Livingstone arrived at the Shire river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Majete was declared a wildlife reserve; proclaimed a protected area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Malawi Wildlife Policy was introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>March - 25 year public-private partnership agreement signed with AP and DNPW April - management team arrived in Majete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>April - Fence was completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>May - Mkulumadzi Luxury Accommodation opened in the reserve by Robin Pope Safaris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>August - National Parks and Wildlife Act was revised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Majete Epicentre 1 established in partnership with The Hunger Project and funded by African Villages Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Majete Epicentre 1 established in partnership with The Hunger Project and funded by African Villages Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Translocation of 500 elephants in Malawi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Defining roles of DNPW and African Parks

Before getting to manage a park, one goes through a process of negotiation in which roles of each partner are clearly defined. African Parks and the DNPW also had meetings to discuss their roles before signing the agreement. Both parties had to understand each other’s goals and missions as well as their ideas for management of wildlife. Once an agreement has been made for the park all parties are aware of their goals. Any concerns can be expressed during this negotiation process (AP₁). According to a respondent from African Parks, there was already an agreement in place with standard operating procedures of how to manage wildlife parks. These government policies had to be renegotiated with African Parks’ policies. This was important in order to prevent issues arising after the agreement was signed. It also provided room for the government to advise African Parks on certain aspects (AP₂). A respondent at DNPW mentioned that African Parks was asked to come up with a business plan first, in which their plans for the upcoming years in terms of infrastructure, restocking of wildlife and tourism development in the protected area were explained. These ideas, including an investment plan, were presented and agreed upon (DNPW₁).

The public-private partnership with the DNPW is unique, according to a respondent at African Parks, in the sense that an NGO takes over full responsibility of a park in terms of management and funding (AP₃). Another respondent at African Parks added “we take total long term responsibility 20 years plus for managing a park in partnership with government and communities” (AP₃). In other words, African Parks manages the park on behalf of the government (in a co-management agreement) and operates under the same policy and conditions as the government. The government leads the law enforcement component such as wildlife scouts while African Parks has full responsibility for running the rest of the park (LWT). According to a respondent at the government, African Parks makes decisions independent from the government (DNPW₁). A respondent at African Parks agreed and added that their decisions should never conflict with the government’s missions. “It needs to fall within the framework of government’s policy” (AP₁). The DNPW also stated that “African Parks makes decisions based on the government’s directions in terms of policy, legislation and any large decisions are made in consultation with the government” (DNPW₁). Even though the public-private partnership aims to collaboratively manage the wildlife reserve, African Parks seems to be a type of statutory body that fully takes on the role of government in the park.
At Majete Wildlife Reserve, the government played a role in a few components. First of all their role is law enforcement. The department is fire bearing and according to a respondent at DNPW, fire arms are not given to private organizations (DNPW3). Thus the government’s law enforcement staff works at Majete Wildlife Reserve under the management of African Parks (DNPW3). “The law enforcement personnel need to be government staff because they enforce the law and have power” (AP1). Another role of the government is problem animal control. This involves the control of animals that escape from protected areas and cause destruction to communities and livestock in villages. Lastly, according to a respondent at the government, their role was to engage with local communities “as the policy emphasizes benefits to the local communities from protected area. It is one of the cardinal points” (DNPW3). The role of African Parks was to take care of anything that happens inside the park such as “the construction and maintenance of roads, boundary fencing, tourism and water supplies” (DNPW3). This was signed in the original concession agreement. In terms of finance, the agreement was that African Parks would collect all revenue until they reached a break-even point. After reaching that point, excess revenue would be shared between the government and African Parks to use for other national parks in Malawi. This break-even point, however, has not been reached yet and whether it is feasible to reach this level under the current approach is debatable.

In short, African Parks has full responsibility and makes all decisions, in consultation with the government and following government policy and legislation (DNPW1). A respondent at Robin Pope Safaris confirms that African Parks has the lead as they are part of the Majete Board. “I can imagine they have a deciding vote, but there are also other board members who have a large vote in the eventual management of the park” (RPS1). As the DNPW is also part of the Majete board, they still have a large say, however this needs to be consulted with the other board members (RPS1). According to Robin Pope Safaris, other actors working in Majete are dependent on African Parks. Thus, “if you control the cash flow you have a large part of the control” (RPS1). African Parks can therefore be seen by other actors as an organization with a lot of power in terms of resource use, land ownership and benefit sharing. One could question whether this power means other actors have less of a say in what happens in the area of the reserve. When discussing the success of Majete’s development since this public-private partnership was formed, respondents were quite positive nonetheless. Both African Parks and the DNPW indicated that their success was largely due to the good relationships they have. “We have been lucky in Majete that we actually had a good relationship with the government. That has paved the way for these two other new projects to come on board as well” (AP1). “There is a lot of understanding between the department and African Parks” (DNPW3). Due to this good relationship, decisions are made smoothly and processes are immediately set in action.

**Majete Organizational Structure**

A local **Majete Board** is formed to provide oversight and guide development processes. This board can be seen as an actor coalition that shares a mission and goals for Majete. This board includes African Parks and government representatives for policy direction and issues of governance. It also includes a tourism representative (from the hotel industry). Local communities, however, are not represented in the local Majete Board which is striking as they make up the largest proportion of the population around the reserve. The board provides oversight for the functions of the park management unit. The park management unit is appointed by African Parks and is the “engine to drive all the operation and ensure that its financial, commercial, technical and funding are being processed” (AP3). Any issues or new ideas that arise over time are discussed in meetings with the Majete Board. During these meetings the role of
the DNPW is to provide government direction in terms of management of protected areas (AP₁). Here, the government can approve ideas and issues for the next quarter (AP₂). In other aspects, such as tourism, planning and strategy of the park, African Parks has full control (AP₁). “African Parks has the liberty, the mandate to source other private companies to run tourism activities in their protected areas while they do the full management of the area” (DNPW₁). During these board meetings the government is updated on operational issues, and some common issues are discussed. This is also a moment in which staff may get transferred (AP₁). It seems as if the board mainly discusses technical problems and solves them within their network. By not including community representatives in this board, however, certain questions or concerns coming from the community might be missed or not spoken about.

Next to the Majete Board meetings, African Parks mentioned that there is also a Joint Liaison Committee (JLC). This is a formal structure comprising of government departments (e.g. DNPW, Forestry, Fisheries, Agriculture, Education) and other formal stakeholders around the park such as the police and judiciary, traditional authorities such as village chiefs and CBO representatives. These stakeholders sit together four times a year to receive updates on the progress of all projects taking place. The JLC functions as a technical advisory committee if there are any problems that require advice (AP₂). The committee can also be seen as a type of actor coalition in terms of information exchange with common goals in mind. The JLC does include community representation, which means that local residents do have the opportunity to share opinions during these meetings. For a visual understanding, the Majete Board and JLC have been included in the actor map below (Figure 6).

Once a year there is an Annual Stakeholder Meeting that is attended by technocrats from protected area management agencies in Malawi, tour operators, local media and press. This is a moment in which African Parks Majete presents its projects and plans for the upcoming year, and brings up any issues that were encountered in the past year (AP₁; AP₂).
5.1.2. Additional partnerships

Besides the public-private partnership between African Parks and the DNPW, the policy arrangement in Majete also comprises of other partnerships that influence the nature of the policy arrangement. This section introduces partnerships that African Parks forms with other actors.

Robin Pope Safaris

Robin Pope Safaris (RPS) is an important actor in Majete that runs a luxury lodge and is responsible for attracting tourists to the reserve. RPS started engaging with African Parks upon their arrival in 2011. “We started working with African Parks because we believed that Malawi could be a better destination and we believed in the set up they had in mind” (RPS). Robin Pope Safaris has a formal relationship with African Parks as they have signed a concession agreement (RPS). RPS pays a fee for their own concession to African Parks. Other revenue from RPS comes in through visitor entrance fees (AP). The visitor fees are presented in Table 4 below.

**Table 4. Majete Visitor Entrance Fees (African Parks, 2017b)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visitor Category</th>
<th>Fee per visitor per day/overnight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Malawi Citizen</td>
<td>4 USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident Foreigner</td>
<td>10 USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-resident Foreigner</td>
<td>20 USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All below age of 12 years old</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the concession RPS is allowed to build roads and set up a tented camp (RPS). This was formally agreed upon by African Parks. RPS is free to plan such developments on their own, as long as it falls within government policy and is communicated with African Parks (AP). As well as this, RPS contributes to environmental and community development projects. Examples of activities that RPS supports include the training of staff members and taking local residents from communities around the park on trips into the national park to raise awareness about the importance of conservation (Robin Pope Safaris, n.d.b). Staff employed at the lodge are mostly from surrounding villages. By working together with specialists at the company, it is ensured that operations are conducted according to the Responsible Tourism Policy.

Financially, Robin Pope Safaris supports carnivore research and translocation projects. In the past, RPS had its own projects but current focus is on supporting existing projects in which another party has the responsibility. “We support projects financially because it ensures the independent development of those projects” (RPS). Robin Pope Safaris believes it is important to be able to follow through with projects. During the credit crisis a lot of companies were not able to finish their projects and this has large impacts on the people who rely on this support. To prevent this from happening, RPS would rather support another organization, such as African Parks, that is fully engaged and responsible for the work (RPS). In Majete, RPS supported the operation of the translocation of lions from South Africa to Majete Wildlife Reserve in 2012 financially. Together with African parks, they realized the comeback of many species, leading to an outstanding success story of conservation in Malawi (African Parks, 2013). Besides Majete, RPS is also becoming involved in Liwonde National Park. “They are one of the most important tourism operations that we work with here” (AP). Not only in terms of donations for translocating animals but also in terms of marketing the park. Through the marketing of their lodge, other NGOs become aware of
Majete Wildlife Reserve and what is going on in Malawi. This increases interest from other donors. “It is sort of cross marketing because when they market the lodge we also benefit and vice versa” (AP).

**The Hunger Project and Malaria Program**

In order to share the responsibility of supporting communities around the reserve, African Parks has formed partnerships with the NGO The Hunger Project and with the Malaria Program. African Parks does not have the capacity to fully support communities on their own and because of this, partnerships with NGOs were seen as a possible solution. Another reason for this effort is because African Parks believes in the discourse that improving community development is required to receive their support and thus reduce poaching and resource depletion. This seems to depict a more hierarchical view of conservation, whereby international NGOs enter an area and teach the local population about how practices should work while in return providing benefits. On the other hand, respondents proved that communities have indeed gained jobs, and improved their livelihoods since African Parks’ arrival. History shows that without this policy arrangement these positive developments would not have taken place so rapidly.

The Hunger Project aims to “uplift the livelihood of people living in the boundaries of the Majete Game Reserve” (THP). The Hunger Project formed a partnership with African Parks and universities in Malawi and the Netherlands to bring in research expertise in 2012, together with Stichting Dioraphte (currently African Village Foundation) who sponsored the Malaria Program. The Malaria Program focuses on health issues. They perform research on malaria, teach and treat local inhabitants, “accompanying the community mobilization” (AP). It is currently set to run five years (AP). The local population around Majete, which is separated into 20 community based organizations (CBOs) by now, plays a central role in that research. They are engaged by receiving the knowledge and opportunity to modify houses, treat stagnant waters and distribute mosquito nets. Consequently, the local population will be better prepared to make decisions regarding public health (Wageningen University, 2014). In this way, researchers participate less in the field and remain more on the background as a backbone to the project. This gives more responsibility to local community members. Therefore, the partnership has helped not only aiding African Parks in their efforts to provide a benefit to local communities, but also to engage local community members in another way by increasing their responsibilities.

