CONSERVATION, PARTICIPATION AND POWER:
Community Involvement in Protected Area Planning in Belize

Roger Few

Thesis submitted to the
University of Leicester for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Conservation, Participation & Power: Community Involvement in Protected Area Planning in Belize

The thesis examines community involvement in the planning of protected areas designated for biodiversity conservation. The research centres on a case study of planning at two coastal sites in Belize: Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker. The study employs qualitative methodology to analyse forms of public participation in planning and to explore the relations and strategies of power in operation between the diverse actors in the process.

The case study revealed that official public participation exercises functioned as circumscribed forms of consultation. Local stakeholders were granted some opportunity to express their opinions, but decision-making remained in the hands of the planning agencies. Certain key local actors could, however, make use of alternative channels of involvement, such as political lobbying and informal social contact. Both forms of community involvement were played out in a complex arena of power relations. The power strategies of actors drew on unevenly distributed resources such as knowledge, discourse, authority and access to state apparatus. Actors also employed a range of tactics including persuasion, compromise, manipulation, exclusion, enrolment and the formation of alliances to secure influence in the power arena. At one level of abstraction it was possible to identify a power-typology of local actors with characteristic interests, roles and relations with planners.

From the two original analytical themes a third, grounded theme emerged relating to the central role played by the planning authorities. Instead of fostering meaningful participation, planners were effectively engaged in a process of containment: their actions in the power arena were geared toward avoiding or blocking disruption and maintaining control. But containment was partial, and the extent of counter-containment helped to explain differences in planning progress between the two study sites. The thesis goes on to argue that attempted containment is inherent in the planning of externally-driven, biodiversity-oriented protected areas.

Roger Few
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# ABBREVIATIONS

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<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>gross domestic product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICDP</td>
<td>integrated conservation-development project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICZM</td>
<td>integrated coastal zone management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGO</td>
<td>international governmental organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>international non-governmental organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEC</td>
<td>primary environmental care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRA</td>
<td>participatory rural appraisal</td>
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**International entities**

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<td>Caribbean Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Coral Cay Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEF</td>
<td>Global Environment Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIED</td>
<td>International Institute for Environment and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUCN</td>
<td>World Conservation Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITCF</td>
<td>International Tropical Conservation Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGP</td>
<td>Small Grants Programme (of the GEF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
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<td>UNDP</td>
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<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>UNEP</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCED</td>
<td>The World Commission on Environment and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCMC</td>
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<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Tourism Organisation</td>
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<td>WWF</td>
<td>Worldwide Fund for Nature</td>
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### National entities (Belize)

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<td>The Ambergris Caye Planning Committee</td>
</tr>
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<td>BAS</td>
<td>Belize Audubon Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCPAC</td>
<td>Bacalar Chico Project Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEST</td>
<td>Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTIA</td>
<td>Belize Tourism Industry Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHPA</td>
<td>Central Housing and Planning Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Central Statistical Office</td>
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<td>CZMA</td>
<td>Coastal Zone Management Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>CZMP</td>
<td>Coastal Zone Management Programme</td>
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<td>CZMU</td>
<td>Coastal Zone Management Unit</td>
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<td>FPMP</td>
<td>Forest Planning and Management Project</td>
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<td>GOB</td>
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<td>LUA</td>
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<td>NACDC</td>
<td>North Ambergris Caye Development Corporation</td>
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<td>NCFC</td>
<td>The National Committee for Families and Children</td>
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<td>NEAP</td>
<td>National Environmental Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>PACT</td>
<td>Protected Areas Conservation Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUP</td>
<td>People's United Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SbF</td>
<td>The Siwa-ban Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEAR</td>
<td>Society for the Promotion of Education and Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEA</td>
<td>Toledo Ecotourism Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDP</td>
<td>United Democratic Party</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

AIMS AND APPROACH

Over 30 years ago Sherry Arnstein wryly noted "the idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle because it is good for you" (Arnstein 1969, p216). What can be wholesome in principle, she implied, does not always prove so palatable in practice.

This thesis examines community participation in the planning of protected areas designated for biodiversity conservation in developing countries. The focus is on statutory protected areas, including national parks and nature reserves, where governments establish legal controls on public access to and resource usage within publicly-owned areas (Clark 1996). The research hinges on a case study of protected area establishment in the coastal zone of Belize that involves in-depth analysis of joint marine/terrestrial conservation initiatives at two sites in the country: Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker. The study analyses forms of community involvement in the planning process and explores the power relations in operation between the diverse actors, especially between local citizens and the governmental or non-governmental actors with statutory responsibility for planning.

The thesis presents an original and distinctive approach to the topic of participation in biodiversity conservation, one that is valuable in both theoretical and practical senses. Hitherto, most research in this field has examined community involvement in the implementation and management of protected areas and associated projects. Participation in the planning of protected areas has received comparatively little attention. Yet it is the planning process that defines the parameters of any future impact of a project on local communities, and the pattern of public involvement in that process is therefore of crucial importance. An equally distinctive component of the thesis is its extension of concepts of social power into debate on participation in conservation. Through meticulous empirical study, the research uncovers the subtleties and complexities of power relations that helped shape both the process and outcome of participation in planning for the study sites. In doing
so it reveals an underlying dimension to planner/stakeholder interactions that has significant implications for conservation practice (discussed in Chapters 9 and 10).

This introductory chapter first sets out the principal aims of the thesis (1.1), before outlining the topical and methodological bases of the research, noting as it does so the rationale for the choice of study (1.2). The third section (1.3) introduces some of the key theoretical underpinnings for the research regarding concepts of structure and agency, power and knowledge. These are now largely embodied within an approach to socio-environmental research commonly referred to as ‘political ecology’. The final section (1.4) outlines how the thesis is organised and how the findings are presented. Throughout the chapter reference is made to other chapters, sections and subsections of the thesis where the themes introduced are taken up in greater detail.

1.1 Aims of the Thesis

Through the detailed analysis of qualitative data, the thesis aims to elucidate the social processes at work in protected area planning for the case study sites and draw out implications of the research for protected area planning in general. In discussing the case study data, the thesis will:

a) analyse and evaluate the form, scope and reach of community involvement in planning (Chapter 7);

b) analyse the role of social power and power relations in terms of the motives, resources tactics and impacts of different actors (Chapter 8);

c) synthesize the findings to identify and analyse underlying processes of ‘containment’ and ‘counter-containment’ in the interactions between planning officials and local stakeholders (Chapter 9).

The ultimate aim is that the research will contribute to its field in both theoretical and applied senses. A number of authors have pointed to the need for a greater understanding of the social dynamics and power/knowledge dimensions of participation in natural resource issues, in developing countries (e.g. Leach et al 1997, Brown, K 1998) as well as in environmental planning in the UK (e.g. Harrison & Burgess 1994, Goodwin 1998). The
thesis research will add new dimensions to these growing bodies of work, especially in terms of examining micro-political processes through the methodology of 'political-ecological thick description' (see 1.3). The relevance of such work is by no means solely theoretical:

“A greater understanding of the local institutions governing management of biodiversity and of the social dynamics affecting 'participation' in natural resource management and local institutions would allow outsiders to analyse the modes of utilisation and the likely impacts of policies to conserve these resources. It is especially important to elucidate these areas in order to facilitate participatory mechanisms.” (Brown, K 1998, p85).

The research will therefore inform the debates on participatory processes within local communities. It will help highlight issues involved in enhancing a broad-based community input into protected area project planning. It also feeds into wider debates on conservation strategy, including the potential for statutory protected areas to meet both social and biodiversity objectives.

1.2 Outline and Rationale

Protected areas in most developing countries have long been founded on the principle of separating human populations from sites of nature conservation. As Section 2.2 details, protected area projects have come under increasing criticism for generating and failing to address social impacts, especially on neighbouring rural populations (West & Brechin 1991, Brandon & Wells 1992, Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). In recent decades, conservation bodies (governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental) have expressed commitment to modifying their practices and incorporating social concerns into the planning and management of protected areas. As a vehicle for social inclusion, they have also expressed commitment to fostering local community participation in protected area projects. The Global Environment Facility (GEF), a multilateral funding mechanism for biodiversity conservation, for example, calls for public involvement in all aspects of the project cycle (GEF 1996a).

'Participation' may have a simple dictionary definition, but evidence from various fields reveals that application of the concept is rarely straight-forward. The term becomes
ambiguous in meaning and contested in its interpretation, and often fails to devolve any true
decision-making capacity to the grassroots level (Brohman 1996, Pimbert & Pretty 1997).
Moreover, participation exercises in practice typically serve to highlight the differing
interests and capacities of stakeholders and expose the non-consensual character of most

"Whilst local participation can be seen as an arena of renegotiation between
technical and political elites and 'local' people, such an implicit depiction of
place-bound communities as homogenous entities belies the tensions that
underpin them."

By the early 1990s, reviews of public involvement in protected area project activities and
management were starting to report issues familiar from other fields, many revolving
around inequalities of power and social conflict mostly between communities and external
agencies but also within communities (West & Brechin 1991, Wells & Brandon 1992, IIED
1994, Western et al 1994). Studies published recently have tended to confirm the
importance of power and conflict themes (Brown, K 1998, Sharpe 1998, Sundberg 1998,
Schroeder 1999). It is with this body of work that the research reported in the thesis is most
closely associated.

To date, most of the reviews relating to developing countries refer to participatory
initiatives for protected areas already in existence. Relatively few studies had been made on
participation in the planning of new protected areas. Yet such studies are arguably of crucial
importance. It is during the initial planning of protected areas that key decisions are taken
on location and extent of protected areas and the regulations and management regimes that
will apply within their boundaries. Such decisions are of fundamental importance to the
lives and livelihoods of local people, and both commentators and practitioners stress a need
for effective public participation at these selection and design stages (Bidol & Crowfoot

Similarly, though most of the research recognises the existence and implications of
imbalance of power in the participation process, there is little detailed exploration of the
mechanisms of power, of the means through which actors exercise influence and of the
factors that shape the result of social interaction. Yet efforts to promote participation,
empower the silent and thereby make conservation more sensitive to social needs can only
be improved by a detailed understanding of the nuances and dynamics of social power in participation processes (Brown, K 1998, Goodwin 1998). Such understanding arguably calls for intensive, empirical studies of the ‘micropolitics’ of participation and also of how power relations in local ‘arenas’ relate to broader contextual factors such as national and global discourses (see 1.3).

This thesis addresses the two significant research gaps identified here: it focuses on community involvement in protected area planning; and it closely examines power relations surrounding the process (see also 2.5). The research centres on a case study of protected area planning in Belize. It employs a qualitative methodology to study the national context of biodiversity conservation and to elucidate the history and micropolitics of planning at two specific sites: Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker (see Figure 1.1). Data-gathering was based on a combination of interviewing, observation and the collation of secondary data (for detailed discussion of methodology see Chapter 3).

Analysis of the case study data turns first to an assessment of how the commitment to participation in planning (expressed in planning reports and external funding) squared up in practice. The aim is to establish how effectively and widely local community stakeholders were involved in the protected area planning process, both through formal and non-formal channels. The analysis then sets out to explore the power dimensions of that involvement, to model the flow of events and interactions at the community level that helped shape protected area plans. All stages of the analysis necessitate an understanding of the wider national and international contexts in order to situate agency within its structural frame (see 1.3). Overall, the methodological approach is more inductive than deductive, reflecting the notion of deriving ‘grounded’ explanatory concepts from the data rather than from pre-existing theory (Strauss & Corbin 1990, May 1997) (see 3.3.1). Given the novelty of the research theme, the emphasis lies in generating theoretical propositions from the results of fieldwork rather than attempting to test theories derived from different contexts.

The thesis research has an inter-disciplinary flavour, absorbing subject matter and methodological influences from various academic fields, among them geography, environmental science, resource management, development studies, sociology and anthropology. Yet, the topic remains inherently geographical. Schroeder (1999) suggests
Figure 1.1 Belize and the study locations
that studies of environmental interventions in general tend to coalesce around issues of spatial relations, questions of scales, and nature-society relations that are central to geographical inquiry. This study sets out to uncover factors operating at different geographical scales, from the local through the national to the global scale. By comparing the planning experience at specific local sites set in the context of extensive study at the national scale, the research not only searches for generalizable strands of experience but also looks for evidence of site-specific factors that illustrate the importance of 'place' in the planning process. And finally, the study is oriented toward spatial themes. Protected areas are conceived in the research as the spatial outcomes of multiple influences arising from multiple social interests in the environment. Data gathered for the case study sites covered the processes by which planning is initiated and moved forward, and by which decisions are made on the location, boundaries and zonation of reserves. These spatial aspects of planning, in limiting access to natural resources, play a crucial role in shaping the social impact of protected areas.

1.3 Theoretical Influences: Agency, Structure, Power and Knowledge

One of the most important aspects of the thesis that needs explaining at the outset is the theoretical position on agency and structure. The approach adopted closely parallels that advocated by Long and van der Ploeg (1994) as outlined below. These authors analyse planned intervention in a development context. They conceive of such intervention as "an ongoing, socially constructed and negotiated process, not simply the execution of an already specified plan of action with expected outcomes", and argue that the analyst "should focus upon intervention practices as shaped by the interaction among the various participants, rather than simply on intervention models" (italics in original) (Long & van der Ploeg 1994, p78). Such an approach is described as actor-oriented.

Actor-oriented approaches distance themselves from structuralist accounts of social phenomena. Long and Long (1992) argue that the main structural models of development produce linear, externalist views of social change that concentrate on centralized processes of intervention or exploitation while undervaluing the potential and capabilities of local people to act. An alternative approach is advocated that recognizes the central role of
human consciousness and human agency in development activity. Yet an analytical emphasis on agency can bring its own pitfalls. Booth (1994) suggests that the pendulum has often swung too far in the practice of actor-oriented research, producing highly localized, micro-scale studies that fail to account for the interplay of internal and external factors and to situate local phenomena within an understanding of their structural context.

The tension between structure and agency in development sociology reflects a wider debate in social theory between those who have looked to the influence of material conditions on social outcomes and those who focus on the role of individuals and individual consciousness. At its most polarized, the structuralist position can lead to determinism while the stress on agency can tend to voluntarism (Pinch 1997).

Drawing on the work of several influential sociologists, especially Giddens (1984), Long and van der Ploeg (1994) attempt to set out a more inclusive and robust actor-oriented approach that incorporates attention to structure (and links agency with issues of power and discourse). The approach rests on a concept of agency that emphasizes both individual people's capacity to know and reflect on their circumstances and to be capable of intervening in the flow of events that surround them. Social systems do not have an independent existence but are composed of the multitude of interactions between individual actors who are affected by societal norms but not enslaved into automatic obeyance of them (Pinch 1997). In Giddens' terms:

"That is to say, social interaction is regarded as everywhere and in all circumstances a contingent accomplishment of actors: and as a skilled production which is sustained under conditions of the reflexive rationalization of action" (Giddens 1996, p105).

As Hindess (1989) notes, it is not only individuals that can take decisions and act on them. The concept of agency therefore also extends to 'social actors' such as state organisations, businesses, political parties, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other organized groups that can formulate and carry out decisions.

Agency is not, however, a simple attribute of an actor: its existence depends on social relations and it only takes effect through social relations with other actors. Following Latour (1986), effective agency, or 'power', rests on the capacity to enrol networks of other actors.
to a given scheme, though such 'enrolment' is almost always partial. Strategies to generate and manipulate networks of social relations involve struggles over meanings and knowledge and the explicit and implicit deployment of different discourses. "These discursive means or types of discourse vary and are not simply inherent features of the actors themselves: they form part of the differentiated stock of knowledge and resources available to actors of different types" (Long & van der Ploeg 1994, p67). (For a detailed discussion of concepts of power and discourse see Section 2.4).

Giddens' (1984) concept of 'structuration' makes the link between agency and structure through defining structure as "the set of rules, norms and resources that individuals use to negotiate their everyday lives" (Pinch 1997, p96). In their daily interactions people continually draw upon structure. It is therefore the medium through which the social system affects the individual, not just by constraining but also by enabling action. Yet structure is also an outcome of interaction, created and changed by actions within social systems (Giddens 1984). "To examine the structuration of a social system is to show how that system, through the application of generative rules and resources, is produced and reproduced in social interaction" (Giddens 1996, p101).

As Booth (1994, p13) explains, Long and van der Ploeg's approach therefore is not about simply exploring how structure places constraints on agency, but about uncovering "through interactionist investigations the very processes that produce and reproduce particular structural forms; the micro-foundations of the macro-framework". In this sense the macro-structure cannot simply be read off as an aggregation of micro-actions:

"The promise of micro-studies to macro-understanding thus lies not in the reduction of the latter to the former, but in the disentangling of the invariably complex web of unintended consequences and feedback effects that form the link between action and structure" (Booth 1994, p19).

The research presented in the thesis therefore takes a middle ground in the debate on structure and agency. The research is strongly actor-oriented, placing agency and micro-political relations at centre stage. Moreover, conceptions of actor power direct from post-structuralist sociology play a key theoretical role in the thesis (see 2.4). However, structural factors are by no means removed from the equation, for as Booth (1994, p39) advises "to be realistic and to reveal their full potential" actor-oriented studies need to analyse the
relationships between "actor-structure nexuses" at different scales and broader-scale inequalities in the distribution of power. Most importantly, the study sets agency in the context of national and international practices, policies and ideologies - discursive frameworks that via agency in particular settings may or may not lead to the reproduction of a structural process described in the thesis as 'containment' (see Chapter 9).

As Graham (1997) argues, such a middle ground position on agency/structure is now widely influential in human geography. Moreover, an actor-oriented approach that interweaves attention to agency and structure is explicitly followed in the key textbook by Bryant and Bailey (1997) on political ecology. The growing body of literature from geography and related fields falling under the broad heading of 'political ecology' has been another important influence on the thesis.

More of an approach than a philosophy as such, political ecology in essence refers to the integration of political and environmental understanding in analysing issues relating to the environment. It emphasises "the dynamic interaction of environmental and political forces" (Bryant 1992, p13), and stresses that environmental change has to be situated in its wider social and political context at a range of geographical scales (Brown, K 1998). Since the pioneering work of writers such as Blaikie (1985) the approach has commonly been applied in a developing country context. Indeed, Bryant and Bailey (1997) argue the case for a distinctive 'Third World political ecology' because of the effects of a widely-shared colonial legacy and a tendency for most environmental conflicts in developing countries to be livelihood-based. (A specific discussion of the insights from political ecology features in Subsection 2.4.2).

Political ecology is itself the product of different philosophical influences. At first a political economy perspective was advocated in order to move forward from hitherto mostly deterministic and often Malthusian explanations for environmental issues (Peet & Watts 1996). Later, socio-political dimensions rooted in post-structuralism entered the field, countering the tendency toward economic reductionism in early political ecology (Bryant 1992). The rethinking of the approach emphasised the significance of human agency, the role of social conflict and power relations at different scales, and the social construction of environmental knowledge as discourse (Blaikie 1995, Peet & Watts 1996). Many theorists
shifted focus toward "the interests, characteristics and actions of different types of actors" (Bryant & Bailey 1997, p23) and the attention to power and discourse has been a particularly prominent feature in published material associated with political ecology during the 1990s (Rocheleau & Ross 1995, Blaikie & Jeanrenaud 1997, Brown, K 1998, Sundberg 1998). According to Peet and Watts (1996, p38):

“One of the great merits of the turn to discourse, broadly understood, within political ecology, is the demands it makes for nuanced, richly textured empirical work (a sort of political-ecological thick description) which matches the nuanced beliefs and practices of the world”.

It is just such a form of 'thick description' that characterizes the approach taken in the field research and presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of this thesis. As the following section describes, Chapters 7, 8 and 9 then draw analytical themes from this empirical detail that ultimately lead to the synthesis of new ideas.

1.4 Thesis Organisation

The thesis is organised along conventional lines, moving from contextual information through discussion of results to analysis. Following the introductory Chapter 1, Chapter 2 reviews debates, concepts and theoretical contributions regarding conservation, participation and the sociology of power, and indicates how the research topic builds on and extends existing work. Chapter 3 then goes on to report, discuss and evaluate the research methodology, covering the rationale for the case study and how data were collected and analysed.

Chapters 4 to 9 are devoted to the case study findings. Chapter 4 first examines the national scale, reporting on research into the context of protected area planning and participation within Belize. Chapters 5 and 6 then provide thick-descriptive narratives of the planning process for each of the two principal study sites: Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker. These detailed accounts derive from a methodical compilation of data, and provide the platform for subsequent analyses. Chapters 7 and 8 address the two original analytical themes, respectively analysing the social character of planning and power relations in the planning process (see 1.1). They are followed by Chapter 9, which synthesizes the analytical findings.
to identify and discuss a third theme of 'containment' relating to the central role played by the planning authorities (see 1.1). This theme emerged in grounded fashion (see 1.2) as the research progressed, and its possible implications for protected area debate in general forms one of the main topics of discussion in the concluding Chapter 10.

Each chapter of the thesis is divided into numbered and titled sections and, in some cases, subsections for ease of cross-reference. Tables and figures are incorporated into most of the chapters, and the thesis makes use of text boxes (rather than footnotes) to feature topics that might otherwise break up the flow of text. Box 1.1, which provides some working definitions for terms relating to the human subjects of the thesis, is the first example of such a box.

Box 1.1 Working terms: people and protected areas

**Planners**
The term 'planner' is used for the state and (I)NGO personnel responsible for implementing protected area projects and drafting plans.

**User Groups**
The term 'user groups' refers to members of the local communities that directly utilize resources within the protected area site either as living space or as a means of livelihood.

**Stakeholders**
In this study, stakeholders are all those people and institutions that can be said to have an interest or 'stake' in the protected area project and its outcome. Local stakeholders include not just user groups but also those who may be affected indirectly by a project or who play a participatory role.

**Actors**
This term is used mainly in the analytical sections of the thesis, and links to notions of 'agency'. The term is often used in analyses that stress individuals not as passive objects of structural logic but as active agents who process information and develop strategies of action within the context of socially-differentiated knowledge and power (Long & van der Ploeg 1994).

Within the text body, italic type is used (sparingly) to emphasize key words and phrases. Inverted commas around words and phrases are used in places to denote newly-introduced
terms, terminology that is under discussion, specialized usage of words that may have broader meaning, terms used in an ironic sense and terms employed by others that have questionable applicability. Within the case study chapters, the contributions and quotes of specific interviewees are referred to by codenames in an effort to preserve anonymity (see Box 3.2). Several appendices contain supplementary material relating to the thesis research but not readily integrated into the substantive chapters.
CHAPTER TWO

CONSERVATION, PARTICIPATION
AND POWER

This chapter reviews debates, concepts, theories and practices relating to the key themes of the research introduced in Chapter 1. The first section of the chapter (2.1) discusses the philosophical background to human relations with nature and the ideas and issues behind human conservation of nature. This is followed by a discussion of conservation practice, especially within developing countries (2.2). The third section (2.3) introduces the concepts surrounding community participation and discusses its application within conservation projects. The next section (2.4) examines notions of power and debates relating to power in the context of environmental issues and community participation. The last section (2.5) then reviews those few contributions that specifically combine analyses of power, participation and conservation. In identifying significant research gaps within the field, this last section further demonstrates the value and originality of the research presented in the thesis.

Inevitably in such a large and thematically complex chapter, there are many subsections with themes that overlap and cross-cut, and cross-referring is common. But there is a general progressive direction to the literature review that matches development of the analytical topics of the thesis - the breadth and depth of community involvement in protected area planning and the power dimensions of such involvement.

It should be noted that this chapter functions as a contextual primer for the thesis. It is, however, by no means the only site of theoretical discussion and input from wider contextual sources. Further references to literature and discussions of debates are developed in subsequent chapters as they become appropriate, and integration of the thesis findings into the wider debate takes place in Chapter 10.
2.1 Nature, Society and Conservation

The first review section sets out the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of human actions geared toward nature conservation. It commences by outlining concepts regarding nature and human society (2.1.1) and goes on to consider debate over the social construction of nature (2.1.2). It then sets out how ideas and value-systems regarding nature have generated discourses of nature conservation (2.1.3) before describing recent changes to conservation discourses associated in part with the emergence of a ‘sustainable development’ agenda (2.1.4).

2.1.1 Concepts of Nature

Key definitions are always a good starting point for a discussion, but some terms defy ready definition. Ideas about nature lie at the heart of the conservation debate, but the precise meaning of such a commonplace term is notoriously difficult to pin down. What constitutes ‘nature’? One dictionary definition is “everything that exists in the world independently of people, such as plants and animals, earth and rocks, and the weather” (Longman 1987, p693). Yet the term is routinely applied to landscapes modified by humans, and the influence of humanity is now said to extend across the entire surface of the planet (GEF 1998a). A conceptual distancing of the natural world from the world of humanity that shares the same physical space appears to be implicit in the dictionary description.

The difficulty of defining nature reflects not just semantics but fundamental ontological issues (Simmons 1993). Is human society and human culture to be conceived as separate from or inseparable from nature? Do humans exist independently of nature? Is there an external natural environment that is “analytically separable from society” (Leach & Mearns 1996, p11)? Such questions are important to the ensuing discussions because they flag up an issue that has a crucial bearing on the ideas and practices of conservation, and especially on the establishment and spatial planning of protected areas.
Some authors argue there is a conceptual separation of nature and culture in Western rationalist thought that, though now hegemonic, is by no means universal to all thought systems (Simmons 1993). Leach and Mearns (1996, p11) argue:

"Western science rests on the basic assumption that 'natural' phenomena can be investigated separately from human society.....Such a distinction is, of course, alien to many African societies, in which categories of thought are structured in very different ways and cut across a nature-culture divide."

They date the Western assumption to post-Enlightenment thinking, but Colchester (1997, p97) traces the roots of nature-culture separatism to Judaeo-Christian beliefs “in which man was given dominion over the beasts”. Such beliefs contrast with “the ‘animistic’ religions of many indigenous peoples, which to use our terms, see culture in nature and nature in culture”.

Ingold (1993) points to shared imagery of the world and the cosmos from a medieval European text and a modern indigenous culture. Both imagine spheres set within spheres, with human occupants located at the centre as an integral part of the surrounding world. He contrasts this with modern Western preoccupation with the world as ‘globe’, perused from an external perspective that distances humanity from its environment (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Contrasting perspectives on the world

A

Two perspectives on the world: A) as surrounding sphere; B) as globe.

Source: adapted from Ingold (1993, p32)
"Thus the movement from spherical to global imagery is also one in which 'the world', as we are taught it exists, is drawn ever further from the matrix of our lived experience" (Ingold 1993, p35). This perceived externality of the world has close parallels with the perceived externality of nature.

The existence and implications of such duality of thought have been widely debated within social science and increasingly within geography (Gerber 1997). Though not all authors are convinced the duality is so deep-rooted or pervasive (Meyer 1999), others contend that the conception of an external nature has fostered generalized ideologies of domination - not only domination of humanity over nature, but also forms of domination along sexual, racial and colonial divides (Boucher 1993, Mies & Shiva 1993). Adams (1997) notes the argument that by positing nature as 'other', by making it the categorized object of rational science, scientists and conservationists participate in the same mindset that frees society to exploit and degrade nature.

“There is a potential conflict in a conservation based on ideas of nature and practices of engagement with nature that are driven by the same rationalist project that has generated the damage that conservationists wish to oppose” (Adams 1997, p287).

Conceptions of duality between nature and society have been reflected particularly strongly in ideas of ‘wilderness’ and therefore have an important bearing on the history of protected area conservation. Cronon (1995) describes how perceptions of wilderness have changed through European history from places of savagery, barrenness and danger to places of tranquility and refuge. Yet they have always been places of a primitive quality lying beyond a perceived frontier. “Whether in a negative or positive sense, then, wilderness and civilization have almost always been counterposed” (Proctor 1998a, p356). Colchester (1997) similarly shows how Christian missionaries brought negative conceptions to bear on the ‘untamed’ New World, and how American ‘wildernesses’ later came to be revered.

What is important to note in the context of the thesis is Cronon’s argument that (romanticized) conceptions of separate wildernesses as containers of a separate nature privilege certain views on conservation. They favour segregation of resource usage and ecosystem protection, and do not encourage conservationists to search for means to combine human populations with nature in a non-destructive manner (Proctor 1998a).
The nature/culture duality of Western rationalist thought has arguably been articulated in protected area practice that, as Section 2.2 shows, tends to enforce spatial separation of ‘natural’ ecosystems and human populations. It has done so by generating a set of socially and culturally constructed conceptions about nature (such as the concept of wilderness) that have in turn constructed a conservation imperative. The next subsection discusses the social construction of such conceptions.

2.1.2 The Social Construction of Nature

The philosophical tenet that our knowledge and understandings of the world arise via social constructions has been increasingly applied to issues of nature and environment in contemporary geography (see, for example, Whatmore & Boucher 1993, Harrison & Burgess 1994, Blaikie 1995, Gerber 1997). Proctor (1998a, p352) analyses and takes forward the debate over the social construction of nature at a stage when the idea is coming under increasing attack from those who point to ‘social constructivism’ as “a new environmental villain”. The reaction has been so strong, he argues, because the social construction argument “strikes to the epistemological core of environmentalism’s moral and political campaign” (Proctor 1998a, p353).

The idea of social construction posits that since we can only know about the world through mental processes, our perception of it is always mediated by cultural filters through which we ascribe meaning to elements of the world (Simmons 1993, Greider & Garkovich 1994). Such filters continue to operate whether information is derived via lay or via scientific methodologies. What natural sciences reveal, therefore, is not knowledge that faithfully mirrors nature but a socially constructed interpretation of nature, a version that also reflects the culture and politics of scientific endeavour (Blaikie 1995, Proctor 1998a). Moral campaigns on environmental ‘issues’ are usually founded on scientific assertions, yet these can never be complete ‘truths’. The scientific assertions and the environmental issues all constitute social constructions of nature.

The social-construction-of-nature argument has provoked angry response from some commentators who see it as potentially weakening the case for environmental protection.
measures (e.g. Soule & Lease 1995). At the heart of this reaction is the charge of relativism, whereby all criteria for judgement become seen as context-bound and open to alternative interpretation (Proctor 1998a). If there are no ‘concrete’ environmental issues, there is no concrete case for environmental protection. At its extreme, relativism could promote a mentality equating to ‘anything goes’.

Perhaps mindful of this charge, both Whatmore and Boucher (1993) and Harrison & Burgess (1994) take pains to emphasize that nature has materiality of itself and is not reducible to social relations. For example, independently of how we conceptualize degradation, degradation of the environment remains a physical possibility. And “there will be real costs to be paid by present or future generations if environmental degradation continues unabated” (Harrison & Burgess 1994, p296). Rather than descending into relativism their attention to social constructions is an attempt to enhance conservation debate by unravelling “the complex ways in which environmental meanings, social structures and political actions are bound together” (Harrison & Burgess 1994, p307).

One key component of such work is the recognition of how discourses flow from the social construction of nature. In constructivist terms nature has no intrinsic meaning: its meaning is constituted through ideas, represented in language and symbols (Whatmore & Boucher 1993). Representations can become concretized into discourses, the strength of which derives both from an abstract basis in ideas and a material basis in practices and institutions. The term ‘discourse’ relates to the totality of ways in which idea-systems are communicated and reproduced. A discourse is therefore a particular “field of communication” relating to a subject (Milton 1993, p8), producing and disseminating a partial, situated knowledge. Discourses are social, cultural and political: they become embedded in societal structures, embody relations of power and have concrete practical consequences (Leach & Mearns 1996, Myverson & Rydin 1996). (See Section 2.4 for a discussion of discourse and power).

Three key representations of nature that have forged conservation discourses include: nature as threatened wildlife/biodiversity; nature as precious wilderness; and nature as manageable resource. The following subsection discusses the meaning of and philosophical background to conservation, revealing how these socially constructed representations of nature have produced mainstream conservation discourses.
2.1.3 Ideas and Discourses of Conservation

The term 'conservation' has two current sets of meanings in relation to the environment (Adams 1997, Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). Conservation can mean the maintenance or rehabilitation of renewable resources specifically for human usage, such as measures to protect soils, maintain water supplies or regenerate timber forests. Conservation also refers to measures to maintain the existence of 'natural' landscapes, ecosystems and wildlife species, for values other than the direct physical exploitation of resources. It is this second sense of the term - conservation as "the ideologies and practices of preservation, protection and enhancement of nature" (Adams 1997, p278) - that is the primary focus of the thesis, although as we shall see conservation discourses increasingly try to intertwine both concerns.

It is important to note that in recent years, 'nature conservation' and 'wildlife conservation' have increasingly been re-articulated as 'biodiversity conservation'. Biodiversity is an umbrella term that refers to the full variety of life on Earth, of ecosystems, species and genes (Hannigan 1995). Box 2.1 provides a brief discussion of the term and its usage.

The discussions in Subsection 2.1.2 lead to the philosophical position that though nature may exist independently of human consciousness our interpretations of it are always socially constructed. Several important constructs about nature that underpin conservation discourses have already been touched upon. All can be linked in some sense to the conceptual separation of nature and human society in Western rationalist thought (see 2.1.1).

