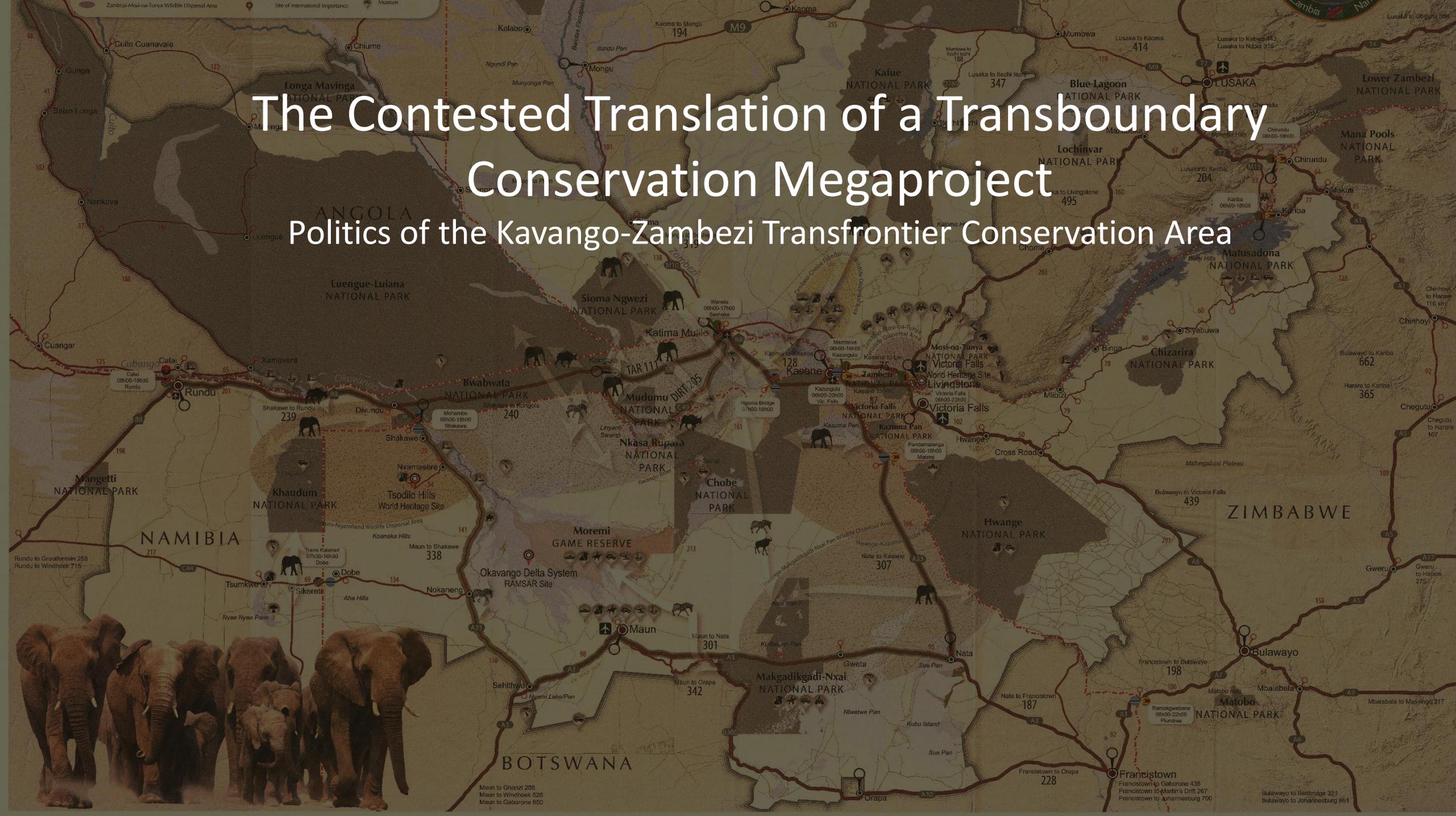


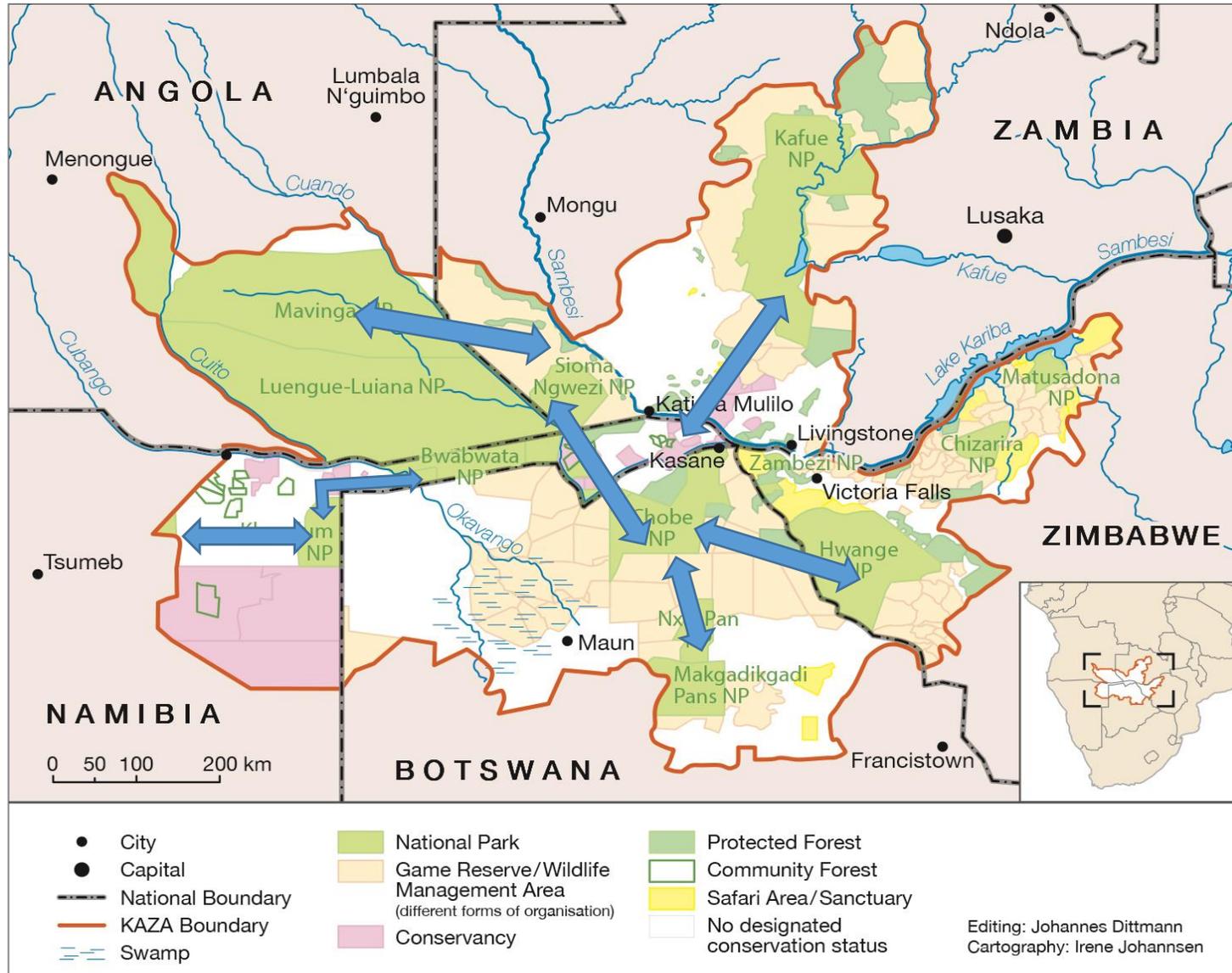
The Contested Translation of a Transboundary Conservation Megaproject

Politics of the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area





Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area (KAZA)



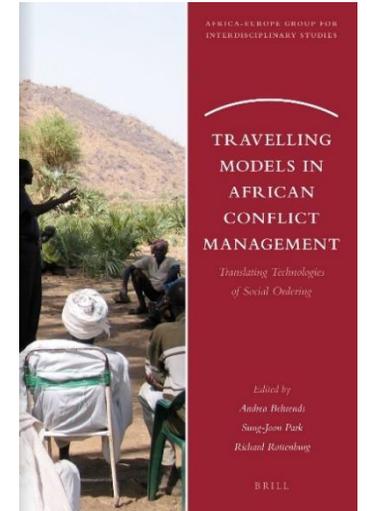
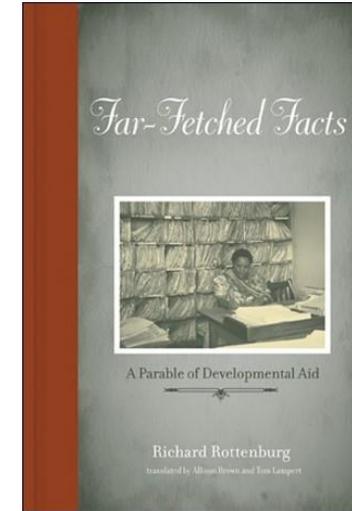
- MoU signed: 2006
- treaty: 2011
- size: 520,000 km² (371,000 km² conservation; 149,000 km² other land uses)
- population: 2,67 million
- 20 national parks, 85 forest reserves, 22 communal conservancies 11 game sanctuaries, 103 wildlife management areas

Vision 2050

“to sustainably manage the Kavango Zambezi ecosystem, its heritage and cultural resources based on best conservation and tourism models for the socio-economic well-being of the communities and other stakeholders in the region” (KAZA TFCA 2015, II).