The partnership is formal because there are organized meetings with African Parks and The Hunger Project and Malaria Program staff to discuss and agree on each of their roles and to help each other when necessary. According to a respondent at The Hunger Project, a memorandum of understanding was signed together with African Parks in 2012. Subsequently, African Parks helped to demarcate boundaries of CBOs, they work together on the establishment of epicenters, and sit together to discuss developments in the area (THP). African Parks provided The Hunger Project with maps of CBOs which they followed, but they have the liberty to set up activities and projects however they want to (AP). “When it comes to health facilities like I said, then we collaborate with the government and have to follow the government policy. If there is a health facility close by we are not supposed to construct a health facility because it would be a duplication of resources” (THP). The Hunger Project chooses its projects based on what is needed and what is already there. The same goes for the Malaria Program. African Parks has the responsibility for wildlife conservation, The Hunger Project takes care of most of the poverty alleviation projects and The Malaria Program has the freedom to focus completely on health projects. In this way the organizations complement each other.
Donors

Donor funding is managed at an executive level, at African Parks’ two sister organizations in The Netherlands and USA. These organizations assist in establishing partnerships in their host countries with institutions that are interested in engaging with and supporting African Parks. “They also provide the legal and governance mechanism through which funds can be channeled by financial partners” (African Parks, 2017a). African Parks is largely dependent on donor funding as Majete’s operations are mainly funded through donors. The largest donors are the Dutch Postcode Lottery, Wyss Foundation in the United States, Liberty Foundation, World Wildlife Fund in the Netherlands and some private individual donors (AP1). According to a respondent at African Parks “100% of the donor funding goes straight into operations” (AP3).

It has been quite easy to attract donors because African Parks is transparent about what the money is used for. For example, when a donor organization provides 1000 USD, they can see this money being used for the creation of boreholes, a road inside Majete or relocation of animals. These developments are clearly visible and also made available in annual reports that are freely accessible online (AP3). According to one of the largest donors, the Dutch Postcode Lottery, it is one of the criteria for choosing the organizations that they support. Organizations need to apply for donations formally at the Dutch Postcode Lottery by showing professional annual reports and budgets. When the supervisory board at the Dutch Postcode Lottery evaluates the applications, certain criteria are looked for. Criteria to qualify for donor funding at the Dutch Postcode Lottery include, among others, a strong focus on development or nature and wildlife protection, professional policy and business plans, the existence of a management board, delivering visible successful performance, and having a large audience or reach (Dutch Postcode Lottery). It was mentioned by the Dutch Postcode Lottery that they are in close contact with African Parks to keep up to date with finances, developments and ambitions for the future to control whether they are still qualified to receive donor funding (Dutch Postcode Lottery).

What also makes African Parks an attractive organization to donors is African Parks’ aim to become self-sufficient in the future. They do not aim to make profit and state that any profit which does get made “would be utilized to start another project or go to government to support one of their other parks” (AP1). This is important to the Dutch Postcode Lottery as well, because one of their criteria is that the amount they provide cannot be more than half of what African Parks generates or receives from other donors (Dutch Postcode Lottery). As African Parks’ revenue increases over time through tourism, they hope to gradually reduce dependency on donors. “The idea is that we will become self-sustainable in the future” (AP2) as the core principle of African Parks is that they have direct control and thus develop to grow revenue and reduce dependency on donors. This refers to a general sustainable development discourse which is common in wildlife reserves requiring outside help as a basis for development. When African Parks arrived in Majete in 2003 the park was not able to generate money to sustain itself and it received full support from donors. Over time, it can be seen that tourism has grown which also provided revenue and decreased the amount of support necessary from donors. However, tourism does not yet cover all costs. Therefore donors are still necessary to reduce this gap. “At the moment it covers about 30% of our operating costs but we want to get it to 60% or 70% percent at least in the next five years” (AP1). “We hope that by 2020 we are able to stand on our own without donor support” (AP3).

Opinions of actors about the feasibility of financial sustainability seem to differ. According to WESM, if donors stop funding in the upcoming years they will still be able to function due to a large endowment fund that has been left for African Parks to use. The original founder of African Parks, Paul Fentener van
Vlissingen, was a Dutch-British billionaire and philanthropist. After his death, his family promised to carry on his work and to donate money to African Parks in times of crisis (WESM). This positive view is shared by African Parks, who also mentioned that the trust fund is a backup pool of money which they can fall back on (AP3). A respondent at the DNPW, however, stresses that African Parks would never be able to function without donor funding. According to the DNPW, African Parks’ head office does not generate money itself, so they have to rely on tourism and donor funding. In Majete, the situation is still questionable. “A few years ago, Majete was spending 1 million dollars per year but only receiving about 3 or 4 hundred thousand dollars revenue” (DNPW3). Today this amount has increased to around 6 or 8 hundred thousand but they have not come to a break-even point where they can finance themselves (DNPW3). He agrees that there is an endowment fund, but “that will only give you so much per year” (DNPW3). It is what gave African Parks a basis to begin with but this fund will at some point run out. The most important projects, translocation of wildlife, are fully funded by donors and without their help these projects would not be possible (DNPW3). On the other hand, he also stressed that with hard work, management and engagement of surrounding populations, they could reach a break-even point in the future. “If Botswana can do it, if South Africa can do it, I think Malawi can also do it and it just takes time. We are making steps and I think that is very important, so we should keep on going” (DNPW3).

If African Parks aims to be financially sustainable, it is important for them to search for alternative or additional ways to increase revenue. According to a respondent at RPS, African Parks makes changes internally to solve these problems. Over time they have adapted their marketing strategies and searched for ways to attract people to the reserve. “This is what their self-sustainability is ultimately dependent on” (RPS1). A respondent at DNPW mentioned that African Parks has shown interest in including hunting as an activity to their model, as this would generate a lot of revenue that could be used for further conservation. This is a discourse that the government did not share. The DNPW believes hunting would not suit their principles and would affect their image. The idea was immediately rejected. “Yes, it can generate big revenue, but our biggest priority is to try and build up what we have. My belief is that it is not good to see a mixture of hunting and conservation in one place. It is confusing” (DNPW3). This conservation discourse seems to be strong on the government level and is supported by donors. The government believes it is more important to develop in terms of protecting wildlife and to refrain from introducing conflicting and opposing activities. If there is a surplus of animals and a need for revenue, in their opinion it is better to sell these animals to a private sector who can then focus on safari hunting rather than having African Parks include hunting in their program (DNPW3). This firstly resembles a ‘resource coalition’ in which African Parks, DNPW and donors have control over the usage of resources in Majete. Secondly, it shows how powerful a discourse can be in a policy arrangement. If the government did not embrace this discourse, they might have agreed with African Parks to include hunting in the arrangement, which would have increased partnerships with private sector organizations and revenue. The policy arrangement is currently constructed to focus on keeping wildlife and as a result depend on donor funding.

It is notable that large projects, such as the restocking program and current ‘500 elephants translocation’ which has been shared on various media channels, are fully supported by donors (DNPW1). The Dutch Postcode Lottery mentioned that they support organizations that have a large reach and visible performance (Dutch Postcode Lottery). The reason behind such large projects is therefore debatable because it seems to be a good way to gain donor support. Animals have been multiplying over time and in Majete the number of elephants has grown in such a large size that it was necessary to relocate them.
The current ‘500 elephants translocation’ project is relocating elephants from both Majete Wildlife Reserve and Liwonde National Park towards Nkhotakota National Park. According to a respondent at DNPW, the reason for populating another park is to balance the ecosystem. “Nkhotakota is a huge area so there is much more space and it is good elephant country too (landscape)” (DNPW). He mentioned that there were only 100 elephants in this park while it can hold about 2 to 3 thousand. Liwonde and Majete have much smaller ecosystems and the elephant population is becoming overcrowded. According to a respondent at the DNPW (DNPW), first of all elephants will have a good habitat and a lot of space to roam, secondly it will raise opportunities for tourism. “The elephant is a flagship species” (DNPW). 

Tourists visiting Africa dream to see the Big 5 and Nkhotakota has the size and landscape for large game. “I think their movement from Majete and Liwonde should not be a problem. Because you come to a point where because of lack of food and congestion the elephants don’t breed anymore. They breed but it is retarded. This will rejuvenate the population and I think that is good (DNPW).” If wildlife that is currently overcrowded can live in healthy conditions, it will make the park more attractive for tourism. According to the DNPW, tourism is an important source of revenue. “What we do, conservation cannot survive by itself just as conservation. We are doing conservation so that in the future conservation can support itself and also support the local communities and in the end support the national economy” (DNPW). This refers to a sustainability discourse in which conservation is a tool to help support economies and will ultimately become a self-sustainable operation. As mentioned, donors share the conservation and self-sustainability discourse and therefore projects like these, that are expressed as being important for wildlife’s wellbeing, are most interesting to donors. If hunting was included in African Parks’ activities, as a way to balance wildlife, donors would be less inclined to support them as it would counteract this type of conservation. If the DNPW does not want to influence its image by including hunting activities, which could help generate income, the dependency on donors for funding might last longer than anticipated. Therefore, donors have a large influence on the policy arrangement. Without donors, resources would not be well protected and actors would not be able to perform the way they are performing today.

Communities

To manage Majete effectively, communities are recognized as important actors. “We believe that if the park is going to develop, it must [have] community participation in the whole set up. If you leave them out, you will have opposition” (AP); a general discourse that seems to be shared by all actors about conservation. In other words, without engaging local communities conflicts may arise, defeating the purpose of conservation. In the past, local communities lived on the land where Majete Wildlife Reserve is currently located. When the fence was built in 2003, these community members were asked to move to surrounding areas. African Parks had to take a risk, because community members did not yet know the significance of building a fence (AP). According to a respondent at African Parks, “caring for wildlife is just like caring for people, and poaching can only succeed if communities are aware and there is no corruption. Addressing these issues will help not only protect the wildlife but will also make the adjoining communities a safe place to live” (AP). This is in line with the common discourse. The government believed NGOs could take over their work, but did not consider forming partnerships with communities. Instead, they focused on educating communities to be able to do their own work properly. Before working in Malawi, African Parks tested this in Zambia, at Liuwa Plains National Park where communities around the park were experiencing human-wildlife conflicts. Due to African Parks’ armed scouts, people started to feel secure and the rate of deaths dropped to zero. “So it is not only securing animals, it is also about securing people” (AP). Ultimately, due to their history and close proximity to the park, community members are one of the main actors in the area that experience changes and developments (AP; DNPW). In order for local
inhabitants to support park developments they must be included in some decision-making, management or economic activities and thus they are one of the four pillars of the African Parks model. In practice, however, community members do not have a say in the final decision-making. It has been shown that community members are engaged through meetings with CBO representatives and the Malawi Wildlife Reserve Association (explained in the following paragraph), but whether opinions are then transmitted to the Majete Board and taken into serious consideration is unclear.

Community structure
A respondent at African Parks explained that there are formal community structures at Majete Wildlife Reserve. Following the wildlife policy on collaborative management in Malawi a total of 19 community based organizations (CBOs) were initially established in villages surrounding Majete Wildlife Reserve (MWDI, 2003). African Parks has an extension and education department that works hand in hand with CBOs in the area, exchanging information between the park and communities (DNPW). Currently there are 20 CBOs, each under a group village headman. “These are the grassroot people that are able to make decisions on their own projects” (AP). A community member mentioned that local communities encountering difficulties or conflicts can approach CBOs. This is because “the CBOs have some community members in the villages who are living there. If something is wrong we will tell this CBO member and they will report it to African Parks” (RPS). In addition, CBOs are a medium through which interventions are implemented. These interventions include issues such as alleviating poverty, illiteracy and health (AP).

CBOs are a central point for public awareness and collaborative wildlife management activities with the goal to improve socio-economic wellbeing of local communities (MWDI, 2003). CBOs form an actor coalition with shared goals and responsibilities. What makes this type of ‘community conservation’ work in Majete is that they are in full time communication with surrounding villages through these structures which helps to create a positive relationship and improve conservation in the long run (AP; AP). “So you have more eyes outside who are like your fence” (AP), enabling information to be shared quickly and efficiently (AP). Both environmental organizations LWT and WESM mentioned that effective management requires engagement of communities, sharing the common discourse. Thus, the discourse of African Parks is conveyed through CBOs, requiring regular interaction.