The most fundamental idea is that nature and the entities that make up a natural world are under threat of destruction owing to human activities (Pimbert & Pretty 1997), a process now often referred to as 'biodiversity loss' (Hannigan 1995). Nature is seen as a victim of human actions, the external object of human impact, and human influence on the environment is portrayed as inherently unnatural (Leach & Mearns 1996). Adams (1997) describes how conservation concern in the UK was long linked to powerful imagery of once tranquil, organic landscapes of the past threatened (and overwhelmed) by industrialization. Today reports from environmental organizations emphasize whole ecosystems as under
threat around the world, from activities such as settlement growth, forest clearance and water pollution (see, for example, GEF 1998a).

Box 2.1 ‘Biodiversity’

Since the late 1980s, the term ‘biodiversity’ (an abbreviation of ‘biological diversity’) has rapidly risen to prominence in international conservation (Jeffries 1997, Brown, K 1998). The word emphasizes variation and variability of all forms and combinations of life on Earth, at the genetic, species and community levels (Blaikie & Jeanrenaud 1997). McNeely and Ness (1995) claim use of the term carries new meanings, implications and opportunities for conservation, in the way it values all forms of life, stresses ecosystem interconnectedness and shows how conservation can mesh with human welfare. The rapid mainstreaming of the term is reflected in the Convention on Biological Diversity (a multilateral charter for nature conservation signed in 1992), which they state “represents in many ways the modern synthesis of conservation and development” (McNeely and Ness 1995, p3).

Proctor (1998a) suggests the idea of ‘biodiversity conservation’ has been embraced so readily because, as scientific terminology, it breaks from culturally-loaded terms such as wilderness preservation. Yet biodiversity is itself a social construct, imbued with ideas and values “albeit primarily from the culture of science” (Proctor 1998a, p358). It is an elastic term that rests on concepts such as ‘species’ and ‘ecosystem’ that may be defined in different ways even by biologists: “biodiversity, therefore, links to an arguable world” (Myverson & Rydin 1996, p66). When applied in the field the term reveals its complexity and ambiguity, presenting value-laden issues for example over how to measure diversity or the choice of ‘indicator’ species (Brown, K 1998). Associated controversy exists in economic and political spheres over the balancing of local and global interests and property rights regarding biodiversity (Hannigan 1995). Blaikie and Jeanrenaud (1997, p47) conclude “there are crucial ambiguities, inconsistencies and contradictions in the formulation and practice of biodiversity conservation, particularly in the role of science and ‘facts’ in the biodiversity discourse”.

Meanwhile some of the species of plants and animals that inhabit ecosystems are recorded as dwindling in population, owing not just to loss and degradation of habitat but also to direct exploitation through hunting and collection. Population decline can lead to extinction, and extinction, as conservation slogans stress, ‘is forever’ (Jeffries 1997). According to IUCN/UNEP/WWF (1991, p28), “natural diversity is more threatened now than since the extinction of the dinosaurs”. As Box 2.2 shows, however, the ‘facts’ and
arguments of biodiversity loss are not immune from critique, highlighting the point that ideas of threatened nature, however compelling, are, in essence, social constructs.

**Box 2.2 The ‘facts’ of biodiversity loss**

Myverson and Rydin (1996) analyse the rhetoric relating to biodiversity loss, showing how rival estimates of biodiversity loss are partly based on (contestible) forms of measurement, partly on imaginative claims. Both globally and locally, the loss of biodiversity is notoriously difficult to quantify (Brown, K 1998). Few would deny that loss can and does occur, but the scale and significance of that loss is an issue open to polemic. Harrison and Burgess (1994, p296) show how an “extinction discourse” relating to nature was produced via UK press reports in the late 1980s, founded on highly questionable scientific rhetoric and using “strongly negative, emotive and often sexually-charged vocabularies to describe the loss of species and habitats”. Fairhead and Leach (1998) provide evidence that rates of forest loss in West Africa have been greatly and systematically exaggerated. Different interests in biodiversity lead to different definitions, different measurements and different ‘facts’, some of which are constructed directly for political ends (Blaikie 1995).

The questioning of truth-claims about biodiversity loss relate not just to numbers, but also to theory. Recent developments in ecological theory are challenging received wisdom on the stability and inelasticity of ecosystems (Leach & Mearns 1996). Increasingly natural ecosystems are being seen as dynamic, unstable systems, continually subject to disturbances, yet often robust in the long term. Biotic communities tend to be patterned by disruption rather than tending toward uniform ‘climax communities’, creating a habitat diversity in space and time that often enriches rather than depletes biodiversity (Pimbert & Pretty 1997). “Gone, therefore, are the days when conservationists could conceive of ‘nature’ in equilibrium and hence portray human-induced changes in theose ecosystems as somehow ‘unnatural’” (Adams 1997, p286). There are cases where human uses of the environment have arguably increased biodiversity, most notably in that ‘cause celebre’ of environmentalists, the tropical rainforests (McNeely & Ness 1995, Ghimire & Pimbert 1997, Fairhead & Leach 1998). A biodiversity crisis can certainly be argued to exist, but its description is not conducted in neutral terms.

A counterpart to the idea of threatened environments is the possibility of there being wilderness environments, alternative spaces free of human impact (Proctor 1998a) (see 2.1.1). The idea of the wilderness - a ‘pristine’ place where humans are absent or at least ‘tread lightly’ on the landscape - perhaps epitomizes the nature/culture divide. The idea or ‘myth’ is deeply embedded in international conservation thinking (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). McNeely and Ness (1995, p5) claim the view of “humans as intruders into nature”
has dominated conservation discourse in much of the world since the late 19th century. The notion was projected by colonial administrators on the landscapes they encountered in Africa, and arose in the USA as a strong and persistent antidote to modernization and urbanism (Leach & Mearns 1996, Colchester 1997). In a world where threatened, peopled environments predominate, a wilderness serves as a haven of nature, a refuge for wildlife where natural processes can go on unimpeded (Proctor 1998a).

Wilderness is therefore a romanticized notion of ‘pure’ nature, which owes its currency largely to European colonial and American imaginations (Leach & Mearns 1996, Colchester 1997). Modern critiques challenge not just whether trying to conserve ‘pristine’ nature should be an imperative, but whether wilderness can be said to exist. Many ecosystems today classed as natural have been shaped by past or current human usage (McNeely & Ness 1995), and there are probably few stretches of the world’s land surface that have not been modified to some extent by human inhabitants (Adams 1997, Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). However:

“Although this conception is slowly gaining some currency in Western societies.... conservation in developing countries is still informed by the ‘wilderness myth’. Protected area management plans rarely begin with the notion that biodiversity-rich areas are social spaces, where culture and nature are renewed with, by and for local people” (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997, p6).

A third important idea is that ecosystems left in a natural state have value to human society. Again this emphasizes nature as external to society. Biodiversity provides resources that service humanity, or, in the terminology of Blaikie and Jeanrenaud (1997), provides public goods with ‘indirect instrumental use values’. Biological resources have important ecological functions including the regulation of air composition, water quality and water flow, recycling of nutrients and the regeneration of soil (IUCN/UNEP/WWF 1991). In providing landscapes and wildlife with aesthetic appeal, they can be sites of recreation, and they function as ‘outdoor laboratories’ for the scientific study of organisms and environment. They also embody ‘option values’ in the sense that they may have direct and indirect uses in the future that for the present remain unknown (Blaikie & Jeanrenaud 1997).

Such utilitarian arguments are increasingly used to justify conservation, but Blench (1998) regards most as weak in the face of the potential for technological and social changes in
society. He does, however, see strength in the argument that conserving biodiversity provides some ecological safeguards against the evolution and spread of super-pathogens. Indeed, in recent decades, the value of nature has partly been re-articulated in terms of biodiversity as a genetic resource, a reservoir of genetic stock of enormous economic and social significance in terms of agriculture, medicine and biotechnology (see, for example, GEF 1998a).

These representations of threatened nature, wilderness and the utility of nature inform the discourses that have evolved within the conservationist movement, discourses that have often operated alongside one another yet not always without tension. Adams (1997) suggests that conservation discourses can be both reactive against rationalism and rationalist in themselves. He argues that the roots of the British concern for nature lay in late 19th century intellectual reaction against the impacts of industrialization and urbanization. Yet the tools of nature conservation were directed toward a rationalizing project of technocratic control over nature. Such ambiguity may sow seeds of potential conflict, but the combined ideologies create a formidable discursive ‘power resource’ (see 2.4).

The two strands of traditional conservation thinking - the reactive and the rationalist - separate out into what might loosely be called ‘preservationist’ and ‘managerialist’ discourses. Preservationist discourses seek to minimize human interference with nature and are imbued with a more moral sense of stewardship (Blench 1998). They may hark back to an image of Arcadian past, and generally favour the setting aside of refuges for the preservation of ecosystems in their ‘natural’ state. Such refuges may either be large ‘wilderness’ tracts or fragments of threatened ecosystems, “icons of nature under threat: their spatial distinctiveness highlighted by, and justifying their elevation as, objects requiring veneration and protection” (Adams 1997, p279). These ideas have a long history, but in recent decades they have been re-articulated within ‘deep ecology’ or ecocentric environmentalism (Eckersley 1992). Nature and biodiversity, in this line of thinking, has intrinsic value and its conservation is humanity’s moral responsibility (Blaikie & Jeanrenaud 1997). According to Colchester (1997) and Pimbert and Pretty (1997) some deep ecologists are strong advocates for cordonning off large tracts of ‘wilderness’ as off-limits to any form of exploitation.
Managerialist discourses are imbued much more strongly with the rationalism of biophysical science and the arguments of human utility. Leach and Mearns (1996) trace part of the 'received wisdom' of conservation practice to post-Enlightenment ideas that society should use its advances to control nature to meet human needs and desires. Adams (1997) shows how conservation and professional ecology were intimately associated in 20th Century Britain. Ecological science provided knowledge about nature that was used to identify problems, predict changes and formulate technical interventions to control change. Conservation thus became concerned not just with preservation but with active management to enhance a protected environment. Conservation would come to provide opportunities for public enjoyment through managed recreation, as well as exotic retreats for the wealthy (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). It also reciprocally served the needs of ecological scientists by providing the outdoor equivalent of laboratories (Adams 1997).

Utility may provide the bottom line, but the campaigns with which managerialists have sought finance and public support for their conservation projects have frequently evoked sympathetic ideas of guardianship of nature and nature's intrinsic worth (see Harrison and Burgess 1994). Messages therefore become oriented toward the different interests people have in biodiversity and the differing ideas they possess over what and how to conserve. Latterly, conservation has been under influence to align toward new sets of interests and newly promoted discourses, to large extent under the banner of 'sustainable development'.

2.1.4 Sustainable Development and the New Discourses

Blaikie and Jeanrenaud (1997) describe how in the late 1980s and 1990s the policy statements of major conservation organisations have tended to shift toward objectives of sustainable resource use and a greater emphasis on human welfare. Within this rhetoric, "policies which once viewed people as a threat to nature now regard people as potential partners in sustainable development" (Blaikie & Jeanrenaud 1997, p60). Hulme and Murphree (1999, p278) regard this as part of a "new conservation" currently challenging old practices.
The idea of 'sustainable development' became of increasing currency in international environmental fora during the 1980s, gained centre-stage at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), and rapidly became a major, if not dominant, theme in global and national environmental discourses (Adams 1993, Dovers & Handmer 1993). The essence of sustainable development is the idea of integrating environmental and social considerations to assure the long term (cross-generational) maintenance of natural and human resources to meet the needs of present and future generations (WCED 1987, IUCN/UNEP/WWF 1991).

The rhetoric of sustainable development is positively charged and has provided a rallying ground for diverse environmental and social campaigns. But it has also been questioned by diverse critics. The concept is surrounded by unresolved debates and contradictions regarding its meaning and what should be its scientific content, its priorities and its implications for policies (Dovers and Handmer 1993, Blaikie 1995). Many authors have pointed to the very diversity of interests that have collected under its banner, and the danger that the notion is sufficiently vague and ambiguous enough to be widely interpreted and manipulated in its practical application by those with radically different agendas (e.g. Holmberg & Sandbrook 1992, Adams 1993, O’Riordan 1998). Colchester (1994) claims that the usage of the term has often stripped the concept of its social and political dimensions. Some argue that it poses little challenge to existing balances of power or to capitalistic economic growth, freeing powerful economic interests to continue with socially and environmentally damaging 'business as usual' (e.g. Adams 1993, Sachs 1993, Chatterjee & Finger 1994). Beckerman (1992) is one who argues that the so-called global issues promoted under sustainable development focus on the needs of the North rather than developing countries of the South (see Box 2.3).

The ambiguity in sustainable development has been reflected in the new forms of conservation discourse it has helped to foster. With human needs as one of its imperatives (Colchester 1994), the concept of sustainable development bolstered ideas of 'people-oriented conservation' that had emerged as a political counterpoint to traditional, 'top-down' conservation (Blaikie & Jeanrenaud 1997). A populist view of sustainable development emphasizes 'sustainable livelihoods' (Woodhouse 1992). State conservation agencies had tended to sideline social considerations relating to communities affected by
conservation projects, but now the call was for greater attention to social needs, through flexible planning, dialogue and popular participation (Blaikie & Jeanrenaud 1997). These topics are, of course, central to the thesis and are discussed in much greater depth later in the chapter (see 2.2 and 2.3).

### Box 2.3 North-South divergences

International negotiations associated with the UNCED ‘sustainable development’ agenda have focussed on particular environmental issues for priority action - issues such as biodiversity loss, climate change and ozone depletion (Redclift & Sage 1994). A number of authors have argued these issues fit a northern rather than a southern agenda. They claim developing country concerns turn more to issues such as water supply, sanitation, fuelwood supply and soil erosion. The environmental priorities of people in the South are therefore linked more to ‘livelihood sustainability’ (Redclift & Sage 1998) and access to natural resources (Chatterjee & Finger 1994). Shanmugaratnam (1989, p13) states: “whereas the environmental crisis in the North is the result of more than 200 years of development through industrial transformation, the crisis in the South is the product of more than 200 years of underdevelopment and inadequate development”. Marc Williams (1993) emphasizes that political concern over the inequalities of international society cannot be put on hold while we address ‘our common future’.

The human imperative within sustainable development has also fostered ideas of conservation centred on economics, valuation and the free market. This approach sees the environment as natural capital, focuses on the costs and benefits of changes in biodiversity, and stresses the potential role of the free market in regulating environmental degradation (Woodhouse 1992, Blaikie & Jeanrenaud 1997, Hulme & Murphree 1999). Citing perceived limitations of the state in securing biodiversity conservation, it advocates the state retreating from environmental intervention (Brenton 1994). In this view, conservation of species and habitats will follow from full exposure to market forces because “their uniqueness and scarcity will lead to high economic values being placed on them” (Hulme & Murphree 1999, p280). Major technical hurdles for the market approach, however, include the valuation of biodiversity, internalization of environmental costs, and policing of markets (Woodhouse 1992, Blaikie & Jeanrenaud 1997), though valuation and marketability of biodiversity is now a cornerstone of conservation strategy in Costa Rica (GEF 1998a).
Yet, perhaps ironically, sustainable development has also bolstered the role of technocratic environmental and ecosystem management (Adams 1993, Chatterjee & Finger 1994). The concept has been promoted strongly in the rhetoric of agencies traditionally concerned with environmental management projects (Blaikie 1995) - state agencies, conservation NGOs, and inter-governmental bodies like The World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Somewhat perversely, then, sustainability also provides an umbrella for the managerialist discourse of conservation, a discourse challenged by people-oriented and market-oriented approaches.

Table 2.1 Alternative conservation paradigms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Classic approach</th>
<th>Populist approach</th>
<th>Neo-liberal approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>diagnosis of problem/solution</strong></td>
<td>environmental</td>
<td>socio-political</td>
<td>economic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>immediate causes of problems</strong></td>
<td>mismanagement by users</td>
<td>mismanagement by state, big business</td>
<td>poor government policies, bureaucratic regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>structural causes</strong></td>
<td>over-population, backwardness, ignorance</td>
<td>resource distribution, inappropriate technology</td>
<td>inappropriate property rights/institutions/prices, overpopulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>institutional prescription</strong></td>
<td>top-down centralized decision-making</td>
<td>bottom-up participation</td>
<td>'market' policies, property rights, resource pricing etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>technology</strong></td>
<td>'fortress conservation'</td>
<td>agronomic techniques of conservation</td>
<td>not specified</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: adapted and summarized from Blaikie & Jeanrenaud (1997, p61)

Blaikie and Jeanrenaud (1997) link the different approaches to conservation with three distinct intellectual paradigms that produce characteristic diagnoses of and prescriptions for action on biodiversity issues (see Table 2.1). The ‘classic’ paradigm encompasses both the managerialist and preservationist discourses discussed in Subsection 2.1.3, while the ‘populist’ and ‘neo-liberal’ paradigms broadly relate to the people-oriented and market-oriented discourses introduced in Subsection 2.1.4.
2.1.5 Summary

Western rationalist thought tends to produce a dualistic conception of nature and culture that posits nature as external to human society. Built upon that philosophical foundation has been a set of highly influential cultural constructions of nature that together promulgate a conservation imperative and privilege certain approaches to conservation. Long-standing discourses of preservationism and managerialism in mainstream conservation have more recently been joined by people-oriented and market-oriented approaches linked to the international environmental agenda of sustainable development. To date, the story of protected areas reflects mainly the preservationist, managerialist and people-oriented approaches. We now turn to describe conservation practice itself, in the light of these different discursive strands.

2.2 Conservation in Practice

The following review of debates and issues regarding the practice of biodiversity conservation commences by describing how the imperative to conserve nature discussed in Section 2.1 has become translated into conservation action, focussing especially on the concept of protected areas (2.2.1). The next subsections then turn attention directly to developing countries, describing the history of protected area conservation in the South (2.2.2) and discussing the social impacts of such conservation (2.2.3). The final subsection (2.2.4) outlines recent global influences on protected area planning and management, including efforts to incorporate social elements into protected area projects.

2.2.1 Conservation Action and Protected Areas

Measures that equate to conservation of biodiversity have a history that long pre-dates construction of the concept of biodiversity. The ruling elite of societies dating back to ancient Egypt, for example, set aside hunting preserves to maintain stocks of game, and
many pre-industrial cultures established (more egalitarian) rights and customs that regulated harvesting of plants and animals from the wild (Western & Wright 1994, Jeffries 1997).

The roots of a modern, globalized conservation movement, however, can be traced to developments in the 19th century and early 20th century in the more affluent countries of the world (Western & Wright 1994). In the USA, increasing urbanization and concern for the preservation of ‘wild’ lands was reflected in conservation legislation and the founding of preservationist organizations such as the Sierra Club (Western & Wright 1994). In the UK, conservation of species and landscapes was spearheaded by NGOs like the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the forerunner of today’s National Trust (Adams 1997). The conservation discourses continued to deepen in influence on a global scale, especially from the mid-20th century onwards, when the foregoing mostly piecemeal actions coalesced into institutionalized scientific movements at the national and international levels (Jeffries 1997). In the decades following the Second World War, a raft of multilateral treaties, conventions and international governmental and non-governmental organisations (IGOs and INGOs) relating to species, habitat and ecosystem protection have come into being (see Table 2.2).

Conservation action can take many forms, as Jeffries (1997) shows. It can be carried out by individual people, private groups such as NGOs, state agencies and international bodies. It can target individual wildlife species or whole biological communities. It involves legislation, policy, land-use planning, research, education and publicity campaigns as well as practical projects intervening directly in the protection of species and ecosystems (IUCN 1980). Such projects may be ex-situ, as in captive-breeding programmes for endangered animals and botanic seed banks, or in-situ, as in provision of nesting boxes or landscape restoration programmes. In-situ measures involving ecosystem management and the regulation of human activities have been a key means of conserving biodiversity exercised both by governments and by NGOs. And the primary means for executing such measures has been the designation of protected areas (Brown, K 1998).

Protected areas are spatially bounded tracts of land, or latterly sea, established by legislation or by ownership for the regulation of human impact on biodiversity (Jeffries 1997). They are often known by terms such as ‘national park’, ‘reserve’ or ‘wildlife sanctuary’ (Ghimire
& Pimbert 1997). They may be declared by private landowners including conservation NGOs or they may be designated by the state as a component of land-use planning. The rationale behind their designation relates partly to the aesthetic and cultural values of preserving whole landscapes, but mostly to the idea that holistic protection of ecosystems is the most effective means to preserve both individual species and biological diversity. Wild populations require suitable habitats and damage to habitats is one of the prime causes of extinction (Jeffries 1997). The world’s biodiversity is said to be increasingly concentrated in a diminishing number of sites “more or less unchanged by human activities”, and many of the most “outstanding” of these have already been granted official protected area status (Wells & Brandon 1992, p1). According to Jeffries (1997) many species’ long-term survival in the wild now depends on protected areas.

Table 2.2 Key international entities concerned with conservation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>type of entity</th>
<th>established/signed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World Conservation Union (IUCN)</td>
<td>conservation INGO 1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)</td>
<td>conservation INGO 1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends of the Earth</td>
<td>environmental INGO 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenpeace</td>
<td>environmental INGO 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR)</td>
<td>conservation treaty 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Heritage Convention</td>
<td>conservation treaty 1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)</td>
<td>environmental IGO 1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)</td>
<td>conservation treaty 1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals</td>
<td>conservation treaty 1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Resources Institute</td>
<td>environmental INGO 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Environment Facility (GEF)</td>
<td>environmental IGO 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention on Biological Diversity</td>
<td>biodiversity treaty 1992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The essence of the traditional protected area model is simply distilled by Ghimire and Pimbert (1997, p4) who suggest "in short, parks and other protected areas are for plants and animals". In theory at least, human usage and enjoyment of the conservation area was regulated so as to comply with the priorities of conservation. The regulations on human access to such areas can take various forms (see below), but in the majority of cases public activity within the delimited ecosystems is restricted to activities that do not "conflict with that primary purpose" (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997, p11). In the case of the most strictly protected reserves public access may be banned outright. The World Conservation Union (IUCN) has drawn up a system for categorizing protected areas and Table 2.3 lists the categories conventionally regarded as the types of areas geared toward the conservation of biodiversity (Jeffries 1997). A newly-introduced IUCN category (VI: Managed Resource Protected Area) is discussed later (see Subsection 2.2.4).

Table 2.3  IUCN categorization of conventional protected areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>category</th>
<th>title</th>
<th>description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Strict Nature Reserve/ Wilderness Area</td>
<td>protected area managed mainly for scientific research or wilderness protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>National Park</td>
<td>protected area managed mainly for ecosystem conservation and recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Natural Monument/ Natural Landmark</td>
<td>protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Habitat/Species Management Area</td>
<td>protected area managed mainly for conservation of habitats and/or specific species through management intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Protected Landscape/Seascape</td>
<td>protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape protection and recreation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Data from the early 1990s report that there were a total of 8,641 protected areas in categories I to V worldwide, covering 6.27 percent of the world’s land surface (McNeely and Ness 1995). Table 2.4 notes the percentage coverage figures for different regions.

Historically, the protected area model for conservation evolved in the 19th century from ancient roots in preserves such as as sacred groves and hunting parks (Jeffries 1997). Its rise
can be linked to the discourses explored in Subsection 2.1.3, not just of nature protection, but also of wilderness preservation and the maintenance of natural resources for human use and enjoyment. The world’s first national parks were founded in the USA both as a means to protect ‘wildernesses’ from human interference and to set aside areas for hunting and recreation (Western & Wright 1994, Colchester 1997). The argument for preserving areas free of local human impact yet available for big game hunting and tourism was later widely applied in developing countries (Wells & Brandon 1992, Western & Wright 1994, Colchester 1997) (see 2.2.2). Protected areas also acted as a resource for science and professional scientists. Adams (1997) describes how ‘scientific interest’ has been repeatedly cited as a justification for the establishment of statutory nature reserves in the UK. Increasingly through the 20th century, conservation became characterized by state intervention as governments took on the role of securing land and resources for the ‘common good’ (Western & Wright 1994, Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). Modern protected area conservation, therefore, has roots both in preservationism and managerialism. It is the central policy tool of the classic conservation paradigm (Blaikie & Jeanrenaud 1997) (see 2.1.4).

Table 2.4 Regional distribution of protected area coverage (data from 1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>geographical region</th>
<th>percentage of land under IUCN categories I-V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>12.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>12.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>10.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>9.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central America</td>
<td>9.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>8.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America</td>
<td>6.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South &amp; South-east Asia</td>
<td>5.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>5.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>5.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Eurasia</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Africa &amp; Middle East</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antarctic</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


What was common to virtually all early protected areas, and what has dominated conservation practice into recent times, has been the drive to separate fragments of nature from ‘normal’ human society: in effect, to protect biodiversity from people (Brown, K
1998). As Section 2.1 suggests, the view that the two can and should be separated spatially is associated with certain social constructions of nature. Yet not only has the constructedness of such conceptions become hidden, but the resulting imperative to conserve biodiversity through spatial separation has to large extent been presented as both essential and apolitical. This claim is set out in more detail in the following Subsection 2.2.2, which examines how discourses of conservation have been played out in practice in developing countries. Suffice to note here that, according to Ghimire and Pimbert (1997, p5), the argument that protected areas are required to protect nature has, through time, become a “non-negotiable” issue from the perspective of conservation institutions. And the creation of *statutory* protected areas to guard against commercial and local development pressures also became an ‘unquestioned’ norm of state intervention (Western & Wright 1994).

“Using this well-honed argument, governments intervened time and again to secure land and resources in the larger interests of society. State land ownership and conservation became unquestioned norms, whether or not they were called for or worked” (Western & Wright 1994, p4).

As a model for conservation, the conventional protected area has been copied many times over in virtually all countries of the world and the number of such protected areas continues to rise (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). Today, “national parks and reserves represent the single most important method of conserving biological diversity worldwide” (Brandon & Wells 1992, p557). The next subsection discusses the history, practice and discursive context of protected areas specifically within developing countries.

2.2.2 Protected Areas in Developing Countries

Protected areas started to emerge in developing countries during the colonial era. Among the first were the forest conservancies established by the British Raj in India in the mid-19th century (Western & Wright 1994). In Africa, both the British and French colonial administrations followed policies of setting up protected areas under the auspices of foresters and naturalists from the imperial countries (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997, Schroeder 1999). After independence, protected areas methods established by the wealthier countries of the North continued to dominate in the South, partly because a ‘blueprint’ approach to
conservation persisted in post-colonial bureaucratic structures and in the training of environmental professionals (Pimbert & Pretty 1997). The domination of such methods, however, is also linked with increasing international funding for conservation, which brought its own management prescriptions to bear.

The geographical focus for much of the work of the IGOs and INGOs listed in Table 2.2 is the developing world. In broad terms, international conservation agencies founded, funded and mostly staffed by the North provide much of the ongoing financial, technical and organizational resources to create protected areas in the South. Moreover, the Convention on Biological Diversity explicitly calls for financial aid for conservation to be directed from North to South (Jeffries 1997). The conservation agencies that generate or coordinate such financial flows are powerful organizations capable of pressurizing and providing incentives for developing country politicians to enact conservation legislation that meet the donor’s requirements (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997).

The design of protected areas in the South has tended to follow the isolationist model of the early US national parks (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). Institutions charged with protecting biodiversity in developing countries have tended to view local communities and local resource-users as a threat to conservation. In theory, the threat can be removed through exclusionary measures: creating protected areas and associated conservation zones in which human activity is denied or strictly controlled (Gilman 1997). According to McNeely & Ness (1995, p1):

“The idea of protected areas (of which the national park is the most well-known category) has been built on a distinctly misanthropic foundation - the assumption that people are destructive of a pristine nature that needs to be protected against human depredation. The solution to the problem thus defined has often been stringent legislation, fences and armed guards to keep people out.”

The resulting mode of conservation that seeks to exclude people from bounded nature ‘preserves’ has been dubbed the ‘fences and fines’ approach (Wells & Brandon 1992) or ‘fortress conservation’ (Blaikie & Jeanrenaud 1997, Hulme and Murphree 1999). In developing countries, in particular, this has often entailed denial of rural people’s access to natural resources such as timber and fisheries, controls on the use they can make of their

The capacity of conservation planning agencies to impose such measures is linked with the often insecure land tenure of rural communities and indigenous peoples in the South, whose ownership claims to ancestral lands are inadequately protected (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). This contrasts with conservation history in much of Europe, where tenure rights have largely been respected in the creation of protected areas (Colchester 1997). Some authors claim that international agencies have often formed what amounts to a coercive alliance with national governments, in which local forms of land use have been articulated as incompatible with conservation and the exclusion of local people therefore justified (Colchester 1997, Brown, D 1998).

"In the worst case scenario, this has led to the conservation movement taking on something of the character of a mission civilisatrice, whose main effect has been to stigmatize the land management practices of the low-consumption peasant farmers of the South, in the interests of a world order whose most obvious beneficiaries are the high-consuming middle classes of the North" (italics in original) (Brown, D 1998, p2).

The reach of the global conservation 'mission' demonstrates how effectively socially constructed ideas reproduced through discourse (in this case a hybrid discourse of both preservationism and managerialism) can take on hegemonic status. Through time, their versions of knowledge become widely accepted as a 'truth', so taken for granted that the values and politics on which they are based become hidden. This mainstreaming of the conservationist discourse is both reflected and reproduced in the depth of institutions and practices concerned with advocating and implementing protected areas in developing countries. Such a conservation 'machine' has close parallels with the 'development machine' identified by Crush (1995, p6):

"This machine is global in its reach, encompassing departments and bureaucracies in colonial and post-colonial states throughout the world, Western aid agencies, multilateral organizations, the sprawling network of NGOs, experts and private consultants....and the plethora of development studies programmes in institutes of learning worldwide".

The conservation machine's capacity to generate support and funding from the West and turn socially constructed ideas into practice has hinged partly on an ability to define conservation of large portions of developing countries as a depoliticized and moral
imperative, as "a global value that no prejudice could undermine" (Anderson & Grove 1987, p5). Such depoliticization of the discourse fails to acknowledge that protected areas in the Third World are steeped in social and economic issues and that their creation is deeply political (Anderson & Grove 1987). As the following subsection shows, such negation of socio-political dimensions is not just unrealistic but is to large extent self-defeating.

2.2.3 Social Impacts of Protected Areas

Since colonial times, then, the predominant approach toward conservation in developing countries has been that of 'fortress conservation', driven by the desire to set aside large tracts of land in isolation from 'encroaching' human populations. Yet, many of these areas had or continue to have substantial human populations - they never met the ideal of pristine wilderness (McNeely & Ness 1995).

Conservationists working on such projects typically paid little regard to the needs and desires of these local people, and often mobilized armed forces of the state in an attempt to enforce protected area laws and regulations upon them (Wells & Brandon 1992, Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). Protected area status was often imposed on land without prior consultation with local resource users, as in the case of Barra del Colorado Wildlife Refuge in Costa Rica created in 1985:

"Many local residents were taken by surprise when inspectors arrived and announced that traditional activities such as hunting and tree cutting were illegal and that the state intended to expel those who did not possess land rights" (Utting 1994, p237).

In many cases whole communities were forcibly evicted and relocated outside national park boundaries (Wells & Brandon 1992). The impact of such measures was often particularly severe for indigenous peoples in tropical forest and savannah environments. At its extreme, relocation of the Ik people from Kidepo National Park in Uganda in colonial times caused the virtual extinction of the tribe through famine and social collapse (Colchester 1997).
The more modern approaches to conservation in which boundaries are located more sensitively and protected areas are zoned with different levels of regulation (see 2.2.4) often attempt to incorporate socio-economic considerations into spatial planning. Yet reviews of recent protected area initiatives suggest that protected area projects have continued to cause serious local hardships (West & Brechin 1991, Ghimire & Pimbert 1997).

Set against a background of restricted livelihood choice and widespread direct reliance on natural resources in rural regions of the South, changes in access to land and natural resources can have “a critical impact on the food security and the livelihoods of local people” (IIED 1994, pvi). Local residents have commonly harvested wild fruits, honey, game, fish, medicinal plants and timber from protected area sites, and used the areas for grazing livestock (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). In economic terms such communities, which “are often extremely poor, with limited access to government services and no political power” bear substantial costs from the creation of protected areas “while receiving few benefits in return” (Brandon & Wells 1992, p558). And at their most severe, protected area plans still require the removal of local communities from zones in which human presence is deemed to be incompatible (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997, Colchester 1997). In 1992, for example, a presidential decree ordered the resettlement of a number of villages at Los Haitises National Park in the Dominican Republic (Stycos & Duarte, 1995).