- **Transfrontier Conservation as a *Travelling Model***
(Rottenburg 1996; Rottenburg 2002; Behrends, Park & Rottenburg 2014; Czarniawska & Sevón 2005; Czarniawska 2008; McCann 2008; Peck 2011; Temenos & McCann 2013)
- **Translating Transfrontier Conservation – actors, places and practices**
(Callon 1986; Callon 2006a; Callon 2006b; Latour 1999; Belliger & Krieger 2006; Mosse 2004; Mosse & Lewis 2006)
- **Techniques and technologies used to create commensurability**
(Bueger 2011; Bueger 2013; Pince 2012; Mosse 2005; Perkins 2004; Crampton 2009; Glasze 2009; Craggs & Mahony 2014; Death 2011; Weisser & Müller-Mahn 2016)

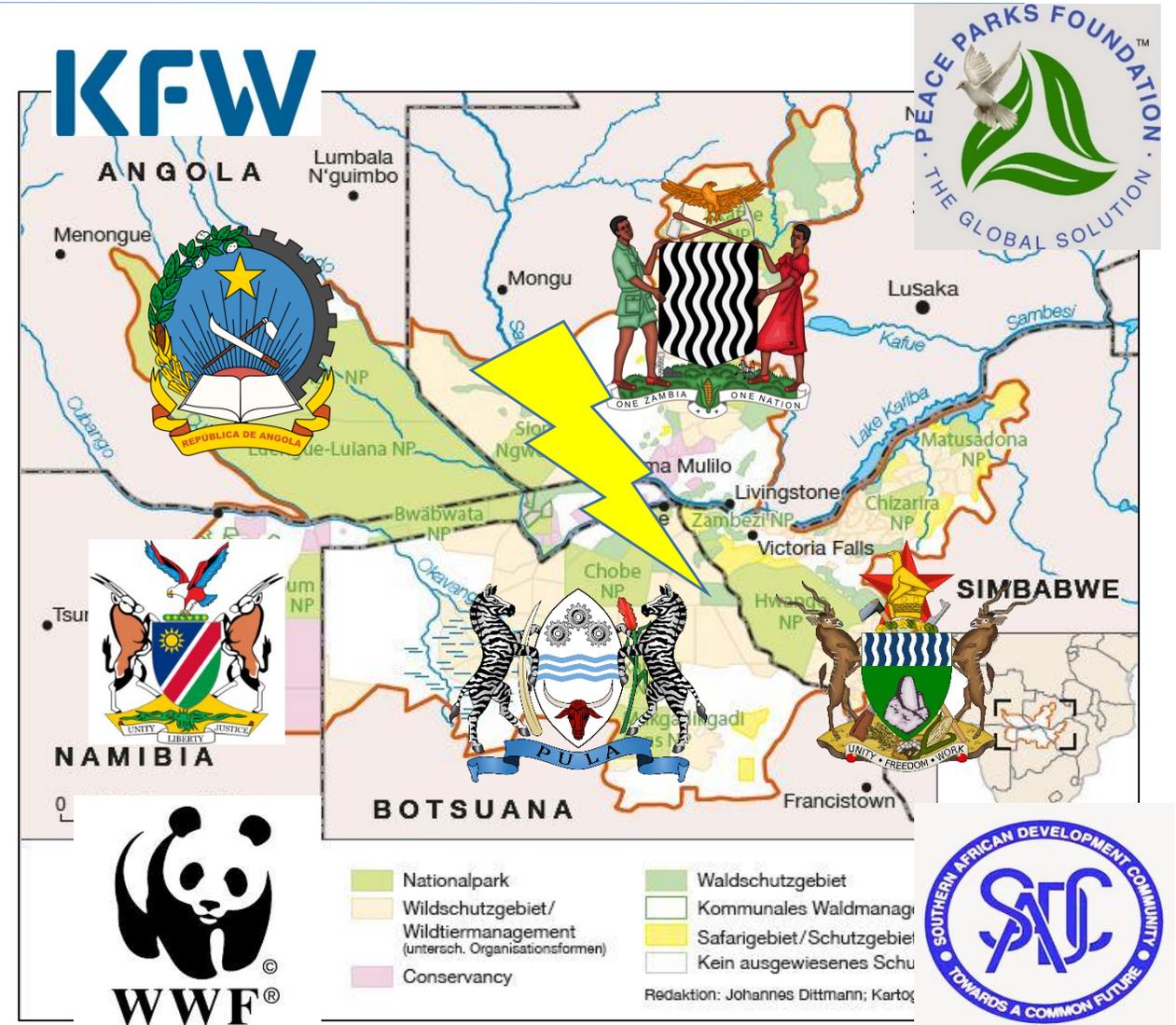


„to translate is also to express in one’s own language what others say and want, why they act in the way they do and how they associate with each other: it is to establish oneself as a spokesman.“ (Callon 1986, 18-19)