Above the CBOs is an association called the Majete Wildlife Reserve Association (MWRA), a mother board for CBOs. The MWRA is comprised of CBO representatives and African Parks staff from the community and extensions department. The association meets quarterly but is not part of the formal reporting procedure of African Parks. They do report information to the Joint Liaison Committee which acts as an advisor to African Parks. CBO representatives liaison between parks authorities and other relevant partners, such as chiefs and local community members to discuss challenges, necessary improvements, poaching issues, illegal activities, awareness campaigns and promoting transparency (MWDI, 2003). For example, they might experience that there is a need for a Child Based Community Center, they might find that there are a lack of schools, limited access to a bore hole nearby their village or a lack of housing for teachers. Once a problem has been identified, CBO representatives may write proposals in consultation with their communities. These proposals are sent to the MWRA. The MWRA is in charge of controlling funds from a community campsite located within the reserve. This is a community run-campsite located at the entrance of the park where visitors with a low budget can spend their night, eat and buy locally made products. According to African Parks, “the camp site is like a revenue sharing mechanism. It is a key path of dialogue so that we have a structured sort of mechanism that we use to communicate” (AP). All
revenue collected at the camp-site is saved as a budget for these community proposals. The association then sits together to go through each proposal to see what is feasible for the upcoming months. According to the size of the projects money will be distributed so that these projects can be built. Each year the budget depends on what was raised at the community campsite and thus some projects can be financed immediately whereas others might only be financed the following year. This depends on the severity of the problem and the size of the budget. It must be mentioned that this budget is for micro projects. Larger projects receive extra funding from the African Parks’ communities and extension department.

Progress of these projects are monitored by smaller committees that are set up by local community members during meetings with African Parks. The committees include members of communities, CBOs and village chiefs (APs). This is an interesting finding because committees include solely local members and are set up by local inhabitants which means that they have a say in this type of decision-making. However, the process of forming these committees is always done in consultation with African Parks. It can be argued that African Parks acts as an authority figure and has a large say in what is developed in surrounding communities. This could influence and limit communities in sharing their honest opinions. On the other hand, African Parks does provide financial support and without their presence this income would not be there for the community. This means that African Parks inevitably will be involved in some way.

Below, Figure 7 presents the actor map, this time including the MWRA. Figure 8 visualizes the organizational structure of Majete including community structures.

![Actor Map including MWRA](image)

*Figure 7. Actor Map including MWRA*
Projects African Parks

Several projects are set up in local communities through African Parks’ community and extensions department to improve quality of life and gain communities’ support. In order for this to work, a general discourse states that community members must be educated about environmental issues and value of wildlife. According to a respondent at African Parks, education is a prime theme. RPS states that the local population used to poach in this area and agrees that education is one way of reducing poaching (RPS2). A respondent at the government mentioned that it is important to raise awareness in communities about the value of wildlife for income generation in Malawi, and also as direct income for communities. By educating the young generation about the disadvantages of cutting down trees and killing wildlife, the number of cases of poaching will decrease in the coming years (DNPW1). African Parks sponsors 100 students from communities around the park through the Majete Scholarship fund to do their studies and increase the literacy level of community members. Students are selected together with community leaders and orphaned and vulnerable children are given priority. In addition, they run environmental education programs in schools and occasionally bring school children to visit the park for free (AP3; AP4). Activities such as essay writing competitions are held, winners are selected and given the opportunity to visit the park for free as well (AP3). In some cases, if schools do not have sufficient chairs available for its students African Parks provides new chairs (AP4). “To build a stronger conservation constituency we need to have people that are able to read and write” (AP3). This is because when people are able to read and write they will be able to understand the information shared with them (AP3). It makes it easier to pass on the conservation discourse (AP3). “Whether your message is getting across, whether people are supporting the ideas or not, is a basis for you to evaluate” (AP3). Poachers in the past would not understand
what they were doing wrong. Today, community members are reporting their own villagers to the police when someone is performing illegal activities (AP₃). On the one hand, this can be seen as an intervention that helps African Parks do their work better. On the other hand, through education communities are also empowered to share their opinions.

“The thinking is that, while we are looking at conserving now we should also be looking at the future. And the future is the children. So it is a comprehensive model. We are not looking at protecting the animals now but we are also looking at protecting the animals for the future.” (AP₃)

According to a respondent at African Parks, community projects have had positive effects so far. Since 2003, there have been “zero cases of poaching of the Big Five, and when you compare the poaching pressure and what is happening in Majete with other protected areas then we feel that we are very far ahead of other areas in terms of cooperation of the reserve and the communities that are here” (AP₂). Pressure on Majete has decreased because people are understanding the benefits of wildlife through school and university programs (AP₂). Children are learning about wildlife and are able to distinguish between game because they have the opportunity to visit a park. If they were poached, they would not be able to see these animals and current benefits would not be there. Using this discourse African Parks intends to gain support from communities (AP₂; Clinical Officer).

Next to educational programs, African Parks is also involved in supporting income generating activities such as the production of honey and the nutritious merenga tree which is said to have several health benefits. Women are being trained to produce beaded jewelry, tailoring and other crafts to sell in the shop at the heritage center of Majete. There is also a harvesting program in which grass and bamboo is harvested sustainably for thatching and building. “And if you look at the google map of the park there is a big contrast of what is outside and what is inside the park. Often those resources are scarce outside so it is a benefit for them to be able to come in and get and use those materials” (AP₁). Infrastructural projects have been built in the communities, such as school blocks for children who used to get lessons outside under the trees, teachers’ houses so that local teachers can work and live in a comfortable place, and drilling of bore holes for community members to have access to drinking water (AP₁; DNPW₂). The respondent at the local clinic confirms that African Parks has built schools in villages where children had to travel too far to go to school, and a health post which also functions as a location to educate local people about health issues. “It is so important that these things have come in. In villages around, it is beneficial to have African Parks” (Clinical Officer). A respondent at the DNPW supported the claim that income generating activities and infrastructural developments have benefitted local communities. As a result, communities are inclined to help protect the reserve. “There is so much development in the communities and indeed they have solicited their motivation to be part of the conservation team” (DNPW₁), which is in line with the discourse that African Parks uses.

Since African Parks’ arrival, employment has risen. From only 14 people being employed in 2003 to over 137 employed directly by or because of Majete Wildlife Reserve in 2015, still increasing today. Next to this, many more community members are employed on a temporary basis both formally and informally to support different projects and businesses in and around Majete (AP₃). “These are the types of projects where we were able to support and change the lives of the community members” (AP₄). According to a respondent at the Hunger Project, who joined the organization in 2011 when the first epicenter was established, a lot of improvement can be seen. Women were not involved in most projects in the past, while today they are running their own businesses. Additionally, most girls were not able to go beyond
primary education and they are currently enrolled in secondary schools. Access to portable water was also a huge challenge at the first epicenter. “I have got pictures where you will be shocked. But now this is solved” (THP). This is largely due to the division of responsibilities after African Parks went into a partnership with The Hunger Project. In general, the population around the park is large and it is difficult to help and include everyone in benefit sharing. Opinions about the extent to which benefits are reaching everyone and the extent to which they are sufficiently involved differ per person. However, the DNPW believes that the fact that community development is on the agenda means that work is being done and this is the most important prospect for the future. “The most important thing is that the process has been set in motion and over time it will reach out to most people. But so far, as far as I am concerned, so good” (DNPW3).

5.2. Tourism development in Majete

Malawi is a country that has not yet become a common destination for tourists to visit. According to a respondent at Ng'ona lodge, visitors coming to Majete are largely local Malawians or expats living in Malawi (Ng'ona). This corresponds to the information provided by African Parks about visitor arrivals in 2016. Figure 9 shows that 18% of all visitors in 2016 were international tourists. 48% of visitors were local Malawian and 34% were residents in Malawi with a different nationality (e.g. expats). In total there were 3817 Malawian visitors, 2717 residents and 1484 international visitors in 2016 (African Parks pp, 2017).

Different factors have influenced the number of international tourist arrivals over time (Ng'ona). First of all, the opening of a new accommodation in 2011, Mkulumadzi Lodge by Robin Pope Safaris, has shown to increase in the number of visitor arrivals in Majete (Ng'ona). A respondent at African Parks agrees that having Robin Pope Safaris in the reserve has been helpful in terms of revenue (AP1). It has driven tourism to the park and created more exposure. It also gives the park a higher profile due to the quality of RPS’s lodges. Having RPS involved in more than just one park “creates some sort of circuit and opens up new opportunities” (AP1). If the relationship between African Parks and RPS and the results in Majete are positive, then this partnership can be promising for the future of developments in other parks. According to the government it is very important to have other organizations to partner with, such as accommodation providers, as they attract people to see the park. This raises awareness about the park, about African Parks’ work and about conservation (DNPW2). This discourse is in line with what is perceived by African Parks as a successful ‘partnership’ because a partnership means that actors can help each other reaching their goals (AP1).

Another factor that has shown to increase tourism levels is an article that was written in the Lonely Planet about Malawi as a new tourism destination. Factors that could impact tourism levels and thus revenue are crises such as the Ebola crisis as well as the introduction of visa fees by the government. This creates a barrier for international visitors to choose Malawi as their destination. This is especially difficult due to competition in other countries with more developed safari tourism products (Ng’ona). These factors can
be identified in Figure 10 below where tourism levels, accompanied by revenue, increase over time. There seems to have been a slight drop in tourism in 2015. According to African Parks, this had to do with a number of issues at the time. The largest problem was the Ebola crisis, during which people were not comfortable travelling to Africa. The economic situation was also impacted due to floods and hunger. “Tourism is a very complex industry, it is very sensitive. If anything happens people will cancel travelling that year” (AP3).

![Figure 10. Tourism and park income Majete Wildlife Reserve (African Parks pp, 2017)](image)

Overall, improvements in the park have shown to interest tourists. With an increase in tourism, Malawi also generates more income. As a consequence it improves the life of surrounding villages as people working at these lodges are employed from local villages (DNPW2; THP). Due to these positive results, there have been negotiations at the government to provide African Parks with more responsibility, managing other reserves in Malawi. Currently, developments regarding tourism for Liwonde National Park and Nkhotakota National Park are on the agenda. “If these parks can come to a stage where Majete is, then I think we have something to sell to the world” (DNPW3). This will ultimately increase tourism to Malawi and to Majete, generating more revenue to cover operational costs and hopefully reduce dependency on donors (DNPW3). This increases the external congruence of the policy arrangement.

5.3. Successes, challenges and improvements in Majete

Management of protected areas can be successful and challenging at the same time. Different actors involved or influenced by the reserve experience and thus perceive the process in different ways. Successes, challenges of management in Majete and suggestions for improvement will be provided in this section as discussed by actors.

5.3.1. Successes and challenges

Implementing policies and communicating with different actors has been made easier due to the fact that Malawi is a relatively peaceful and stable country. “African Parks has judiciary on their side which is very important” (WESM). “We have a government that is open to cooperative management” (LWT). A local respondent working at RPS mentions that he experiences benefits from the park since African Parks has arrived due to the increase in job opportunities for his family (RPS3). A respondent from EGENCO, the
Energy Generating Company that is located inside Majete, mentions that the company is able to function better because of the success African Parks has delivered. African Parks takes proper care of the environment, which provides space and time for EGENCO to focus on its own work, rather than feeling the pressure to take action and conserve wildlife too. This is something the company used to worry about in the past (EGENCO). Lastly, all respondents mentioned the vast increase in wildlife that has returned to Majete since African Parks’ arrival. Both the respondent at The Hunger Project and the local clinical officer stress the importance of the increase in wildlife. Over time wildlife has multiplied, so far that it is reaching a point of overpopulation. This is a sign of success and translocation projects are showing that African Parks is taking care of the consequences (THP; Clinical Officer). Their efforts in terms of educating local communities as well as scouts has proven to work due to the decrease in poaching (THP; Ng’ona). Ng’ona lodge, located outside the reserve, also experienced an increase in tourism arrivals and day visitors over time and stresses that African Parks’ management has strongly influenced this. “In general, African Parks is better, it will not work under Malawi government management” (Ng’ona). The relationship with the local community and gaining their support shows to be successful due to good communication structures and education projects. Overall, the stability of the country enables swift communication and policy implementation and good relationships between African Parks and other actors has made the process easier.