Not surprisingly, in many cases social and political conflicts arise over resource rights, land tenure and ownership (Colchester 1997, Schroeder 1999). Local communities claim their priorities are being overridden by the imposed priorities of external groups with an interest in conservation. In some cases, people simply refuse to comply with the measures, continue to clear plots or harvest from the wild, and hence become transformed into illegal squatters and poachers. The often slender finance available for policing protected areas makes encroachment and poaching difficult to counter and conflict difficult to address (Brandon & Wells 1992, McNeely & Ness 1995). A survey of traditional national park-style protected areas in Asia, Africa and Latin America by Wells and Brandon (1992) showed that pressure on park resources by local human activities was commonplace and that relations between park staff and people were generally poor.
Displacement, resentment, conflict and criminalization of resource use has sometimes caused biodiversity loss actually to increase during and after the designation of protected areas (West & Brechin 1991, Ghimire 1994, IIED 1994). In the early 1990s reports from north-east Costa Rica suggest that there was accelerated deforestation during the creation of a cross-border park with Nicaragua because many local farmers attempted to cut and sell as much timber as possible before restrictions were imposed (Utting 1994). Cases of open protest against conservation projects have taken place in many countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia, often fuelled by a centralized, opaque manner with which protected areas are conceived and planned by authorities (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). “Although sporadic in nature, organized protests and rallies, attacks on park guards, poisoning of animals and deliberate burning of forests are becoming common events in many developing countries” (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997, p15).

In the long-term, then, the restrictive measures of the fortress conservation approach have seldom been applied effectively on the ground in developing countries. The majority of national parks in South America and India, for example, have people living inside their borders and utilizing their resources (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). On the one hand, in many traditional protected areas this human ‘encroachment’ is arguably causing increasing and uncontrolled environmental degradation (Brandon & Wells 1992). But, on the other, there are also cases where conflict and its destructive implications have been defused by a relaxation of rules on the ground. Staff and even national agencies are “adapting IUCN’s ideal to the reality of local conditions”, allowing local populations certain rights and access to resources (McNeely & Ness 1995, p9). Some such compromises are long-standing, but most are linked to major new trends in conservation practice that have been of increasing influence in the last two decades. The next subsection reviews these initiatives.

2.2.4 New Directions in Protected Area Conservation

As conservation in general became re-articulated in line with emerging ideas of sustainable development (see 2.1.4), distinct changes became apparent in the discourses and practices of protected area conservation (Hulme & Murphree 1999). The language of conservation began to shift toward social dimensions. As early as 1980, the major organizations involved
in writing the ‘World Conservation Strategy’ were linking conservation and development goals and defining one of the roles of conservation as ensuring ‘sustainable utilization’ (IUCN 1980).

The recognition that biodiversity conservation schemes that did not take local people into account not only raised ethical issues but also ran the risk of being self-defeating (see 2.2.3) also gained increasing currency from the late 1980s (Wells & Brandon 1992). Biodiversity conservation projects in developing countries were being increasingly criticized for their negative impacts on local communities and for a failure to incorporate local people’s needs and potential contributions in project plans (West & Brechin 1991). Meanwhile, conservation scientists increasingly recognized the practical limitations of fortress conservation. Leader-Williams and Albon (1988, p535) argued “in poor countries, large conservation areas and sizeable populations of valuable species can probably only be maintained by a radical change in approach”.

Conservationists, in response, increasingly tried to insert social elements into protected area plans to mitigate impacts and increase public support for biodiversity conservation. The goals of conservation became expanded to include socio-economic objectives such as sustainable exploitation and equitable access to natural resources (Jeffries 1997, Infield & Adams 1999), and there was much discussion over how to make conservation more people-oriented (Brandon & Wells 1992). Thus:

“The aim, therefore, must be to achieve more balanced accounting, to develop the area and its wildlife for the benefit of the human inhabitants and to replace the current conflict between them and protected areas with a custodial and participatory relationship that benefits both parties” (Leader-Williams & Albon 1988, p535).

At first termed ‘ecodevelopment’, the new approach rapidly disseminated a rhetoric implying the inherent compatibility of objectives relating to nature conservation and local human needs (West & Brechin 1991). The needs of local people was a major theme at the 1992 World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas (Tacconi 1997). After the 1992 UNCED Summit, when ‘sustainable development’ took centre-stage in the international lexicon, “biodiversity projects now became difficult to fund on purely conservationist lines, and social concerns became de rigueur in all aid-funded biodiversity interventions” (Brown, D 1998, p2). The IUCN defined a new category of protected area,
the Managed Resource Protected Area (see Subsection 2.2.1), which explicitly permitted sustainable utilization to meet community needs (McNeely & Ness 1995). It was hoped that social development components of these and other projects would now neatly lead the way to resolving the previous failings of protected areas (Brown, D 1998). The people-oriented approach was moving into the mainstream of conservation discourse (see 2.1.4).

Much of the work under this new approach has hinged on the provision of incentives to local populations, especially economic incentives, via a mixed basket of measures bracketed rather broadly under the heading of Integrated Conservation-Development Projects (ICDPs) (Sanjayan et al 1997). McNeely and Ness (1995) describe such initiatives as efforts to change patterns of resource exploitation by altering perceptions of self-interest. They include compensation measures for lost access to resources and social and economic development measures to provide alternative incomes and alternative resources for communities surrounding protected areas (Brandon & Wells 1992, McNeely & Ness 1995). This can mean initiatives such as micro-projects in agroforestry, water management and soil conservation, loans and enterprise promotion, substitution of fuel sources as alternatives to fuelwood harvesting, efforts to employ local people as park rangers, and, commonly, projects to generate tourism-related employment, especially in ‘ecotourism’ (see Box 2.4).

Agencies often undertake such activities within designated ‘buffer zones’. The buffer zone concept arose from the recognition that protected areas cannot be isolated either from environmental or socio-economic pressures in surrounding areas. In place of abrupt boundaries, strictly protected areas may be surrounded by broad zones in which measures are put in place that allow for settlement and resource extraction, but on a sustainable, low-impact basis (Jeffries 1997). This is the approach used in the ‘biosphere reserves’ advocated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), “whereby a fully protected ‘core zone’ which excludes human occupation or use is cushioned from the outside world by a ‘buffer zone’” (Colchester 1997, p116).

Zoning for different levels of restriction is taken a stage further in ‘multiple use reserves’, which are growing in number particularly in the New World (Richard & O’Connor 1997). These are composite protected areas that may include designated zones for settlement and resource use as well as fully protected zones (Wells & Brandon 1992). Resource uses
permitted in selected zones often include traditional harvesting of animal and plant species using techniques deemed compatible with conservation goals (Gilman 1997). And as interest in establishing marine protected areas in coastal areas of the world has intensified in recent years, the multiple-use model has commonly been adopted as a means of accommodating usage of fishery resources that have traditionally been regarded as open-access (Gilman 1997, Cocklin et al 1998).

**Box 2.4 Ecotourism**

Ecotourism has become something of a buzzword in the 1990s (Lindberg et al 1996) and a regular item in the basket of socio-economic incentives promoted by conservationists (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). The idea of ecotourism is of a tourism industry geared toward the recreational value of observing and experiencing nature. In theory, it should provide financial support for conservation and economic benefits for local residents, and it should be conducted at a scale and in a manner that minimizes local environmental and social costs (Lindberg et al 1996).

There are compelling reasons, however, why conservation agencies should avoid viewing ecotourism as a panacea. The tourism market is finite and fickle, and projected levels of visitation to protected areas can often be illusory (Sanjayan et al 1997, Brown, D 1998). Ecotourism business is often captured by ventures based in capital cities or overseas and the economic benefits accruing to local people are often low and seasonally-variable (West & Brechin 1991, Colchester 1997, Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). West and Brechin (1991, pp393-394) issue a stark warning:

"In the light of these understandings, the local 'hard sell' of tourism as a blanket solution to local people to compensate them for the loss of residence and traditional economic uses of reserves will only be counterproductive in the end, as local people become embittered and distrustful in the face of empty promises."

Moreover, despite the supposedly 'sustainable' character of this form of tourism, environmental costs from increased pollution, fuel use, littering, waste disposal and other factors and social costs such as the erosion of traditional values remain persistent problems (West & Brechin 1991, Colchester 1997, Ghimire & Pimbert 1997).

Biodiversity projects incorporating social factors, however, have so far met with mixed success. West and Brechin (1991) argue that the conservation establishment has found it difficult to close the gap between rhetoric and reality in trying to harmonize natural area protection with rural development. Brandon & Wells (1992, p567) claim that many of the
problems are inherent in the overall strategy of using development to achieve conservation objectives when “the end is not development”. The disjuncture is well known to practitioners for, as Sanjayan et al (1997, p16) note: “the agenda of the villagers for development priorities is usually very different from that envisioned by the conservation community”.

Attempts to implement ICDPs have thrown up numerous practical dilemmas and early optimism on the part of agencies has given way to more sombre assessments of the challenges involved and the need to learn by experimentation (Richard & O’Connor 1997, Wright 1997, Infield & Adams 1999). In their study of 23 ICDP projects in developing countries, Wells and Brandon (1992) found most struggling to meet objectives in terms of development or conservation. Decisions on what to prioritize, who to target and how to broker competing interests in social development actions are thorny issues. One key problem identified is that such ‘charitable’ projects can serve to reinforce the separation of people from local wildlife resources and alienate them from a custodial sense of ‘ownership’ of conservation schemes (IIED 1994, McNeely & Ness 1995, Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). Another problem has been a tendency for agencies to overstate potential gains from activities, especially from tourism. “Too often false expectations are raised among local communities and local governments as to the level of economic benefits they might enjoy” (Sanjayan et al 1997, p4). Broken promises can inflame tensions (Schroeder 1999) and further diminish the chances of achieving the ‘social contract’ between agencies and communities that underlies much ICDP thinking.

The actual social sensitivity of the new methods of spatial planning for protected areas - core/buffer zonation and multiple-use reserves - also has to be critically reviewed. According to Ghimire and Pimbert (1997, p34) core areas have still tended to be large in size compared with buffer zones, and their creation has in some cases entailed the further “official encroachment into local woodlots and other common property resources”. They also point out that IUCN’s definition of a Managed Resource Protected Area (which can encompass multiple-use reserves) still assumes the majority of the total area must remain in its ‘natural state’. In their view, planning methods are therefore still strongly oriented toward strict biodiversity protection.
Moreover, a top-down managerialist approach is still inherent in the establishment of zones within and surrounding reserves in which permissible forms of land and resource use are specified by the conservation agency. It has also been a feature of much of the decision-making on ICDP activities. These have frequently been initiated, planned and managed by outsiders without taking sufficient account of local aspirations, of livelihood possibilities other than paid employment, and of social and political constraints (Colchester 1997, Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). They have often been undertaken “under the auspices of donor-funded projects which view local people as passive beneficiaries” (IIED 1994, pvi8).

A further step in the realignment of conservation practice away from traditional biodiversity protection might therefore be to foster the more active involvement of local people: their direct participation in protected area project planning and management.

The argument for engaging community participation in protected area decision-making has long played a key role in people-oriented conservation thinking. The call for such involvement began to be heard in conservation circles in the late 1960s and 1970s, and appears to have close links with the rise of a grass-roots approach in rural development (Western & Wright 1994) (see 2.3.1). It is an argument now incorporated into the policy statements of major international bodies engaged in biodiversity conservation including the Global Environment Facility (GEF) (see Box 2.5). Blaikie and Jeanrenaud (1997, p64) see it as part of the new “conventional wisdom” in international conservation discourse.

The argument is broadly as follows. The integration of social factors into decision-making on biodiversity conservation projects demands the input of information on social factors and the capacity for that input to influence project plans. This, it is increasingly argued, is best facilitated not just by ‘social assessment’ - the formal gathering of knowledge on local culture, society and economy, as well as on wider structural contexts - but also by the ‘participation’ of local people in decision-making (e.g. World Bank 1994). The planning process can seek to involve local communities as much as possible in providing information and making decisions on any project that has implications for their livelihoods. Doing so serves ethical, social and developmental objectives on the one hand. But it can also serve the cause of biodiversity conservation, through the input of local environmental knowledge and stimulation of local support for conservation.
Box 2.5 The Global Environment Facility

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was launched in 1991 as a multilateral mechanism for financing projects in developing countries that address environmental issues of global concern. The latest replenishment of its funds took place in 1998, when it was granted a further $2.75bn (Young 1999). It is implemented jointly by three agencies: The World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). At the time of replenishment, the GEF had committed funding to projects in 119 countries (GEF 1998b), with 39% of funding targeted to biodiversity conservation, including the establishment of protected areas and sustainable management of buffer zones at biodiversity-rich sites (GEF 1997). In 1993, GEF commenced funding for coastal zone management in Belize, a component of which was the establishment of new protected areas.

The GEF in many ways represents the embodiment of the new directions and new rhetoric of conservation. It has responded to the criticisms of previous biodiversity conservation strategies and the call for greater community involvement by setting out formal commitments to social assessment and participation in the biodiversity projects it funds (GEF 1996a). All three Implementing Agencies correspondingly laid down participatory guidelines that were supposed to apply to all projects in their GEF portfolios (UNDP 1993, UNEP 1994, World Bank 1994). In fact, an inter-agency review conducted at the close of the GEF’s three-year pilot phase, criticized many projects for failing to match the policy commitment in practice (UNDP/UNEP/World Bank 1993). Many inside and outside commentators have continued to point to shortfalls between participatory rhetoric and project practice since the review (Jeffries 1997, GEF 1998b, Young 1999). Further reference to GEF experience is made during the course of the thesis and in Box 10.1.

Figure 2.2 presents an idealized model of the requirements, linkages and potential benefits of social assessment and participation applied to statutory conservation planning. Later in this chapter, Subsection 2.3.3 explores the themes of community involvement in conservation projects in greater depth.

2.2.5 Summary

Protected areas form one of the principal tools of biodiversity conservation. The traditional protected area model stems from a combination of preservationist and managerialist approaches to nature conservation and broadly seeks to separate conservation sites from
'destructive' human influence. In the past the model has tended to be applied in strict fashion within developing countries, driven by strident international discourses of conservation that were to large extent depoliticized by external agencies. Yet the creation of protected areas in the Third World has commonly caused severe social and economic problems for local populations. It has often resulted in conflict and protected area regulations on human access have commonly failed, sometimes with adverse effects on biodiversity. Protected areas are therefore inherently social, and inherently political.

Figure 2.2 Model of social assessment and participation

Conceptually, and ideally, the relations between social assessment and participation, and their roles and requirements in a conservation context could be represented as above.
Both for ethical and practical reasons, conservation organizations have responded to calls to make conservation more people-oriented. Since the 1980s social elements have regularly been incorporated into protected area plans, but with only mixed success, partly because many projects continued to be planned from the 'top-down'. The now-influential people-oriented discourse of conservation additionally calls for 'bottom-up' community participation in decision-making. Section 2.3 now shifts focus to look in depth at the ideas, prescriptions and practices surrounding 'community participation'.

2.3 Participation

The case for community participation in biodiversity conservation reflects earlier debates in other realms of public intervention, especially in the field of rural development. This section commences by introducing the wider debate on participation (2.3.1), followed by more focussed examinations of community involvement in environmental initiatives (2.3.2). The final subsection (2.3.3) reviews arguments for and the emerging problems of public participation specifically within conservation projects.

2.3.1 The Participation Debate

Arnstein's brief but much-quoted paper 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' exposed the frequently misleading and rhetorical use of the term 'participation' within urban renewal and anti-poverty programmes in the USA (Arnstein 1969). Hers was an early critique of simplistic notions of democratic pluralism in what was then a growing movement for more active citizen involvement in environmental planning on both sides of the North Atlantic (Healey 1997). Participation, in this sense, referred to involvement in decision processes, and, although the term is sometimes used in the more limited sense of benefit-sharing, for most social analysts participation still means communities contributing to decision-making (Brohman 1996, Ribot 1999).

Debates over community participation have since taken place within many fields, but it is those within rural development that has been particularly pertinent to conservation policy in
developing countries (Western & Wright 1994, Pimbert & Pretty 1997). Chambers (1983) was one of the early voices advocating a change in rural development planning in the Third World, arguing that external practitioners too often designed projects without truly understanding local specificities and the complex nature of rural poverty. The error was compounded by a tendency to disregard local people’s knowledge and potential input into planning. The result was development that largely failed to serve the needs of those communities being ‘developed’. These themes were echoed by other writers (e.g. Richards (1985) on indigenous knowledge in agriculture, Potter (1985) on participatory urban planning, and Rocheleau (1987) on the user-perspective in agroforestry), and struck a chord with many development practitioners. Redressing these shortcomings required an approach to planning and managing development that was less ‘top-down’ and more ‘bottom-up’, open and in-depth, that engaged local people’s knowledge, opinions and aspirations in a truly participatory exchange.

In the early 1990s the call for participatory development, both from Northern analysts and from Southern NGOs, became increasingly taken up in the policy statements of bilateral and multilateral development agencies (Nelson & Wright 1995). According to Mayoux (1995 p235):

“Participatory development is now an established orthodoxy in the policy guidelines of development agencies right across the political spectrum, from large Western donor agencies to left-wing NGOs”.

As debate and practice have moved on, so the theoretical concepts surrounding participation and critiques of its application have become more refined. Participation has emerged as a far from simple process of giving voice to and empowering a ‘community’ (see Box 2.6). Simplistic notions of community solidarity and communal interests have been debunked. Communities are not necessarily consensual, homogeneous entities (Leach et al 1997). The differing roles and agendas of different stakeholders in a development project, both within affected communities and without, have been recognised, along with an awareness of the complexity of the power relations that exist from the household level up to the state (Taylor & Mackenzie 1992, Nelson & Wright 1995, Brohman 1996).

It has become evident that development interventions are always likely to benefit some people more than others. Different social actors have differing access to a participatory
process: elite or special interest groups can often exert disproportionate influence on the outcome of interventions (Mosse 1994, Brohman 1996, Ahluwalia 1997). Psychological factors such as self-esteem, respect for authority and the search for stimulation also differentially shape people’s readiness to participate (Sanchez et al 1988). Ineffective participation is often linked with problems of motivation, negative past experiences of projects, and knowledge and communication gaps (Potter 1985).

Box 2.6 What is ‘community’?

Several authors argue that ‘community’ itself is a vague, poorly-defined and often contested concept (Western & Wright 1994, Warburton 1998). Sharpe (1998) stresses the internal cleavages of power, class, ethnicity, gender and political allegiances that often exist in local populations and help make community an insecure social construct. Indeed, the very concept of ‘community’ has sometimes been imposed on people by state and other organizations (Nelson & Wright 1995).

Warburton (1998, p15) suggests that the idea of community is so difficult to define adequately that it may be most easily understood by “recognising what it is not: it is not state, society, association, individual, self”. It has connotations of local-scale, of social groups linked by relationships that are more immediate than with the rest of society. She also notes that the notion of community is often firmly linked with ‘place’, with a shared sense of identity arising from a specific home location and familiarity with its physical and social characteristics.

On the other hand, adoption of participation as a ‘buzzword’ by development institutions, without real commitment to empowering communities, has also been roundly criticised. Brohman (1996) claims that so-called participatory programmes have often remained tightly controlled by the agencies promoting them. Arnstein (1969, p216) argued that “participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless”. She distinguished eight forms of participation corresponding to different levels of citizens’ power. Pretty has developed a more elaborate typology of interpretations of the term, which “range from manipulative and passive participation, where people are told what is to happen and act out pre-determined roles, to self-mobilisation - where people take initiatives largely independent of external institutions” (Pretty 1995, p4). His typology is reproduced in Table 2.5.
### Table 2.5 A typology of participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Participation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Passive Participation</td>
<td>People participate by being told what is going to happen or what has already happened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Participation in information-giving</td>
<td>People participate by answering questions posed by extractive researchers and project managers using questionnaire surveys or similar approaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Participation by consultation</td>
<td>People participate by being consulted, and external agents listen to views. These external agents define both problems and solutions, and may modify these in the light of people's responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Participation for material incentives</td>
<td>People participate by providing resources, for example labour, in return for food, cash or other material incentives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Functional participation</td>
<td>People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Interactive participation</td>
<td>People participate in joint analysis, which leads to action plans and the formation of new local groups or the strengthening of existing ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Self-mobilization</td>
<td>People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Participation, in its deepest sense, is seen not just as a means but as an end: as a way of better securing social and economic objectives and as a goal, in itself, of empowering communities with control over their livelihoods (Taylor & Mackenzie 1992, Edwards 1994, Brohman 1996). The power dimensions of participation are explored in greater detail in Subsection 2.4.3. Here we now turn to view cases in which the ideas of participation have been applied in environmental interventions in developing countries.

### 2.3.2 Participation in Environmental Initiatives

to participation has become “near-mandatory” in environmental agencies’ policy and project planning. The tendency dovetails with the general populist critique of post-War development described in Subsection 2.3.1, but it is also linked to the widely-held argument that participation in environmental and resource management is a key component of ‘sustainability’ and sustainable development (see 2.1.4) (Ghai & Vivian 1992, Holmberg 1992, Mitchell 1997).

In some environmental projects, such as wide-scale reforestation in settled landscapes, community participation in terms of labour input is a practical prerequisite (Ghai & Vivian 1992). But participation in the sense used in the thesis, of involvement in decision-making, is also increasingly built into environmental projects. The preparation of a land use plan for a dryland district in north-west Botswana, for example, involved a series of meetings in villages in the area over a span of three years in which, reportedly, “land use conflicts were identified and discussed, and alternative land use zoning arrangements were debated” (Mitchell 1997, p172). Ghai and Vivian (1992) note that environmental projects initiated either by government agencies or NGOs that engage communities in planning and implementation processes have covered activities such as soil conservation, agroforestry, watershed management, protection of marine resources, waste recycling and energy conservation. The mix of participatory methods fostered by agencies can include social surveys, public consultation meetings, advisory groups and written submissions from members of the public. According to Mitchell (1997) such participation often creates more effective environmental management in the long term.

Agencies may also be able to intervene in such a way as to foster a more bottom-up mode of participation in environmental action. As a normative ideal, the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) has used the umbrella term ‘primary environmental care’ (PEC) to denote approaches towards sustainability that operate at the ‘grassroots’, organized by communities with varying degrees of external support. The concept of PEC integrates environmental, economic and social goals in joint pursuit of environmental protection, meeting the basic needs of the poor, and empowerment of communities. The role of outsider agencies is seen here as “bringing interested groups together and facilitating the process of information exchange and decision-making” (Holmberg 1992, pp32-33). This approach builds on a long tradition of grassroots environmental activism in the South,
independent of outside intervention, over issues such as logging in tropical forests and industrial pollution (Ghai & Vivian 1992, Holmberg 1992). Environmental resource management projects organized by communities rather than solely by agencies are discussed further in Box 2.7.

**Box 2.7 Community-based resource management**

The idea that action at the grassroots - local-scale solutions derived from community-level initiatives - is essential to the furtherance of sustainable development has gained widespread currency in the 1990s (Ghai & Vivian 1992, Leach et al 1997). Such 'community-based' actions may entail the community acting independently to resist external environmental threats and maintaining or developing its own, communal rules and institutions to manage and conserve local resources (Ghai & Vivian 1992). Colchester (1994) lists a series of cases in tropical Asia where local people have challenged industrial-scale forest clearance, and Shiva (1994) notes that women have often been in the forefront of such social mobilization for resistance. Though erosion of indigenous systems of common property management is a growing problem in the face of external pressures (Richards 1997), some new and successful forms of community-based resource management have also arisen, in some cases out of initial resistance, as with the Chipko movement in India (Colchester 1994).

But the term 'community-based' is also employed to refer to cases where external agencies attempt to foster 'bottom-up' organization for resource management and conservation. Some such approaches have been founded on legislation that secures usage rights and cedes a measure of control over natural resources to local communities (Colchester 1994). Ideally, security of rights and derivation of benefits then provide the platform that enables communities to develop sustainable patterns of resource use, with technical assistance from outside (IIED 1994). In this sense, though, there is a fine-line between what is truly derived from the grassroots and what is imposed from outside, however benignly.

Experience has shown that community-based initiatives often fall short of expectations (Leach et al 1997). This is partly because of the complexity of pressures from poverty, commerce and politics that often run contrary to environmental protection (Western & Wright 1994). But it is also connected with unrealistic assumptions on the part of external agencies regarding the solidarity and capacity of communities. If internal cleavages exist, conflict rather than consensus is likely to surround local resource management decisions, especially if the local decision-making institutions are themselves undemocratic (Leach et al 1997).

Agency-led environmental initiatives, like rural development projects, must overcome major issues if they are to be effectively participatory and empowering. According to
Mitchell (1997) experiences from projects in both North and South suggest successful participation processes depend on: compatibility (respect and trust) between participants; benefits to all partners; equitable involvement; effective communication; adaptability and flexibility; and patience and perseverance on the part of all partners. Facilitating participation along such lines is clearly a tall order for agencies (both governmental and non-governmental), especially those that have been previously accustomed to top-down lines of decision-making on environmental matters (see, for example, Young 1999 on GEF projects).

In many cases agencies may have to work hard to overcome deep mistrust of external institutions owing to people’s previous experiences of intervention, as Utting (1994) has documented for social forestry schemes in Guatemala. Indeed long alienation from processes of decision-making on the environment continues to constrain local environmental action even in countries of the North, including the UK (Bromley 1990). On the other hand, people in all societies simply may not be motivated to take time out from work and home life to participate in environmental matters. In such circumstances, there is often a difficulty for planning agencies in determining whether more active participants, including organized environmental pressure groups, fairly represent the views of less active community members (Mitchell 1997). Often those who readily participate are those already more empowered: “the better-off, elites, officials, local leaders, men, adults and the healthy, rather than the worse-off, the underclasses, the vulnerable, lay people, women, children and the sick” (Chambers 1998, p138). Ribot (1996, 1999), writing on forestry projects in the West African Sahel, warns of the dangers of devolving decision-making power over resources to local individuals and community groups whose representativeness and accountability cannot be assumed.

The notion that even a ‘subsistence’ community might speak with one voice on natural resource issues is dangerously simplistic (Leach et al 1997). People make different usage of their local environment - such as fishing, farming, hunting, gathering and livestock grazing - and different segments of the community have divergent interests in its future (Western & Wright 1994, Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). In non-subsistence conditions the divergences may be still greater. According to Little (1994, p348) “most social scientists now assume that conflict is inherent in most types of resource use or conservation”, with different
stakeholders exercising "varied interests in a resource's use or conservation". Sharpe (1998) shows how in south-west Cameroon, different social groups have differing traditions of settlement and farming reflected in different styles of forest conversion and usage and therefore divergent views on how the forest should be managed.

Perhaps most fundamentally, successful participation relies on social and political structural conditions that permit, rather than inhibit, democratic involvement of local people in decision-making (Ghai & Vivian 1992, Wells & Brandon 1992). It needs supportive policy frameworks across government, underpinned by civil rights to organize and to access information (Holmberg 1992). In many countries, formidable barriers to empowerment are inherent in the social order. "Institutionalized injustice, land and wealth concentration, patronage and 'cronyism', censorship and repression, are the main enemies of sustainability" (Colchester 1994, p92).

In the light of such challenging issues, it is perhaps little surprise that in the realm of environment/development "the rhetoric of community participation has been rehearsed many times, but it remains the exception rather than the norm on the ground" (Warburton 1998, p5).

2.3.3 Participation in Protected Area Projects

As already noted (see 2.2.4), the call for greater community participation started to be taken up in conservation too, and by the 1990s many conservation bodies were promoting a grassroots role for villages and communities surrounding national parks and other protected areas (Little 1994). This was especially so as initiatives such as ICDPs increasingly blurred the distinction between development activities and conservation activites. As conservation practitioners tried to integrate social factors within biodiversity projects, many commentators argued that effective community participation, though problematic in itself, was essential in the pursuit of such goals (e.g. West & Brechin 1991, Wells & Brandon 1992). As a review of management planning at the marine Cahuita National park in Costa Rica suggests, local cooperation is difficult to achieve without cooperation in decision-making (Kutay 1991).
Wells and Brandon (1992) identify five modes of local participation in respect of the design and implementation of ICDPs: providing initial information; giving feedback through consultation; participating directly in decision-making; initiating new actions; and taking part in project evaluation. They show how, in Nepal, a six-month social survey (information provision) resulted in the decision to create the multiple-use Annapurna Conservation Area rather than a traditionally restrictive national park. In the BOSCOSA ICDP project in Costa Rica local people had a major role in decisions on alternative agricultural methods (decision-making) and in developing community-based initiatives such as agroforestry (initiating action).

Participation, in its various forms, can therefore feature in the initiation, planning and management of protected areas and associated projects. It operates perhaps most obviously in projects that are rooted in community action. Such ‘indigenous’ protected area initiatives range in scale from a 600 sq km strictly-protected core sanctuary set up by the Kuna people of Panama in their communal lands (Utting 1994) to small-scale private ‘reserves’ established by communities on the edge of villages to support nature tourism, as in Belize (see 4.4.2). Other more or less community-based initiatives (see Box 2.7) include ‘extractive reserves’ and ‘co-management’ arrangements. Extractive reserves are areas that are leased to user groups for small-scale, sustainable harvesting of wild products, such as rubber-tapping and nut-collecting in Brazil (Salafsky 1994). Co-management involves state authorities formally sharing decision-making responsibility on selected management issues with local community representatives, as in Australia’s Kakadu National Park (Hill & Press 1994).

But participation has also become a common theme in more conventional protected area projects throughout the world. Furze et al (1996, p102) stress that participation should involve people in all phases of externally-promoted conservation projects, in “design, development and implementation”. Community involvement has been incorporated into a range of statutory and non-statutory protected area projects in developing regions, from the Amazon Basin (e.g. Howard et al 1995) to the Pacific islands (e.g. Tacconi 1997). Participation has been widely promoted by international environmental organisations (e.g. IUCN/UNEP/WWF 1991) and features in the policy statements of multilateral bodies involved in funding protected area projects. A ‘Best Practice Note’ on biodiversity
conservation projects circulated by The World Bank in 1994, for example, emphasizes the involvement of all key stakeholders at various stages of the project (see Box 2.8 for its definition of 'stakeholders'). The document argues:

“When those who are expected to benefit from the project engage actively in conservation management and decision making, their participation can lead to better decisions, greater ownership and accountability, improved management and empowerment” (World Bank 1994, p2).

**Box 2.8 Stakeholders in biodiversity conservation projects**

The potential list of ‘stakeholders’ in a protected area project can be large indeed. According to the World Bank (1994, p4) local stakeholders in biodiversity conservation projects typically include “consumptive users (e.g. farmers, fishermen, wood gatherers) and non-consumptive users (e.g. recreational visitors) and disadvantaged or at-risk groups (e.g. indigenous people, women, landless households)”. Other local or non-local stakeholders listed include project implementors (from state agencies, NGOs or private business), policy makers, international donors, NGOs (both advocacy groups and community-based organizations), research organizations, and private businesses.

Yet, simple statements advocating ‘participation’ in conservation fail to convey the complex, problematic nature of the participation process (see 2.3.1 and 2.3.2). In conservation, as in rural development, therefore, the challenges of participation have already become evident.

A report by the International Institute for Environment and Development on community-based wildlife projects notes a similar range of approaches to participation as identified by Pretty (see 2.3.1), with the degree of participation increasing the more a biodiversity project moves away from an imposed protected area model toward community-led management of communal resources (IIED 1994). Little (1994) claims that people are more likely to be granted a participatory role in the project implementation rather than in the design stages, and that most conservation projects treat participation as a means (to enhance conservation), not as an end (community empowerment). Few, for example, give communities real power to decide their own conservation goals and sanction offenders. Even in co-management
arrangements, there is a tendency for governmental organisations not to share power in balanced fashion with community decision-making bodies when such initiatives are actually put into practice (Murphree 1994).

Several authors argue that if conservation is seriously intending to utilize participatory methods and language in the furtherance of conservation goals, it must recognize that 'meaningful' participation demands strategic involvement in decisions that empowers communities with greater control over their lives and resources (Wells & Brandon 1992, Little 1994, Furze et al 1996, Pimbert & Pretty 1997). Changing previously top-down conservation styles requires considerable commitment as well as skills and training (Blaikie & Jeanrenaud 1997). As Sanjayan et al (1997, p17) caution, “converting agencies traditionally concerned with natural resources management and conservation into organizations skilled in community involvement is certainly a lofty goal”. Indeed, it is a challenge with ideological dimensions for it arguably confronts conservation discourses rooted in concepts of nature/culture division (see 2.1), an issue explored in depth in Chapters 9 and 10.

Agencies that attempt to foster participation face other, major practical issues. Participation is a time-consuming process (Little 1994, GEF 1998b), and therefore one highly demanding for state conservation agencies often very short on resources (Sanjayan et al 1997). It requires commitment of time to build trust, rapport and credibility, and participation can be stifled if the process is forced to fit within an externally-driven timetable (Furze et al 1996). Like all participatory initiatives, project implementors also have the perennial problem of how to ensure a meaningful cross-section of the community actually participates (Furze et al 1996, Cocklin et al 1998). That means not just coping with disparities in motivation, but also sometimes coping with strong local hierarchies that may deny a voice on resource issues to disadvantaged groups (Wells & Brandon 1992).