Breaks in translating Transfrontier Conservation

- vision is an ,empty signifier‘
- rigid top-down management
- contested sovereignty and ownership
- locked in interministerial land use debates on national levels
- compromised by micro-politics in ministry





KAZA – a failed mega-project?

- delayed implementation
- absent materialisation
- most funds spent on operational costs

„KAZA has failed!“

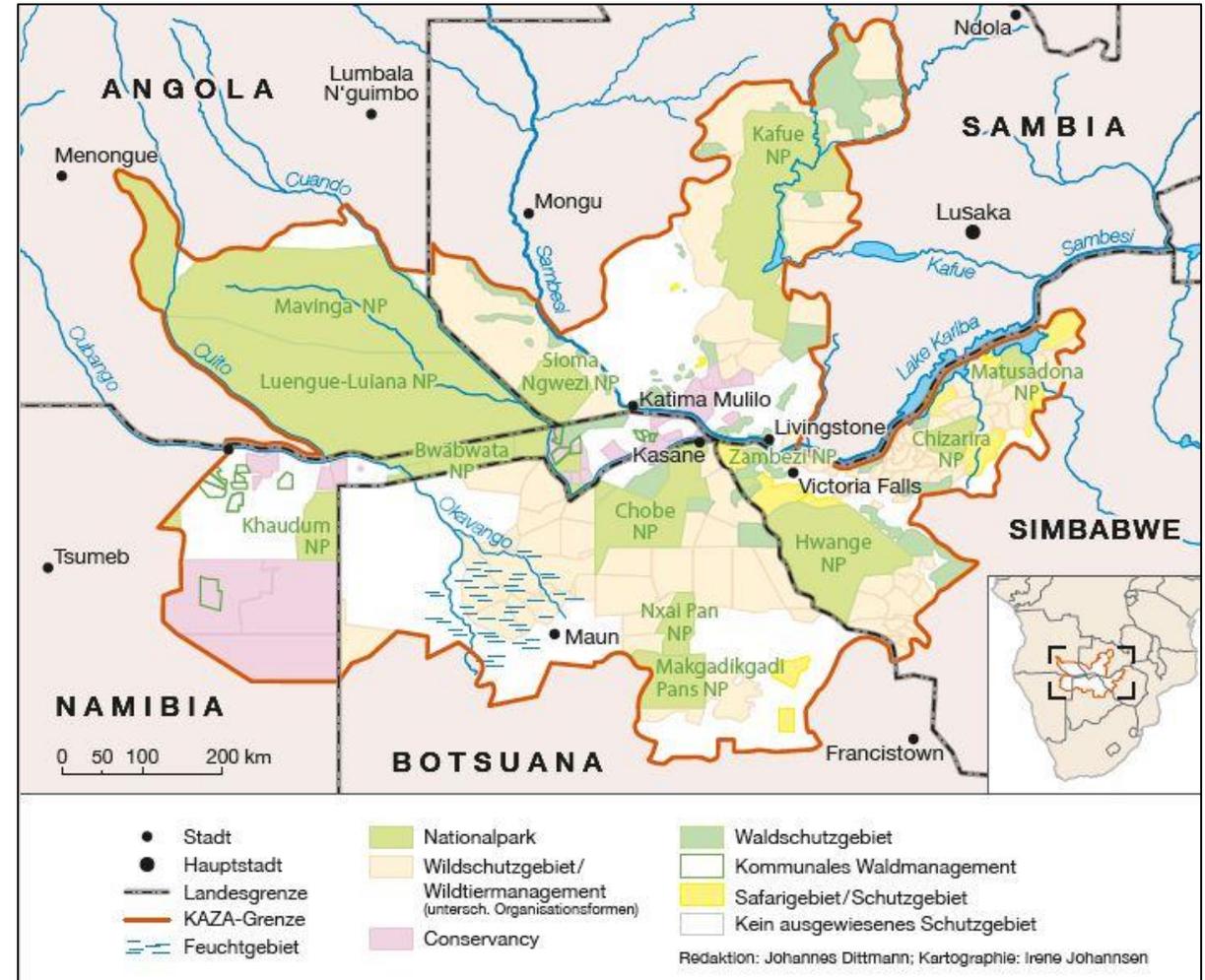
(KAZA revisioning workshop 2018)



KAZA – ‚sufficiently vague‘

Useful failures

„For national politicians – from presidents downwards – such mega-projects are opportunities to demonstrate power and benevolence, asserting control; very useful political resource during election periods and when trying to quash rebellion and opposition in such areas.“ (Chome et al. 2020, S. 5-6).