Despite various indicators of success, protected area management also proves to be challenging. According to respondents, Majete experienced a number of challenges over time. First of all, both the DNPW and a respondent at Ng’ona lodge mention that the tourism industry in Malawi is small. Due to the fact that Malawi is landlocked and financial resources and infrastructure are lacking, it is difficult to attract high levels of tourism. This is a source of revenue that Majete relies on. Malawi has to compete with countries that have larger wildlife reserves such as South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia. Tourism is more developed in those countries, making flights and accommodation expenses cheaper (Ng’ona). A recent article by the MBC stated that the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism has started to advertise Malawi’s tourism sector in international media such as CNN and BBC to attract tourism to the country (Ngwata, 2017). The Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism therefore uses the discourse of the tourist gaze, whereby tourists are meant to be convinced to travel to Malawi after seeing attractive images. The DNPW does not completely share this discourse as they worry that tourists might be disappointed if the images do not portray reality. The DNPW believes it is a challenge to fully meet expectations of visitors. “If people come to Malawi due to our marketing and they don’t get to see what they want to see, we lose tourists. They will go straight to South Luangwa and those places” (DNPW₃). This could negatively impact Malawi’s tourism industry. The DNPW mentioned that setting up Majete at the start of the partnership was also a challenge. This is because two different set ups were involved, the government and the private sector. The private sector is often more result oriented. “We are also result oriented but there is too much bureaucracy” (DNPW₃). RPS added that it was difficult at the start because of a rather informal atmosphere (RPS₁).

It is interesting to note that African Parks, the DNPW and environmental organizations such as WESM and LWT mention that population pressure is a large problem. As the human population is increasing, resources are becoming scarce (DNPW₃). As a result, local community members around the park are searching for alternative ways to make use of resources, increasing problems with charcoal. “Pressure on
the reserve is huge, we are really kind of a conservation island here” (AP). There is a fear that local community members might find ways to get inside (DNPW). This is a strong statement implying that having community members on board is problematic while they originally used to live there and should have the right to jointly decide what happens to the land. According to African Parks, population grows around 3% a year, with over 140,000 people living outside the park. Even though there have been efforts to educate community members and provide benefits, in some cases it remains a challenge. There is also a fear that supporting communities around the park will cause other people, that live further away, to travel to Majete and attempt to gain these benefits (WESM). These people are assumed to be less educated about wildlife conservation and could possibly encroach on the park (THP). In the recent article by MBC, it is also stated that “with the status of the population now if not controlled by 2030 Malawi is expected to have a population of 26 million which is very alarming considering the fact that land and natural resources are static” (Ngwata, 2017).

Opposing statements by participants are also notable. One the one hand, it is mentioned that education is a core theme and that raising awareness about conservation issues has increased community’s support. On the other hand, participants mention that community members in some cases still find it hard to understand the importance of conservation. They explain that due to the sharing of benefits, African Parks has raised expectations. Community members start to become impatient and expect African Parks to provide schools, scholarships and other benefits (AP). “They should know that African Parks is there to conserve wildlife. The issues with development is not 100% on the agenda but because we are working with the communities we still need to support them. That is why we have the extension program” (AP). “African Parks is not a development organization, but it does sort of contribute to that development goal” (AP). This is a reason why partnerships with the Hunger Project and Malaria Program have been formed; to share responsibilities and overcome this problem. It seems, however, as if African Parks feels forced to contribute to a development goal and that they are actually finding it more of an obstacle to work with communities than a solution. Partnerships are formed with other organizations to relieve themselves from this problem while still being able to contribute to the development goal. It can therefore come across as if this is done for their own benefits rather than for the benefit of communities.

When looking at the perspective of the (limited) local community members that were spoken to, issues such as population pressure or relationships between actors are not mentioned. Community members were positive about the benefits received from the park. However, it must be noted that some conflicts do exist. Community members disagreed with certain policies. Penalties for fishing and use of resources, or the payment of entrance fees were mentioned. The local clinical officer mentioned that he does not understand why residents of the area have to pay entrance fees to the park. Even though the price may not be high to tourists, for local community members it is still a significant amount. “It hurts me when my friends from far away tell me they went to Majete and saw the animals while I haven’t seen them myself” (Clinical Officer). He also mentioned that developments in the Shire river, by the hydropower station that is located inside Majete, cause problems for local inhabitants. When the hydropower station is opened, water flows away and fish are washed onto the shore. Local community members eat these dead fish. However, they are arrested for this and taken to court (Clinical Officer). He believes and understands that conservation is important and supports anti-poaching initiatives, but he does not believe that these policies concerning ‘dead fish’ are fair. He believes there should be new regulations for such small actions.
and African Parks should be the one to address it (Clinical Officer). In an informal conversation with a few local inhabitants during a village visit it was mentioned that they wish to be able to use more resources. They also stressed that they would like to be able to go into the park to see the animals for free. This information can currently be shared with CBOs who the discuss it in their meetings but it is questionable to what extent community members have the right and power to actually influence changes in policies.

5.3.2. Suggestions for improvement

Overall, actors have indicated two important themes for improving these challenges in Majete. First of all, African Parks, DNPW and The Hunger Project stated that education is important to create synergy. In order to manage wildlife effectively all parties should understand the importance and reasons behind operations, also in terms of expectations. The Hunger Project explained that in some cases local communities feel “their perception is now that African Parks is putting more importance on the game than on human life” (THP). This shows that community members might feel underappreciated because of the way the policy arrangement is constructed. To reduce this problem, more small scale businesses could be created so that community members can make their own living, feel independent and responsible for themselves. The DNWP states that “we must find ways to change the attitude and mindset of the people” (DNPW2). African Parks believes that through educational programs, ownership of land and use of resources will become clearer (AP1). This seems to be reasonable from the perspective of African Parks, but it also implies that African Parks and the DNWP are knowledgeable and know what is best for the area. However, communities have been living and surviving in this area without the assistance of African Parks for many years. They ultimately have knowledge about the area as well, in aspects such as the size of land necessary for subsistence farming. By excluding community members from fundamental decision-making about resources, a barrier is created. Education could be effective, as it already shows, but it would be even more effective if community members are better involved in decision-making as well.

A second theme or suggestion for improvement that multiple actors have mentioned relates to issues that should not be solved by African Parks and could be the responsibility of other government departments. Actors expressed their concern about the enormous amount of responsibility that African Parks has taken upon themselves. Currently, multiple actors have identified that an increased number of partnerships could be initiated so that African Parks can focus more on conservation. Even though partnerships (e.g. with The Hunger Project) already exist, which has helped divide responsibility of community development projects, Majete would benefit from more government coordination. “I would expect the government to address development issues through its many organs such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Water Supplies, the Department of Forestry, the Department of Community Services” (DNPW3). Other departments are currently included in the JLC for advice, but they could also take more responsibility for external factors. The DNWP identified a concern that challenges could occur in the future if African Parks takes on too many responsibilities. The responsibility of African Parks is to manage protected areas. They do provide resources to surrounding communities but this is not the primary responsibility of the conservation department. “There are other partners in the government that can address these issues. Plus there are quite a number of NGOs that are playing different roles and can take on this responsibility. It is a question of coordination” (DNPW3). The recent article in the MBC also states that Malawi has considerable potential for tourism and wildlife, but to receive significant results, it states that “other
ministries like health and civic education need also to work hard in controlling rapid population growth” (Ngwata, 2017). Over time, new partnerships could help reduce their responsibility even more and bring focus back to wildlife conservation.

A respondent at RPS adds that it would be useful if a representative from tourism operations inside Majete would join the Majete Board. Currently they have one person in the board who has knowledge about tourism, but this person is not active in the same type of tourism branch. According to this respondent, their expectations are not realistic for this type of wildlife reserve (RPS1). If someone from RPS would be included in quarterly or annual meetings “they would have more immediate input and understand what the realistic expectations are from African Parks’ model” (RPS1). Additionally, when being part of the board, information is shared and one can discuss issues directly. “I think they would get a better understanding of how this market, and then I talk about high-end tourism, operates and where the interests lie” (RPS1).

When looking at challenges in Majete, the DNPW and NGOs seem to find the growing population pressure the largest challenge for conservation and management in Majete as well as the lack of understanding their discourse by local community members. The few local community members, on the other hand, admit that they are experiencing benefits but still question the reasons behind specific policies. This means the policy arrangement at Majete is not completely ‘collaborative’. One of the reasons for this is because of the underlying discourses that exist in Majete, which will be further discussed in the next chapter (section 6.3).
6. Conclusion and Discussion

The goal of this research was to get a deeper understanding of the policy arrangement at Majete Wildlife Reserve. This was done by investigating the dynamics in relations between actors in terms of resources, rules and discourses. The central research question of this study was “What are the main characteristics of the policy arrangement at Majete Wildlife Reserve in Malawi and how can it be explained?”. Based on the four dimensions of the PAA, sub-research questions were formulated to guide the study. These sub-research questions focused on the role of actors in the policy arrangement in terms of partnerships; how the policy arrangement influences or is influenced by the distribution of resources such as wildlife, knowledge and finances; how and by whom rules and policies are constructed; and the influence of typical discourses in the development of Majete Wildlife Reserve.

The main characteristics of the policy arrangement reveal that African Parks has taken over the role of the government in Majete. African Parks forms a public-private partnership with the DNPW who previously managed the reserve. Management and financing of Majete has been outsourced to African Parks since 2003. African Parks takes the lead and makes final decisions within the reserve that adhere to government policies. This means that African Parks is a dominant player in the arrangement. To be able to operate efficiently and fulfill conservation goals, African Parks forms further partnerships (or actor coalitions) with The Hunger Project and Malaria Program. These organizations focus on poverty alleviation and health issues to foster community development and reduce conflicts with surrounding communities in terms of resource use. Other important actors in the reserve and ‘pillars’ of the African Parks model are the community, tourism operation Robin Pope Safaris, and donors. Communities are important in supporting anti-poaching and conservation initiatives in return for gaining benefits. Tourism operation Robin Pope Safaris is an important player in terms of attracting tourists and thus generating revenue for the park. Donors are highly dependent on for their financial support. A JLC is set up to share and discuss issues with different actors and provide advice where necessary. Rules and policies were set at the start of the partnership by DNPW together with African Parks. African Parks is free to decide what happens in the reserve as long as these developments adhere to the established policies. As all final decisions are taken by African Parks they function as a new type of government. As a result, African Parks has control over financial and environmental resources in the reserve. Communities are restricted to using (limited) environmental resources from the reserve but are compensated by being given the opportunity to farm and use resources outside. Communities also gain knowledge resources through educational activities and financial resources through employment within the reserve. Typical discourses in Majete have also influenced the policy arrangement. A discourse regarding educating communities in return for support has contributed to the dominant position that African Parks takes within the policy arrangement. Another discourse that focuses on protecting wildlife and refraining from hunting has influenced the way the game is played (i.e. rules and policies) and thus the activities that take place in the reserve. These activities now focus on translocation projects rather than trophy hunting. Consequently, the flow of income and distribution of resources within the reserve depend on donors’ support, indirectly giving donors control over the distribution of resources as well.
Results illustrate that the four dimensions of the PAA are continuously interrelated. The policy arrangement in Majete has proven to be successful in terms of conservation, but lacks confidence in the financial sustainability of the model and the extent to which it is truly a collaborative approach. In order to explain the policy arrangement at Majete Wildlife Reserve and better understand its characteristics, this chapter is facilitated by a discussion. The discussion concerns the type of governance system at Majete in which African Parks is a dominant actor, the nature of the partnership accompanied by its rules and policies, the influence of typical discourses in Majete, and finally the level of congruence. The level of congruence has been examined both within the park, as well as nationally and internationally in comparison to other conservation arrangements in Africa. This chapter will end with limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

6.1. Governance
In the past decades, many centralized governments have been shifting towards more decentralized government schemes in which regional government authorities or other organizations take on the responsibility for issues that used to be governed by the state. Loorbach (2010) mentions that the power of the state, in a central top-down approach, is decreasing as governance gets devolved. We are experiencing a shift towards more shared policy-making structures and constructing policies together with other actors. According to Loorbach (2010: 161), “interaction between all sorts of actors in networks often produces (temporary) societal consensus and support upon which policy decisions are based”. These new governance schemes are thought to improve coordination and planning (Loorbach, 2010). According to Meadowcroft (2007), schemes in which the government was both a regulator and manager often did not work well in Africa because governments lacked coordination and finance. It is commonly believed that these collaborative approaches are more beneficial as responsibility can be shared and results can be reached in a more efficient way.