2.3.4 Summary

Community involvement in decision-making has emerged as a prominent theme in recent debates on protected areas and is a key component of people-oriented conservation
discourse. Yet the experiences of public participation in rural development, environmental and conservation projects within developing countries have revealed that it is a highly complex social process. The very term 'participation' is open to interpretation and the participatory rhetoric of external agencies is often not borne out in practice. On the other hand, naive assumptions about community homogeneity and harmony of interests regarding natural resources mask the conflicts and imbalances that tend to surround participation at the local level.

How power is brokered between the different sets of stakeholders in protected area projects - within communities as well as between communities and agencies - therefore greatly influences the participation process and the outcome of project planning. It is to 'power', and the related themes of knowledge and discourse, that Section 2.4 now turns.

2.4 Social Power

Many of the authors cited in the preceding discussions have drawn attention to the need for an understanding of social power and its role within conservation and participation. This section commences by discussing theoretical debates on power and outlining the analytical approach on power relations employed in the thesis (2.4.1). It then sees how conceptions of power have been applied and formulated within the environmental context, especially within political ecology (2.4.2). The final subsection discusses power in relation to community participation (2.4.3), leading on to a topical synthesis of power, participation and protected areas in the concluding section of the chapter (2.5).

2.4.1 Theoretical Discussions of Power

This extended subection sifts through contemporary debates in order to develop a conceptual understanding of power upon which to frame the research. It discusses concepts of what we mean by the term 'power' and what exercises power, before going on to discuss power relations and the mechanisms that operate in those relations (and attendant themes of
knowledge and discourse). The themes are illustrated largely with examples drawn from a development context.

The academic literature on social power is extensive and the debates generated are highly complex and unresolved. Indeed some authors argue that power is an 'essentially contested' concept, always open to dispute because different theories rest on fundamentally different values and assumptions (e.g Lukes 1974, Hartsock 1990). Rather than attempt to describe the merry-go-round of debate and counter-debate, this subsection will concentrate on some key contributions of contemporary theorists to indicate themes of power most pertinent to the thesis topic. Table 2.7 then draws on these elements to set out in simple terms the conceptual approach to power employed in the thesis.

What is Power?

Power has become one of the most contentious concepts in sociology (Law 1991, Scott 1994). And yet, outside the world of academic theorizing, people make frequent use of the term in conversation and seem to share a tacit 'common sense' understanding of what it means. It may be appropriate, therefore, to start the discussion of concepts of power by looking at a contribution that tries, as it were, to go back to basics.

Morriss (1987) argues that power should be conceived in essence as how it is used in ordinary language. Once its essence is so defined, conceptual elaboration can then be built up from this foundation. On etymological grounds, Morriss makes a crucial distinction between 'power' and 'influence', which he sees as overlapping in meaning but not synonymous. The core idea of power is more limited: “'power' always refers to a capacity to do things, whilst 'influence' sometimes (and typically) does not” (italics in original) (Morriss 1987, p12). Influence, in many uses of the term, refers to an outcome rather than an ability. Power he regards as a dispositional property - a relatively enduring condition of an object. Furthermore, social power is a conditional disposition - its exercise implies a degree of choice and intention. Extending the etymological approach, power does not merely 'affect', he claims, but 'effect': to be able to affect an issue or someone in some way is to have influence; but to be able to effect or accomplish something is to have power.
The preceding paragraph has already thrown up a series of issues regarding the permanence of power and the link between intentions and outcomes, which help set the scene for the rest of this discussion. But the core idea that power refers to an ability or capacity to cause something is echoed widely in the contemporary literature, including the key works of Lukes and Giddens. Thus Lukes (1986) refers to power as an ability to make a difference to the world and Giddens (1985, p7) defines power as 'transformative capacity' or "the capability to intervene in a given set of events so as in some way to alter them". Giddens links that capacity to the mobilization of 'resources' that may include, for example, types of technical knowledge, rhetorical skills, the possession of authority or the tools of force (Giddens 1993).

But does power conceived by Morriss (1987) as a relatively enduring dispositional property means that power is something possessed? Giddens (1993, p118) argues that:

"Power does not come into being only when being 'exercised', even if ultimately there is no other criterion whereby one can demonstrate what power actors possess. This is important, because we can talk of power being 'stored up' for future occasions of use".

But for many writers, power exists only in the flow of events - it is not something one can hoard for later use. Clegg (1989) and others regard power as 'relationally constituted', arising from the process of interaction. Thus: "power is a description of a relation, not a 'thing' which people 'have'" (Nelson & Wright 1995, p8); and "no matter how much power one appears to accumulate, it is always necessary to obtain it from the others who are doing the action" (Latour 1986, p276).

Law (1991) suggests that as lay people we routinely assume that power can be stored. There is no reason why social analysts cannot then treat power in the same way, as long as they acknowledge that its storage is impermanent and dependent on a set of precariously structured relations. Power, in this reading, is perceived both as a capacity and as a relational effect - as a product generated in the network of actors and their relations (Law 1991, Umans 1998).

What is perhaps most important in this debate is the challenge it brings to any notion that power is firmly fixed in certain locations (be it people, institutions or places). Indeed,
Giddens (1985) too, argues against fixity within power systems. Taking the argument further, power, in this sense, could then be seen to be present in every transformative action or attempted transformative action. This squares with Freire’s theorization, which sees power as inherent in all forms of oppositional behaviour rather than confined merely to spheres in which dominant groups operate (discussed in Giroux 1985). It also linked with actor-oriented directions in rural development research that emphasize how each actor is “endowed with different and changing amounts of knowledge and power” (Booth 1994, p11).

The work of Foucault has been particularly influential on much of this thinking. Foucault (1986) sees power not as a commodity that can be ‘appropriated’ but as something much more fluid and ubiquitous. “Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain” (Foucault 1986, p234). Foucault’s net-like conception sees individuals as always simultaneously exercising power and undergoing the effects of power: they are constituted by power and at the same time are the vehicles of power. Power in this sense is “embedded in the very fabric” of the social system and “resides in every perception, judgement and act” of every individual (Hardy & Leiba-O’Sullivan 1998, pp459-460). Foucault’s ideas suggest that the exercise of power is generalized, it always entails costs and its outcome is seldom certain:

“Power should be seen neither as essentially centralized and hierarchical, nor as necessarily based on some combination of coercion and consent, nor as always serving a dominant social interest” (Hindess 1996, p141).

What Exercises Power?

What exactly exercises social power is one of the thorniest issues in the field. Is it human agents alone (acting either as individuals or as collectives) that do so, or can enduring structures within society (ideological, cultural, social, economic, administrative) themselves exercise power?

Lukes (1974) has built on a tradition of post-War thought in developing his ‘three-dimensional’ view of power, which broadly sees people using power to realize their interests in competition with those of others (see Table 2.6). One of Lukes’ criticisms of
previous interest-based theory was that it focused on strategies of action and inaction without taking into account social and cultural constraints on people’s ability to recognize their interests (Scott 1994). It focused on agency but ignored structure. Lukes’ ‘third dimension’ addresses this omission, but he does not go so far as to ascribe power to structure. Instead “the systemic effects are to be seen as structural constraints on the exercise of power, and not as aspects of power itself” (Scott 1994, general commentary).

Table 2.6 Lukes’ three dimensions of power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of Power</th>
<th>Power of Actor A over Actor B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Dimension</strong></td>
<td>A and B have conflicting interests on an issue. A is better able to use power effectively in the decision-making arena.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power mobilized through resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Dimension</strong></td>
<td>A controls the decision-making process by limiting access and agendas. B is aware of the issue but unable to get access to the decision arena.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power mobilized through decision processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third Dimension</strong></td>
<td>A controls the political agenda. B is unaware of the issue and has no will to contest it. Conflict fails to materialize in the first place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power mobilized to prevent conflict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lukes (1974) developed an interest-based approach to power, describing three means by which actors can exert power over other actors in decision-making. The model assumes power is exercised when there are conflicts of interest (overt, covert or latent). The third dimension acknowledges structural mechanisms that serve to hide actors’ consciousness of issues (hegemony) as well as direct management of meaning by more powerful actors (Hardy & Leiba-O’Sullivan 1998). A fourth, ‘Foucauldian’ dimension could be added that views all actors as “prisoners of the prevailing discourses of power” although one actor may derive greater advantage from them than another (Hardy & Leiba-O’Sullivan 1998, p462).

Source: adapted from Hardy & Leiba-O’Sullivan (1998, p462)  
(additional reference: Lukes 1974)

Giddens (1985, p7) affirms the basic connection between agency and power: “to be an agent is to have power”. Though structural influences run through his concepts on the operation of power in society, it is always agency that appears to exercise power. Thus agents deploy resources that may be structural properties of social systems, and power is “typically at its
most intense and durable when running silently through the repetition of institutionalized practices" (Giddens 1985, p9). But it is always agents that draw on those resources and practices in the exercise of power.

Writing in a development context, Schmink and Wood (1992) adopt a similar view on the roles of structure. They see social groups as collective actors, with each collective employing degrees of power drawn from multiple sources (cf. Giddens’ resources) including wealth, force, access to state apparatus and idea systems (thus the power of indigenous forest peoples in land disputes has been enhanced by drawing on ‘environmental discourse’). Social context or structure again has an important conditioning effect on actors’ power. Economic, political and ideological factors, on a scale from the global to the regional, “structure local outcomes by shifting power balances and by altering the incentives and disincentives for alternative courses of action” (Schmink & Wood, 1992 p18).

Griggs (1996, p388) speaks of both material and non-material resources that can act as ‘power bases’ - “the structural foundations of an actor’s power”. In his study of political parties in South Africa power bases included popular support, institutional capacity, political alliances and public perceptions of credibility. For Healey (1997), individuals and groups in society develop enduring relational bonds that can also be called upon as power resources.

The functional separation of power from structure is not adhered to by all. Layder (1994) attacks the ‘voluntarist’ tendency he sees in both Lukes and Giddens by reaffirming power as a structural phenomenon. Structural power, he says, refers to the resources social groups possess in their unequal relation to other groups, and its role must be recognized for adequate theorization. Yet this power he acknowledges has a different meaning. It is conceived not as bringing about change itself, but as conditioning the power in turn of actors. “Such power structures constrain the exercise of power by individuals or collectivities operating within those structures” (italics in original) (Layder 1994, p374). Going back to the ideas of Morriss (1987), ‘constraint’ can affect, but it does not effect.
Power Relations

Power relations - how people interact with another within power systems - clearly lie at the heart of analyses of how social power operates. Here debate has often been polarized over whether or not the sociology of power should focus on conflict. Linked with that issue has been debate on ‘power over’ or ‘power to’ approaches to the study of power relations.

Power operating as ‘A’ affecting ‘B’ in a manner against the interests of ‘B’ is a key component of the interest-based conception of power (Lukes 1974). It emphasizes ‘zero-sum’ power relations between competing agents - the greater the power of one agent, the correspondingly lesser the power of the other. Power, in this sense, is inherently related to the existence of conflicts of interest. Lukes argues that theory should focus on the conflictual aspects of power, for these he regards as the issues of crucial interest to society.

Emphasis on conflict leads to the identification of specific types of mechanisms through which power is seen to operate. Wrong (cited in Scott 1994) develops a family of concepts describing power relations starting with ‘force’ (coercion), ‘manipulation’ and ‘persuasion’ (including reward). These are viewed as the most general mechanisms, and, when stabilized or institutionalized, they may be described as ‘authority’, or as Scott prefers it ‘domination’. “An individual or group exercises domination when it can issue a command to others and can be certain that this will result in obedience” (Scott 1994, general commentary).

An alternative approach focuses not on conflict in power relations but more on processes of consensus. It views power in a ‘non-zero-sum’ sense as a property of social systems that enables individuals to accomplish more than they could do otherwise (Law 1991). Actors can therefore derive mutual benefits from the exercise of power, and the growth of one person’s power does not necessarily negatively affect the power of others (Nelson & Wright 1995). A search for facilitative mechanisms of power therefore leads one away from an emphasis on identifying domination and toward processes of cooperation and compromise. According to Clegg (1989), such a facilitative conception of power is reflected in the more recent writings of Giddens, and Foucault’s work also emphasizes a productive conception of social power.
The conflict/concensus dimension of power is closely linked to the question of whether power should be viewed in sociology in terms of ‘power over’ or ‘power to’. Power over other actors is the core idea of the zero-sum model of power (Lukes 1974), while the non-zero sum model implies a power to accomplish (Morriss 1987). Social ‘power to’, however, is not used solely in a concensual sense. It is conceived as an added capacity for action resulting from membership of a society, and that capacity to act is not evenly distributed (Law 1991). Morriss (1987) argues that the verbal form ‘power to’ can be used in the manner of ‘power to do something to somebody’, and it therefore effectively incorporates the conflictual exercise of ‘power over’.

Law (1991, p168) sees value in combining the two approaches in analysis, seeing no reason why “concern with ‘power to’ should necessarily exclude concern with ‘power over’” (italics in original). The key concern for him then becomes the means by which social relations become stabilised such that power effects become manifest. Such a concern helps open analysis up to consider a greater variety and complexity of mechanisms or tactics involved in power relations. It leads one into an arena of negotiation, of often subtle application and deflection of power, in which power is not viewed solely in terms of capacity to fully achieve intended outcomes.

As Clegg (1989, pp17-18) puts it, “the view of power is of a far less massive, oppressive and prohibitive apparatus than it is often imagined to be”. This is partly because of increasing recognition that attempts to exert power are usually twinned with resistance (see Box 2.9). Clegg visualizes society containing circuits of power and resistance. Giddens (1985) writes of a ‘dialectic of control’, in which all attempts by superordinates to control trigger counter-strategies in subordinates. Power is seldom now viewed in a unidirectional sense, even in the most uneven of unequal relations. Freire (cited in Giroux 1985) claims that domination is always partial and always fought over within asymmetries of power.

There is now a large body of literature exploring the subtlety of power relations in terms of processes such as legitimation and negotiation through which agents try to alter social events in their favour. Clegg (1989) endorses much of the work of a French post-structuralist group that studied the complexities of power relations through a ‘sociology of translation’. Social outcomes, under this methodology, arise through a continuous series of
displacements and transformations (of interests, goals, actions, objects, people, meanings etc) referred to as a process of translation (Callon 1986). In this model, power is composed by enrolling other actors in political and social schemes, and the ability to generate such associations hinges on both material and non-material resources (Latour 1986). For Callon (1986) one of the key mechanisms through which power becomes concentrated in certain hands is through obtaining the right to represent silent actors. (The sociology of translation provides the foundation for the current analytical approach known as actor-network theory (see, for example, Law 1992, Murdoch & Marsden 1995, Clark & Murdoch 1997)).

A parallel approach is taken in the development context by Arce and Long (1992) who have undertaken research into the micro-sociology of rural development through a ‘knowledge-interface framework’. They uncover the way individuals and groups, including the marginalized, exercise power in negotiations between one another, making strategic trade-offs to give themselves room for manoeuvre and enrolling others to their cause. Knowledge is seen as a key resource in the exercise, reflecting the old axiom ‘knowledge is power’.

**Box 2.9 Resistance in the development context**

In ‘Weapons of the Weak’, Scott (1985) challenges the image of the powerlessness of the Third World poor and argues that even non-confrontational actions such as withdrawal of support, cooperation and compliance can be effective forms of struggle. He claims that many unpopular development projects have been “nibbled to extinction by the passive resistance of the peasantry” (Scott 1985, p31). Hart (1991) warned against analytical rejection of ideas of hegemony in her parallel study of gender and worker power in Malaysia. But she also found rural women not just to be the passive, powerless victims of capitalism or patriarchy, but to be engaged actively in labour struggles. Parajuli (1991), Crush (1995) and Williams (1997) all note cases of continuous and often highly adaptive resistance by Third World citizens against policies derived from developmentalist discourses. O’Brien (1996) introduces the idea of ‘rightful resistance’, by which aggrieved citizens may adopt the rules and ideologies of an elite in order to press for rights and confront other power-holders. Such tactics exploit divisions among the powerful and utilize, often manipulatively, existing channels for expressing grievance. Under such conditions “unexpected alliances often emerge and simple dominant-subordinate distinctions break down” (O’Brien 1996, p32).
The link between power and knowledge is an important point to stress. Umans (1998, p27) sees “knowledge as both a mental and social construction which emerges as a product of interaction between actors”, and that therefore “knowledge processes are embedded in relations of power, authority and legitimacy”. He argues that scientists, for example, tries to establish a “hegemonic knowledge” by using “power techniques such as claiming universality, objectivity and neutrality” (Umans 1998, p27). Greider and Garkovich (1994) view power and knowledge as entwined in the creation of symbolism in landscapes. Their argument has a broader resonance:

“Three key factors underlie power in these processes: the ability to define what constitutes information (i.e., the ability to construct knowledge), the control of this socially-constructed information, and the symbolic mobilization of support” (Greider & Garkovich 1994, p17).

Knowledge embedded in societal norms and practices becomes discourse (see 2.1.2) and numerous authors stress this further fundamental link between power and discourse. Said (1978) viewed the ‘orientalism’ discourse as existing in an exchange relationship with different forms of power, and Foucault (1986, p229) argued there could be no power relations “without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of discourse”. Power is implicit in the creation of discourses, but discourses themselves can also act as power resources. Actors can therefore enhance their bargaining position by drawing on discourses, sometimes transforming them in the process (Arce et al 1994). Williams (1997) notes that in their resistance to state policies, villagers in part of India tactically deployed a ‘hybrid discourse’ that had both traditional and modernist elements. In his study in South Africa, Griggs (1996) saw political parties actively trying to construct discourses in an effort discredit the opposition, win allies and create extra leverage. Other tactics he observed included political trade-offs and the mobilization of support through invoking a discourse of ethnicity.

Table 2.7 summarizes how the researcher has drawn together elements of the discussion from Subsection 2.4.1 to provide a theoretical framework on power to be applied in the analytical chapters of the thesis. The framework combines ideas of transformative agency with insights from post-structuralism regarding the generality of power and the existence of a range of mechanisms within power relations other than forms of domination. The next
subsection goes on to explore themes of social power and politics specifically in an environmental context.

Table 2.7 An analytical framework on power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>topic</th>
<th>theoretical position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>what is social power?</td>
<td>Social power, in this framework, refers to a capacity to alter social outcomes. Power is therefore gauged by its effects, but intended outcomes do not necessarily have to be achieved for power to have been exercised in social interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>power resources</td>
<td>Agents mobilize available resources to enhance their power and thereby exercise power unevenly. The distribution of resources can stabilise (but never permanently fix) the distribution of power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what exercises power?</td>
<td>Power is brought into operation by agents. Social power is exercised by human agents, both individually and collectively. Structure itself does not exercise power, but structures may act as power resources or may create constraints from which people require the power to break free.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>power relations</td>
<td>The exercise of power takes place via power relations between agents. Power relations are not fixed and always entail degrees of resistance. They are shaped by the motives and resources of the actors and by contextual and structural factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>power over/power to</td>
<td>A facilitative notion of power as 'power to' accomplish an outcome effectively subsumes a notion of power solely as 'power over' other actors. It recognises constructive as well as competitive power relations, and a variety of overt, covert and latent means through which people try to achieve their goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mechanisms of power</td>
<td>The mechanisms that can be analysed in power relations include tools of domination but also tactical actions such as persuasion, manipulation, compromise, legitimation, enrolment, alliance-formation, exclusion and withdrawal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4.2 Power and the Environment: Political Ecology

Issues of social power are as evident in the interaction between people and the environment as they are in any aspect of human society. They are a fundamental part of how we value and act upon nature, and how we stake claim to environmental resources. As noted in Chapter 1, the term 'political ecology' has been coined to describe analytical approaches
that incorporate power and politics in the understanding of society-environment relationships. According to Bryant (1997, p10):

"At the heart of a political ecology reading of the Third World’s environmental problems is the idea that the relationship between actors (ie states, businesses, non-governmental organisations, farmers, etc), and the links between actors and the physical environment, are conditioned by power relations".

The environment is certainly a focus of social action. Increasingly, human impacts on the environment spark disputes and protest. More fundamentally, people have perhaps always been engaged in struggles over access to environmental resources such as land, water supplies, fuelwood, fisheries and wild game, and in the Third World such environmental conflicts are usually tied directly to livelihoods (Bryant 1997). Tensions can exist both between external actors (state, businesses and NGOs) and local resource users, and also between the members of user communities (see Box 2.10).

**Box 2.10 Intra-community resource conflicts**

Leach et al (1997) argue that recent debates calling for community-based environmental action (see Box 2.7) have paid remarkably little attention to issues of power, agency and the politics and inequality of community institutions, despite plentiful literature in other fields. The notion of ‘community’ is often a glorified one and local politics and disputes are often overlooked (Mehta 1997). Warner and Jones (1998) list a long series of potential conflicts within community-based natural resource management regimes, over issues including ownership of land and resources, unfair distribution of work and revenues, in-migration of recent settlers and inadequate representation on village committees. Within communities, the notion of legitimate control over resources can depend on how individuals’ identities are perceived - who they are and where they come from (Matose 1997). In externally-sponsored projects there may be rival civic organizations each vying for representative status, posing a problem for authorities in deciding with which body to negotiate (Kepe 1997). Mehta (1997, p81) stresses the “dynamic interplay between formal and informal networks, embedded in the community’s social and power relations”.

Rocheleau and Ross (1995, p412) present a case study of the complex social conflicts surrounding an afforestation project in the Dominican Republic that tend also to “articulate with conflicts of class, locality, occupation and organizational affiliation”. The conflicts existed both at the micro-sociological level within communities and between local and state
interests. Schmink and Wood (1992) show how in Amazonia conflicting interests and tensions can also arise within the environmental bureaucracies of the state.

Bryant (1997) notes that actors can exert power over the environment of other actors by attempting to control their access to environmental resources but also through influencing the priorities of environmental projects and state management agencies. Yet such attempts often run into counter-measures from ostensibly weaker actors, both via passive forms of resistance and from more active resistance such as acts of sabotage against forest plantations in remote rural areas that are difficult to police. Bryant also notes that powerful state and non-state actors may seek to legitimize their actions in the eyes of the public, justifying them in terms of the common good of, for example, environmental stewardship or employment creation. In doing so, they can open up spaces for weaker actors to influence and resist their actions.

As in other spheres, environmental concerns do not always result in forceful expressions of 'power over'. It can lead to more subtle tactics including compromise, accommodation and withdrawal, and it can also be resolved through the forging of concensus (Warner & Jones 1998). In the dynamic process of negotiating conflicts, actors may reconstruct their interests, alter their strategies and rebuild their alliances, often drawing on alternative facets of identity (Schmink & Wood 1992, Rocheleau & Ross 1995). Moreover, there is also the possibility that actors can work cooperatively in pursuit of environmental goals or in pursuit of sustainable communal access to environmental resources (e.g. Holmberg 1992). In the terms outlined in 2.4.1, all such forms of social action involve the exercise of power through power relations.

The environment, as social construction, is also a focus for struggle over meaning and ideology. Peet and Watts (1996) argue that a robust political ecology has to give serious attention to the construction of knowledge and the politics of meaning. Blaikie (1995) notes that influential ideas of environmental change can be disseminated that are only partially grounded in actual physical changes. Cline-Cole (1998), for example, illustrates how hegemonic, but contestible, knowledge claims of fuelwood scarcity in Nigeria have been constructed by forestry officials and NGOs.
As Subsection 2.4.1 argues, ideas, knowledge-claims and discourses form power resources. Harrison and Burgess (1994) show how different actors - developers, conservationists and the media - were able to utilize, develop and combine different rhetorical constructions of nature in a planning conflict in the UK. One conservation campaigner lamented the absence of a charismatic, 'flagship' threatened species (e.g. dolphin, whale, elephant), the imagery of which conservationists sometimes actively employ as vehicles for fund-raising or lobbying. Bryant (1997, p12) argues that powerful actors may use "indirect discursive means" to control the environment of others, not just by drawing on discursive resources but by controlling what actually constitutes "the 'public transcript' - that is, the 'socially accepted' version of events". He also argues, though, that the resource of ideas is one relatively accessible to weaker actors and can therefore be an effective tool for resistance. Schmink and Wood (1992) note how almost all social actors in their Amazonian case study strategically deployed environmental discourses in attempting to justify their economic or territorial interests.

Many of the discourses that relate to the environment have a global reach and are pursued on an international stage by scientific communities, institutes, INGOs and multilateral organizations (Blaikie 1995). Their knowledge claims can be transmitted powerfully to governments and civil society. In their analysis of 'received wisdom' on the African environment, Leach and Mearns (1996) argue that donor agencies such as the GEF not only transfer their environmental priorities to recipient countries but that these also resonate with the interests and training of state environmental agents. A shared crisis narrative that links local people with environmental degradation helps to justify the state agents' intervention in environmental management.

However, as repeatedly noted, the flows of power are seldom one-way. Scientific and managerialist discourses are increasingly being challenged by local and indigenous knowledges, and neo-populism is helping to prompt greater dialogue between knowledge systems (Blaikie 1995). Environmental issues such as industrial-scale rainforest clearance may themselves open up emancipatory possibilities by providing rallying grounds for broad, often multi-dimensional social movements at the grassroots (Peet & Watts 1996). For Bryant (1997) transforming power relations so that decision-making devolves to the local level is part of political ecology’s radical agenda and, moreover, the key to solving the
environmental problems of the South. The following subsection moves on to discuss power relations specifically within the realm of community participation.

2.4.3 Power and Participation

As the literature on participation mushroomed in the 1980s (see 2.3.1), so some authors began to recognise a simplicity in some of its assumptions, especially regarding power. Sanchez et al (1988, p12) pointed out then when power was considered, often it entailed vague, poorly-theorized notions of “giving power to the citizens”. The complex power dimensions of participatory projects sponsored by state organisations and NGOs, including both relations between agencies and communities and relations within communities, have since become central topics, at least within academic debate. There has been a recent recognition not only that participation does not necessarily equal power-sharing but also that it may actually act as a vehicle through which existing power relations are reinforced and reproduced (White 1996, Goodwin 1998).

Critical assessments of so-called participatory initiatives frequently point to a failure in practice to empower community members with a genuine voice in or control over decision-making (e.g. Hussein 1995, Mayoux 1995). In some cases agencies may be outright manipulative. Three decades ago Arnstein (1969, p216) argued that participation without redistribution of power “allows the power holders to claim that all sides were considered, but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit. It maintains the status quo.”

Under circumstances of illusory participation such as these, it is possible that social protest can be dissipated and disarmed without leading to social change. As White (1996, p7) puts it “incorporation, rather than exclusion, is often the best means of control”. Power therefore can exist not only in the functioning of participation but also in the politics of how participation is represented by actors to different audiences, from local communities to donor agencies (Quarles van Ufford 1993, White 1996). White (1996) has attempted to show how different forms of the catch-all term of participation relate to different, sometimes disguised interests on the part of development agencies (top-down perspective) as well as communities (bottom-up perspective) (see Table 2.8).
Table 2.8 Interests in participation (in a development project)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>form of participation</th>
<th>top-down perspective (interests)</th>
<th>bottom-up perspective (interests)</th>
<th>function of participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nominal</td>
<td>Legitimation: gives impression agency has a popular base</td>
<td>Inclusion: personal benefit may result from membership</td>
<td>display</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instrumental</td>
<td>Efficiency: local people provide labour, making project cost-effective</td>
<td>Cost: necessary input if community is to gain from project</td>
<td>means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>representative</td>
<td>Sustainability: gives people a voice in decision-making, helping ensure project viability</td>
<td>Leverage: chance to influence design and management of project to ensure interests are met</td>
<td>voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transformative</td>
<td>Empowerment: desire to work in solidarity with people to raise their capacity to transform their lives</td>
<td>Empowerment: chance to develop capacity to identify, fight for and achieve goals</td>
<td>means/end</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: adapted from White (1996, p7)

Lukes (cited in Healey 1997) argued that the formal decision-making arenas of government always operate in tandem with informal, less visible mobilizations of power. Such informal power may be exercised through manipulative actions behind-the-scenes but it may also flow in more subtle fashion from the idea systems of the powerful. Goodwin (1998) shows how conservation organizations in the UK privileged ‘expertise’ to such an extent that local people were viewed as poorly equipped to discuss strategic issues of conservation priority and the scope of participatory fora was consequently undermined. Agencies often set, perhaps tacitly, parameters for what is viewed as legitimate participation. Actions of open protest - including sabotage of conservation projects - become classed as illegitimate reaction and as non-participation (White 1996). Richard and O’Connor (1997) similarly warn of the danger of conflating compliance with participation and equating opposition with non-participation.

On the other hand, communities themselves face major obstacles in developing the capacity to participate. They may lack the knowledge base, motivation, political infrastructure and ability to organize accountable groups to respond to participatory initiatives (Arnstein
When community members do participate it may not be on an equitable or representative basis. The complexities of interests, conflicts and power relations that typically exist within communities has already been discussed (see 2.3). In terms of participation, it is not uncommon for local elite groups to capture project benefits partly because agencies have found it expedient to work with (and sometimes align interests with) existing powerholders rather than the marginalized and excluded (Brohman 1996, Desai 1996, Goodwin 1998).

Community-based power often lies with those individuals who represent the community or have special social access to project decision-makers - actors that stand at the 'interface' between community and state (Arce et al 1994). Such actors may present views just as unrepresentative of the general community as those of external agencies, and may be just as elitist in their rejection of other groups as being too inexpert to participate (Desai 1996, Goodwin 1998). Mosse (1994) points to the way participatory information gathering techniques (known as PRA), as public events that may not be culturally accessible to all, can construct versions of local knowledges that are shaped by relations of power and gender.

So far in this subsection we have considered participation mostly as a means to effect projects rather than as an end in itself of empowering communities. The discussion in Subsection 2.4.1 strongly suggests that power is not fixed and that power relations should never be viewed as static. And yet, there is also the recognition that power relations have an exchange relationship with societal structures that often reproduces broad social divisions in the distribution of power. What can the sociology of power tell us about the possibility of transforming such patterns, especially with respect to the hitherto marginalized in society?

Nelson and Wright (1995) discuss the implications of the 'power to' and 'power over' models for empowerment via participation, in the development context. A 'power to' approach admits the possibility of a generative, collective power, in which people (in communities and concerned agencies) work together, stimulating one another's capacity to effect change and alter power differentials at ever higher levels (see also Sharp 1992). A 'power over' approach might then become applicable as hitherto marginalized people start to tackle the powers over them by winning for themselves long-term access to resources and
decision-making and treatment as equal partners from development institutions (Nelson & Wright 1995).

However, the same authors go on to argue that post-structural insights about power challenge the assumption that external agencies can readily convert to helping empower communities (Nelson & Wright 1995). They point out that discourses and institutions can interact with their own hidden, self-sustaining logic. Though international development agencies are developing programmes to foster participation, “will the invisible side-effect logic of the development apparatus be incorporating the marginalized in even more distant clusterings of power, undermining their resistance” (Nelson & Wright 1995, p11). Long (1992a) is another who points to the irony in workers of international agencies embedded in the development apparatus professing to initiate empowerment of communities. Whether external conservation agencies can likewise foster an empowering form of participation is one of the central questions of the thesis.

2.4.4 Summary

Debates on power draw attention to the multiplicity of ways in which actors at different societal levels can exercise a capacity to intervene in social events. In so doing actors draw on a differentiated stock of power resources that help shape the outcome of the social mechanisms that constitute power relations. Key resources include knowledge constructions and existing discourses. In addition to tools of domination, actors can employ a range of more subtle tactics in power relations including persuasion, manipulation, compromise, enrolment and alliance-formation.

Power relations are as inherent and complex in human-environment interactions as in any societal sphere. And power relations between actors at all levels are fundamental to the issue of community participation. The next section now explicitly draws together the three main contextual elements of the thesis: protected area conservation, participation and power.
2.5 Conservation, Participation and Power: A Summary and Research Agenda

This section summarizes the role of power relations in the context of community participation in biodiversity conservation projects. It notes the limited existing academic work that specifically relates to this combination of themes. It also identifies key research gaps and thereby reiterates the originality and value of the material presented in the thesis.

Drawing together the insights from the previous sections, the diversity of actors, interests, discourses and power relations involved in conservation becomes clear. Biodiversity has different value and meaning to different people. Issues of biodiversity translate into issues of resources, livelihoods and commerce. Conservation debates involve divisions between interests at various geographical scales from the local to the international. Conservation actions may be strongly influenced by the values of external donor agencies, yet they can also hinge around local-scale power relations. As Blaikie and Jeanrenaud (1997) point out, conservation is therefore inherently political. It acts as a forum for the interplay of power, knowledge and discourse.

Actors in biodiversity conservation may include government officials, state politicians, foreign environmentalists, national NGOs, commercial companies, landowners and local elites, as well as members of communities that have a direct livelihood or subsistence stake in utilizing environmental resources. As Ghimire and Pimbert (1997) point out several such social groups may have (separate or cross-cutting) interests in protecting biodiversity. Others may perceive their interests will suffer from conservation restrictions, especially from the establishment of protected areas. Strategies of action and power result from these differing interests of actors.