Establishment of KAZA and state sovereignty

- KAZA established for ownership among African governments
- KAZA to contribute to the establishment of state sovereignty in peripheral regions

“seize the golden opportunity to take complete ownership... to sharpen its focus so that it can complement the socio-economic development efforts of... respective countries.”
(Hon. S. Nujoma, President of Namibia 2003).

*“The war had come to an end. It had caused a lot of unrest in the Zambezi and there was the secessionist movement. That generated some momentum for reaching out from a Namibian perspective. And why not use the existing platform that was already there... Let us take control over OUZIT and let’s put our stamp on it... **this was driven by the desire to have stability in the area where in the previous five years there was not stability...** That is why this government, specifically the president, saw an opportunity”* (KAZA NSC member)



“Namibia’s wild elephant sales draw global condemnation” *National Geographic*

KAZA and green sovereignty

- KAZA as an instrument to assert sovereignty against international restraints
- Claiming to legalize ivory trade
- Militarization of conservation

*„We have a crisis now in Namibia as you know. There is a human–animal conflict... Now people whose fields are destroyed by elephants want compensation. What do you compensate them from? **If you could sell some of this ivory in a controlled way [...] it would be easier for the national party to address that issue.**” (President Geingob (Namibia), 2019)*

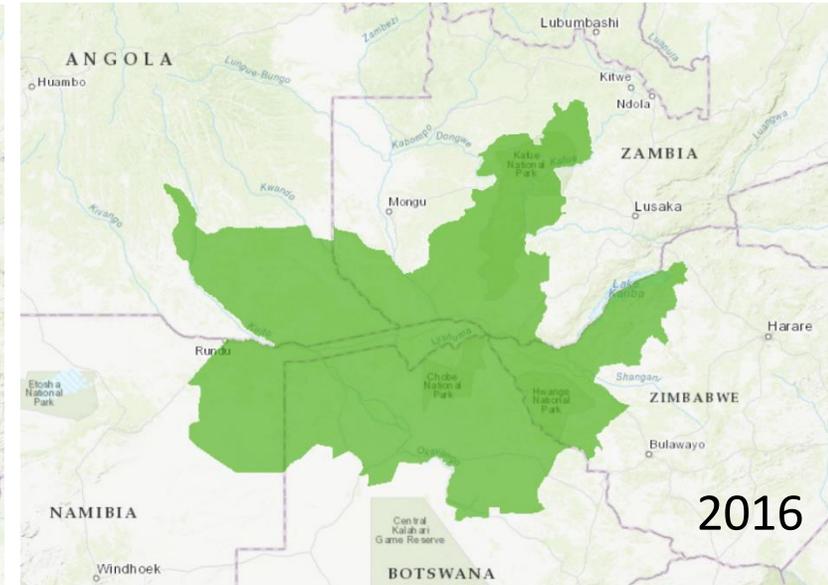
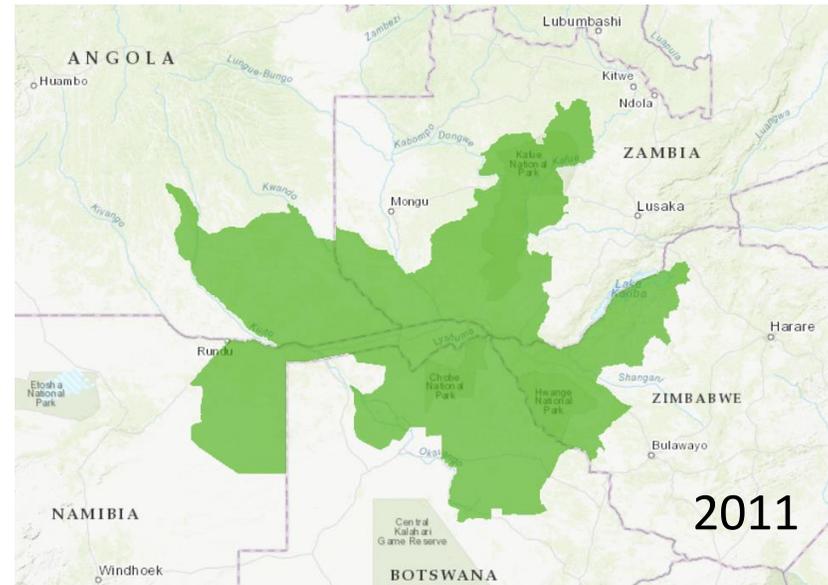
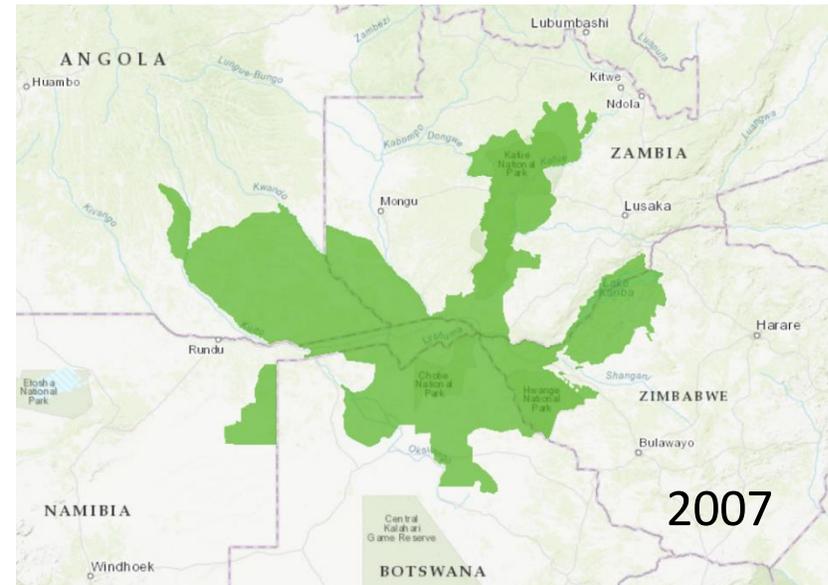