In Malawi, the central government was not capable of managing protected areas effectively. The government formed a partnership with African Parks which was considered a collaborative approach to conservation in which the government worked hand in hand with a non-state organization to make policy decisions. In practice, management of Majete was fully outsourced to African Parks, meaning the power of the central government was transferred to African Parks. This makes African Parks a type of statutory authority that can manage and make decisions for the park on behalf of the government. In other words, the original model has not drastically changed. One could argue that this is still a top-down approach, except instead of the government making final decisions, now African Parks has been given this role. Decentralization often implies bottom-up governance but in this policy arrangement decentralization has meant outsourcing governance to African Parks which is essentially not a bottom-up approach.

6.2. Partnerships
According to Teisman et al. (2002), partnership arrangements have become more popular and are often seen as new forms of governance. However, even though they are proposed, such forms of governance still need to adhere to existing procedures. Teisman et al. (2002: 197) mention that policies are often based on organizational decisions, “rather than on joint interorganizational policy making”. In Majete
decisions also need to adhere to government policy and to the agreements that were made at the start of the partnership in 2003. Overall, decisions are made in the Majete Board, which comprises of African Parks employees and government representatives. In other committees, multiple actors are included, such as community committees that monitor the development of community projects and the JLC that includes community members, government personnel and African Parks staff. Final decisions, however, are made in the Majete Board, rather than jointly with these communities.

Partnerships, according to Teisman et al. (2002), can sometimes be linked to the trend towards network forms of governance. This is where public actors take their relations with and reliance of other actors into account and try to solve governance problems by collaborating rather than through central steering. Benz (2004) also mentions that partnerships represent a shift of government towards networks where steering is based on society and social rules. Looking at the African Parks model, we can see that in theory multiple actors are included: the government, commercial operations, donors and the community. The idea is that each of these actors has a role in conservation of Majete and generating revenue for the park. In the end, however, it is African Parks’ responsibility that everything runs well. The pressure of having this responsibility and accountability seems to work well. On the one hand, this policy arrangement highlights the co-existence of people and wildlife because even though their main focus is conservation, they have included community development in their agenda and established additional partnerships with The Hunger Project and Malaria Program. This has been done to address community issues properly so that local communities can also develop; reducing poverty levels and benefiting from the reserve. Community members have been given the opportunity to join in several activities and have also been given the responsibility to monitor projects by taking part in committees. A lot of communication goes through CBO members which means that CBOs do have the opportunity to share the direction they want projects to go or to identify the most significant problems that need to be addressed. On the other hand, in reality the level of this relationship is debatable. As African Parks has the final say in decision-making, we can argue that the partnership is not equal or collaborative in terms of decision-making. Communication between partners exists, but the extent to which there is a two-way communication between communities and African Parks is limited. It seems as if communities are content with the benefits they receive and therefore accept the policy arrangement as it is. If they want to respond and make changes, African Parks can still decide not to go through with their ideas.

Many scholars have promoted the idea that working together with different actors enables one to achieve more than individuals and organizations on their own. According to these scholars it results in a better and more acceptable long-term solution (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999; Barrow, et al., 2000; Berkes, 2004; Adams, et al., 2004; Barrett, Lee, & McPeak, 2005). It must be mentioned that the policy arrangement in Majete has caused considerable changes for actors in terms of resources and rules. In the past, management of resources was poor and uncontrolled, enabling local inhabitants to make use of resources without punishment. Currently, there are increased restrictions as to which resources and how much can be used. Due to an overarching inclusive development discourse, as well as the construction of the present policy arrangement, actors increasingly feel more responsible for protecting the environment and for sharing benefits with local communities. Local actors have also gained more possibilities to share their voice due to African Parks’ efforts, through for example education. Educational projects improve the level of knowledge and literacy in the community. Even though community members might be steered to learn
about conservation in African Parks’ favor, they are also becoming more literate. As a result, community members might form their own (strong) opinions which could lead to discussions about ownership and rights in the future.

6.3. Discourses

Conservation and development are concepts that are perceived and practiced in different ways and are influenced by discourses. Discourses, in this research, refer to communications that influence the understanding of a topic. According to Arts et al. (2006a) discourses give meaning to realities. It is a “specific ensemble of ideas [...] produced, reproduced and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities” (Hajer, 1995: 44). Three specific discourses will be discussed in this section which explain the policy arrangement at Majete Wildlife Reserve.

6.3.1. Educating communities for conservation

Results show that the policy arrangement in Majete is influenced by a discourse which states that ‘community members must be educated about environmental issues and value of wildlife and must receive benefits from the reserve in order to gain their support’. This links to a common conservation discourse that is based on local support for conservation which can be strongly influenced by the impact of management of the reserve, as experienced by local communities (Bennett & Dearden, 2014). Essentially, community support depends on the strength and quality of management (Bennett & Dearden, 2014). By educating local communities and providing benefits to improve livelihoods, African Parks actually steers communities to believe that management is indeed effective, regardless of the policies that are implemented. By receiving benefits, communities are forced to believe that African Parks is a positive and favorable institution in Majete.

By building a fence around the park, communities have been forced to resettle to surrounding areas. The discourse in Majete suggests that this leads to conflicts and assumes that education and benefit sharing compensate for that. There is also a constant fear that communities could encroach on the park and the discourse implies that communities will only cooperate if they are educated. This shows that African Parks has the authority and ability to make decisions in the reserve. It would be wrong to imply that communities accepted these circumstances or position passively but the extent to which communities had the ability to fight for their land or the extent to which they can counter-argue and influence decision-making today still appears to be low. This has to do with the way in which African Parks conveys its conservation discourse to the community. These educational programs might actually cause community members to feel more appreciated and cared for.

According to Manji and O’Coill (2002: 568) this type of policy arrangement suggests that the role of an NGO “represents a continuity of the work of [...] missionaries and voluntary organizations that cooperated in Europe’s colonization and control of Africa”. They mention that such NGOs do contribute to alleviating poverty in African countries and help local inhabitants to “emancipate themselves from economic, social and political oppression” (Manji and O’Coill, 2002: 568). However, most of the time this is marginal and the course of action is driven by the NGO rather than the local population. This is reflected in the case of Majete where an external organization came into the area, set up a fence and decided it was best to educate local communities about (their perception of) conservation. Even though it is an attempt to
engage communities and provide opportunities for participation in economic generating activities and setting up micro businesses, it also leads to new levels of inequality. This is because communities have had to sacrifice their land and work to foster conservation (Garland, 2008), instead of receiving ownership over the land and leasing it to private parties which is the case in other conservation approaches. In Majete, communities have lost ownership rights, and thus the power to determine the direction of policy and development in the area. We could say that this discourse depicts characteristics from the former fine and fence approach, yet performed in a modern and liberal manner that encourages benefit-sharing and job creation. In this way it could be considered a more sustainable alternative to the traditional approach.

6.3.2. Refraining from hunting as a source of revenue

What appears to be another dominant discourse in Majete is that ‘hunting goes against the conservation image because it eradicates rather than protects wildlife’. This conservation discourse is particularly imposed by the government because they believe conservation involves protecting and stimulating the reproduction of wildlife to bring disseminated areas back to their former glories. Donors share this discourse and exclusively support environmental organizations that protect wildlife. This is a powerful discourse and highly influences the policy arrangement because it blocks hunting revenues, a potentially large source of income. Without this discourse, the policy arrangement would be constructed differently because private hunting companies could be hired and included in the arrangement as a means to increase revenue. If this was the case, it would have reduced dependency on donor funding. On the other hand, donors are willing to fund the preservation of natural resources. African Parks receives a substantial amount of donor funding for translocation projects which, according to them, balances and protects wildlife in a favorable way. According to Gullison & Blundell (2000: 924), “plentiful funding should be available for conserving species [...] that have a high international profile”. This reflects the excessive donor support for the ‘translocation of 500 elephants’ project that has been considerably presented in the media (Watt, 2016; Gibbens, 2017; Mackenzie, 2017).

Foreign funding can have a strong influence on the policy arrangement. This is because foreign donor companies determine what money is used for (Gullison & Blundell, 2000). This discourse influences the policy arrangement as donors steer developments in Majete. After all, a shared conservation discourse between the government and donors has caused hunting to be removed from the policy arrangement. This is a common discourse because according to Di Minin et al. (2016: 99), “the contribution of hunting to conservation is often contentious”. This is because it is uncertain to what extent removing animals is sustainable and how this will effect wildlife populations in the long-term. Additionally, it would counteract educational activities that target problems of poaching. This discourse, however, is not common in all countries and conservation approaches. In Namibia, for example, where communities have ownership over wildlife in the form of conservancies, trophy hunting as a way to gain revenue is permitted. Revenue that is generated from trophy hunting in Namibia has “encouraged local community participation in conservation, which in turn has resulted in substantial increases in the abundance of many wildlife species and in the total area of land falling under community protection through conservancies” (Di Minin et al., 2016: 100). The discourse of refraining from hunting in Majete has therefore clearly influenced the development of the policy arrangement.
6.3.3. Striving for self-sustainability
A general discourse of African Parks is that they ‘aim to become self-sustainable in the future’. This is part of a development discourse that has an influence on the policy arrangement because it increases the value of the relation with tourism operations. According to the government, tourism is an important source of revenue and a possible solution to reducing donor dependency and becoming self-sustainable. The intention to have conservation support itself in the future, and for it to contribute to local communities and national economy of Malawi reflects a strong development discourse. It does seem to contradict to the previous discourse that has caused the policy arrangement to strongly rely on donor funding. How, and the extent to which Majete will reach a level of self-sustainability is therefore unclear, and requires further research.

6.4. Congruence
The strength of policy arrangements is often discussed in literature as being dependent on the level of congruence of internal and external factors in collaborative management (Carlsson & Berkes, 2005; Lamers et al., 2014; Wiering et al., 2017). This concept of congruence refers to the coherence of policies relating to a context. Boonstra (2004) divides the concept into three types, namely strategic congruence, internal-structural and external-structural congruence. In most cases, total congruence or harmony is difficult to achieve as some conflicts or contradictions between actors or organizations are inevitable (Arts & Goverde, 2006). However, a certain degree of congruence is important when aiming to achieve stable and well performing policy arrangements (Arts et al., 2006; Wiering et al., 2017). The following section will discuss the level of each type of congruence for the policy arrangement in Majete which also helps to explain the characteristics of the arrangement.