Participation-oriented critiques of conservation policy have underlined the existence of power differentials between conservation agencies (state agencies and NGOs) and local communities. Reviews of conservation initiatives indicate that those differentials continue to operate and to constrain local involvement, even where projects have been hailed as more 'participatory' or 'community-based' (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). Wells and Brandon (1992) argue that authority structures often inhibit participation in conservation decision-
making, particularly where the state perceives a threat to its authority. Pimbert and Pretty (1997) claim that a managerialist 'blueprint approach' imbued with the values of rationalist science still dominates conservation practice. McNeely and Ness (1995, p34) note that among many protected area managers and within international conservation organizations there are still those who are distrustful of a cooperative approach and that "a strong residue of the earlier misanthropic orientation remains".

But the issue of power is more complex than this. Actor-oriented analyses emphasize that power differentials exist not just between agency and community but at all levels. They exist within planning agencies and they exist within communities. The presence of local-scale power differentials has also been widely recognised in the literature on conservation and participation (e.g. Western & Wright 1994, Ghimire & Pimbert 1997, Leach et al 1997). Researchers have noted that communities are far from homogenous and that powerful members of local communities can exploit participation (Brown K 1998, Goodwin 1998, Sharpe 1998). They can, for example, draw on discourses to capture influence and so further their political interests and economic interests, sometimes to the detriment of the poor (for example, in securing control over regimes of resource use) (West & Brechin 1991, Sundberg 1998).

The foregoing suggests that any conservation project not planned in a purely authoritarian manner, and especially one that seeks local involvement, is likely to be forged out of a complexity of power struggles - struggles played out from international to intra-local scales. Both researchers and those practitioners seeking to deploy participatory initiatives in conservation therefore need a better and more critical understanding of those political dynamics and power relations (Brown, K 1998, Goodwin 1998).

Section 2.4 demonstrates that a sociological focus on power and power relations would enhance understanding of conservation processes by drawing attention to the mechanisms through which decisions are made and influenced by a range of actors. However (as noted in 1.2) there appears to have been little attention within the conservation context to analysis of the mechanisms of power and the factors that pattern power relations. Recent case studies in developing countries by K Brown (1998), Sharpe (1998) and Sundberg (1998), which examine diversity of interests, knowledge production and discursive identities, take
some steps toward addressing this research gap. Overall, however, attention has been
directed toward the effects rather than the workings of power.

Where attention to power has been evident within conservation/participation research it has
tended to concentrate on differentials regarding access to and management of protected
resources. There has still been little explicit attention to power at work in the planning of
protected areas. Yet the process of planning, and of community participation within
planning, is fundamental to the outcome of a conservation project in terms of biodiversity
protection, access to resources within the site, and the sensitivity of the project to
community needs (see 1.2).

The research presented in the subsequent chapters of the thesis therefore attempts to
contribute to debate in a distinctive way by focusing explicitly on the protected area
planning involving communities, and by building an understanding of the processes at work
through a detailed examination of the mechanisms of power. It does so by analysing the
social character of community involvement in planning, analysing power relations in terms
of the motives, resources, tactics and impacts of different actors, and synthesizing the
findings to reveal underlying processes at work in the patterns of interaction (see 1.1).

The approach is not only original, but, as Section 1.1 suggests, potentially valuable in
theoretical and applied senses. The distinctive elements of the thesis can contribute to wider
debates on power and environmental resources and power and participation, as well as
provide specific insights into the protected area planning process that can inform
conservation practice. As people-oriented discourses of conservation have moved to centre-
stage in international circles, and ideas are being put into practice on the ground, the search
for such insights is timely. In the words of the GEF Social Scientist the research presented
in this thesis constitutes "an important undertaking" (Cruz 1996). The next chapter explains
the methodological basis of the research.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The findings of the thesis are based on field study conducted in 1996/97 in Belize, supported by data-gathering activities in the USA and the UK. The first section of the methodology chapter explains work broadly preceding the field study, including the choice of the case study approach and the geographical focus, and outlining a conceptual framework for data-gathering (3.1). The second section covers the data gathering methodology, rationale, site selection and research procedure in the field (3.2). The third section describes how the results of the research were subsequently processed, collated and analysed (3.3). The fourth and last section evaluates the methodology in terms of rigour, credibility and ethics, noting problems that were encountered and issues that arose, and indicating the steps that were taken to counter them (3.4).

3.1 Preparatory Phase

Prior to fieldwork, a number of decisions were taken that have a crucial bearing on the research output. This section describes the preparatory phase, detailing the rationale for the choice of approach, the process of case study selection, preliminary data-gathering outside Belize, and the conceptual framework designed to guide (but not structure) the field research.

Case Study Approach

The case study of protected area planning in Belize forms the centrepiece of the research. The decision to hinge the work on a case study resulted from the desire to investigate process, to penetrate beneath institutional rhetoric and official reporting to try to elucidate the fine detail of the processes of planning and participation. At the same time there was a desire to firmly situate actions on the ground within their structural setting. The
combination required in-depth and multi-layered analysis of agency and context. Given the range of actors involved or potentially involved in protected area planning in different ways and at different spatial scales, and the likely opaque complexity of much of their interests and actions, such analysis also called for a cross-verifying or ‘triangulating’ blend of data-gathering methods. An intensive case study approach was the logical outcome of these requirements.

In concentrating attention on a specific case in time and space, a case study “allows a particular issue to be studied in depth and from a variety of perspectives” (Kitchin & Tate 2000, p225). It therefore facilitates a micro-sociological exploration of decision-making practices of actors and their interactions with other actors, set within the dynamics of social context (Marsden et al 1993). Yin (1993, pxi) argues that a case study approach is appropriate:

“When investigators desire to (a) define topics broadly and not narrowly, (b) cover contextual conditions and not just the phenomenon of study, and (c) rely on multiple and not singular sources of evidence”.

The desires of this investigator met all three criteria, in: defining planning and participation as broad socio-political processes; stressing the inseparability of protected area planning from its social, political, cultural and institutional context; and advocating a flexible approach to data-gathering from different sources.

However, Yin goes on to characterize the case study as a method capable of theory-testing as well as theory-building. The research detailed in this thesis, with its conscious design solely for theory-building based on qualitative data (see 3.2.1), would, in his terms, be defined as a method of ‘grounded theory’ (see 3.3.1) not as a ‘case study’ method (Yin 1993). In contrast, de Vries (1992, p69) extends use of the term ‘case study’ to ethnographic research that eschews principles of causation and theory-testing, and embraces multiple realities and the “strategic and negotiated character of real life”. The term therefore probably defies consensual definition. Here, I am content to use ‘case study’ simply to mean an intensive, multi-sourced study of an event or issue situated in a specific geographical context.
The imperative of the research, then, was to ensure that the case study investigations carried out were sufficiently intensive to convey an accurate account of the place-specific planning process. The aim was to build such an account through the equivalent of ‘thick description’ advocated in political ecology (see 1.3). Thick description involves the collation of densely-textured data that provides a solid platform from which generalizations might then be constructed (Eyles 1988). Case study findings are not always easy to apply elsewhere because of their focus on a specific phenomenon. But a thoughtful case study helps avoid the danger of glib generalizations resulting from insufficient attention to specificity. When carefully conducted such a study can serve theory because “close examination of the ‘concrete’ leads to an understanding of more general processes” (Murdoch & Marsden 1995, p373).

The choice of more than one case study country could have enriched the research and aided generalization, but not if it necessitated diluting the research effort at each area. Practical matters ensured that it would. Since the intention was to study the planning process in developing countries subject to external intervention, the research necessarily entailed costly long-distance travel. There was an expected difficulty of gaining interview access to actors, especially local stakeholders, which would lengthen the fieldwork period needed at each site. Moreover, since there was likely to be a relative paucity of existing analytical material regarding the socio-economic, developmental and political aspects of conservation, additional time would be needed to derive or collate such information (see, for example, Howard 1997). Considering the time and finance available for the research, it was decided that a single case study country would prove the most effective option.

**Case Study Selection**

The innovative nature of the GEF funding mechanism, as well as its historical linkage with the newly emergent global discourses of conservation (see 2.1.4), suggested from the outset that GEF biodiversity funding could help in the identification of a suitable case study area. Some of the initiatives aided by the GEF would be expected to involve ‘state-of-the-art’ notions of engaging community participation in conservation. The portfolio of 59 biodiversity projects initiated during the GEF’s pilot phase (GEF 1996c) therefore acted as a lens through which a specific case study would be identified.
In October/November 1995 a research trip was made to the USA to meet and interview staff and consult document libraries of the GEF and its two main implementing agencies, the World Bank and the UNDP. The opportunity also arose to meet and, in some cases, interview GEF commentators in the non-governmental sector. The research was undertaken partly to gain an overview of public involvement under GEF biodiversity projects, but, most importantly, to gain insights into specific project-funded initiatives in order to gauge which might be most suitable for case study.

A total of 14 interviews were conducted in Washington DC, where the GEF Secretariat and the World Bank are housed, and in New York, the location of the UNDP headquarters. Table 3.1 provides a list of the 14 interviewees and their affiliations. The interviews were semi-structured in form (see 3.2.3), with some standardization of questions for the task managers and regional coordinators overseeing specific GEF biodiversity projects.

Table 3.1 Interviewees in the USA, 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>organisation</th>
<th>position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GEF Secretariat</td>
<td>Social Scientist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The World Bank</td>
<td>Environment Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The World Bank</td>
<td>Task Manager (GEF project: Philippines)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The World Bank</td>
<td>Task Manager (GEF project: Mexico)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The World Bank</td>
<td>Task Manager (GEF projects: Bolivia, Ecuador)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The World Bank</td>
<td>Task Manager (GEF project: Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The World Bank</td>
<td>Task Manager (GEF project: Congo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>GEF Unit/Biodiversity (GEF projects: Papua New Guinea, Mongolia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>Regional Coordinator (GEF projects: Belize, Colombia/Panama, Bolivia/Peru)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>Regional Coordinator (GEF projects: Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Guyana)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>Senior Advisor, Small-Grant Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>Coordinator, GEF Small Grants Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Conservation Union</td>
<td>Senior Policy Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IUCN)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Conservation Society</td>
<td>Director, Latin America Program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As a result of consulting documents and gauging the responses of interviewees in the USA, conservation activities in Belize (associated with a GEF ‘Sustainable Development and Management of Biologically Diverse Coastal Resources’ project) were selected for further investigation. This was for both analytical and logistical reasons. First, and most importantly, it appeared activities in Belize met the substantive needs of the study. With GEF help, the Belizean government was embarking on a programme of integrated coastal zone management (ICZM). This included the establishment and management of protected areas that would impact on fishing and other local resource user groups and on those engaged in the tourist industry, and it clearly set out channels for local consultation in planning and implementation (GEF 1993). In order for a study of participation in planning to be feasible there also needed to have been demonstrable progress made in the process of planning. In 1996 planning for several new protected area sites in Belize’s coastal zone was under way and some were expected to be nearing completion.

Second, a detailed study of the Belize project was feasible on practical grounds. The small size of the country would facilitate travel between the main population centres, seats of government and protected area sites. Documentation in Belize is written in English, and English is widely spoken. (The researcher also comprehended the other two main languages, English-based Creole and Spanish). While in the USA and later in the UK, good contacts had also been established with relevant UNDP personnel and with INGOs involved in the Belize project.

Follow-up contacts and queries both confirmed the suitability of the case study choice and indicated that the proposed research was acceptable to governmental authorities in Belize.

*Preparatory Data Gathering for Case Study*

Data collection for the case study did not take place solely within Belize. Some secondary materials were accessed prior to departure. Information was also gained from formal interviews and informal meetings (see Appendix I for a full list of these data sources).

Of the interviews carried out in the USA, three provided information pertaining directly to the chosen case study: that with the Regional Coordinator overseeing the GEF project in
Belize; that with the Coordinator of the GEF Small Grants Programme which was operative in Belize; and that with the officer of the Wildlife Conservation Society, an NGO active in the coastal zone of Belize. Following selection of the study country, further preparatory meetings were held in the UK with individuals and organisations working in Belize, including a former coastal planner, the NGOs Coral Cay Conservation and Raleigh International, and the Department of Geography of the University of Edinburgh. Copies of documents were also obtained from some of these contacts as well as by mail from the GEF Secretariat. Lastly, contact was made with, and information gained from, governmental and non-governmental organisations within Belize itself, including the Marine Research Centre of the University College of Belize and the GEF-financed Coastal Zone Management Programme (both of which were to provide much-valued technical support during the fieldwork).

**Conceptual Framework for Field Research**

There was no intention to formulate a fixed research strategy prior to fieldwork both for practical reasons and to enhance the empirical grounding of the research (as explained in 3.2.1). However, a broad, flexible framework was conceptualised in the UK that would serve as a guide for the data-gathering process and help to prevent key elements becoming overlooked during time in the field as there was to be just one opportunity for data-gathering. Figure 3.1 replicates in diagrammatic form the original ‘framework of investigation’. It attempted to map out the various elements of the protected area planning process that might need to be incorporated into data gathering for each site. With a few exceptions noted in the next section, most of the original research elements and lines of enquiry were indeed successfully incorporated into the actual data-gathering process.

Three general parameters for the research defined the broad direction for data collection. First and foremost, the key interest of the study was in process. The central aim was to investigate community involvement in the planning process and to model the flow of events and power relations that helped shape protected area plans. Second, the research was to have a spatial component. It would examine in particular the processes through which decisions were made on reserve location, boundaries and zones. It would also entail selection of more than one protected area site in Belize for detailed, comparative study on
the presumption that spatial factors and the local context of place might play a role in shaping the conduct, progress and outcome of planning. Third, the study for each chosen site would be frozen in time. It would attempt to provide an account of the planning process (however far it had progressed) leading up to and including the period of fieldwork, but not attempt to account for subsequent events.

Figure 3.1 Original ‘framework of investigation’ (September 1996)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>ACTORS</th>
<th>non-local agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>discourses</td>
<td>conservation</td>
<td>societal (economic, social, cultural, historical)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>environment</td>
<td>institutional (GEF/UNDP, government, NGOs etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>development</td>
<td>policy (national, sectoral, coastal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>structure</td>
<td>planners</td>
<td>community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ministry staff</td>
<td>organisations (conservation, development, business, trade)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CZMU/UNDP staff</td>
<td>businesses - co-ops - unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consultants</td>
<td>community groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>representatives individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ACTORS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>community</td>
<td>non-local agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>organisations (conservation, development, business, trade)</td>
<td>politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>businesses - co-ops - unions</td>
<td>interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>community groups</td>
<td>investment decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>representatives individuals</td>
<td>etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ATTRIBUTES</td>
<td>non-local agency</td>
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<tr>
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<td>resource usage</td>
<td>landholding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>livelihood</td>
<td>socio-cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>use-potential of resources - rights to utilize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>impact of denial of access</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>costs/benefits of conservation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PERCEPTIONS</td>
<td>non-local agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>need for protected area</td>
<td>politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>extent of vulnerable area</td>
<td>interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spatial distribution of ecosystems/resources</td>
<td>investment decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>need to conserve biodiversity</td>
<td>etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>conservation of resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>conservation of landscapes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>social/cultural impacts of development etc</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CONCERNS</td>
<td>non-local agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>livelihood/revenue - access to resources</td>
<td>politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- rights to develop - land values</td>
<td>interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>prestige/career advancement</td>
<td>investment decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>etc</td>
<td>etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ACTIONS</td>
<td>non-local agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>formal participation</td>
<td>politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>collection of data</td>
<td>interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>workshops - public meetings</td>
<td>investment decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>technical committees</td>
<td>etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>etc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>informal influence</td>
<td>non-local agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>acquaintances/social ties</td>
<td>politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>private meetings</td>
<td>interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lobbying</td>
<td>investment decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>etc</td>
<td>etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OUTCOMES</td>
<td>non-local agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>decisions made</td>
<td>politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>delimitation of boundary</td>
<td>interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>delimitation of resource use zones</td>
<td>investment decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>community input</td>
<td>etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>levels of community input</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>into reserve plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Data Gathering

The data-gathering methods employed 'in the field' form the subject of this section. It commences by outlining the concepts that informed the data-gathering approach (3.2.1). The second subsection describes the preliminary investigation phase of the fieldwork, the selection of protected area sites, and the 'in situ' evolution and refinement of the research programme (3.2.2). The procedure for interviewing, the principal mode of data collection, is the next subject of discussion (3.2.3), followed by examination of the other data-gathering methods employed (3.2.4).

The fieldwork period in Belize ran from October 1996 to March 1997, the maximum period feasible owing to time/funding constraints. As discussed by Burgess et al (1994, p132), funding and logistical considerations produced “the kind of compromise which is common in research, allowing research and evaluation to be conducted rigourously, yet within the parameters of a specified budget”.

3.2.1 Conceptual Approach

Data gathering for the research was adaptive and primarily qualitative in nature. The research agenda, questions and investigations were intended to adapt and evolve as both the research and the planning process under study proceeded. Flexibility was required partly for practical reasons. Adherence to a rigid, preconceived research agenda planned in a setting distant in space and time would most likely prove unworkable in the field (Lloyd Evans et al 1997). Allowance would also have to be made for common practical obstacles to data-gathering in developing countries such as problems with climate, transportation and equipment, the granting of official permission and the cultural norms of interaction (Dixon & Leach 1984).

Moreover flexibility of approach would increase the chance that the research findings would become empirically ‘grounded’ (see 3.3.1). The attempt to construct investigations and questions in the unfolding experience of the place-specific planning process would help resist an (often unwitting) tendency for research to be formulated and driven by ‘a priori’
assumptions. In common with much anthropological work, the researcher did not set out with an initial hypothesis to test but rather with a readiness to examine and discover multiple themes (Okely 1994). In some senses, the research approach was 'exploratory' in the terms outlined by Peil (1982). The researcher started with a framework guide to help organise data-gathering (see 3.1.4) but tried to minimize the impact of pre-conceptions on the investigations by devising the research agenda 'in situ' and keeping an open mind for new ideas and insights.

Though the collection of some quantitative data on opinions and perceptions was originally envisaged, the research was always intended to rest heavily on qualitative data - data not readily convertible to numerical values (Yin 1993). Qualitative research and its attendant techniques are arguably oriented toward a more empathetic understanding of social phenomena, by being more sensitive to the subjectivity of human experience and the embeddedness of human behavior in its historical and geographical context (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 1992).

"'Qualitative' techniques aim to explore the processes producing a particular event and to promote detailed understanding of socio-spatial experiences. They are intensive research methods, for example in-depth interviews and participant observation, often based on detailed case studies rather than large-scale data sets" (Madge et al 1997, p92).

The qualitative emphasis in this work reflected the focus on process rather than pattern, a focus that became sharper as fieldwork progressed (see 3.2.2). Stress was placed on gaining an in-depth experiential account of different actors' perceptions, concerns, interactions and involvement in the planning process. That task prioritized flexibility to tailor research questions to individualized circumstances rather than adherence to a schedule of standardized but rigid questions (Eyles 1988, Valentine 1997). It required data-gathering techniques that were continuously open to the exploration of new lines of enquiry. In better meeting those needs, a qualitative approach could more freely permit the recognition and exploration of the different layers of meaning inherent in social acts (Valentine 1997, Dyck 1999), a freedom especially important for the investigation of complex power relations.

It should also be noted that elements of the data-gathering approach also paralleled the methodology of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and its variously-titled incarnations. One of the governing principles of PRA is 'optimal ignorance' (Chambers & Guijt 1995).
“Optimal ignorance suggests that it is not possible to ‘know’ the object of the research completely. Rural cultural, social, economic and political processes are so complex that the best researchers can hope to achieve is a type of informed ignorance about their worlds of their study. Because this is the case, it is not sensible, either economically or methodologically, to spend vast amounts of time in the field doing research which will have little additional value in comparison to time spent” (Furze et al 1996 p56).

Under PRA, the most efficient means to achieve optimal ignorance is to use a selection of different but complementary information sources and data collection techniques that can be relatively rapidly executed. Social understanding then builds through triangulation from diverse sources (see 3.4.1) - the second principle governing PRA (Furze et al 1996).

3.2.2 Preliminary Investigation and Development of the Research Strategy

In keeping with the grounded and adaptive aims of the research, the first stage of fieldwork was devoted to preliminary meetings, site visits and consultation of documents to help derive a strategy for data collection ‘in situ’. Preliminary (and, in some cases, informal) discussions of the research plans and project context were conducted with selected officials, activists and local community members during visits to governmental and NGO offices and to prospective research sites. The purpose of the meetings was to establish initial contact, gain initial information on sites, stakeholders, local issues and the national context, assess the feasibility of research plans and gauge the acceptability of research methods. An early visit was also made to the Port Honduras area in the south of Belize at the invitation of a national NGO that was carrying out planning workshops with local communities for a proposed marine reserve. The visit in effect served as a pilot study, providing the chance to ‘test’ some research ideas and methods and observe how critiques of participation from the academic literature might apply in the Belizean context.

The preliminary investigations and the flow of events in Belize resulted in some major early decisions regarding the research strategy. These are included in Box 3.1, which notes some of the revisions that took place as the research process evolved in the field. Indeed, in both practical and conceptual terms, there was a continuous process of adaptation and fine-tuning during data-gathering.
Box 3.1 Adaptations and rejections in the research process

Once in the field, it soon became clear that certain ideas for the research would not be fruitful or feasible, and some would require adaptation or rejection. Indeed, iterative adjustments were made to the research agenda as events unfolded right through to the close of the fieldwork period.

Interview Sampling
The logistics of gaining access to people (especially working fishermen and marine tour guides) meant that any systematic sampling of local community members would dominate the research agenda in time and money. Initial investigations implied that only a small number of 'key players' had become actively involved in debate, consultations and planning regarding the reserves. It was strongly indicated that an interview sample dominated by the majority of non-active stakeholders was unlikely to yield much variety and depth of response, and was likely to omit some of the key players. The idea of a broad-sweep, random sample of local stakeholders was therefore rejected. Instead, a more purposive sample of local stakeholders was combined with deliberate targeting of key informants (see 3.2.3).

Observations
The unfolding of events during the fieldwork period presented some unforeseen opportunities but also caused frequent modification of the data-gathering schedule. In particular, repeated postponement of further consultation meetings for both Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker delayed and ultimately prevented observation of community workshops in progress for the two sites. However, the researcher unexpectedly gained the chance to observe important interactions between some of the key players, such as a meeting between national officials and the chair of Caye Caulker Village Council.

Questionnaire
Extensive survey techniques were rejected in the field. The problems noted above of gaining adequate access to people would have been multiplied had a stakeholder questionnaire survey been attempted. In-country advice confirmed that a large sample would be difficult to reach in person and suggested that the response rate for a posted survey would likely be low. Moreover general awareness of and involvement in the protected area projects appeared to be such that a formal survey of public perceptions would be of doubtful value. On the basis of optimal ignorance (see 3.2.1), it was decided that research effort would be better invested in interviewing than in a method likely to yield a poor response in relation to the time invested (Howard 1997, Lindsay 1997).

It became evident from the initial investigations that the scope of community participation in the planning of new coastal protected areas granted local community members little or no direct hand in decision-making. Any local input into spatial planning decisions on location, boundaries and zones was likely to have stemmed from more subtle processes of argument
and influence both inside and outside official consultation fora. The need for in-depth, qualitative research in order to analyse community involvement in planning therefore became still more pressing. Moreover, it appeared that few local stakeholders had taken an active role, even within the consultations. Instead, the planning process seemed to hinge largely on the roles of key actors in government, in NGOs and within the communities. The focus in the research therefore shifted further toward the roles of 'key players' in the planning process. (See Munton (1995) for an equivalent emphasis on the roles of key agents in land development in the UK).

Once in the field, it was also decided to base the case study on intensive research of two specific protected area sites - Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker - set in the context of an extensive study of participation in general within Belize. These two sites were most feasible and most appropriate for intensive study. Planning was a current activity for both selected sites, each was of economic importance to local communities, and in both cases consultation activities had been built into planning. Moreover, the fact that the two sites differed in terms of how far planning had progressed would provide a comparative aspect to the study and hopefully yield extra insights into the planning process.

Once fieldwork began in earnest, the research continued to proceed in a reflective manner. During the course of data-gathering some preliminary analysis was undertaken to provide immediate feedback on the efficacy and appropriateness of the research approach as well as to generate grounded ideas and concepts for follow-up investigation.

### 3.2.3 Data Collection: Interviews

Data gathering for the research hinged on interviews. These related both to the national context of conservation and participation (discussed in Chapter 4) and to the substantive findings on the specific protected area sites (presented in Chapters 5 and 6). Interviews were the priority method because of the richness of detail and depth of understanding they could elicit.

"The advantage of this approach is that it is sensitive and people-oriented, allowing interviewees to construct their own accounts of their experiences by
describing and explaining their lives in their own words.... In the course of the interview, researchers have the chance to go back over the same ground, asking the same questions in different ways in order to explore issues thoroughly; and interviewees can explain the complexities and contradictions of their experiences” (Valentine 1997, p111).

A total of 76 interviews were carried out and recorded in detail, with interviewees ranging from national politicians to local stakeholders in protected area projects. Table 3.2 lists the interviewees, summarizing their defining role in terms of the research topic and indicating codenames by which each individual may be referenced in the forthcoming chapters. Further information on all interviewees appears in Appendix I.

Of the total, 23 interviews related to protected areas in general or to the wider context. These were conducted with politicians, central government officers, academics and workers of national NGOs identified during the preliminary investigations as being engaged in conservation planning or community development activities. A further 24 interviews (with both officials and local stakeholders) related solely to the Bacalar Chico site and a further 29 only to Caye Caulker (see Figure 3.2). Given the overlapping coverage of some of the general interviews, the total number of interviews referring to the two specific protected area sites was higher than these figures (see Table 3.3).

The procedure for selecting the site-specific interviewees followed a rationale for qualitative interviewing that places less emphasis on ensuring numerical representativeness and more on the informativeness and ‘positionality’ of the interviewee. Lindsay (1997, p59) refers to such techniques as ‘theoretical sampling’, in which the “primary concern is to interview people who have distinct and important perspectives on the theme of our research question”. Such selection is explicitly dependent on the skills and judgement of the researcher.

Site-specific interviews for Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker were conducted both with ‘key informants’ (Donovan 1988) targeted for their official or other direct involvement in planning, and with a range of other local stakeholders selected for their usage of resources within the protected area sites.
Table 3.2 List of interviewees (see Appendix I for further details)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERAL CONTEXT</th>
<th>code</th>
<th>BACALAR CHICO</th>
<th>code</th>
<th>CAYE CAULKER</th>
<th>code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>coastal zone manager (CZMP)</td>
<td>czmp2</td>
<td>protected area officer (Government)</td>
<td>fishery5</td>
<td>protected area officer (Government)</td>
<td>fishery8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coastal zone manager (CZMP)</td>
<td>czmp3</td>
<td>protected area officer (Government)</td>
<td>fishery7</td>
<td>conservation NGO director/tour guide</td>
<td>ccgen1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environmental projects coordinator (GEF/SCP)</td>
<td>gef3</td>
<td>conservation group president (INGO)</td>
<td>ingo6</td>
<td>local council chair/ fisherman</td>
<td>ccgen2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coastal zone manager (Government)</td>
<td>fishery2</td>
<td>marine research officer (INGO)</td>
<td>ingo7</td>
<td>(ex) local council chair/ fisherman</td>
<td>ccgen3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marine reserves officer (Government)</td>
<td>fishery3</td>
<td>local development corporation rep.</td>
<td>bcgen1</td>
<td>(ex) local council chair/ fisherman</td>
<td>ccgen4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marine reserves officer (Government)</td>
<td>fishery4</td>
<td>fisherman/tour guide</td>
<td>bcgen2</td>
<td>tourism NGO/ tourism business</td>
<td>ccgen5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forest resources senior officer (Government)</td>
<td>forest1</td>
<td>real estate agent</td>
<td>bcgen3</td>
<td>tourism NGO/ tourism business</td>
<td>ccgen6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terrestrial conservation officer (Government)</td>
<td>forest2</td>
<td>real estate agent</td>
<td>bcgen4</td>
<td>landowner/tourism business</td>
<td>ccgen7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terrestrial conservation officer (Government)</td>
<td>forest3</td>
<td>real estate agent</td>
<td>bcgen5</td>
<td>fishing cooperative secretary</td>
<td>ccfish1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>land holdings senior officer (Government)</td>
<td>gov2</td>
<td>fisherman</td>
<td>bcfish1</td>
<td>fishing cooperative station manager</td>
<td>ccfish2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tourism/environment officer (Government)</td>
<td>gov3</td>
<td>fisherman</td>
<td>bcfish2</td>
<td>fisherman</td>
<td>ccfish3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environmental planning officer (Government)</td>
<td>gov4</td>
<td>fisherman</td>
<td>bcfish3</td>
<td>fisherman</td>
<td>ccfish4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>land-use planning officer (Government)</td>
<td>gov5</td>
<td>fisherman</td>
<td>bcfish4</td>
<td>fisherman/tour guide</td>
<td>ccfish5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>economic planning officer (Government)</td>
<td>gov6</td>
<td>fisherman</td>
<td>bcfish5</td>
<td>fisherman</td>
<td>ccfish6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conservation trust fund director (Government)</td>
<td>gov7</td>
<td>fisherman</td>
<td>bcfish6</td>
<td>fisherman</td>
<td>ccfish7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forest project officer (Government/ODA)</td>
<td>gov8</td>
<td>fisherman</td>
<td>bcfish7</td>
<td>tour guide/fisherman</td>
<td>cctour1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marine research director (academic)</td>
<td>acad4</td>
<td>fisherman</td>
<td>bcfish8</td>
<td>tour guide</td>
<td>cctour2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>protected areas manager (NGO)</td>
<td>ngo1</td>
<td>tour guide</td>
<td>bctour1</td>
<td>tour guide</td>
<td>cctour3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conservation project coordinator (NGO)</td>
<td>ngo2</td>
<td>tour guide</td>
<td>bctour2</td>
<td>tour guide/tourism business</td>
<td>cctour4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>socio-political pressure group coordinator (NGO)</td>
<td>ngo4</td>
<td>tourism/fishing business</td>
<td>bctour3</td>
<td>tour guide/tourism business</td>
<td>cctour5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>protected area project senior officer (NGO)</td>
<td>ngo5</td>
<td>tour guide</td>
<td>bctour4</td>
<td>tour guide</td>
<td>cctour6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>protected area project officer (NGO)</td>
<td>ngo6</td>
<td>tour guide/fisherman</td>
<td>bctour5</td>
<td>tour guide</td>
<td>cctour7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>protected area project officer (NGO)</td>
<td>ngo8</td>
<td>tour guide</td>
<td>bctour6</td>
<td>tourism business</td>
<td>ccres1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tour guide/real estate agent</td>
<td>bctour7</td>
<td>tourism business</td>
<td>ccres2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>resident</td>
<td>ccres3</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>resident</td>
<td>ccres4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>ccres5</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>resident</td>
<td>ccres6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3.2 Interview topics

General = interviews relating to the national context of conservation (including reference to the specific sites)
Bacalar Chico only = interviews relating solely to Bacalar Chico
Caye Caulker only = interviews relating solely to Caye Caulker

Table 3.3 Number of interviews relating to the specific protected area sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>local interviewee</th>
<th>non-local interviewee</th>
<th>total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relating to BACALAR CHICO</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating to CAYE CAULKER</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

local interviewee = site user (e.g. fisherman, tour guide) or resident of local community
non-local interviewee = official or commentator based outside local communities
Key informants were identified both by references to them in planning documents (see 3.2.4) and by references to them in preliminary discussions and preceding interviews. This form of selection has parallels with the ‘reputational technique’ that has been used in studies of community power structures (Trounstine & Christensen 1982). Successively through the research, interviewees suggested those individuals and groups who they perceived acted as ‘key players’ in the planning process. All such actors that were identified were approached for interviews.

A much greater number of local people were not identified as active in the planning process, yet still classed by planners as ‘stakeholders’. It was decided that a selection of people from neighbouring communities who directly utilized resources in the protected area sites should also be approached for interview to gauge local perceptions and opinions regarding community involvement and reasons for non-involvement in planning exercises. Because of the emphasis on analysing the processes of participation, however, sampling did not extend to any communities potentially affected by planning but where there had not yet been any consultation or interaction with the planners.

Again, criteria associated with theoretical sampling were applied:

“Rather than trying to achieve a target number of interviews, we will be alert for the stage when we have explored the whole range of realistic responses. Beyond this ‘point of theoretical saturation’, further interviews simply provide us with further examples of attitudes and behaviours we have already explored” (Lindsay 1997, p59).