Presidents of Namibia and Botswana during the Elephant Summit, Kasane, 2019

*“I support KAZA efforts on elephants. We should not be victims of our success in conservation... **The West must humble itself and learn conservation from us, instead of lecturing us on what we ought to do**” (President of Namibia Hage Geingob, 2019)*



KAZA and green territoriality

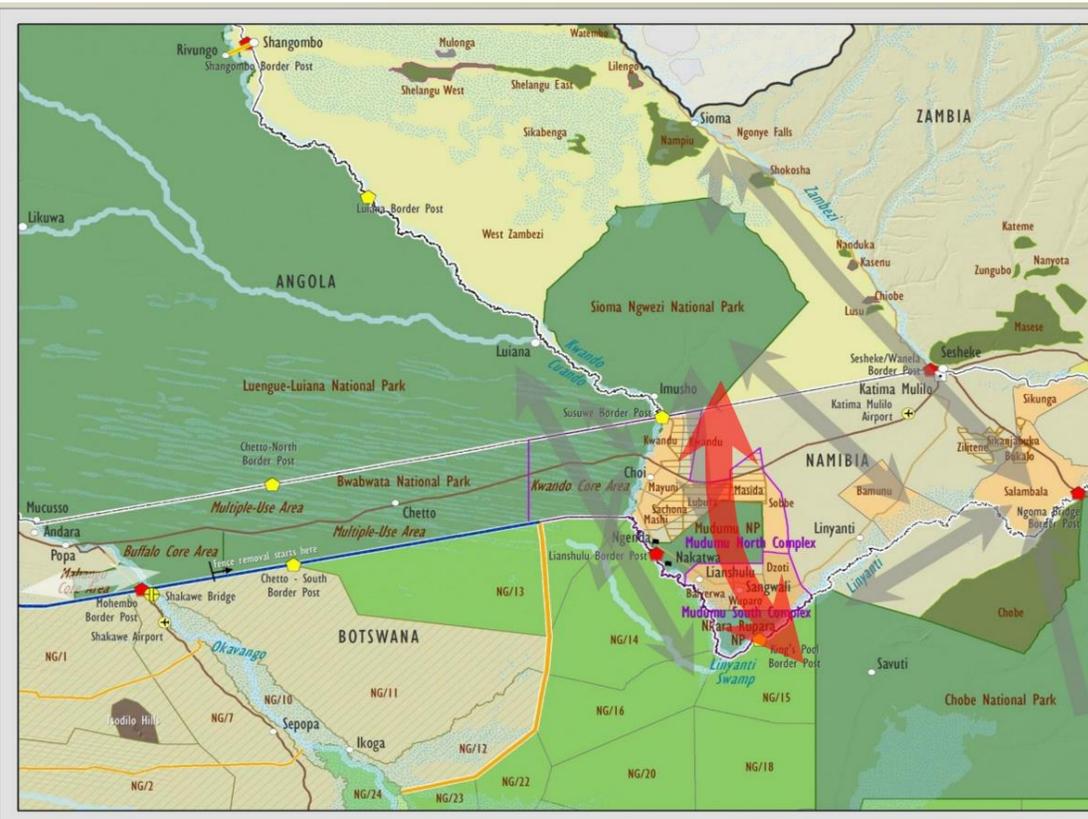