6.4.1. Strategic congruence
Strategic congruence refers to the coherence in views and opinions of different actors and how these actors share common interests and discourses relating to for example educating communities, refraining from hunting and striving for sustainability (Boonstra, 2004; Arts et al., 2006). In Majete, the discourses mentioned are accepted by all respondents and thus there is coherence between African Parks, DNPW and organizations regarding the overall conservation goal of the policy arrangement. Actors are working together in partnerships to realize this. The government and African Parks have shared interests which are reflected in their level of communication, organized meetings and common policies. Respondents have expressed that wildlife conservation in Majete is indeed successful and has shown positive results. In addition, Robin Pope Safaris is perceived by all actors as a positive contribution to Majete. It is viewed as a contributor to financial concerns, as it has attracted visitors to the park, bringing in revenue through visitor entrance fees and selling of souvenirs. This indicates a relatively high level of strategic congruence in the arrangement and implies that the policy arrangement and management processes are effectively contributing to the success of policy outcomes.

On the other hand, the policy arrangement is shown to be dominated by African Parks. This is reflected in the discourse that relates to educating communities and could imply that community members are being perceived as less powerful within the policy arrangement. This view might actually differ from what community members perceive as important for the area. Activities that are undertaken at African Parks are generally in line with the overarching discourse, which is the aim to conserve wildlife while making
sure communities receive benefits. African Parks introduced community projects to gain respect and support from local community members and ultimately reduce conflicts in the park. This has resulted in better wildlife conservation but according to the government and other organizations around Majete, educating local community members remains a necessary focus. However, even though education is perceived as important by these organizations, it is possible that community members do not agree or fear a loss of autonomy. Some community members might not share the same opinions because the ban on poaching actually influences their resource use. Community members that struggle to find resources outside of the park might develop a negative image towards the policy arrangement where they feel an ‘expectation’ to help conserve wildlife. Different views on these aspects indicate a low level of strategic congruence in the arrangement.

This strategic orientation differs from a Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) discourse which encourages “the full participation of communities and resource users in decision-making activities, and the incorporation of local institutions, customary practices, and knowledge systems in management, regulatory, and enforcement processes” (Armitage, 2005: 703). CBNRM is a discourse that responds to the limitations of previous bureaucratic and centralization management schemes that still tend to be seen in Majete. To improve strategic coherence in Majete, it is important to include community representatives in decision-making and to provide opportunities for small businesses that can be set up and operated by the local population. In that way, more community members around the park can make their own living, reducing their dependency on African Parks.

6.4.2. Structural – Internal congruence

Structural-internal congruence is the coherence between the four dimensions within the policy arrangement, namely the actors, resources, rules and discourses (Boonstra, 2004; Arts et al., 2006). In Majete, key actors such as African Parks and the DNPW share a common discourse. Despite their opinions, this discourse - together with the rules of the arrangement - is understood and followed by actors involved. This ensures that other actors also share African Parks’ goals for Majete. Informal relations, conversations with actors that are not part of the arrangement as well as partnerships create a dynamic type of management which encourages actors to work towards the common goal of wildlife conservation. This indicates a relatively high level of internal congruence in terms of the direction of the policy arrangement.

Even though the public-private partnership with DNPW and African Parks was seen as a collaborative approach that would include communities, commercial operators and donors in its model, African Parks is still the most powerful actor as it has control over important resources and decides the rules. Communities who used to live in this area before African Parks arrived do receive benefits from the arrangement. However, in the end they are still in the most disadvantaged position as they do not control those resources, both physical, financial and in terms of knowledge. This implies that African Parks will always have a final say and ability to decide the eventual level of benefit sharing and set the rules of the game. In the future, friction with local communities might occur if management of resources and policy decisions continue to be controlled by these key actors, which could pose a threat to the internal congruence. In-depth research into the outcomes of other policy arrangements is required to find out whether communities, in a collaborative approach where communities have full ownership and decision-
making power, are actually better off than in the case of Majete. The aim to become financially sustainable might also pose a threat to internal congruence of the arrangement if dependency on donors for financial resources remains necessary. These signs of incongruence suggest that the policy arrangement might be subject to change in the coming years.

6.4.3. Structural – External congruence

Structural-external congruence can refer to the degree to which social and political demands in society are in line with goals of the policy arrangement (Boonstra, 2004; Arts et al., 2006). In other words, it is the extent to which the policy arrangement is coherent with wider (conservation) policies, both at the national and international level.

National level

What we are currently seeing is that conservation has been put higher on the agenda in Malawi. The government acknowledged problems with its national parks over time and as a result revised the National Parks and Wildlife Act in 2004 to improve wildlife conservation and especially to bring the topic to people’s attention. These policies are in line with the policy arrangement in Majete which also concerns wildlife protection. Majete has undergone major changes since the arrival of African Parks, including the relocation of big game. This corresponds to literature about conservation that addresses its growing importance (Attwell and Cotterill, 2000; Reynolds et al, 2001; McElroy, 2015). For example, Germano et al. (2015: 100) states in their article that “translocations as a wildlife management tool have risen exponentially over the past few decades”. Next to setting up the fence, transferring wildlife to the reserve and implementing law enforcement, the policy arrangement has also contributed to solving some problems in the region. It has improved water resources for local residents around the reserve, reduced poverty, educated the population and changed people’s attitude towards conservation. This corresponds to literature in which partnerships are viewed as arrangements that can strengthen sustainable development and are responsible for societal progress (Glasbergen et al., 2007). This policy arrangement has been considered an example for improving wildlife conservation and reducing poverty in Malawi, according to publicity, but also to the respondents of this research. Based on the fact that conservation is on the agenda in Malawi and that this policy arrangement contributes to general development goals, it can be considered externally congruent at the national level.

Another interesting point is that African Parks is sometimes seen by other actors as an organization that feels responsible for more issues than solely the management and conservation of Majete. One example is that they take on responsibility to foster community development around the park. African Parks encourages the formation of committees in the village by community members themselves and at the same time initiates and controls these community meetings. Even though African Parks believes it is necessary to initiate developments in order to successfully conserve wildlife, other actors believe this responsibility could be shared or outsourced to other parties. This process has been set in motion via partnerships with The Hunger Project and Malaria Program and via a Joint Liaison Committee in which issues are discussed. However, more partnerships could be established between, for example African Parks and other government departments to take on the direct responsibility of monitoring issues of irrigation, agriculture, and education. According to Nichols (2016), outsourcing responsibilities would be an advantage as it could save costs and therefore reduce dependency on donors. We have currently seen
that including a tourism partner in the park attracted more tourists and that this contributed to income for Majete which was used for conservation. However, even though it is assumed to be a positive addition to the park, some actors stressed that it cannot be said that tourism immediately improved conservation and livelihoods. It does not mean that new partnerships will undoubtedly improve any situation. There are more factors that influence this. Nichols (2016) mentions that increased partnerships would be time consuming as more actors have to be involved in meetings. This could lead to increased conflicts. The same counts for outsourcing responsibilities. Creating more partnerships could be a positive change, but it does not necessarily mean it will improve results immediately. It will require African Parks to be open towards discussion and dialogue with other actors that are currently less involved in decision-making. Currently African Parks seems to be a closed system, similar to the old model operated by the government. Increasing partnerships would change this model in the future and decrease African Parks’ control of Majete. It would further increase external congruence with other organizations and government departments. However, if African Parks is less in control of the policy arrangement it could also cause internal incongruence. Similarly, partnerships may indeed create a democratic process whereby different actors have shared influence in decision-making, but conservation is currently already successful so whether this would be positive for the reserve as a whole is debatable.

**International level**

Due to a conservation crisis occurring, especially in Africa, many places have been suffering from a loss of species, destruction of wildlife and at the same time human populations are experiencing high levels of poverty (African Parks, 2017a). Conservation in Africa has therefore been a topic commonly addressed and researched (Nthiga et al., 2011; Van der Duim et al., 2014). To cope with these issues, different conservation policy arrangements have come about over time, experimenting with ways to decentralize political control and decision making to alternative degrees of government (Boudreaux et al., 2011). The policy arrangement in Majete is only one particular example of a conservation approach. African Parks has gained legitimacy due to its success regarding conservation in Majete, not only in the country but also in other places in Africa. The model first started in Malawi at Majete Wildlife Reserve but has since then been exported to ten other parks in eight countries (African Parks, 2017a). It has come to such an extent that they are taking a leading role in many parks addressing conservation and development issues. This shows that the policy arrangement is externally congruent internationally in terms of their legitimacy in Africa and within the African Parks Network.

There seems to be an idea that collaborating with different societal actors helps to deliver better conservation and livelihood results. In practice, other conservation policy arrangements that exist in Africa such as conservancies in Namibia and Tourism Conservation Enterprises (TCE) in Kenya, have a discourse that differs completely to the case of Majete. These two approaches have been selected to indicate differences with the approach in Majete. It must be mentioned that these cases refer to areas outside (and/or attached to) national parks while Majete is a national protected area itself. The characteristics are still relevant to compare nonetheless. In Majete, African Parks forms organization and communication structures that involve other actors but in reality African Parks still has the lead and takes final decisions. Ideally, collaboration efforts would create dynamism and harmony where all partners bring in capabilities, opinions and competitive advantages to strive for common goals together and equally. In the conservancies approach in Namibia and the TCE approach in Kenya, this can be seen more clearly. A strong
policy arrangement in Namibia decentralizes authority and specifically provides rights to local communities living in and around a protected area to manage wildlife (Buscher and Dietz, 2005). Wildlife policy in Namibia changed after independence in 1990 which gave communal land owners conditional ownership over wildlife if they registered as conservancies. For example, groups of land owners can share their resources “for the purpose of conserving and utilizing wildlife on their combined properties” (MET, 1995 in Van der Duim et al., 2012: 129). In this way, rights are provided to local communities, rather than governments, to profit from sustainable natural resource management. Another example of a successful approach to conservation and land-use are the TCEs in Kenya. This strategy, developed foremost by the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), aims to conserve nature and wildlife outside state-protected areas that is identified as threatened, and to improve community livelihoods through commercial activities (Nthiga et al., 2015). Together with AWF, a private investor approaches local communities to form a private-community partnership in which land is set aside entirely for conservation and tourism purposes. Communities remain owners of the land which is used for conservation and tourism (i.e. lodges) (Nthiga et al., 2015). Decision making takes place in a board, a trust in which all three parties are represented. Decisions also include the management and distribution of community benefits and the recruitment of donors (Nthiga et al., 2015). All economic benefits from the tourism operation are given to the community (Nthiga et al., 2011). Thus it encourages local communities outside national parks to protect wildlife (Van der Duim et al., 2014). In these cases communities have much more of an influence in the decision-making.

These are two positive attempts at decentralizing political control. The case of Majete is different because the arrangement is dominated by an NGO rather than local communities. Benefit sharing is included in the set-up, which is similar in all conservation approaches, but it is not the primary purpose of the arrangement in Majete and therefore it constitutes a discourse leaning more towards the former (but improved and liberal) fine and fence approach. This differs entirely from community-based conservation, as discussed by Barrow & Murphree (2001) where local inhabitants completely manage their own resources. The approaches in Kenya and Namibia do relate to the discourse commonly referred to as CBNRM (Van der Duim et al., 2012). In the conservancy approach in Namibia, communities do not have to resettle or move away from their land and have legal ownership rights of a protected area. Revenue that is generated goes directly to communities. In this approach communities can also decide to allocate part of their land towards trophy hunting, as a way to gain revenue from game hunters. This is a typical discourse in itself which differs from the discourse in Majete where hunting is forbidden and is seen as counteracting conservation goals, influencing the source of revenue. In the TCE approach in Kenya, local communities are formally included in the arrangement as they remain owners of the land, which also relates to the CBNRM discourse. This differs from Majete, as communities had to leave their land and do not receive direct revenue from the policy arrangement. Instead, communities receive benefits indirectly through employment opportunities, scholarship programs and the building of structures such as schools and boreholes.