Identification of users (fishermen, tour guides and landowners/land agents) generally commenced with preliminary, informal conversations in the communities. Once a user of the site had been identified and interviewed, further selection often took place more ‘purposively’ via a form of ‘snowball’ sampling (Peil 1982) in which current users of the area in question were successively able to suggest contact with other users. Snowballing methods are useful when members of a target group are difficult to locate at random (Lindsay 1997), but progressive checks had to be made on interview material to avoid the danger of all informants simply coming “from a very narrow circle of like-minded people” (Valentine 1997, p116). In the case of Caye Caulker, where awareness of the proposed protected area was more widespread through the community, it was decided that a range of
individuals who were not direct users of the marine resources should also be interviewed to
gauge their perspectives. Six interviewees were selected through an 'accidental' (Peil 1982)
sampling of village workplaces. This accounts for the greater number of interviews
conducted at Caye Caulker, a difference justified by the methodological focus on depth of
understanding rather than numerical standardization in data gathering.

All the interviews were semi-structured in style, guided with a checklist to ensure key topics
were covered, but open enough to encourage wider discussion and permit interpretative
analysis (Baxter & Eyles 1999a). In semi-structured interviews there is no strictly pre-set
order or wordage of questions, broad-ranging dialogue around issues is permitted, and
interviewees are encouraged to develop their own interpretations of topics (Furze et al
1996). Though many topics in the research were common to all interviewees, the interview
framework and approach was tailored to each category of actor (officials and NGOs for
example were expected to be able to offer more information than most local stakeholders on
the context of coastal planning). Each interview was different in some respects from others
because the method recognises each interviewee as an individual (Valentine 1997). The aim
of the technique parallels that of the qualitative 'long interview' format, which sets out to
explore perceptions and experiences of respondents but does not attempt “making any
quantitative judgements on their pervasiveness” (Goodwin 1998, p485).

The researcher already had extensive experience in interviewing, and had to draw heavily
on that experience when confronted by the wary reticence of some fishermen or the
confident rhetoric of some elected office-holders. In all cases there was a need to approach
interviews with flexibility in mind, to be able respond to the verbal capacities and styles of
the interviewee (Valentine 1997). Tactics used to enhance interviews included ‘probing’ to
elicit information in more depth (May 1997) and ‘funneling’ of topics from the general to
the specific to help establish rapport and put interviewees at their ease (Cook & Crang
1995, Furze et al 1996). The researcher was always mindful of the possibility of accidentally
or deliberately misleading responses, and tried to circumvent them with follow-up questions
to clarify points. Appendix II provides examples of some key question schedules used in
interviews as well as some example interview transcripts.
Interviews varied in duration from 15 minutes to well over one hour, and were held in various settings including homes, offices, dive shops, boats and jetties. They were recorded on tape whenever the interviewee and interview conditions permitted. Taping has the advantage of freeing the researcher to concentrate on the conversation and also permits the extraction of verbatim quotes (Howard 1997). If taping was not feasible, extensive interview notes were jotted on paper and written up in full immediately after the interview. Personal information was sometimes included in the dialogue, but the interviewees were assured of anonymity.

In interviews with local stakeholders, discussion was enhanced by offering interviewees the chance to annotate a transparent overlay on a simple base map of the local area (showing the coastlines and the line of the barrier reef). Almost all interviewees comfortably recognized this spatial representation of the area, especially when common landmarks were pointed out as suggested for such exercises in PRA handbooks (e.g. FAO 1989). The mapping exercises were conducted principally as a tool to facilitate the interview process. The technique was of some use in helping people articulate their perceptions and concerns regarding the site, but, more importantly, it helped break down the sense of formality and the interrogative pattern of question and answer. The mapping tool provided an alternative visual focus for the interviewee, and helped people take a more pro-active role in initiating dialogue on topics and issues.

### 3.2.4 Data Collection: Other Methods

In support of interview material, data was also gathered through informal meetings, site visits, observation and the collation of secondary sources.

Throughout the research, careful written notes were taken of any pre-arranged or ad hoc meetings and conversations relating to the study but which were not formally conducted as interviews. Such exchanges were typically more free-ranging in form, and the content was not framed by specific question schedules, though all related in some way to issues of conservation and/or participation. They therefore fell midway between the methods of semi-structured interviews and the ‘informal conversational interview’ technique in which topics
are not pre-determined (Kitchin & Tate 2000). A total of 47 such meetings took place with officials, NGO workers and community members, both within the specific study sites and at locations around Belize (see Appendix I). They lasted from 10 minutes to one hour, and varied from discussions in government offices to conversations with fishermen mending lobster traps. Again, immediately after each meeting, mental or jotted notes were written out in full.

Though they lacked the methodological planning that preceded interviews, meetings and conversations were regarded as an invaluable further source of data. So, too, were carefully-logged descriptive field notes from site visits, that in two cases included observation of interactions between planning officers (all site visits and observational sources of data are listed in Appendix I). Together, these methods drew on techniques linked with more ‘ethnographic’ forms of data collection, such as detailed observation and note-taking and conversational and open-ended interaction, which are aimed toward an empathetic understanding of social scenes (Peil 1982, Howard 1997, May 1997).

As a more formalized source of observational data, the researcher was permitted to attend two official meetings at Caye Caulker between planners and local key players (from a conservation NGO and the Village Council). As already noted in Subsection 3.2.2, important insights into the problems and potentials of community consultation also came from observation of community workshops held for the proposed Port Honduras Marine Reserve in southern Belize. The researcher played no part in any of these meetings, but was permitted to take notes by the organisers unless any of the participants took objection (none expressed objection). The researcher’s role was therefore that of a ‘detached’ and ‘unobtrusive’ observer rather than a ‘participant’ (Kitchin & Tate 2000). Notes were taken not only of the content of the meetings and discussions, but also of the modes of presentation, intervention and interaction between participants.

Last but certainly not least, primary data collection was backed up by consultation of approximately 100 documents and other secondary sources, including both private and public texts (May 1997). Site-specific secondary sources collected included official planning documents, maps, minutes of advisory committee meetings, non-official reports, newsletters and journal articles relating to the protected areas. Wider contextual
documentation and literature was also collected to support the primary data from the case study (Clark 1997). Such material covered human and environmental geography, conservation practices, the political and administrative history of coastal zone development and community participation in general within Belize. All secondary sources cited within the text are listed in the Bibliography.

The documents represented sources of data of various kinds. Some provided information of practical help for the field research. Some provided direct accounts, opinions and critiques of the social processes under study. Others required a more subtle reading of content and language to reveal insights not just through what they reported, but through how they reported. It had to be recognised that “secondary data reflect the aims and attitudes of the people and organizations who collected the data” (Clark 1997, p65). Account also had to be taken of the effect that early documentation might have had in selectively informing and structuring later steps in the planning process. All in all, secondary sources were approached by no means as neutral, objective sources of data (Howard 1997), but as texts imbued with layers of meaning and “as the sedimentations of social practices” (May 1997, p157).

3.3 Results and Analysis

The tasks of collecting the field data and of processing and analysing the results did not take place in a completely linear progression. As already noted in Subsection 3.2.2, analytical work to some extent commenced during fieldwork to provide initial feedback and permit fine-tuning of the study (as advocated by Bryman & Burgess 1994 and Crang 1997). However, the bulk of analytical work was carried out on return to the UK.

The first part of this section outlines the methodological approach to this phase of the research (3.3.1). The following two subsections discuss data processing and results (3.3.2) and analytical method (3.3.3). But it should be noted that there was no clear distinction in the research between these two phases of work: discussion of results inevitably evolved into preliminary analysis.
3.3.1 Inductive Approach

It would be somewhat naive to suggest that the fruits of data collection were wholly rooted in empirical reality and not to some extent theory-driven (May 1997). But attempts were made to design the research methodology in response to the fieldwork experience and to encourage a process whereby explanatory concepts flowed from the data. The research was therefore more inductive than deductive (Kitchin & Tate 2000), taking an approach “in which generalizations are developed from information presented in case-studies using refinement, abstraction, typification and categorization” (Eyles 1988).

The data processing and analysis broadly followed the principles, if not the precisely-defined field methods, of ‘grounded theory’ (Bailey et al 1999). In terms of analysis, a grounded theory approach tries to avoid the danger of applying premature theoretical categories to qualitative data and favours the identification of categories emerging out of the data (Strauss & Corbin 1990). Its principal analytical techniques include repeated review and reformulation of data gathering in the field (Bryman & Burgess 1994) and development of coding strategies based on “breaking down, conceptualizing, and reconstructing data” (Yin 1993, p62).

Cook and Crang (1995) discuss in detail the various steps that can be built into a coding strategy, starting with initial annotation of materials as a form of ‘open coding’. The idea here is more to note topics neutrally rather than search for significant themes, although in practice “no researcher can confront such a text quite so ‘innocently’” (Cook & Crang 1995, p78). The next step is to develop a set of codes with which to label similar topics, and then to collate data items relating to each code and see how they relate to one another. At this stage underlying relations and analytical themes are identified and secondary coding systems can be built up that help to map out the phenomenon in analytical terms. (A schematic diagram of the coding process employed in the thesis is incorporated in Figure 3.6). Throughout, coding should be a flexible, iterative process, in which materials are repeatedly re-read and previous steps re-evaluated as queries, contradictions, omissions and inconsistencies inevitably arise. In this way, codes become “the building blocks for emergent rather than pre-specified concepts” (Bryman & Burgess 1994).
3.3.2 Data Processing and Results

The quantity of data gathered on the two main study sites and on the national context, required a painstaking, systematic approach to data processing. All primary data - tape-recorded interviews and hand-written interview, meeting and observation notes - were first transcribed into printed form, and stored within separate computer files. Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, with printed annotation in square brackets to indicate where passages were indistinct or interrupted, or to show extra information such as non-verbal gestures or changes of tone of voice.

The various data sources - scripts, notes and secondary sources - were then studied to yield a coding system for the results of the research. For information relating to the two protected area sites, Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker, the first reading suggested that items of data should be classed into the following four main categories:

A ‘process’ - descriptions of the planning process;
B ‘views/issues’ - opinions and concerns relating to the sites and the planning process;
C ‘plans’ - descriptions of plans and planning decisions;
D ‘context’ - other information and opinions relating to the local context.

The data sources were then re-read and a list of topics relating to each category was drawn up for each site. For example, a total of 27 topics were drawn up under category ‘B’ for Bacalar Chico, including:

- ‘awareness’ (knowledge of protected area plans)
- ‘reef degradation’ (concern over reef damage)
- ‘fish stock’ (changes in fishery stocks)
- ‘zoning’ (marine reserve zoning plans)
- ‘land extent’ (land coverage of protected area)
- ‘development restrictions’ (proposed regulations for adjacent land)
- ‘consultation process’ (value and conduct of community consultations)
- ‘tour bias’ (alleged bias toward tour guides in consultations)
- ‘enforcement’ (enforcibility of proposed regulations)
Full lists of coding categories and topics are provided in Appendix III. These lists were progressively built up and revised, as each source was read through and annotated to indicate which sections corresponded to which categories and topics. There was considerable overlap in the coding annotations, with any one section capable of falling within more than one topic. Figures 3.3 and 3.4 provide brief examples of some coded data.

The next step was to sort similarly-coded references together from the various data sources (see Cook & Crang 1995). To ease the process, a spreadsheet matrix was prepared indicating the number of times each coded topic appeared in each of the data sources. The results were then collated by listing each topic in turn and summarizing each data reference that pertained to it, noting the data sources in square brackets. Figure 3.5 gives an example of how data references were collated for a single topic, in this case relating to Caye Caulker.

Figure 3.3 Coded extract from interview transcript

| B awareness | “Well, definitely it is well accepted. But the Bacalar Chico project or the advisory committee need to start informing the general public [about] the positive impact of the reserve and also the negative, because we have to take into consideration that tourism cannot survive without the marine products, which automatically brings [in] the commercial fishermen. We have to be aware that these people need to survive also. So we have to, the Bacalar Chico project people have to, come and explain things to the locals, to the general public. The tourism guides will accept it, there is no doubt about it, but we cannot abandon the commercial fishermen. I think we need them the same way they need us."
| B consultation process |
| B community support | |
| D fishing | |

* Commercial fishermen from San Pedro?

| A where fish | Yes, there is a lot of commercial fishermen and they fish heavily on that area. And they do lobster fish, pick up conchs. Also it needs proper monitoring, especially from the boundary of Mexico - the village of Xcalak, it has some commercial fishermen who come into our Bacalar Chico area, which is illegal." |
| B mexican | |

Source: interview with *bctour1*
A zoning planning | [Anon] reported on the various zoning options that had been discussed with the staff of Bacalar Chico and the CZMU. These options have since been discussed with individual fishermen. [Anon] felt that there should be another public forum to discuss the proposed zoning scheme and mentioned that the Tour Guide Association will be holding a meeting this month. It was agreed that this would be a good opportunity to hold the forum, and [anon] agreed to make the necessary arrangements.

A informal consultation

A formal consultation | It was noted that 3 landowners had offered to help with providing a lot for the visitor centre: [anon], [anon] (Rocky Pt. area), and [anon] (Robles area). These offers need to be treated with caution, however, as acceptance may be viewed as endorsement of any related development projects.

B self-interest

A marine boundary | [Anon] then briefly explained the rationale for extending the southern marine boundary to Basil Jones, and the members felt that this was acceptable.

A formal consultation | [Anon] questioned the southern land boundary, stating that plans were being considered for development in part of the area included within the reserve boundary. It was felt, however, that this could be resolved through zoning for multiple use.

B land extent

[Anon] reported that 3 landowners had offered to help with providing a lot for the visitor centre: [anon], [anon] (Rocky Pt. area), and [anon] (Robles area). These offers need to be treated with caution, however, as acceptance may be viewed as endorsement of any related development projects.

[Anon] then briefly explained the rationale for extending the southern marine boundary to Basil Jones, and the members felt that this was acceptable.

[Anon] questioned the southern land boundary, stating that plans were being considered for development in part of the area included within the reserve boundary. It was felt, however, that this could be resolved through zoning for multiple use.

[NB 'anon' indicates that a name given in the minutes has been deleted to preserve anonymity]

Source: BCPAC (1996a, p2)

B: REEF DEGRADATION
- reef is in good condition right now but have to start protecting to avoid it worsening [cctour1]
- reef will recover in 1-2 years because it is in a good state [cctour3]
- the reef was prettier and bigger with more fish when she was young; both fishermen and tour guides are to blame [ccres5]
- every day it's being destroyed [cctour6]
- some tour guides stand on reef [cctour1]
- its hard for guides to stop snorkellers and divers touching and damaging corals, but reserve would give them more say in preventing it and would have patrols as at Hol Chan to stop tourists standing on reef [cctour4, ccgen3, ccres1, ccres4]
- outsider sailboat fishermen (Sarteneja) stand on corals to get conch and break coral to get lobster out; Caye Caulker people mostly use stick with hook for lobster [cctour1]
- people do damage and break coral, but does not agree whole reef at CC should be made a reserve [ccfish4]
During the process of sorting further revision was made to the coding scheme by merging topics and creating new ones. These iterative steps are shown by dashed lines in Figure 3.6, which summarizes in schematic form all the stages of data processing and analysis (see 3.3.3). The output of data processing formed the basis for Chapters 5 and 6, which provide largely thick-descriptive accounts of planning and public participation for the two protected area sites.

A similar processing technique was used for the topical break-down and subsequent sorting of data on the national context to the study. Since data collection was in this case more generalized and less in-depth, data coding was a rather more straight-forward task, resulting in far fewer items per topic. The results of this work form the basis for Chapter 4. Box 3.2 explains how all original research data is presented and referenced within the text in the following chapters of the thesis.

**Box 3.2 Presentation of data in the thesis**

In the thesis, reference to secondary data is given in the conventional manner for published sources, by noting author or publishing organisation and date of publication in brackets. For quoted passages of text the corresponding page numbers are added to the reference (unless page numbers do not exist in the original document).

Reference to primary data from interviews, meetings and observation notes is noted by indicating the codename for the source material in brackets (e.g. *forest1*, *bcfish9*). See Appendix I for the list of data sources and their codenames. The reference indicates that information in the preceding sentence relates to that particular source material.

Direct quotes from transcribed interviews also feature in the text, and are reproduced verbatim on the grounds that reported speech should be solely in the words of the speaker, both to respect the ethical rights of the speaker and to preserve potentially valuable information on personal and cultural styles of expression (including the use of Creole terms). The [* ] symbol denotes a question put by the interviewer.

For all quotes, whether from interviews or secondary data, a connecting series of full stops indicates that sections of dialogue have been deleted from within quotes for reasons of brevity. Any words within square brackets are included by the researcher to add clarity, explanation or non-verbal elements to quotes.
3.3.3 Analytical Method

The sorted and collated data for Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker formed the raw material for the more abstracted analysis phase of the research discussed in Chapters 7, 8 and 9. The largely-descriptive, collated references were read through closely to reveal a series of analytical themes that applied jointly to the two sites.

Not all the coded topics had been incorporated in the sorted materials described in Subsection 3.3.2. Data on more interpretative topics, such as items coded under 'self-interest' or 'official attitude' (see Appendix III), were fed directly into the analytical phase. These data too were studied to yield analytical themes. In keeping with the iterative style of the research (Cook & Crang 1995), there was also further reading of all original transcripts and notes in an attempt to reveal any subtexts, topics and themes not recognized before.

A list of 14 broad analytical themes emerged from the materials, falling into three main categories related to the social character of planning, power relations and the notion of 'containment'. Some of the analytical points had indeed been noted during the course of the fieldwork, but the process of deriving themes from the processed results helped further to ensure they were grounded in the empirical findings (Bryman & Burgess 1994). The list of categories and themes in the analytical coding scheme was drawn up as follows:

**Social character of planning:**
- 'form/scope of participation'
- 'evaluation of consultation'
- 'non-consultative involvement'
- 'heterogeneity/key players'
- 'exclusion?'

**Power arena in planning:**
- 'planning as power arena'
- 'interests/resources/tactics'
- 'enrolment/representation claims'
- 'typologies of actors/actions'
- 'impacts on planning/progress'

**Planners' central roles:**
- 'progress/containment'
- 'containment actions'
Having identified and categorised the themes, the researcher studied all of the analytical source materials and noted in tabular form wherever points discussed in the texts related to the 14 themes. Once again, the materials were then drawn together, this time to provide the framework for Chapters 7, 8 and 9, built around the series of analytical themes. Findings from the general Belizean context reported in Chapter 4 were also integrated into the text as supportive material. The various stages of data processing and analysis described in this subsection and Subsection 3.3.2 are summarized in Figure 3.6.

3.4 Evaluation of Research Methodology

Before moving on to detailed discussion of the case study findings, it is important to raise some further points regarding the research process and to reflect on the methodology applied.

Overall, data collection in Belize and elsewhere progressed remarkably smoothly, given the independence of the research and its sensitive subject matter. Government officers, NGO officers, other key informants and local stakeholders in general were welcoming and helpful. Almost everyone approached agreed to an interview, and the researcher was granted access to a wide range of official documents. Most contacts were either positively supportive of the research plans or politely indifferent to them.

On the other hand, and as the preceding sections have noted, logistics and procedural delays in planning constrained certain elements of the research. Limited resources of finance and of institutional support contributed to the decision not to invest effort in extensive research surveys such as questionnaires. Both officials and local stakeholders may have been cooperative when met, but the task of locating people and arranging secure times to meet was time-consuming and often thwarted by their non-attendance. Planning delays denied the researcher the chance to undertake direct observation of consultation meetings for the Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker protected areas. The unpredictable nature of planning
progress, though of analytical interest in itself, to some extent caused the fieldwork to become a 'slave to events'.

Figure 3.6 Schematic summary of data processing and analysis

Rectangular boxes represent data materials. Elliptical boxes represent actions. Solid arrows represent each action's input and output. Dashed arrows represent iterative inputs. (See text for further explanation).
Some information and opinions on sensitive issues was difficult to gain without intrusive questioning or covert investigation methods that the researcher did not want to pursue for both ethical and practical reasons. At Caye Caulker, for example, the researcher was unable to confirm with confidence the identities of a group of people regarded by some stakeholders as an influential, 'behind-the-scenes' political lobby with landholding and business interests. Dogged questioning might have revealed their identities and details of their activities but it risked alienating interviewees and creating confrontations that could have jeopardized other aspects of the fieldwork.

Such factors have to be borne in mind when considering the evaluative topics that follow. The first subsection is concerned with issues of methodological rigour, discussing subjectivity, interpretation and criteria for evaluating the credibility of qualitative research (3.4.1). The second subsection moves on to consider ethical issues pertaining to the research (3.4.2).

3.4.1 Subjectivity, Interpretation and Credibility

The author holds to the argument that research is a far from neutral, objective exercise (Madge et al 1997). Social researchers cannot assume a 'detached' vantage point from which to view and report on social phenomena. Their viewpoints and approaches are themselves shaped by "social relations stretching between the field, the academy and beyond"(Cook & Crang 1995, p7). Decisions and actions are influenced by deep-rooted cultural values and by more immediate value judgements of the researcher. Values therefore enter the practice of research at every stage, from initial identification of research interests to usage of the research results (May 1997).

In this research, subjective decisions are clearly manifest not just in the choice of methodological approach and the interpretations of its results (Furze et al 1996), but in the very mechanics of deciding where to gather data, which questions to ask and how to record and report the responses. By way of example, it has already been noted that much use has been made in the thesis of verbatim quotes. Such data helps to corroborate arguments. But quotes are only selected portions of dialogue, and, wilfully or not, they can be applied in a
manner mis-representative of the original text. The researcher must remain alert for such misuses.

The physical presence of the researcher also has an influence on the data that is actually made available - the information expressed by interviewees. The research process is itself an intersubjective act between ‘actors’, one “always saturated with relations of power/knowledge” (Cook & Crang 1995, p6). Those relations can have various consequences on the responses given by interviewees. A field researcher has to be mindful, for example, that informants may actively express what they perceive the researcher wants to hear (Howard 1997). Alternatively, they may deliberately modify their responses because of the researcher’s perceived links with officialdom. They may also try to steer interviews to further their own interests so that the researcher becomes “manipulated and controlled by the research population” (Madge et al 1997, p105).

These examples suggest that many interpretative pitfalls lie in the path of research. Avoidance of such pitfalls in the conduct, analysis and presentation of the thesis research demanded rigorous attention at all stages of the work.

In presenting quotes from interview data, the researcher therefore took care to avoid the problem of mis-representation noted above. Iterative consultation of transcripts during the process of analysis (see 3.3.3) and checking of sorted items of data against transcripts during presentation helped ensure quotes remained faithful to their original context.

In the case of interviewer-interviewee relations, the researcher tried to make it clear to local stakeholders that he was not an official by explaining his role and by dressing informally. For this study he also took care to avoid becoming identified with particular viewpoints or factions, because of the danger of sending out ‘political signals’ to interviewees that could undermine cooperation (Howard 1997). During interviews, the researcher actively tried to circumvent potentially misleading responses by being aware to the possibilities of modification and manipulation and by returning to subjects and rephrasing questions. Controversial or ‘suspicious’ statements were also re-assessed at the analytical stage by cross-checking or ‘triangulating’ with other data items within transcripts and with data from
other sources. Triangulation now has a common role in qualitative research (Baxter & Eyles 1999b) and played a key part in the thesis research (see Box 3.3).

**Box 3.3 Triangulation**

One of the principal tools of methodological rigour is ‘triangulation’, cross-checking of the validity of data through comparison of different sets of data.

"Triangulation is one of the most powerful techniques for strengthening credibility. It is based on convergence: when multiple sources provide similar findings their credibility is considerably strengthened" (Baxter & Eyles 1997, p514).

Triangulation can arise through the use of multiple data-gathering methods. In this field research, though some data collection methods did not prove viable, there remained a combination of complimentary approaches in the use of interview material, meeting and observation notes and secondary sources. Triangulation is regarded as a key principle of PRA, and the methods employed in the research equated to use of several PRA techniques, namely ‘secondary data review’, ‘direct observation’, ‘semi-structured interviews’, ‘key informants’, ‘chains of interviews’ and ‘mapping’ (Furze et al 1996).

Triangulation can also be achieved within single techniques by cross-referencing among different information sources such as different interviewees (Baxter & Eyles 1997). In the research, some standardization of questions was already built into the semi-structured interviews. Moreover, the iterative process of data collection and preliminary analysis in the field enabled new opinions, perceptions and observations of interviewees to be identified and addressed in subsequent rounds of data collection. Extra emphasis was placed on gaining multiple opinions on particularly controversial points. For example, corroborative information on the role of community representatives on a ‘participatory’ planning committee for Bacalar Chico (see Chapter 5) was gained from four interviews, one informal meeting and a series of secondary sources (committee minutes).

The result has been that few of the points examined in the discussion and analysis chapters of the thesis derive from a single source, and those that do so have been acknowledged as such. Most importantly, the researcher is confident that all analytical claims in the thesis have been verified through triangulation.

The reflexive recognition of value judgements and the researcher’s part in the research process is arguably central to interpretation (Madge et al 1997). Acknowledgement of subjectivity issues combined with detailed accounts of methodological approach can
improve the ‘honesty’ of qualitative work, enhancing research design and practice, and making it easier for others to evaluate its ‘credibility’ (Frankenberg 1993, Baxter & Eyles 1997). Recognition that research is essentially subjective does not negate the potential of applying a rigorous approach to the conduct of research (Bailey et al 1999).

The traditional criteria for evaluating methodological rigour in quantitative research based on notions of objectivity and statistical validity are difficult to apply in qualititative research that explicitly recognises the subjective, constructed nature of knowledge and the existence of ‘multiple realities’ (Eyles 1988). Rigour is harder to demonstrate and test. It hinges less on the specificities of technique and more on general principles of academic reflexivity, honesty and responsibility (Baxter & Eyles 1997, Bailey et al 1999). The central criterion becomes that of ‘credibility’ - the degree to which an interpretation can be demonstrated to represent people’s experience authentically (Baxter & Eyles 1997).

Certain strategies do exist for enhancing rigour in qualititative research. In a survey of empirical papers by social geographers, Baxter and Eyles (1997) identified 11 common strategies relating not just to data collection methods but also to presentation of the researcher’s reasoning regarding methodology, analysis and interpretation. They comprised: presentation of a rationale for the choice of methodology; use of multiple methods (enabling triangulation); description of respondents; use of interview quotes; description of interview practices; description of procedures for analysis; long field seasons; revisits to respondents to clarify meanings; verification of interpretations by respondents; links with existing theory; and presentation of a rationale for interpretation.

Between three and nine strategies were used in combination in the works surveyed by Baxter and Eyles (1997). This thesis research has featured eight of the strategies and addressed a further two in part (the field season was of medium duration, and some, but not all, respondents were revisited). There was, however, no verification of interpretation by the interviewees. The latter exception is regrettable, but would have required a return trip to Belize to ensure responses were gained and were of sufficient clarity and depth to be informative. However, as noted in Subsection 3.4.2, research results and interpretations were presented to audiences in Belize at the close of the fieldwork and following the main phase of analysis.
The author of this research is confident in the steps taken to ensure its credibility. As Bailey et al (1999) argue, demonstration of that rigour relies on openness of reporting in which research procedures are made explicit. A recent work by Baxter and Eyles (1999a) provides a checklist for evaluating qualititative interview research (see Table 3.4). In the course of this chapter and others of the thesis, information is presented that enables each of those evaluative questions to be addressed.

Table 3.4 Checklist for evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>question</th>
<th>thesis chapters to consult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 What was the natural history (purpose, rationale, evolution) of the research?</td>
<td>Chapters 1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 What data were collected, by whom, and by what methods?</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 How was the sampling done?</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 How was the data analysis done?</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 How credible and dependable are the data-construct links?</td>
<td>Chapters 3-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 What results are presented?</td>
<td>Chapters 3-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 How credible is the theory/hypothesis?</td>
<td>Chapters 7-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 How transferable are the findings?</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: adapted from Baxter and Eyles (1999a, p311)

3.4.2 Ethical Issues

Proctor (1998b) notes that there has been increasing ethical debate within geography on relations between researchers and their research subjects, in this case between researchers and people. Many authors express an ethical dilemma "between the right to research and the right of research participants to self-determination, privacy, and dignity" (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 1992, p73) or the need to balance rights to gather data with "rights to personal and community integrity and privacy" (Peil 1982, p18). Madge (1997) explores ethical issues specifically within Third World research and argues that no fixed formulae can be applied to such research. In large part ethical conduct therefore involves thinking
through the process of interaction on the ground. Ethical considerations played an important role in all stages of the thesis research, from data collection through analysis to dissemination of the case study findings. Four main issues related to the study are discussed here: informed consent, privacy, anonymity and information sharing.

Informed consent, whereby potential research participants have the chance to make an informed decision whether to divulge information or not, has become a guiding principle of social research (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 1992, May 1997). All interviewees in the case study were told the topic of the research, the purpose of the interview and the identity and affiliation of the interviewer, and asked for their consent before any data were collected. The research was introduced in non-technical language and in generalized terms (as a study of community involvement in planning). Because of sensitivity to such terms and to avoid 'priming' interviewees, it was decided not to refer specifically to issues of power and conflict unless the interviewee brought these up. Peil (1982), Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) and Frankenberg (1993) discuss similar instances where full disclosure of research plans could prejudice the research outcomes.

Informants' right to privacy is another guiding principle of social research. Privacy issues relate to the setting for interviews, the sensitivity of information, and the use made of the results (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 1992). So long as the informant agreed, interviews were conducted in private, and if interviewees indicated embarrassment or discomfort with a line of questioning, in general they were not pressed to give an answer. There were exceptions in cases where officials appeared to be reticent, and the researcher decided that mildly pressing questions were justified on the grounds of the public accountability of officials.

The privacy issue relating to usage of results is essentially that of respecting people's wish for anonymity. Indeed maintaining anonymity of informants was a guideline for the research (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias 1992, Howard 1997). Interviewees were told beforehand that they would not be named in research reports, regardless of whether or not they expressly asked for anonymity. In the chapters that follow, references to data from specific informants are given in coded form. This provision is enough to protect the identities of most local stakeholders to avoid any possible risk to them or their interests.
(May 1997). However, it has to be recognised that, by virtue of their more active involvement in the activities under study, the identities of officials and other 'key players' are not so readily concealed by substituting codes for names. In such cases, it is difficult not to compromise anonymity to some degree (Peil 1982). Whenever such interviewees expressly asked for their comments to be kept confidential, however, special effort has been taken to minimize any clues to their identity.

The final ethical issue concerns the sharing of information with research participants, an element of a more wide-ranging challenge to 'disengagement' associated with feminist critiques of research (May 1997). Social research can and, arguably, should be a two-way process of information exchange (Madge 1997). Throughout the data gathering for the study the researcher was prepared to respond to people's queries not only on the research programme but also on the planning process itself. He was keen to provide any insights that were within his expertise and that did not compromise the wishes of confidentiality of others. This included emphasizing to local stakeholders that they had a right to express an opinion on planning issues, as well as providing views on consultation procedures to a planning officer when the interview was completed. The danger that the researcher's responses might impact on the topic of study was minimized because the research was mostly analyzing actions that had already taken place and because of the slow progress of planning compared with the duration of fieldwork.

Information-sharing can also follow more formal channels of reporting (Howard 1997). Further feedback on consultations was provided at the close of fieldwork in a paper presented at the Third Belize Interdisciplinary Conference, March 1997, and in a preliminary research report circulated to state and NGO officials. After return to the UK, a full, published report was prepared and circulated to interviewees and organisations in Belize (Few 1998).

3.5 Summary

The thesis research is based on a case study of community involvement in the planning of protected areas in Belize. Following a preliminary research phase that included interviews
at multilateral institutions, fieldwork in Belize was undertaken in 1996/97. Qualitative data were collected primarily from semi-structured interviews, supported by informal meetings, observations/site visits and secondary sources. Some data were collected on conservation and planning within Belize in general (reported in Chapter 4), but the bulk of data-gathering related to planning processes for two protected area sites at Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker.

For the two protected area sites, the aim was to develop a form of thick description from which to build interpretative concepts that were empirically grounded. Iterative analysis of the materials commenced during the fieldwork process but the main analysis phase took place on return to the UK. Transcribed data were processed via an empirically-derived coding and sorting system to yield narratives of planning (see Chapters 5 and 6) and a series of analytical themes pertaining to the two protected area sites (discussed in Chapter 7-9). Throughout the study, careful attention was paid to issues of methodological rigour and the ethical conduct of research. The thesis now turns to the results of the research, commencing with a discussion of the national context to the case study in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER FOUR

BELIZE:
THE CASE STUDY CONTEXT

Before turning attention to the protected area sites selected for detailed study it is crucial to provide an account of the national context of conservation, protected area planning and public participation in Belize. This chapter therefore forms the backdrop for the case study. It commences with a broad-ranging overview of Belize’s physical and human geography, providing information on its social complexion, economy, political systems and international relations (4.1). The second section focuses on environmental issues and particularly on the country’s record in biodiversity conservation (4.2). The third section examines issues related to the coastal zone, including the planning system for coastal zone management and its protected area component (4.3). The fourth, and most in-depth section surveys the recent history of local participation in governance, development and conservation projects in Belize, including a range of protected area initiatives (4.4).

Throughout the chapter reference is made to data (primary and secondary) collected during the field research. Primary data sources are indicated by italicized references (see Box 3.2). It should be noted that contextual information presented in the chapter is that relevant to the period of the field research (1996/1997) rather than the year of thesis presentation (2000).