“the connectivity of ecosystems and the migratory nature of wildlife species is a good point with which you can argue” (Namibia Ministry of Environment).

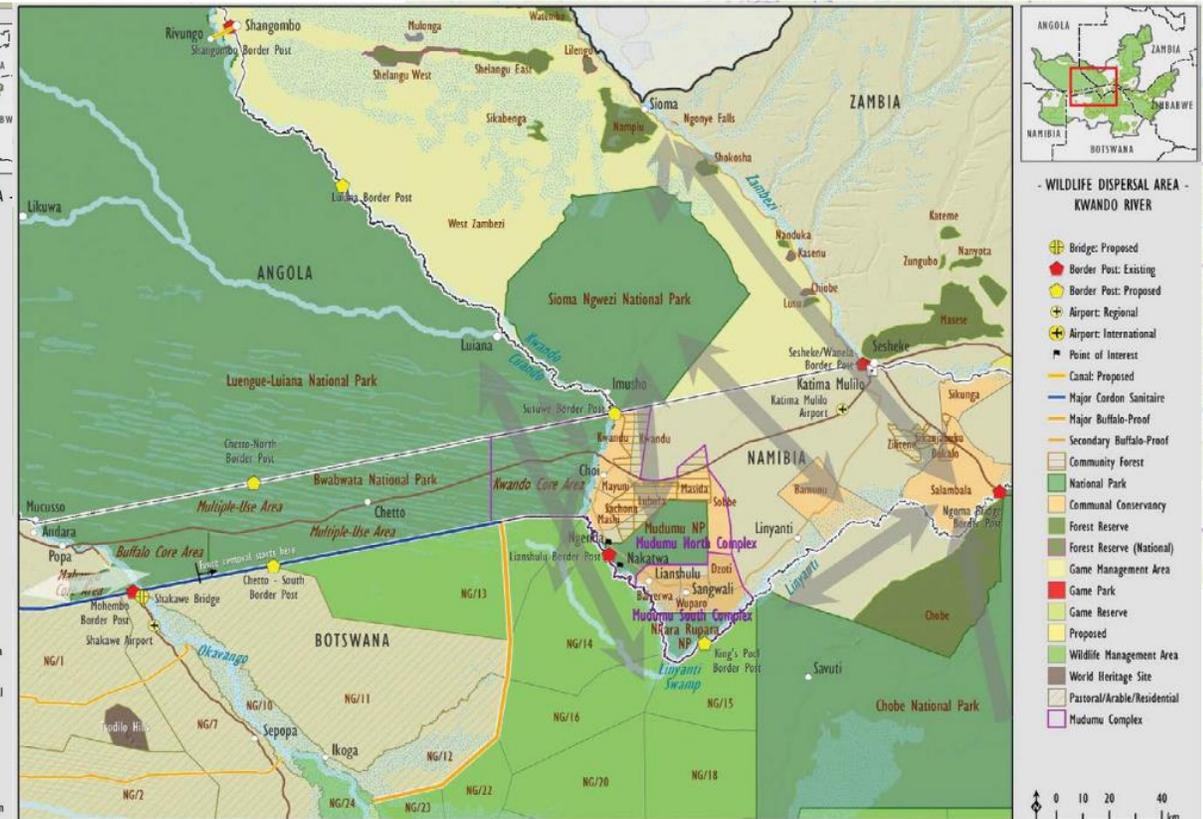
„It is an opportunity to get money. CBNRM money had been sharply reduced for various reasons. People get tired of the same programme so you have to rebrand it, come up with a new name” (local NGO).