All three conservation arrangements were initiated because top-down approaches had not been providing desired results (Nthiga et al., 2015) and all cases have led to improved results in terms of conservation and benefit sharing. However, in Malawi the government outsourced all responsibility to African Parks which means African Parks received the authority and control over resources. Governance has in fact not changed much from the previous government model in terms of control of resources and one could argue
that this remains a type of top-down approach. This fundamental difference indicates that the policy arrangement is externally incongruent relative to other international conservation arrangements. According to Rodríguez et al. (2007) “conservation projects are ultimately more legitimate, politically acceptable and successful when led locally”, a discourse that is not reflected in Majete. The question is, whether local communities are actually better off in other conservation approaches where they do have ownership and equal roles as other actors. This requires a more in-depth study of the outcomes of policy arrangements in terms of livelihoods in Majete compared to the cases of Namibia and Kenya. Table 5 below provides an overview of the differences between the three conservation approaches.

Table 5. Comparison conservation approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Focus</strong></td>
<td>Rehabilitation and long-term management of national parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actors involved</strong></td>
<td>Major actors and their specific roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal entity</strong></td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ownership of the land (protected area)</strong></td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public-Private Partnership Majete, Malawi</th>
<th>Tourism Conservation Enterprises Kenya **</th>
<th>Conservancy Approach Namibia **</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Focus</strong></td>
<td>Rehabilitation and long-term management of national parks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Actors involved</strong></td>
<td>African Parks – has full responsibility for managing the park and private sector, distributes benefits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government – provides policy and legislation, provides scouts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Donors – provide most of the financial support</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NGOs – Provide help in community development and malaria projects</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism operator – owns and runs the lodge in the park, attracts tourists to the reserve</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communities (Communal land owners) – Owners of land on which conservation areas are created and on which lodges have been built and from which livestock is to be excluded in order to attract wildlife for tourism. Distributes benefits.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private entrepreneurs – Manage the lodge in terms of daily operations, marketing, sales and product development</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NGOs – Broker, arbitrator and expert in conservation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Donors – Finance the community mobilization phase and co-finance the construction of lodges and the transfer of immovable assets to the community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal entity</strong></td>
<td>Public-private partnership between DNPW government and African Parks based on formal agreement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ownership of the land (protected area)</strong></td>
<td>DNPW Malawi Government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>Joint venture or partnership based on formal contract.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National legislation provides use rights over wildlife and tourism to conservancies, which are legal entities with the power to acquire, hold and alienate property of every kind and with the capacity to acquire rights and obligations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ownership of the land (protected area)</strong></td>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>Conservancies own huntable game and are concession holders over tourism lodge development within their boundaries. Land in communal areas is held in trust for the benefit of traditional communities by the state.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Management of protected area and/or tourism operation**

| NGO African Parks manages wildlife and finances | Private sector party manages tourism operation which is also conservation method | Conservancies carry out wildlife management activities through the appointment of their own game guides which are involved in wildlife monitoring, game counts and managing human-wildlife conflict. Conservancies enter into contractual arrangements with trophy hunting outfitters and photographic tourism companies. Usually a joint management committee manages the contractual arrangements. |
| Private sector party manages tourism | Communities distribute benefits |

**Sources of Finance**

| Donors are the main source of finance, all donor funding goes straight into operations of the park. Other sources of funding are from the tourism operation (concession fees and tourist entry fees to the park). Income from the community campsite goes straight to the community in terms of projects. | Transfer of immovable assets occurs through different funding mechanisms (e.g. donors, social venture capital, equity shares, loans) Such funding is leveraged with private capital of the private entrepreneur. | Conservancies receive their own income through sustainable use of wildlife. They retain all income earned in this way. Donor and government funding provides resources for technical support to conservancies. Funding for trophy hunting comes from the trophy hunting company. |

**Contribution to conservation**

| Land which was damaged and left without any resources is now secured. Reintroduction of wildlife has brought the park back to its former glory. | By securing land as conservation area, the amount of land available for conservation increases. By strategically selecting the location for such conservation areas, corridors between already protected areas can be created, allowing for landscape-level conservation. | Ownership over wildlife and income from use of wildlife provide the conditions for communities to accept wildlife on their land. Conservancies set aside land specifically for wildlife and tourism. Wildlife has also been reintroduced. |

**Contribution to livelihood**

| People’s livelihoods are improved through the development of community structures, direct employment and other social projects. | People’s livelihoods are improved, among other things, by the receipt of various types of fees; direct employment and local procurement opportunities; and the construction of health clinics and schools. Next to such tangible benefits, intangible benefits, such as increased security and empowerment, are important positive social impacts of tourism conservation enterprises. | Conservancies directly receive various fees from trophy hunting and photographic tourism companies. Income is used for employment, social projects and cash payments to members. Hunting and tourism operations employ local people, sometimes to management level. |

**taken (and adapted) from Van der Duim et al. (2014)**
6.5. To conclude
This research has contributed to knowledge about policy arrangements at wildlife reserves in Africa. Gaining in-depth knowledge about African Parks, a key player in the field of conservation, allows for a significant evaluation of the conservation arrangement. The policy arrangement as being constructed in a way that positions African Parks as an authority figure, similar to the previous model, as well as the strong discourse to save wildlife by educating communities and scouts around the park, has led to positive outcomes in terms of wildlife conservation and community development. A fundamental difference in this arrangement compared to other conservation arrangements is the role of communities, being involved and supported in Majete, but not gaining a decision-making position. Increasing collaboration with communities to the level of ownership of resources and decision-making could be beneficial for the future of the policy arrangement. However, African Parks is still accountable to its partners in the end. If they do not deliver what they express and intend to, they will not receive donor funding, community support, or willingness of tourism operators to work in the park. That would highly influence the policy arrangement. If African Parks fails, the government will not continue partnerships with African Parks and their position in other parks in Africa would be influenced as well. African Parks therefore might be seen as a dominant actor, and one could argue that the top-down approach could become problematic in the future, but on the other hand African Parks is also an important actor that has had to deliver positive results for all its partners. The question is what is more important: wildlife conservation that also leads to community development, or equal roles and decision-making power for all actors in and around a protected area? More research is required to find out which combination of factors leads to the best outcomes on all levels. Overall, the policy arrangement in Majete has been a successful approach for rebuilding wildlife in Majete and for putting Malawi on the map. This is promising for Majete’s future in terms of financial independency and for becoming a renown safari destination.

6.5.1. Limitations of methods
For a better understanding of the results of this research it is important to reflect on limitations. This is also necessary in order to identify suitable follow-up studies. One of the main limitations of this research is the methodological focus on actors in Majete. Respondents of this research were mostly from organizations within Majete. This limitation was taken into account during the analysis process but could have ultimately caused some bias in the results. To be able to understand the case as a whole, perspectives of actors outside Majete, including local community members, should have been more investigated. Local community members make up a large part of the population living around Majete Wildlife Reserve while their perspectives are currently underrepresented. During field visits and informal conversations in villages, it was still possible to get a general idea how local community members that are employed through tourism or who make use of newly built structures, view the work of African Parks and changes in the area. However, community members that are not in any way in contact with other parties in the reserve, were not interviewed during this research due to time, language barrier and difficulty of access. Interviewing representatives of the community could have led to alternative insights.

6.5.2. Suggestions for future research
This research was exploratory and interpretive in nature. It has explored certain areas of interest and created opportunities for future research. In order to further explore the findings of this research it is
necessary to continue this study. First of all, a future study should focus more on local communities surrounding the borders of Majete Wildlife Reserve. In that study one could investigate how people living outside Majete have improved their lives or have been disadvantaged by the developments over time as a result of the current policy arrangement by looking at both statistical information and actors’ perspectives. Education seemed to be a shared discourse in this research, referring to the understanding of local communities about the importance and ownership of resources and the reasons for different policies. As this full understanding has not yet been researched it could be interesting in a future study to investigate how residents make sense of these ownership constructions and policies.

Another significant study is to investigate the role of donors and financial flows in Majete. It would be interesting to find out the underlying reasons behind donor funding or the results of donating large amounts of money to private organizations. By getting a closer look at the perspective of donors we could find out more about the certainty of donor funding. Furthermore it is important to investigate exactly what could happen if donors stop funding. Would the policy arrangement in Majete collapse? And how is Majete able to reach self-sustainability? In this case, the research would benefit from a study investigating who controls the work of African Parks and decides whether their work is successful or not.

Additionally, future research could benefit from extending the focus of this research to different scales of analysis, for example by comparing the African Parks model to models of other NGOs; comparing the policy arrangements at Majete Wildlife Reserve to the arrangements within Malawi as a whole; and comparing wildlife management in Malawi more closely to the arrangements in other African countries. In the last case, one could also look at African Parks in other countries to see where African Parks might have experienced interventions which failed. What could we learn from those examples and in what way did Majete overcome or avoid these challenges? Even though other conservation approaches may include communities at the decision-making or ownership level, it is important to investigate whether that approach has actually led to better results. In any case, an extension of this research would contribute to existing literature and help policy makers develop effective conservation arrangements.
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Publishers.
Appendix 1 - Interview Guide
genral questions

Main question for interview
How do actors view and explain the policy arrangement in Majete in terms of wildlife conservation and inclusiveness?

Instructions for the introduction

- Introduce myself
  - A master student at Wageningen University, studying tourism and environmental issues and particularly interested in wildlife conservation approaches in Africa
- Explain the objective of the Master Thesis and assure their contribution is valuable
  - The objective is to understand the case of Majete Wildlife Reserve: what the main characteristics of the policy arrangement are, what has changed over time, what the role of different actors is in the management. All information from any source about the development of Majete Wildlife Reserve is valuable for scientific purpose but also as an example for other parks.
- Assure that the results will be anonymous, that interviewees can choose not to answer a question or to stop the interview when they do not feel comfortable
- Ask permission to record the interview and explain what will be done with the recordings
- Thank the interviewee for making time and ask if there are any questions before starting the interview

Opening questions
Suitable questions to break the ice and set an open tone:

- It is great to be in Malawi, how long have you worked here?
- How do you enjoy living and working at this beautiful location?
- Thank you for inviting me, I look forward to learning more about Malawi and Majete

Interview questions
The following are a list of questions that can help guide the interview. The questions are based on predetermined categories derived from the literature. The questions do not have to be answered in order.

Actors

- What is your position within the organization?
- How long have you been working at the organization?
- What do you believe is the overall mission of your organization?
- How do you believe the vision has changed over time (before African Parks took over management)?
- What has been the role of your organization during and after the agreement?
- What measures have been taken to conserve wildlife over time? How?
- What barriers do you face when you are trying to operate your role?
- Which other actors are involved in management?
- How do you view other actors involved or affected?
- Is there congruence in actors’ opinions?
- Who is involved in the policy arrangement and who is not?
**Resources**

- Which actors have experience in the field of wildlife conservation?
- Do actors share their information with other actors? And how do they share their information?
- Are there actors which provide other actors with financial resources, like grants or funds?
- Are there rules to give certain actors more power to influence the policy arrangement?
- How is the park management and conservation financed?
- Benefits and weaknesses?

**Rules of the game**

- Is there a general legislation produced and adopted in management of Majete Wildlife Reserve?
- Are there individual arrangements between actors to achieve goals?
- Which actors are involved in the development of these legislations?
- Are the arrangements influenced by international organizations? (for example donors)
- Are the local residents involved in decision-making and if so, how?
- Do you think local residents should be more involved in the process?
- What are the formal rules, agreements and legislation?