4.1 Introduction to Belize

Belize lies to the south of the Yucatan Peninsula in Central America, bordered by the Caribbean Sea to the east, Mexico to the north and north-west and Guatemala to the west. With a land area of just 23,657 sq km, it is the second smallest of the Central American states after El Salvador, and no part of the country is greater than 109km from the sea (Barry 1995). A former British colony, the country changed its name from British Honduras
to Belize in 1973 and gained full independence in 1981. The following text briefly introduces aspects of the country’s physical geography, social fabric, economy, political structure and international relations.

**Physical Environment**

Belize is a tropical country, with relatively stable, warm temperatures and a seasonal rainfall pattern. Monthly mean temperatures vary from approximately 24°C in January to 27°C in July (Barry 1995). Annual rainfall increases from north to south, and the wettest season runs from May to September (CSO 1996). Hurricanes are an occasional occurrence in the July to November storm season (Programme for Belize 1996). In 1961 Hurricane Hattie struck Belize, bringing especially severe damage to the islands and low-lying coastal areas.

In physiographic terms the mainland is divided into three principal regions (GOB 1996a). Plains of low relief occupy most of the northern half of Belize and a coastal strip in the south. A mountain chain, the Maya Mountains, dominates the centre-south of the country, with elevations rising to 1120m. Upland or rolling karst landscapes to the west and north of the mountains form the third major region. Forest formations (open and closed) remain extensive across all three topographic regions (see Figure 4.1). According to a recent conservation report “they would cover 80% of the country under natural conditions and still do occupy some 74%” (Programme for Belize 1996, p9). Other inland vegetation formations include scrub, open savannah and freshwater swamps, and mangroves predominate toward the coast (Programme for Belize 1996).

Belize’s most renowned natural feature stands offshore. A barrier reef runs almost the entire length of the coastline, separated by a broad, shallow lagoon. Roughly 200km in extent, it is the longest barrier reef in the Northern Hemisphere (GOB 1996a). By dissipating the force of the waves, the coral reef creates calm inshore waters rich in patch reefs and sea grass beds and protects an estimated 450 small islands or cays (usually spelled with an extra ‘e’ in Belize) distributed through the lagoon (see Figure 4.2). Beyond the reef two large coral atolls stand on submarine ridges, forming the westerly outposts of Belizean territory. Figure 4.3 maps both the topographic and marine features of Belize.
Figure 4.1 Mayan ruins and forest at Caracol, South-west Belize

Figure 4.2 Small cays in the coastal lagoon, Port Honduras area
Figure 4.3 Topography and reef formations of Belize

Information sources: McField et al (1996), ITM (undated)
Settlement and Society

The 1995 mid-year estimate for the total population of Belize was 216,500, up from a figure of 189,392 in the 1991 Census (CSO 1996). The population is the smallest of any Central American country, generating a sparse average density of just over nine persons per square kilometre. Over one quarter of the national population resides in Belize City, the congested, commercial hub of the country and historic capital located near the mouth of the Belize River (see Figure 4.4). Eight smaller urban centres exist - Orange Walk, Corozal, San Pedro, San Ignacio, Benque Viejo del Carmen, Dangriga, Punta Gorda and Belmopan - the last of which is a new town founded and constructed as the seat of government. Just over half the total population is rural, residing in villages and smaller settlements (CSO 1996).

Both ethnically and culturally, Belizean society is diverse. Though categorization of ethnicity is difficult and contentious in modern, multi-racial Belize, census data attempts to break population down by this factor (CSO 1996). Figure 4.5 notes the ethnic composition of a population described thus by Barry (1995, pxvii): “historically it is a country of immigrants, with even most of the present Mayan communities tracing their origins to Mexico or Guatemala.”

Until the last decade of the 20th century, the largest ethnic group in the population were classed as Creoles, people who trace their origins to when British settlers brought slaves from Africa and the West Indies in the earlier phases of colonization (Barry 1995). The latest census now lists the largest group as the Mestizo (CSO 1996), people who trace their origins to mixed Amerindian and European descent. The majority of Mestizos are descended from people who fled into northern Belize from Mexico during the Caste Wars of the mid-1800s, but in recent decades their numbers have been swelled by immigrants and refugees from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador (Barry 1995, NCFC/UNICEF 1995). Smaller ethnic groups include the Garifuna (descendents of people of mixed African and Amerindian blood), Maya Amerindians (who mostly migrated into the country in the 19th century), Chinese settlers and East Indian and Mennonite communities (CSO 1996). The country also has a small number of more recent settlers from Europe, East Asia and North America. English is the official language of Belize, but Spanish is the first language of 40% of the population and Creole is the main ‘lingua franca’ (Barry 1995).
Figure 4.4 Urban centres and major roads

Information source: ITM (undated)
Figure 4.5 Ethnic composition of Belize

Percentage of total population as of 1991 Census

Source: data from CSO (1996, p14)

Economy and Welfare

Table 4.1 lists the economic sectors of Belize in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Ever since colonization, primary products have been a mainstay of the Belizean economy. They remain so today, even though the logging trade on which the colony was founded has dwindled in importance. Agriculture and agroprocessing industries combined roughly account for one quarter of the GDP, three quarters of export earnings and as much as 40% of employment (Barry 1995). Sugar, bananas, citrus fruits and marine products (mainly lobster, conch and shrimp) are the leading primary exports (NCFC/UNICEF 1995).

In the last two decades, however, tourism has become the most dynamic component of the Belizean economy, a sector also based on the nation’s natural resources. From 1994 to 1997 Belize received 124,000-134,000 tourist visitors per annum (WTO 1999), compared with
just 11,000 per year during the 1960s (Barry 1995). The rate of growth of tourism was especially dramatic in the late 1980s:

"Tourist arrivals increased by 75 per cent between 1985 and 1989, mostly attracted by the world's second longest coral barrier reef, together with rainforest and wildlife reserves. These have put Belize in the forefront of the 'ecotourism' market" (NCFC/UNICEF 1995, p130).

Table 4.1 Economic sectors (percentage share of GDP 1995)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sector</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>primary</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agriculture</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forestry/logging</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fishing</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mining</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secondary</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manufacturing</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>electricity &amp; water</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>construction</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>service</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trade, restaurants &amp; hotels</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transport &amp; communications</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finance &amp; insurance</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>real estate &amp; business services</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public administration</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community &amp; other services</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(bank service charge)</td>
<td>-4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: data from CSO (1996, p112)

Overall, economic growth rates in Belize peaked at over 10% per annum in the late 1980s. But the economy remained heavily dependent on primary exports, preferential trade agreements, heavy importation of manufactured goods and flows of foreign aid, and growth slowed during the 1990s (Barry 1995). Since 1985 successive governments have undertaken neo-liberal structural adjustment measures, under terms recommended by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Economic policies have included reductions in public expenditure, export promotion, and the encouragement of external investment - policies reaffirmed in the Government's 'Medium-Term Economic Strategy Paper 1994-
1997 (GOB 1994). Tourism is regarded as a pillar for the future economy. In the words of the Minister of Tourism and the Environment:

"If you look at what’s gonna happen at the turn of the century, the protection that we’ve been getting for agricultural products in Europe is being eroded by the US. So I have a feeling that some of those industries are probably gonna be in trouble. Whereas if tourism continued to develop on a firm footing, then it could become the number one." (gov3)

In 1997, per capita GDP stood at $4,300, and Belize was ranked 15th among Central American and Caribbean countries on the UNDP’s Human Development Index (see Table 4.2) (UNDP 1999). Since 1960 major improvements have been achieved in health care and water supplies, but problems of poor infrastructure and persistent poverty remain (Barry 1995). According to government advisors:

"Despite steady economic growth and relatively stable economic conditions prevailing in Belize, the provision of basic services to various sectors of the population is still below acceptable levels" (NCFC/UNICEF 1995, p7).

Table 4.2 Regional rankings on UNDP’s Human Development Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>regional rank</th>
<th>country</th>
<th>HDI value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>0.857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>0.851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Antigua &amp; Barbuda</td>
<td>0.828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>0.801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Trinidad &amp; Tobago</td>
<td>0.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>0.791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>0.786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>St Kitts &amp; Nevis</td>
<td>0.781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>0.777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>0.776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>0.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>St Vincent &amp; the Grenadines</td>
<td>0.744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>St Lucia</td>
<td>0.737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>0.734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>Belize</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.732</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>0.726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>0.674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>0.641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>0.624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>0.616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>0.430</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNDP (1999, p134-137)
Paved highways are few. Only a minority of the rural population has access to safe water, and the incidence of malaria increased during the 1980s (Leonard 1987). One third of the population has no electricity supply. Poverty levels in both rural and urban areas stand at over 20%, and unemployment and underemployment remain high (NCFC/UNICEF1995).

Government and Democracy

"Unlike most of its Central American neighbours, Belize has not been torn by violent civil conflict and repression" (Barry 1995, pxiii). Belize has a stable parliamentary democracy (with a Constitution, including a Bill of Rights), and, through several changes of government since independence, national politics have been free of military intervention (Barry 1995). Political office has alternated between two major parties, the People's United Party (PUP) and the United Democratic Party (UDP). At the time of the field research the UDP had been in office since 1993.

The system of government is described by Barry (1995). A Prime Minister presides over a Cabinet drawn from an elected House of Representatives and an appointed Senate. Each Cabinet member is responsible for a government Ministry. The elected Members of Parliament represent 29 constituencies. Local governance is then administered by a system of elected Town Boards, with the help of elected Village Councils, although this lowest tier has few independent powers.

Stability may characterize the system, but the young democracy in Belize has strident critics. Interviews and conversations during the course of the research revealed the way power is locked in a rival two-party system that pervades down to the level of local governance (e.g. ccgen6). There were also accusations of electioneering and of poor inter-ministerial coordination (e.g. ccgen8, acad4). According to the Society for the Promotion of Education and Research (SPEAR), a Belizean NGO campaigning for political reform, "excessive concentration of political power, rampant official corruption and growing public disillusionment permeate all aspects of the political process" (SPEAR 1996, p1). Shoman (1994, p235) adds:

"With the changes of parties in government, certain trends in the governance of the country that cut across party lines have become apparent. Regardless of
which party is in power, the system of ‘clientilism’, of rewarding supporters with contracts, jobs, land and other favours, remains unchanged”.

However, as the director of SPEAR suggested during an interview, public understanding has not risen to a movement to change the status quo. There is still an unwillingness to ‘rock-the-boat’ and a paternalistic belief that personal gain is best derived from personal support for a party (ngo4). Such issues are taken up further in Section 4.4.

**International Relations**

Modern-day Belize displays an unusual and sometimes tense concoction of cultural influences, part Caribbean, part Latin American, part Mayan, with an economic colonial legacy and elements of infrastructure modelled on British institutions (see Box 4.1) and increasing economic and cultural influence from the United States.

**Box 4.1 The colonial legacy**

British occupancy of the coastlands now known as Belize dates from the late 17th century, when settlers arrived to export logwood (Barry 1995). British power over the area was to continue for the next three centuries, even though British descendents soon became a numerical minority. During the 18th century the population swelled as increasing numbers of African slaves were forced to provide labour for the logging industry. In the mid-19th century thousands of refugees arrived from Mexico, introducing sugar cane cultivation (BTIA 1997). In 1862 the colony of British Honduras was formally declared (Barry 1995).

In the 1940s and 1950s a nationalist movement gained increasing political ground in Belize and by the 1960s the conversion toward self-government had begun (Shoman 1994, BTIA 1997). But, in modern Belize, many legacies of colonial rule remain, including a governmental system that is based on the ‘Westminster-Whitehall’ model (Barry 1995). But perhaps most significantly, the colonial economic structure persists with its orientation toward primary exports and manufactured imports. In the words of Shoman (1994, p260):

“Belize was an imperial creation; its purpose: to supply timber to the British market.... As the years rolled by, as it moved from settlement to colony to independent nation, and as the economy shifted from forestry to agriculture, imperialism remained a constant factor. It no longer wears the clothes of a colonial power, but it maintains its power by economic means rather than by direct political rule. The important constant is that we are still unable to take economic decisions, that we remain a dependent satellite economy whose role in the global economy is strictly circumscribed.”
The nation is a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organisation of American States. It is also a member of the British Commonwealth, with the Queen as titular head, and until 1993 a British Army garrison was stationed in the country (Barry 1995). The garrison remained after independence as a safeguard against Guatemalan claims on Belizean territory, an issue that continued to strain relations between these neighbouring countries at the time of the research. Today, however, the USA exerts the greatest foreign influence on the country. It is both the leading trading partner of Belize, providing 54% of all imports in 1995 (CSO 1996), and its principal source of foreign investment (NCFC/UNICEF1995). American products and television programmes have heavily penetrated Belize in recent decades (Shoman 1994), and, with the USA just over two hours distant by air travel, an increasing number of Belizeans seek employment and residence there (Barry 1995).

Belize, in turn, has attracted a flow of entrepreneurs (both residents and non-residents) from North America, Europe and East Asia, some of whom have acquired land on the mainland and on the cays or invested in tourism facilities (Barry 1995). Indeed, one of the principal criticisms levelled at the burgeoning tourism industry concerns the concentration of ownership among non-natives and the failure of economic spin-offs to reach local economies (Shoman 1994). On the other hand, the country also has a strong presence from IGOs and INGOs working on development and environmental projects, including those that organise volunteers for conservation projects such as the UK-based Coral Cay Conservation (CCC).

4.2 Environment and Conservation

Drawing on some of the topics outlined in Section 4.1, this section takes a closer look at environmental matters relating to Belize. It first discusses environmental issues in general within the country (4.2.1), before specifically charting the early development of protected areas (4.2.2) and discussing the progress and trends of conservation during the 1990s (4.2.3).
4.2.1 Environmental Issues

The tourism industry of Belize is keen to promote the country as a land free from large-scale environmental degradation and rich in wildlife - a "Garden of Eden... where jaguars roam the wilds, colourful birds fly freely and denizens of the deep glide through pristine waters" (BTIA 1997, p22). Relative to most other countries in the region, the country has retained extensive forest cover, partly because of its low population and partly because of the land-use history of selective logging rather than agriculture (Barry 1995, Lindberg et al 1996). As indicators of the degree of human influence on the environment, it is perhaps also useful to note that Belize is a stronghold for two large mammals highly sensitive to hunting and habitat alteration, the jaguar Panthera onca (terrestrial) and the West Indian manatee Trichechus manatus (marine). Both Leonard (1987) and Barry (1995) argue that the state of the Belizean environment puts the nation in a strong position to chart a course of 'sustainable development'. For example:

"More than any other nation in Central America, Belize has the opportunity to assess carefully and designate those lands most suitable for agricultural development before the pressures of population stimulate the relentless land clearing waves that in other areas run ahead of any thoughtful attempts to reduce haphazard deforestation" (Leonard 1987, p125).

But neither author paints an entirely rosy picture. Barry (1995) suggests growing problems in the coastal zone, of mangrove clearance, waste management on the islands and overfishing of marine life - issues explored further in Section 4.3. He also notes that water supplies are being increasingly contaminated by agricultural pesticides and that, though logging practices may have retained vegetation cover, the forests that remain have almost all been selectively stripped of the large, valuable hardwood trees such as mahogany (Barry 1995). Leonard (1987) points to growing sewage problems in urban areas and current hotspots of deforestation in areas of the south and west settled by refugees. The existence of growing local pressure on forests was confirmed in an interview with an officer of the Forest Planning and Management Project (gov8), an initiative funded by the UK government.

In 1996 the Government of Belize published a National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) noting many of these environmental issues and listing policy priorities for
"environmentally sustainable development" (GOB 1996a, p3). These are reproduced in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Problems and priorities listed in the National Environmental Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'serious environmental problems'</th>
<th>'policy and management recommendations'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>absence of a national land management programme</td>
<td>strengthening land-use management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increasing (solid and liquid) waste problem</td>
<td>improving waste management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increase in unsustainable agricultural practices</td>
<td>reducing deforestation and unsustainable agricultural practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outbreaks of environment-related diseases</td>
<td>improving health conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pollution of the coastal zone by land-based and trans-boundary activities</td>
<td>improving water resources management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development pressures on coastal areas of high tourism or urban density</td>
<td>enhancing integrated coastal zone management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inadequate capacity to sustainably manage the Belize Barrier Reef</td>
<td>developing a conservation strategy for tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• strengthening legal and institutional capacity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• breaking the poverty-environmental degradation cycle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• expanding financial mechanisms for environment/resources management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: summarized from GOB (1996a, p2-3)

The NEAP applauds the enactment of an Environmental Protection Act in 1992, as an initial step in improved environmental management. According to Barry (1995), however, the Act's requirement that environmental impact assessments should be undertaken for major development projects was poorly enforced and already frequently undermined. He notes:

"Political and economic motives rather than environmental planning generally guide such land-use decisions as new road construction or the transfer of reserves to agricultural production" (Barry, 1995, p133).
As explored in depth in Chapter 2, the designation of protected reserves and parks has emerged worldwide as one of the key tools of environmental and natural resources management. We now turn to examine how the ideas and practices of protected area conservation have been applied within Belize.

4.2.2 Establishment of Protected Areas

According to Lindberg et al (1996), by 1993 some 12.7% of Belize’s land area was already contained within IUCN’s protected area categories I-V (see Subsection 2.2.1) and the percentage was on the increase. This figure was significantly higher than the average regional figures for Central America (9.0%) and the Caribbean (9.5%) (McNeely & Ness 1995), but lower than the totals for Honduras and Costa Rica (approaching 25%) (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). However, twice as much land again in Belize is included in Forest Reserves, forested tracts set aside primarily for timber extraction. Hence, the NEAP is able to proclaim “approximately 36% of Belize’s territory is under some form of protection” (GOB 1996a, p14). Figure 4.6 maps these various forms of protected area.

The roots of the present protected areas system lie in changes to forestry practices that took place in the early 20th century. Following 300 years of logging, colonial foresters began to acknowledge that systematic management was required if they were to prevent depletion of the timber resources (Munro 1983). Legislation in the 1920s created a Forest Department (in the Ministry of Natural Resources) and established powers for designating Forest Reserves for sustained yield management (Barry 1995). “Ever since then development of forestry and conservation in Belize have been closely linked” (Munro 1983, p140). By 1977 a total of 14 Forest Reserves had been delineated and established, the great majority of them located in the southern half of the country (Programme for Belize 1996).

The other early impetus for protected areas came from bird protection (Munro 1983). In 1928, under the Crown Lands Ordnance, a portion of Half Moon Caye was set aside as a nature reserve to protect a seabird colony. No further reserves were set up until the 1960s, after the devastation wrought by Hurricane Hattie highlighted the fragility of certain habitats and wildlife populations (Munro 1983, Barry 1995). The key development in that
Figure 4.6 Protected areas and Forest Reserves in Belize

Information source: LIC (1997)
decade proved to be the establishment of the Belize Audubon Society (BAS), as an offshoot of the Audubon Society of the USA. In the late 1960s and 1970s BAS successfully lobbied for the creation of a series of wildlife reserves on state land both inland and on the cayes, and responsibility for managing the reserves was handed over to the NGO (Munro 1983). Its establishment represented “the start both of organised local concern for nature conservation and of the interest and influence of the international NGO community” (Programme for Belize 1996, p28).

In the same year as Independence, the Government took a major step toward creating a more systematic basis for nature conservation in passing the National Park Systems Act 1981 (Zisman 1989). The Act enabled the Minister of Natural Resources to declare new categories of protected area, more strict than the pre-existing Forest Reserves, including National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Nature Reserves (GOB 1981). The distinctions between these various categories are noted in Table 4.4. In the process of drafting the legislation, however, certain clauses were deleted from the bill so giving the Minister greater discretion over specific management objectives for parks and the power to ‘dereserve’ or remove protected area status from a site (Munro 1983).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>type</th>
<th>principal function</th>
<th>legislation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bird Sanctuary</td>
<td>species protection</td>
<td>National Lands Act 1992 (formerly Crown Lands Ordnance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Reserve</td>
<td>controlled extractive use</td>
<td>Forest Act 1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Park</td>
<td>habitat and species protection; preservation of natural/scenic values</td>
<td>National Park Systems Act 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Sanctuary</td>
<td>habitat/species protection; preservation of natural/scenic values</td>
<td>National Park Systems Act 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Reserve</td>
<td>conservation of species, habitats and natural and cultural heritage</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two years later the Fisheries (Amendment) Act 1983 (followed by another amendment in 1988) gave the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries the power to declare Marine Reserves (GOB 1983). Unlike a National Park, these protected areas can allow for ‘controlled extractive use’ of marine resources, at least in delimited zones. The law also differs for Marine Reserves in that it requires a management plan to be drafted for the site before it is designated. The first protected area to be established under the Act was the Hol Chan Marine Reserve in 1987 (Programme for Belize 1996). The relevant extracts from both Acts are presented in Appendix IV.

The passing of the Acts co-incided with expansion of tourism in Belize, a factor which is widely acknowledged by governmental and non-governmental sources to have reinforced the drive toward protected area establishment (Zisman 1989, Programme for Belize 1996). By the end of 1996, 18 protected area sites had been designated under the 1981 Act and five marine reserves under the 1983 Act. The mushrooming of the protected areas system was also connected with the increasing involvement of national NGOs and international organisations, both in assisting planning and helping manage the areas. BAS continued to be the government’s key management partner, and external assistance came from INGOs such as Wildlife Conservation International and Worldwide Fund for Nature, along with funding from bodies such as USAID and the EU (Zisman 1989, Barry 1995).

NGOs and INGOs also became involved in establishing private reserves (42% of land in Belize is privately-owned (GOB 1996a)). The largest site by far is the Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area in the north. Programme for Belize, initially US-based but now an independent Belizean NGO, attracted international funding to acquire the land (part of a vast former estate) in 1989, and now holds it in trust as a multiple-use reserve (Barry 1995). Shipstem Nature Reserve, also in the north, is a private protected area owned by the International Tropical Conservation Foundation (ITCF), based in Switzerland. Belize also has some examples of small-scale reserves initiated and managed by local communities - a topic taken up in Subsection 4.4.2.

Throughout the story of protected area establishment in Belize, one recurrent theme has been the strong influence of external agents - colonial authorities, INGOs, funding bodies and individual conservationists. This prominent involvement in conservation activity
remained just as evident at the time of the field research. The following subsection takes stock of conservation progress and trends in Belize at the time of fieldwork.

4.2.3 Conservation in the 1990s

In an interview conducted during the field research the head of the Forest Department made a confident claim about Belize's protected area system. “We've looked at all the other systems abroad and we're coming up with a very exemplary one” (forest1). This claim brushes over some significant problems and issues expressed in governmental, as well as non-governmental, circles. There were questions surrounding government commitment to protected areas, the management capacity of the state, and the financial sustainability of conservation efforts.

Some interviewees in conservation-related agencies conveyed mixed messages about the politics behind governmental commitment toward establishing new protected areas. The head of the Forest Department's Conservation Division said:

“I would like to believe that we have quite a good back-up right now for that. And why do I say that? Because I feel that the government won't be pulling out of those reserves right now because it takes quite a lot of energy to push for those reserves and a government can't basically say no. I mean it has happened before, but right now I feel that there is a great level of support” (forest2).

A senior officer of the Coastal Zone Management Programme stated:

“We're a small, relatively poor country, and things are getting harder and harder, so there's always this push for investment. And that's where we have to be careful.....By and large I think we are still doing it the right way. But, if things are very attractive, even if it means damaging, will they resist? It really depends on how strong the rest of us are too, in lobbying later on” (czmp3).

The head of the Conservation Division also stressed the need to improve his department's protected area management commitment and capacity. He argued that, hitherto, areas were simply discussed at the national level and then legally delineated by statutory instruments, with little further input at the ground level from the state. “In fact, many of our parks have nominally been called as paper parks, really” (forest2). The drive now was to try to develop
management plans for the areas, but he felt the process was held up by inadequate finance and inadequate staffing, and insufficient expertise in the community-related aspects of protected area management (see 4.4.3).

The NEAP acknowledges that "the present management arrangement of protected areas is still weak" (GOB 1996a, p14). It cites lack of sufficient financial and human resources to explain why "16 of the 26 protected areas are still without any formal management", including enforcement of regulations and education to raise public awareness in local communities (GOB 1996a, p14). Its policy prescriptions for protected areas focus on administrative capacity-building and the raising of finance through initiatives such as park user fees, tourist exit taxes and a 'Belize Barrier Reef Foundation' for funding coastal zone conservation. In fact, exit taxes were already being levied for conservation purposes at the time the field research commenced (see Box 4.2).

Box 4.2 The Protected Areas Conservation Trust

An alternative 'internal' mechanism for raising conservation funds came in the form of the Protected Areas Conservation Trust (PACT), enacted in 1995 but only newly-operational at the time of the research. PACT raises 90% of its funds through a special exit tax for foreign tourists, and the money raised is intended to be disbursed to conservation-related projects put forward by government agencies, NGOs, private businesses and communities. In an interview, the director of the trust claimed that original proposals for a tax set at BZ$20 (US$10) had met with strong opposition from a few "very vocal" members of the tourism industry (gov7). They had directly lobbied central government and caused the fee to be more than halved on the grounds that it would deter visitors to Belize. The director rued the decision, and commented "sometimes a single person can have the voice of thousands" (gov7).

At the same time as the NEAP was being prepared, a National Protected Areas Systems Plan for Belize was being drafted as a joint project between NGOs, INGOs and Government agencies, funded by USAID. In its introductory section the Synthesis Report of the project argues that in the context of future demographic and economic pressures "the window of opportunity to conserve the considerable natural and cultural heritage values of Belize is fast closing" (Programme for Belize 1996, p27). The report affirms that the state's management capability is hampered by shortcomings in finance and qualified staff, and
again lists recommendations for improving the administrative structure and finance for protected areas. It also advocates development of a range of further protected areas, of various kinds, including sites run by community organizations (Programme for Belize 1996).

Belize continued to rely heavily on external assistance for conservation in the 1990s. Though the USAID closed its operations in Belize during 1996 (Castaneda 1996), the Minister of Tourism and the Environment continued to feel confident the country could muster sufficient external finance for conservation. “There are enough people out there who are prepared to assist us” (gov3). Other INGOs such as The Nature Conservancy, ITCF and CCC became more involved on specific conservation projects in the country. And it was during the 1990s that GEF funding began to be disbursed in Belize via the UNDP (see 3.1). The nation received funding both for a national-scale coastal zone management project, with protected area development as one of its objectives (see 4.3.2), and for small-scale environmental initiatives under the GEF’s Small Grants Programme (see Box 4.5 in Section 4.4.2).

During the fieldwork period, in December 1996, coastal conservation received a further symbolic and practical boost when the Government succeeded in its application to gain World Heritage Site status for the Belize Barrier Reef. This chapter now turns attention to the coastal environment of Belize, assessing planning issues in the coastal zone and current arrangements for protected areas within this most densely populated sector of the country.

### 4.3 Planning in the Coastal Zone

In 1996 the Government of Belize published the ‘State of the Coastal Zone Report’, a comprehensive guide to the nation’s coastal resources, their utilization, conservation and present and future management (McField et al 1996). The Report asserts that coastal resources underpin the country’s economy but are coming under increasing pressure from economic and development activities. It stresses the priority of building an integrated and effective strategy for coastal zone management, concluding “it is evident that Belize’s future prosperity lies to a large extent in sustainable management of the coastal zone”
The establishment of protected areas is one of the key components of that strategy.

This section outlines the major socio-economic activities in the coastal zone and environmental issues associated with them (4.3.1), legislation, planning policy and management strategy for the coastal zone (4.3.2), and the development of marine and coastal protected areas (4.3.3).

4.3.1 Coastal Activities and Impacts

Approximately 40% of Belize’s population lives in coastal settlements and on offshore cayes. The coastal area is vital for two key economic sectors - fishing and tourism - and recent residential and industrial development has been concentrated in the littoral zone and its hinterland (GEF 1993). Though human impact on the coastal environment has hitherto been slight in comparison with other, more densely populated countries, there is growing concern that the impact is increasing (Barry 1995). The growth in human activity has reportedly led to increasing levels of pollution in coastal waters from domestic sewage, industrial effluents and shipping. The expansion of residential and other developments has also led directly to the clearance of mangrove and coastal forest (littoral forest) vegetation and the destruction of sub-tidal habitats through dredging and landfill (McField et al 1996). Table 4.5 summarizes information on the reported pressures on coastal ecosystems and threatened wildlife species.

There is a long heritage of sea fishing in Belize, dating back to ancient Mayan times, and the industry remains a major source of employment and foreign exchange. In the mid-1990s annual fishing exports had a total value of US$10 million, and farmed shrimp added a further $5 million (McField et al 1996). The commercial fishing industry is composed mainly of small-scale operations, most of which belong to one of five fishing co-operatives established to purchase, process and export marine products, especially lobster Panulirus argus and conch Strombus gigas.
Table 4.5 Threatened habitats and wildlife

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>habitats</th>
<th>major threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>coral reefs</td>
<td>pollution, siltation, damage by fishing/water sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seagrass beds</td>
<td>dredging, siltation, pollution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mangroves</td>
<td>clearance for development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>littoral forest</td>
<td>clearance for development (only 2000ha of this distinct vegetation formation remain in the country)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>wildlife</th>
<th>major threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>crocodiles</td>
<td>hunting, persecution, loss of nest sites (beach)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sea turtles</td>
<td>hunting, loss of nest sites (beach)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manatee</td>
<td>hunting, accidents (boats/fishing gear), disturbance and loss of habitat (mangrove channels, quiet rivers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seabirds/coastal birds</td>
<td>loss of habitat (mangrove/littoral forest), disturbance, pollution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: summarized from McField et al (1996, pp2-4)

According to McField et al (1996) and Programme for Belize (1996) over-exploitation threatens the sustainability of conch, lobster and certain finfish stocks, all of which are fished along or close to the barrier reef and in the inshore lagoon. The coastal zone report adds that fishing operations can also directly damage reefs and bottom habitats, and stresses that the fishery resource itself is dependent on the maintenance of inter-related mangrove, seagrass and coral habitats (McField et al 1996). Some sources claim the impact of fishing is exacerbated by illegal incursions in the border areas by fishermen of Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico. In 1983 a coast guard raid on foreign ‘poachers’ resulted in an armed conflict in which there was one fatality (Leonard 1987).

Commercial fishing has now been eclipsed as a source of revenue by tourism, which centres on visits to the cays and the attractions of the reef for diving, snorkelling and sport fishing. Since the 1970s tourism developments have been concentrated in the coastal zone (Furley et al 1996). Approximately one third of all hotel rooms are located in just two resorts close to the reef: San Pedro and Caye Caulker (both of which feature heavily in the case study). But
developers, many of them foreign investors, have also combed the smallest of cays in search of sites with tourism potential (Barry 1995). As well as generating demand for hotels, restaurants and other services, tourism brings opportunities for local guides and boat-owners to earn a living taking visitors on scuba, snorkel and fishing tours. In the 1990s, in an effort to develop a Belizean niche in the nature tourism market, the government and industry have actively promoted Belize as an ‘ecotourism’ destination (see Box 2.4), emphasizing small-scale, low-impact tourism geared toward an appreciation of nature, wildlife and local cultures (Programme for Belize 1996).

However, though tourism in the country is, for the most part, small-scale, its influence is not always benign. As an environmental research report warns, “tourism is Janus-headed, bringing both economic prosperity and environmental degradation” (Furley et al 1996, p34). Environmental issues connected with tourism development in Belize, even so-called ecotourism, have included loss of coastal habitats through construction and dredging, pollution from sewage and solid waste and damage to fragile corals by scuba divers and boat anchors (McField et al 1996, Barry 1995).

4.3.2 Coastal Zone Management

Activities in the coastal zone are the subject of some 40 items of primary legislation, along with a series of national policies and guidelines issued by a variety of government ministries and departments (McField et al 1996). Table 4.6 lists some key acts and their legislative functions. Enforcement problems have long plagued many of the acts, and there have been recent attempts to revise and strengthen the regulation system, such as new statutory Forest Regulations on the cutting of mangroves (Zisman 1993). Efforts have also been expended to improve public compliance with laws, such as poster campaigns relating to fishing regulations.

Comments from two government officers interviewed during the research illustrate the perceived imperfection with which the land-use planning laws in particular have been applied. Applications for subdivisions, for example, are submitted to a Land Utilisation Authority (LUA) reporting to the Minister of Natural Resources. One officer who formerly
attended meetings of the LUA explained that applications for subdivisions on the cays often caused concern in local communities that plots would be sold to foreign developers, with negative impacts for local people such as denial of customary access to beaches. She claimed that her attempts to bring such matters up at the LUA were seen by the then chairman as causing unnecessary delay in the processing of applications (gov6). Another planning officer argued that much of the planning system is open to political and personal influence, suggesting that the decisions of the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHPA) can be swayed by an applicant’s party-political affiliations (gov5). She added that planning itself is still at a young stage in Belize, and remains seen by many people as a hindrance rather than a help.