KAZA and green territoriality



map used by the ministry of environment



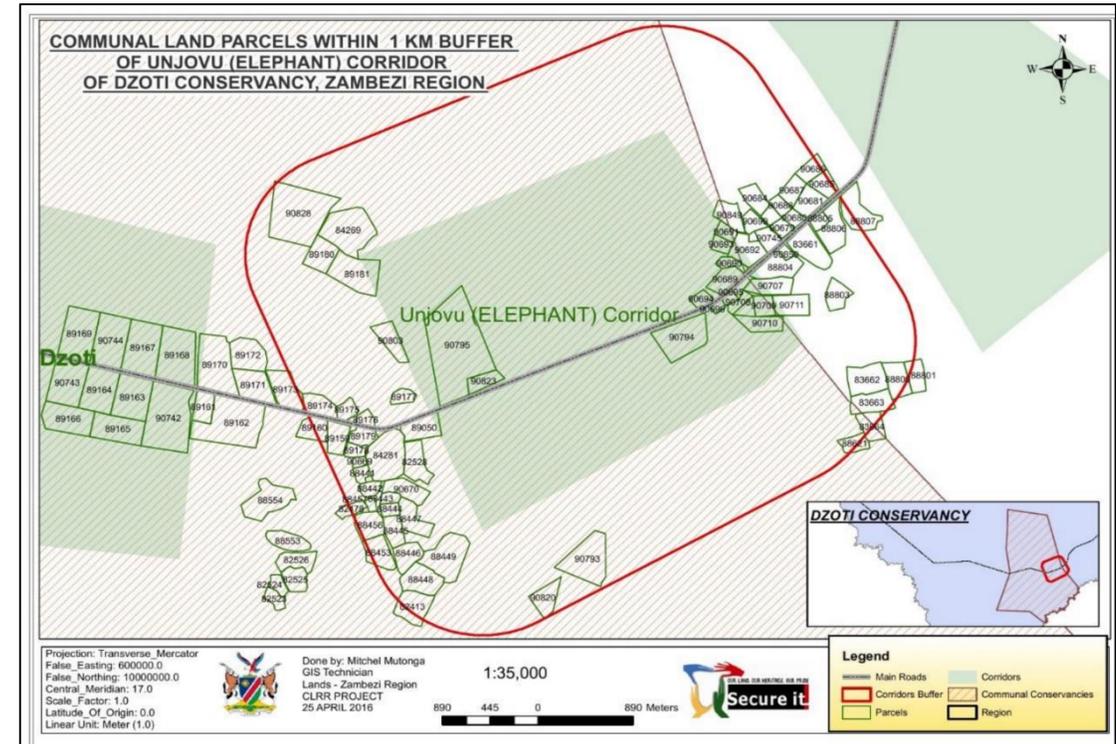
original map (KAZA TFCA 2015)

→ countering other land uses than conservation through mapping ecological connectivity



KAZA and green territoriality

- 2008: first resettlements under KAZA in southern Zambia; Ngonye-Falls Community Partnership Project funded by DGIS, DANIDA and the Peace Parks Foundation (€ 600.000)
- since 2014: resettlement projects under KAZA start in Namibia; Kwandu, Mashi, Mayuni, Bamunu, Sobbe, Dzoti, Salambala; funded by Ecorys Group (PMTC Zambia) and UKAID (CRIDF) (at least € 1,5m)
- 2018: more wildlife corridor securing initiatives planned until 2024 (€ 424.000)





Conclusion

- TFC is translated, adopted and used for other purposes than the official vision; though KAZA fails to meet its vision, it does not fail completely or for all
- KAZA as a leverage, stage and instrument in politics: re-asserting sovereignty and territorializing environmental authority across borders
- The purpose of an ambitious megaproject's vision is not necessarily to achieve it – but to navigate interests in the process of aspiring it
- By translating TFC in KAZA new regimes of political authority emerge



Conclusion

„As a result of international policies of conservation, whole territories are now outside state authority. [...] Managed on the capitulation model by international organizations seeking to protect the environment, these territories have a de facto extraterritorial status.“ (Mbembe 2000, S. 283)

Regimes of global environmental politics *„can make, remake, and unmake the state at the same time in different ways across time“* (Ramutsindela & Büscher 2019, S. 8).

In Africa the environment and the state have a co-constitutive relationship (Death 2016).
In Africa regionalism and the state have a co-constitutive relationship (Bachmann 2019).

→ The complex cross-border, cross-scalar and cross-sectoral setting of KAZA (that is different from other TFCAs) gives rise to new forms of political authority

→ What we can see in KAZA is the emergence of **graduated** forms of sovereignty and territoriality constituted through green regionalism

Sebola & Tsheolola 2019
Agnew 2020
Mogende & Ramutsindela 2020
Müller-Mahn et al. 2018
Kuus 2020
Ramutsindela 2019
Boeckler et al. 2018



Thank you!

Johannes Dittmann
Development Geography, University of Bonn
johannes.dittmann@uni-bonn.de