**Discourses**

- What do you think of the communication with other actors involved?
- What do you think of the work of other actors involved?
- Which actors do you think are most relevant?
- Do you think wildlife conservation and community involvement or the improvement of local livelihoods are more important than economic growth?
- How would you describe the management at Majete Wildlife Reserve?
- What do you think of the way the park is managed currently?
- Can you suggest improvements necessary for the management of Majete Wildlife Reserve?
- Overall philosophy about conservation, tourism, communities, ownership

**Instructions for conclusion**

- Thank the interviewee for their participation and time, assure that their contribution has been of great value
- Ask if there are any questions from their side
- Ask if they would be interested in receiving the final version of the Master Thesis
Appendix 2 - Interview Guide participant specific

Malawi Government: Department of National Parks and Wildlife (1)
- Can you tell me something about the management of national parks in Malawi?
- Objective prior to partnership
- What has changed over time
- Why engage with African Parks? What makes them unique?
- Who decides on the partnership and how was this decided?
- How much of a role do you still play in the partnership and Majete?
- How is the partnership formed and legalized?
- Do you have meetings with other actors?
- Who sets the agenda and who is included?
- How is management in Majete different to other parks?
- What are the current rules? Which actors besides AP play a role?
- Policies regarding infrastructure, facilities, entrance, who is included in decision-making?
- Who receives benefits?
- How do you communicate information?
- How is your cooperation with AP and RPS?
- Do you think management is currently effective?
- Can you suggest any improvements if necessary?

Malawi Government: Department of National Parks and Wildlife (2)
- How were parks in Malawi managed in the past?
- What have been policy objectives in Malawi, in terms of wildlife conservation in general over time? What made the government want to manage wildlife?
- What is different to the management of parks in Malawi today?
- What determined your decision to partner with African Parks?
- What makes a PPP unique and different to other ways of managing?
- What makes African Parks unique/different/successful?
- Do you think their model is effective? Feasible? Sustainable?
- How is the park financed in Majete?
- What would happen if donors stopped today?
- To what extent does DNPW still have a role (in 2003, and today in 2017)
- How is Majete secured? How was the patrol system introduced? Does it work well? Who makes these kind of decisions?
- Who introduced the CBO system?
  1. Does it work?
  2. Do benefits reach all communities?
  3. Are communities now more understanding? Why?
- Have contrasts between people/landscapes over time decreased or increased? How?
- What do you think should still be improved in Majete?
African Parks (general)

- What is African Parks, what is the model and objective?
- What has been done and changed over time in Majete and/or in Malawi?
- What made you decide for Majete and for a partnership?
- How much is the government still involved?
- How is a partnership formed and legalized, who makes this decision?
- What rules are currently involved for tourism, fences and infrastructure?
- Which other actors are involved in Majete?
- What are the policy arrangements?
- Do you have meetings? (the board - who makes final decisions?)
- How is information shared and communicated?
- How is African Parks financed?
- If donors stopped today, what would happen?
- How do you support local communities?
- In general, what is your opinion on sustainable tourism?
- Do you think management is currently effective?
  - What are the barriers
  - What are the successes
  - Can you suggest any improvements?
- What makes African Parks unique?
- How is African Parks different to other similar NGOs?
- Do you have any employment figures of the area?

African Parks (communities coordinator)

- What is your role at African Parks?
- What projects are organized for local communities currently?
- Are they involved in decision-making?
  - Meetings
  - Rules/policies for inclusion?
- In the past, what did the Majete region mean to local people?
- How did communities benefit or experience Majete in the past?
- What has changed since the partnership?
- How are current benefits distributed?
  - Who decides this?
- How do you, in general, view the cooperation with other actors such as DNPW, RPS?
- Do you believe management is currently effective?
- What changes would you wish to see in Majete? Are there any barriers?
- What is your opinion on sustainable tourism?
- Is tourism the most important source of revenue for the park?

Robin Pope Safaris

- What is the objective of Robin Pope Safaris for operating in Majete Wildlife Reserve?
- How has this objective developed over time?
- What do you consider to be your main role in Majete?
- How do you achieve your goals?
- What are the most important resources at Majete Wildlife Reserve (e.g. wildlife, landscape)
- Who decides what you can build or organize for tourism?
- Who receives benefits from tourism?
- What is your relationship with African Parks?
- What is your opinion on responsible tourism?
- How do you contribute to wildlife conservation and community development?
- In what way do you address environmental issues to your guests?
- In what way are you involved in management of Majete?
- Do you participate in meetings with African Parks?
  - If so, what is discussed in these meetings?
  - If not, how is information communicated with you?
- Who decides on the rules and policies for Majete?
- What do you think of the communication and work of other actors involved?
- Which actors do you think are the most relevant?
- Do you think management is currently effective in terms of inclusiveness and wildlife conservation?
- Do you value wildlife conservation and community involvement or the improvement of local livelihoods similar to economic growth?
- Can you suggest improvements necessary for the management of Majete Wildlife Reserve?

Lilongwe Wildlife Trust
- What is Lilongwe Wildlife Trust (Objective, how long operating)
- How do you achieve goals? (Meetings, measures taken, who decides on rules and policies, which actors involved?)
- What has happened and changed in Malawi over time (any events, large projects, impacts)
- What can you say about poaching in Malawi (changed over time, any formal/informal rules)
- How is Lilongwe Wildlife Trust financed? (partners?)
- Do you know anything about what is happening in Majete?
- Do you know anything about African Parks? (Management)
- Do you face any barriers in your work?
- How do you share/communicate your information?
- What is your opinion on sustainable tourism and community development?

Ng'ona Lodge
- Introduce lodge, how long has it been operating, what was your main objective?
- Do you have any contact with actors inside Majete?
- Have you experienced changes since African Parks’ management?
  - E.g. increased levels of tourism for your business, improved infrastructure etc.
- Have there been any major events or happenings that had impact?
- What is your opinion on the work of African Parks? Why is AP unique, how do you communicate your work, do you see improvements?
- What is your opinion on the management of Majete in general?
- Are there any policies or rules regarding your operations? (Who makes the decisions and decides on new projects?)
- How is your operation financed?
- What is your opinion on sustainable tourism? Do you support it in any way?
- What are your objectives for the future? What are your plans?
• Do you face any barriers in your work due to Majete?
• What are the formal or informal rules and decisions that you have to make or follow?
• Who receives the benefits from tourism?

ESCOM
• Can you say something about ESCOM?
  o What is your objective here in Majete
  o What have you done over time?
  o What are your plans in Majete
• You have built a power station over here:
  o How did you decide to build this?
  o Were there any policies/rules for this?
  o How was the decision made? (Meetings?)
  o How has the final say for what you can build here?
• Do you have contact with the government, African Parks or other actors?
• How is the power station financed?
• You share the boundaries with Majete, does this have advantages or disadvantages for you?
• What impact do you have in Majete and its surroundings with the new power station?
• Can you say anything about what has happened in the past years? You started the same time as African Parks, do you experience changes over time?
• What do you know about African Parks, what is your opinion on their work?
• How do you experience management in and around Majete? Any improvements necessary?

WESM
• Can you tell me something about WESM?
  o Objectives
  o Projects that you do
  o How long operating?
• How is WESM financed?
• Do you have any projects in Majete?
• What do you know about African Parks and the changes in Majete?
• What is your opinion on African Parks?
• What do you believe or suggest should improve?
• Are there any barriers in your work?
• What is your opinion on sustainable tourism?
• If donors stopped today, what would happen to Majete?
• Who makes decision at WESM? Do you have meetings with other actors?
• Do you have policies or rules for your projects?
• Is the Blantyre branch different to other locations of WESM?

Local community members
• What has Majete meant to you and your family in the past?
• What has changed for you and your village since African Parks arrived?
• Are your family members also employed in the park? What do they do?
• Does your family receive any benefits/profit or compensation? How is this provided to you?
• Do all benefits reach everyone?
• Do you get informed about conservation and other things that happen? How?
• Are you satisfied with how Majete is/was being managed?
• How do you feel about the contrast of the environment in/outside the park?
• Do people have access to the resources inside the park?
• Can you make any decisions yourself?
• If you are critical, what could still be improved in the park?

Scout/ranger
• What does your job involve?
• How is the scouting by African Parks organized?
• When did you start working here? And what did you do before?
• Is your family also involved or being compensated for in the park?
• Do you think the work African Parks is doing is positive? Does it really benefit all communities?
• Can you be critical? What do you think is still a challenge? What should be improved?

The Hunger Project
• What is the Hunger Project? Objective, How long operating?
• How do you achieve your goals?
  o Meetings
  o Policies and restrictions
  o Who decides?
• What is your relationship with African Parks?
• What is your opinion on the work African Parks?
• Do you believe your projects and African Parks’ projects reach all communities? How, and in what ways, is it successful?
• Have there been any events that impacted or restricted your work?
• Have there been any struggles or barriers?
  o Name a critical point of African Parks
  o What can be improved to increase local participation or development?
• How do you experience change in Majete?
• How do you feel about the contrast inside and outside the park?
• What is your opinion on sustainable tourism?
• Do you have contact with other actors inside and around Majete?
Appendix 3 – Field Notes

Village visit 1

- The meeting was organized to form a new committee in the village with members of the CBOs, school management committee and the village development committee.
- The new committee formed included 6 members
- Those who attended the meeting were the CBO members, village headsmen, African Parks staff who also led the meeting, and the chief. They proposed the new project of building a school and created a committee that would steer the process.
- Before every project there is a meeting to discuss the roles of members. After this meeting they are free to do the project.
- African Parks assists in the organization of the meeting
- The role of the eventual committee is to control the project. They choose their own chairperson.
- I spoke to the school teacher, city council representative, education officer, extension officer and the chief of the village
- They all spoke very positively about African Parks’ work and about the results of the projects
- The school teacher said that the government of Malawi always promises to build schools but never follows through. He said that African Parks does always follow their promises. African Parks works faster and is therefore necessary in the village.
- In this village, kids used to sit under trees because their school building was damaged during a storm. With the heat there is not enough space under the trees for all of the children and no desks or proper facilities. They have one building left but this is not enough to facilitate all the children. Therefore they proposed to build another one.
- Extensions officer said that African Parks also provides chairs for children who have to sit on the floor. The government usually provides stationary but this time African Parks will provide this as the government hasn’t done so yet.
- The education representative of the city council attended this meeting so that they are up to date with what is going on in the village but also to authenticate the project.
- During the meeting all chiefs, CBOs, SMC and VDC members were present and sitting in the audience.
- African Parks, the government representative, and senior chief were on the podium
- African Parks led the meeting and one by one the representatives spoke
- Everyone clapped for the speakers but for the senior chief they had a different clap (shows he is highly respected).
- They voted for the committee positions, but it is led by African Parks (local employees of African Parks)
- So local community members get to vote but African Parks counts votes
- Chief/AP and government put in the first brick with a community member.
- African Parks staff are also local (from the region). Therefore language spoken was local. (Makes the gap smaller and the event less intimidating).
Village visit 2

- Visiting a village where a school has recently been built. The meeting is set to discuss the plan for the opening of the school. This is a day in which communities can celebrate and therefore they have to tell other actors what their plans will be for that day. Other actors help realize this.
- CBO chairman, steering committee, African Parks representative (local employee), and chief are present.
- Chief sits on chair, higher up in front of the group. Everyone introduces themselves.
- African Parks explains the outline of the meeting.
- African Parks asks what the community expects on the day that the school opens. They will be giving the school to the village and the villagers are allowed to choose which activities will be done on this day.
- He explains that African Parks doesn’t work with politicians. Communities can decide for themselves which issues are taking place and what they really need. African Parks does not work with politicians but with the local community members themselves in order to prevent unnecessary problems.
- CBO members explain that there will be a road to Blantyre that needs to be fixed, there will be a tent or roof for the day to reduce heat, there will be traditional dances, the area will be cleaned up.
- Afterwards they all discussed who will speak that day, what African Parks’ role will be, etc.
- At the end of the meeting African Parks shared some drinks to close off the meeting.
- The conversation/discussion was in general quite equal, everyone was allowed to speak, however, African Parks did seem to take the lead