Table 4.6 Key Acts relating to resources and planning in the coastal zone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act</th>
<th>key functions re. coastal zone</th>
<th>responsible Ministry/Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forests Act 1927</td>
<td>regulates clearance of trees &amp; mangroves</td>
<td>Natural Resources/Forest Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Parks System Act 1981</td>
<td>establishes terrestrial protected areas</td>
<td>Natural Resources/Forest Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Protection Act 1981</td>
<td>protects threatened marine mammals and crocodiles</td>
<td>Natural Resources/Forest Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries Act 1948</td>
<td>controls exploitation of fish, conch, lobster and turtles (regulates catch size, fishing gear, closed seasons); establishes Marine Reserves</td>
<td>Agriculture &amp; Fisheries/ Fisheries Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Lands Act 1992</td>
<td>stipulates how national lands (also known as crown lands) may be leased, granted or reserved</td>
<td>Natural Resources/Lands &amp; Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Utilisation Act 1981</td>
<td>controls the ‘subdivision’ (breaking up for sale) of privately-owned land; establishes Special Development Areas (rural zones in which, e.g. building is regulated in terms of height and areal extent per plot)</td>
<td>Natural Resources/Lands &amp; Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing and Town Planning Act 1947</td>
<td>controls development in urban areas; declares urban/rural planning areas as subject to Master Plans that set zoned development regulations and are administered by local committees</td>
<td>Housing, Urban Development &amp; Co-operatives/Central Housing and Planning Authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The potentially acute environmental and planning problems particularly associated with the small offshore islands of Belize have been officially recognised in the recent drafting of a joint Cayes Development Policy by different government departments (CZM Technical Committee 1995). The document sets broad policy recommendations only, in an attempt to coordinate existing policies regarding the encouragement of investment, ecotourism and conservation management. It acknowledges that foreign investment in tourism can generate controversy, noting: “such developments should not be a source of conflict between foreign investors and local residents with, in some cases, the loss of traditional land use rights and inappropriate development” (CZM Technical Committee 1995, p2).

The drafting of the Cayes Development Policy was part of a recent drive toward integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) in Belize. The drive reflects a global trend toward the establishment of ICZM structures that integrate governmental and non-governmental sectors to manage the often intense activities concentrated in coastal areas (Mumby et al 1995). Following the recommendations of an international workshop held in Belize in 1989, a Coastal Zone Management Unit (CZMU) was set up in the Fisheries Department with responsibility for co-ordinating government activities (cZMP3, McField et al 1996). Then, in 1993, US$ 3 million of GEF funding was secured to establish a Coastal Zone Management Programme (CZMP) (see Chapter 3). With an overall objective of helping preserve the biodiversity of the coastal zone of Belize, the CZMP’s brief was to assist the CZMU in managing and conserving the country’s coastal resources and in developing an ICZM programme for the country (GEF 1993, McField et al 1996).

The input of GEF money was a crucial step in launching Belize on the path toward ICZM. By the time of the fieldwork its management team had provided technical back-up for the work of the CZMU (cZMP3), funded environmental education projects throughout the country (cZMP2) and developed mechanisms for co-ordination between agencies (cZMP2, cZMP3).

The main emphasis of the CZMP, however, has been in institutional capacity-building (cZMP2), an area in which it has also courted the most controversy (gef1). At the time of the fieldwork, a bill was in progress for the establishment of a Coastal Zone Management Authority (CZMA) as a new arm of government (GOB 1996b). The Bill was finally enacted
in December 1997. However, inter-agency negotiations to establish the new body did not meet with smooth progress, as Box 4.3 indicates. An academic at the University College of Belize, who was a representative on the inter-sectoral Coastal Zone Management Technical Committee, commented that the concept of integrated management planning to break free from sectoral interests was prevented by "raw politics" (acad4).

**Box 4.3 Politics of the CZMA**

Interview responses to questions on the establishment of the Coastal Zone Management Authority provide an illustration of the institutional politics and sectoral divisions that typify Belize’s young administrative structure (acad4).

The Bill to create an Authority was spearheaded by the externally-funded CZMP. Its non-Belizean, UN-appointed head explained that the CZMP’s initial role of strengthening the CZMU was soon thought to be ill-advised. "There was little point in strengthening a unit that isn’t even a government department.... when what you’re trying to achieve is a strong co-ordinated policy decision body" (czmp2). The CZMP therefore made preparations for a new body “which would have that power” (czmp2). However, the actions of the CZMP had to be endorsed by several government ministries. It was claimed that, though government presented a united front in support of the concept of ICZM, certain sectors of government had been “acting against the project” (czmp2). Some “would rather not have to co-ordinate” because they wanted overall control to be vested in their own agencies and they would have “more opportunity for empire-building” (czmp2).

The CZMP, on the other hand, was criticized by an officer of the Fisheries Department for taking control away from the governmental CZMU, and not respecting the need to consult government ‘stakeholders’ fully on the new arrangements (fishery2). The Minister of Tourism and the Environment stated “we totally support the principle” of ICZM, but cautioned “we need to make sure that it’s gonna be [financially] sustainable” (gov3). The chief of the Forest Department also stressed the need for adequate resourcing. He referred to the work of the project as additional to rather than replacing current management arrangements, and stated “we don’t look at the coastal zone as a separate entity” (forest1).

However, politics are not fixed and standpoints are not immutable. In order for its reef tourism assets to become eligible for World Heritage Site status, the Government had to make a written commitment to enacting ICZM in the country by an international committee (fishery2, IUCN 1996). In the opinion of a CZMU official that was why the Act was likely to be approved: “Belize had to commit themselves” (fishery2).
The head of the CZMP envisioned that protected areas would form the highest tier in a general coastal management plan to be drawn up by the nascent CZMA (czmp2). The present CZMP, even though it did not have formal planning powers, was already playing an influential hand in helping plan marine reserves and coastal national parks, by virtue of its cross-cutting role and externally-financed technical resources. The development of coastal protected areas and policy initiatives related to them are the subject of the next subsection.

4.3.3 Protected Areas Policy

At the time of the field research, Belize had a total of 19 statutory protected areas lying on the coast or offshore (Programme for Belize 1996, czmp3). Table 4.7 gives details of each site.

**Table 4.7 Protected areas in the coastal zone**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>site</th>
<th>type</th>
<th>established</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deep River Forest Reserve</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird Caye Bird Sanctuary</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doubloon Bank Caye Bird Sanctuary</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Guana Caye Bird Sanctuary</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man o’War Caye Bird Sanctuary</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un-named caye Bird Sanctuary</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>un-named caye Bird Sanctuary</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Moon Cay Natural Monument</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hol Chan Marine Reserve</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laughing Bird Caye National Park</td>
<td>1991 (extended 1996)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdon Canal Nature Reserve</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glover’s Reef Marine Reserve</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payne’s Creek National Park</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarstoan-Temash National Park</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwater Caye Marine Reserve</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sapodilla Cays Marine Reserve</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Blue Hole Natural Monument</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve &amp; National Park</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: summarized from Programme for Belize (1996, pp37-41), interview (czmp3)

All but the Bird Sanctuaries and the Forest Reserve were established in the 1980s and 1990s. That recent conservation drive has been linked with the Government’s decision to
promote nature-based tourism and ecotourism (Barry 1995). The sites established (or extended) in 1996, together with Glover’s Reef and Half Moon Caye, were also the sites jointly nominated for World Heritage Site status. According to a CZMP officer it was this that provided the impetus for their timely declaration (czmp3), although it should be noted that proposals for protecting both Bacalar Chico and Southwater Caye were initiated earlier by local communities and reef users (GOB 1995, Furley et al 1996). By 1996, planning work had also commenced on two more proposed protected areas, a joint marine and terrestrial protected site at Caye Caulker and a marine reserve at Port Honduras.

For the new marine reserves, planning was the responsibility of the CZMU (within the Fisheries Department), with assistance from the CZMP (see Figure 4.7). Generic guidelines are in place for the planning procedure, although the extent to which they are all applied varies from site to site (fishery3) and according to how the projects were initiated (fishery2). In essence, protected area boundaries and a preliminary management plan are drawn up by the planning officials, with input of biological and socio-economic data gathered by officials through surveys and public consultations. A draft Statutory Instrument is then passed up for approval through the line Ministry, vetted for legal formalities by the Solicitor-General, and then passed to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries for signing and enactment (fishery2, fishery3).

The planning procedure for national parks and terrestrial reserves proceeds along the same lines, with the exception that there is no requirement for a management plan to be drafted prior to designation of the area (forest3). Planning operates through the Conservation Division of the Forest Department, again with assistance from the CZMP. Boundary details are then written into a Statutory Instrument to be signed by the Minister of Natural Resources (forest2). Figure 4.7 schematically summarizes the lines of responsibility within government agencies (and indicates planning input from non-governmental bodies) in the planning of joint marine/terrestrial protected areas such as Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker.

Officials indicated that the selection of protected area sites is governed in the first instance by biodiversity criteria (e.g. forest1, czmp3). The draft Cayes Development Policy contains four recommendations on protected areas, three of which emphasized the need to strengthen conservation of the nation’s richest mangrove, littoral forest and reef and wetland sites.
(CZM Technical Committee 1995). However, formal planning procedure operates in the context of wider policies, including the drive toward investment in tourism and the development of integrated coastal zone management. Marine reserves, for example, can be designed as multiple-use (see 2.2.4): they can legally accommodate some degree of economic access to resources by the local population. The CZMP has drawn up a zoning scheme to guide planning that includes areas for controlled commercial fishing and recreational use, as well as more strict conservation zones (CZMP 1996a). The scheme is described in Appendix V.

Figure 4.7 Inter-agency planning responsibilities and advisory input

A solid arrow denotes a decision-making command line
A dashed line indicates an advisory input into planning
(NB individuals can be members of more than one agency)
As well as taking socio-economic factors into account, officers of both the Fisheries Department and Forest Department expressed a desire to foster community participation in planning and management, though neither agency has a legal requirement to do so (fishery3, forest2). The draft Cayes Development Policy’s fourth recommendation on protected areas reads:

“The proposal for cayes, or parts of cayes, for designation for protected area status must be undertaken with the provision that there is the potential for effective management and that the designation process includes maximised public and private sector participation: in order for the protected areas programme to remain both popular and effective great attention must be paid to systems of designation and management that are based upon consensus, accountability and the comprehensive involvement of the different Government departments and the general public” (italics added) (CZM Technical Committee 1995, p7).

Box 4.4 contains an extract from an interview with a planning official from the Fisheries Department describing the planning process in relation to local communities. The topic of community participation, in Belize in general and specifically within protected area planning and management, forms the basis of the next section.

**Box 4.4 Interview extract on the planning procedure for marine reserves**

In the following extract from an interview with an officer of the CZMU, several (italicized) phrases are of note in relation to the analytical themes of participation, power relations and containment to be pursued in subsequent chapters.

“Well, you know, reserves are created in different ways. Some of them [are] because Government, conservationists perceive the need to protect a certain area. In cases like those the next step after identifying the need is to get support from whatever community there is close by…. From there on, or maybe simultaneously, as it has happened, we get the background, just the baseline data of the physical, the resource itself. From then on it should be plain sailing. I mean from the time it’s identified you sort of get a sort of indication from your Minister whether it will be supported [by he/she] or not. So by the time you reach that level you already know that yes it’ll be supported by your Minister and its just a matter of preparing the paperwork…. And then you have other cases where the people themselves…. tour guides, the villagers, who need that area for their livelihood, have seen the need, they have approached government authorities and said, you know what, we want this area protected. In that situation it’s the Government who have to say well, okay, we can protect that area. And then the whole process is a little bit quicker because then at least you have the support of the locals, right, so you go a little bit quicker” (fishery2).
4.4 Community Participation in Belize

In October 1996 representatives of some 90 Belizean NGOs and local groups came together in Belize City for the First Summit of Civil Society Organisations. A joint Declaration by the delegates stated “a primary concern is that Civil Society is excluded from participating in decisions that affect people’s lives” and advocated a range of actions to try to reverse the exclusion (Catzim 1997, p31). The report of the Summit included the following reference to one of the presentations:

“He stressed that we need to move away from the attitudes and practices of learned helplessness which have continuously created a sense of alienation within the process of national development.... He further explained that as Belizeans we ‘do the most to do the least’ and allow our own fears to keep us captive.” (Catzim 1997, p16)

The issues of citizenship, empowerment and grassroots organization form the topic of this last section of the chapter. It commences by analysing community participation in Belize in a broad sense, in terms of local political organization and community development activities (4.4.1). It then successively narrows in focus, turning to community involvement in environmental and conservation-related projects (4.4.2) and then specifically to participation in the planning and management of statutory protected areas (4.4.3).

4.4.1 Participation in Politics and Community Development

Different authors have argued that the very concept of community participation and organization has been slow to get off the ground in Belize in comparison with other countries in the Caribbean and Central America (Palacio 1987, Barry 1995). Reasons cited for this include the country's relatively low level of social polarization and the lack of a land tenure crisis (Barry 1995), as well as its late date of independence, the post-independence priorities of the state and widespread political factionalization (Palacio 1987, Shoman 1994, Barry 1995).

An interview with the director of SPEAR, the NGO that organised the Civil Society Summit, cast further light on some of these points. History provided part of the reason, he
claimed \textit{(ngo4)}. On the one hand no social crisis deep and wide enough to bring about revolution had occurred in Belize, while on the other hand former land alienation and increasing urbanization during colonial times prevented the Creole majority from developing a sense of geographical permanance and commitment to the idea of community. Later, from the 1960s, the concept of nation-building and nationalist pre-occupation with Guatemala’s territorial claim to Belize may have diverted citizens’ capacity to organize and protest against social and economic injustices \textit{(ngo4, Shoman 1994)}. Whatever its causes, there appears today to be a limited culture of organization at the grassroots level in Belize, reflected in poor awareness of the potential for social change and low motivation to initiate and participate in community development activities \textit{(ngo4)}.

The political climate and structure of modern-day Belize has continued to stifle empowerment at the grassroots, according to several commentators. Despite structural adjustment measures that have reduced government spending and caused the retrenchment of hundreds of civil service jobs, decision-making power remains highly centralized \textit{(ngo4)}. In the words of Shoman (1994, p260): “whereas during the self-government period the government had responsibility with limited power, it now seems to want power without responsibility”. At the time of the research, proposed legislation to strengthen the role of the Village Councils in Belize had allegedly been stalled at the Cabinet level because of ministerial opposition \textit{(ngo4)} and these rural bodies continued to possess few powers \textit{(Palacio 1987, NCFC/UNICEF 1995, ngo3)}. The result according to SPEAR is that “apart from voting in elections, only a handful of people make most decisions that affect most people’s lives” \textit{(SPEAR 1996, p5)}.

Even in terms of their limited powers, the actions of Village Councils are said to be impeded by the factionalism associated with entrenched two-party politics (see 4.1), which are replicated at the village level. Personal party loyalties tend to cross-cut class and race, and are linked more to social ties and political favours \textit{(Barry 1995)}. Strict party affiliations create strong divisions within communities, and under conditions of patronage, the political composition of Councils helps determine the distribution of government resources among communities \textit{(Barry 1995, ngo3)}. The result is that “the system encourages political lobbying to achieve development interventions rather than genuine community participation” \textit{(NCFC/UNICEF 1995, p106)}. According to a development NGO worker,
communities served by central government and local councils have no vehicle for challenging such politically-based decisions (ngo3).

Accustomed to having little or no voice in governance, the broad mass of people in Belize have tended to be the passive recipients of decisions affecting local development rather than active participants in defining problems, solutions and priorities. Moreover, at the time of Independence, the focus of central government was turned away from social and community development toward major physical infrastructure projects (Palacio 1987, NCFC/UNICEF 1995), and the inertia to target local scale development continued into the 1990s (Palacio 1994). An interview with an official from the Ministry of Economic Development revealed that a round of consultations on community priorities were conducted nationwide in 1994, but the findings were difficult for the Ministry to incorporate into planning because the micro-scale desires of the communities did not match the macro-scale focus of the Government (gov6). Palacio (1987) argued that government initiatives come with their own centralized frame of reference, through which project success is likely to be measured in terms of bureaucrats' performance rather than tangible benefits for the target community.

Prior to Independence, the Government did promote the formation of rural self-help groups, credit unions and agricultural and fishing co-operatives. Most of these examples of collective action, however, eventually foundered through inadequate participation, poor management and insufficient assistance (NCFC/UNICEF 1995, Barry 1995), with a few notable exceptions including the Northern Fishermen's Cooperative (see 6.1.2). After 1981, however, further impetus toward participatory community development came with the injection of funding from foreign governments and INGOs. These international agencies had considerable leverage in designing their funding programmes (Palacio 1987), and there was a rapid surge in new community groups and national NGOs formed to take advantage of the funds (Barry 1995) in fields such as social welfare, women's issues, community development and conservation (NCFC/UNICEF 1995). Shoman (1994) is strongly positive about the growth and success of these groups, especially the network of women's organizations. But Barry (1995, p96) argues that the organisations have “thus far failed to realize their full potential for instilling community spirit and building collective popular action outside the arena of party politics”. There are allegations that some community-based organisations have become successful at absorbing money for micro-economic projects.
without producing effective results (ngo4). One commentator concluded "by any measure of success the impact of the NGO’s at the microlevel has been limited" (Palacio 1994, p130).

The next subsection examines community involvement specifically within the environmental sector, both in terms of participation in government-led action and in terms of projects initiated by NGOs and grassroots bodies.

4.4.2 Community Involvement in Environmental Issues and Conservation

The involvement of communities in government-linked decisions and initiatives on the environment appears, for the most part, to have been minor. According to one NGO officer, government rhetoric about community participation with regard to the environment has not been translated into practical measures, partly because of insufficient finance and partly because of bureaucratic inflexibility (ngo3).

In interviews, officials tended to reveal positive perceptions about the general public’s awareness of environmental issues and support for conservation, but mixed perceptions on their capacity and opportunity to participate in environment-related initiatives. The head of the CZMP argued that most people in Belize now understood the importance of protecting natural resources (czmp2), and an official at the Department of the Environment claimed that Belizeans in general were supportive of the idea of reserves in their local areas (gov4). Though the Minister of Tourism and the Environment recognized that fishermen might be nervous about fishing restrictions at new marine reserves, he believed that in time they would accept the need for sustainable management of stocks (gov3). One of the key impediments to such understanding was motivational:

"[There are] certain people who don’t feel that there’s a need for them to get involved in the discussion. So a fisherman says, look, I just want to go and fish and go home. And we have to get a formula to get them involved" (gov3).

But, as Section 2.3 suggests, fostering genuine opportunities for involvement is an often elusive goal for government bodies. An officer of the CZMP, for example, explained that public consultations over coastal management planning had been piecemeal, partly because...
of staff shortages, and that "we don’t really have a sort of planned strategy of community participation" (czmp3).

Inland, the participatory gap has been particularly prominent with respect to Forest Reserves. The reserves have historically been demarcated and logging concessions granted with little reference to the use of forest resources by neighbouring communities. In the 1990s, consultation procedures and programmes have been introduced for the first time as part of a Forest Planning and Management Project (FPMP) funded by the UK Government and designed to improve management of the areas (gov6, gov8). One official who worked on the FPMP consultations claimed that the government did not look favourably on many of the findings, especially the idea of communities gaining extractive use of the reserves as well as logging companies (gov6). Another FPMP official suggested the Forest Department was concerned that it could meet the logistical requirements of fostering local participation, was unaccustomed to giving an active role to local people, and was reluctant to devolve decision-making power to communities (gov8). The Chief Forest Officer was indeed dismissive of the need for consultation, stressing that Belize’s democratic process already gives people a say - people can participate in decision-making through electing their constituency representative (forestl).

In the southern district of Toledo, however, Mayan communities occupying the fringes of forest reserves have actively protested against the forestry policies. This has been one of the few examples of organized grassroots resistance against the Belizean state. Condemned as foreign-funded radicals by the Minister for Tourism and the Environment (gov3), activists have formed an indigenous organization, the Toledo Maya Cultural Council, to protest against logging and press their claim for access to land (Steinberg 1998).

The next subsection discusses participation in the context of statutory protected area projects oriented to conservation. But before going on to this topic, it is also useful to review local involvement in non-state environmental initiatives: in projects initiated by national NGOs and, in some cases, by the communities themselves. As one author notes "out of the incipient environmental movement in Belize, community projects have emerged to protect local habitats as a base for economic development, mainly through ecotourism" (Barry 1995, p96). A number of these initiatives have succeeded in gaining some of their
funds through the GEF's Small Grants Programme (SGP) (see Box 4.5). Once again, however, the record of private-sector and community-based projects has been mixed.

Box 4.5 The GEF Small Grants Programme in Belize

From 1993, GEF funding became available in Belize for national NGOs and community groups to carry out environmental projects. Over the three-year pilot phase 15 projects were approved and received a total of US$300,000 in grants. Several involved local conservation management and ecotourism initiatives, including projects at the Community Baboon Sanctuary, Rio Bravo, Laguna, Five Blues Lake, Gales Point, and Caye Caulker (UNDP 1996). In 1996, nine new proposals had been submitted for approval, including applications from the Toledo Ecotourism Association, Monkey River, and again, Caye Caulker (see Chapter 6) (gef3).

When interviewed, the Programme co-ordinator identified a need to strengthen the programme, and especially to improve the impact on local livelihoods. He explained that applications from groups had to meet certain programme requirements guidelines on project type and administration, including community participation in project design. In the pilot phase this had not been fully addressed, and several of the projects “were developed purely by an NGO and delivered to the grassroots community” (gef3).

One key impediment to the process, he claimed, had been “the capacity and competence of community groups to really design and document projects that would fit into our portfolio” (gef3). Previous participants had already stressed the need for more training and support (UNDP 1995). One training workshop had since taken place and the co-ordinator said that those present had complained of their more typical experience with funding agencies: “many times funding agencies are up here [he gestured high] and say, yes, we have money, but they don’t give you any help or assistance or guidance in terms of accessing that fund” (gef3). He argued that many rural people were used to not being involved in development projects and aid programmes. “For me it’s gonna be a challenge to really get those type of people involved” (gef3).

One national development NGO, the Belize Enterprise for Sustainable Technology (BEST), has been especially active in the indigenous forest villages of Toledo, fostering ecotourism ventures such as village guest houses, local reserves and nature trails, and the training of guides. The NGO’s policy is to respond to requests for help from local groups rather than initiating projects directly (ngo3). Though some of the ecotourism projects it had assisted had proved economically successful, others have found it difficult to attract sufficient visitors and the projects have foundered (BEST 1996). One local group, at Laguna village,
reported receiving just seven visitors from 1994 to 1996 (comm2). Part of the problem has been competition with other village ecotourism groups, including the more firmly-established Toledo Ecotourism Association, which operates in 14 villages (TEA undated). Though these organisations are founded, at least, on principles of communal profit-sharing, there have also been problems of competition between people within villages for tourism revenue (Beavers 1995).

In the north of the country, the national NGO Programme for Belize has carried out community outreach work in villages surrounding its private protected area, the Rio Bravo Conservation and Management Area. Its plan has been to foster sustainable economic development use of natural resources such as beekeeping, chicle harvesting (for chewing gum) and the making of handicrafts, as well as organising ecotourism (ngo2, Programme for Belize undated). An officer of the NGO stressed that most people employed in its entire Rio Bravo project are from the local areas, but admitted that at the time of the field research it had no formal system for community participation and that there had been little consultation of local people in planning and management (ngo2).

Perhaps most indicative of the difficulty of identifying firmly positive examples of community participation in conservation in Belize has been the case of the Community Baboon Sanctuary in central Belize. Though it has been often promoted as a model of community-based conservation (gef3), close inspection revealed that this private initiative was beset by serious organisational problems. The Sanctuary had been formed as a result of a series of landowners voluntarily pledging to preserve contiguous parcels of forest along a 30km stretch of the Belize River as habitat for howler monkeys *Alouatta pigra* or 'baboons' as they are known in Belize (Horwich et al 1993, Beavers 1995). Initiated in 1985 through the encouragement of an external academic, the project had since received financial support from WWF and the SGP.

In terms of species protection, the Community Baboon Sanctuary appeared to have been a success, with monkey numbers having more than doubled in the reserve (Beavers 1995, comm4). Horwich et al (1993) stress positive aspects of the project including the generation of local support for and benefits from conservation. However, ecotourism benefits from the initiative have been small-scale and poorly distributed (Hartup 1994). There have been
complaints that the local tourist facilities have been poorly promoted (and eclipsed by a more luxurious private lodge built by outsiders), and that the economic benefits have accrued mostly to individuals based in one, the most central, of the eight participating villages (Beavers 1995). Disputes had also arisen over the authority and working practices of the appointed sanctuary manager (Beavers 1995, comm4) and the lack of a local committee to oversee management (Horwich et al 1993). The coordinator of the SGP in Belize was particularly scathing:

"And so it wasn’t as if the project itself was really - really had community commitment and participation. The whole structure of this one is one of manipulation and infighting among key individuals, because everybody sees it as a means of grabbing for themselves." (gef3).

He claimed that some of the SGP grant money had not been accounted for, and added “they wouldn’t get money from us again” (gef3).

4.4.3 Participation and Statutory Protected Areas

Public involvement in the planning and management of statutory protected areas oriented toward biodiversity conservation is the focus of this subsection. Until the mid-1980s there appears to have been practically no consultation or involvement of local people in the establishment of protected areas. Protected area sites were identified by conservation professionals and, as in many developing countries at the time (see 2.2), their regulations were imposed with no voice in the proceedings granted to any communities existing in the neighbourhood. A senior officer of Belize Audubon Society regarded the lack of consultation as a continuing impediment to management in those areas:

“You know, one day these people were used to using the resources in that area, the next day they were told no hunting, no fishing, you know. And that’s what we have had to grapple with” (ngo1).

He noted that one of the most conflictual cases had been the establishment of Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary in 1984, which left residents of Crooked Tree village surrounded by a wetland protected area. Villagers not only had to cross the area in order to travel outside the village but also directly used the lagoons for wildfowl hunting and fishing (ngo1), both of which were legally forbidden by the imposition of sanctuary status (BAS undated).
However, in managing the site, BAS decided that it was not feasible to prevent fishing by local people, and, in effect, have only controlled fishing by outsiders (ngo1).

Since the latter half of the 1980s, the notion of including local people in some manner within planning and management decisions has filtered into the various agencies involved in conservation in Belize. Its timing has meshed with the rise of people-oriented approaches to conservation across the world (see 2.1.4). External influences promoting participation are evident in the tenets of coastal zone management expressed in the coastal zone report (McField et al 1996) and in the funding principles of external bodies such as the GEF (czmp2). But practitioners in Belize also link the idea of greater community participation with national experience. A Forest Department officer claimed “there is now a trend for that because of past mistakes; and we all agree that we have done mistakes, so that, so we want to repair them from now on” (forest2).

The interview with this official responsible for protected areas, however, revealed that departmental policy on participation in planning was still in the early stages of evolution. As well as cautioning against the extra expense of consultation exercises, he was concerned about how to go about consulting:

“But also the question is what is participation, who are involved in that process? I mean who shall we count on as part of it? Is it the whole community? Is it the alcalde [the council], their members there? Is it like Siwa-ban [ie a local NGO] or some group” (forest2).

As well as considering public participation in planning, the Forest Department had already started experimenting with on-site management by local communities. Under the concept of co-management (see 2.3.3), the Department would maintain a strategic oversight for the area but save on their own limited resources by delegating responsibility to a community group for activities such as the collection of park entrance fees, patrolling and perhaps the preparation of a management plan (forest2). It was underlined that the communities themselves would be expected to drive the process and display commitment to this form of participation. “We cannot push them for things which they cannot do - it has to be coming from them basically” (forest2). However, he recognised that many communities were insufficiently empowered to initiate such projects without outside assistance. He also expressed concern that local groups do not always operate in conditions of social harmony.
In communities there is always turf, there is always competition for things, there is always infightings and politics (forest2), one drastic case of which is described in Box 4.6.

Box 4.6 Five Blues Lake: crisis in co-management

The Forest Department’s first co-management agreement with a community association commenced at Five Blues Lake National Park, an inland protected area established in 1994. At the time of the field research, serious problems had already surfaced in the management operations (ngo1). The protected site was actually declared as a result of local interest in the early 1990s, and the local group Friends of Five Blues was initially successful in day-to-day management, fund-raising and attracting tourists (comm3). However, community relations began to break down and local management began to founder, reportedly because participants had been inadequately prepared for the responsibility (ngo1) and lacked sufficient support mechanisms of official input (acad4). A US Peace Corps volunteer who acted as the manager, backed by a board of seven local residents, described how resentment by some local people led to vandalism, theft and arson attacks on park facilities and ultimately to a violent robbery that forced him to quit the post (comm3). He blamed the incidents on sections of the rapidly-increasing refugee population in the area who wanted the land in the protected area to be made available for farming.

BAS, in its management role for a series of protected areas (see 4.2.2), also expressed a desire to foster community participation, but its officer admitted that involvement had so far been “at a very low level” (ngo1). However, it had the option itself of entering joint management relations with community bodies, and was in the process of trying to set up such an arrangement for Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary. The initiative was to start with a conflict resolution workshop with 30 village representatives, since BAS had already encountered conflicts linked to local politics as well as to suspicion of the NGO itself and its motives for intervention (ngo1).

Within the coastal zone of Belize, community involvement in protected areas was a little more evident than at inland sites. This was partly because planning for several coastal sites had been triggered by appeals from local residents (GOB 1995, Furley et al 1996). The widely-known success of Hol Chan Marine Reserve as a tourist attraction (see below) had
served to raise awareness among coastal communities of the potential economic benefits of protected areas in their localities (czmp3). It was also due in part to the Fisheries Department’s more firmly established procedures for public consultation during planning. The CZMU’s protected areas coordinator explained that, though participation was not enshrined in law, “we feel that for something to be successful we need to incorporate the social aspects of communities” (fishery3). Involvement mechanisms typically included socio-economic surveys and public consultation meetings on emerging plans. The CZMU officer said that he would consider 70 percent support at a meeting as a public mandate to go ahead with a planning proposal (fishery3).

The issues that most frequently arose in the planning of coastal protected areas concerned access to marine areas for fishermen and diving and snorkelling operators (GOB 1995). These were issues on which the planners indicated some preparedness to compromise (fishery2), although they expressed wariness of a tendency for more “vociferous” interest groups opposed to reserves to dominate and “really mess up” meetings (czmp3). Community-wide opposition to a proposed protected area had yet to be expressed, but officials suggested that if such a situation were to occur for a site regarded by the planners as a conservation priority, the ‘national interest’ (in the government’s perspective) would probably override the local (czmp3, fishery3).

As well as holding local consultation meetings, the planning agencies also had a policy of establishing a system of advisory committees for areas in the coastal zone (czmp3, GOB 1995). Such committees consisted of agency, NGO and local community representatives. Their role was to provide assistance, advice and recommendations on the planning and management of each site for the planning authorities and government ministers (fishery2, fishery3). The head of the Fisheries Department or one of his colleagues was the automatic chair of the committee meetings (fishery2). Because of their local representation, the advisory committees were regarded as a key part of the participatory process (Vousden 1995) and the planners held the system in high regard (czmp3). The official report on the coastal zone makes the grandiose claim “they ensure that all those with an interest in an area are represented in any decisions, and that there is adequate community participation at all stages” (Mcfield et al 1996, p203). However, as discussed in Chapter 7, such claims are by no means watertight.
A brief outline of participation exercises undertaken for four existing coastal protected areas provides some initial illustration of the processes at work. The designation of Laughing Bird Caye National Park in 1991 and its extension in 1996 reportedly took place in response to lobbying from neighbouring communities on the mainland and from BAS (acad3, Zisman 1996). Little management and formal participation activity had taken place for the site at the time of the research (czmp3), but a locally-based NGO, Friends of Laughing Bird Caye, had just been formed and was to be granted the central role in redrafting and implementing a management plan (czmp3, GOB 1995, Zisman 1996).

Prior to the declaration of Glover’s Reef Marine Reserve in 1993, the CZMU conducted a survey of the related tourism industry and held informal discussions with ‘user groups’ such as local landowners, commercial fishermen and tour operators (czmp3). No formal public meetings were held and no advisory committee was initially prioritised because on the isolated atoll “there wasn’t really a community as such” (czmp3). However, plans to establish a Committee were under way (McField et al 1996, czmp3). A similar story prevailed in the planning for Southwater Caye Marine Reserve, involving questionnaires and informal discussions with fishermen from mainland settlements, tourism operators and landowners prior to designation in 1996 (czmp3). In this case an advisory committee had been appointed, but had yet to be convened (GOB 1995, czmp3). For both these marine reserves, management activities in general had yet to become fully operational (GOB 1995, czmp3).

The situation was slightly different for the country’s first marine protected area, Hol Chan Marine Reserve. The site was gazetted in 1987, following lobbying by residents of nearby San Pedro and the recommendations of external conservation biologists (Carter et al 1994, Zisman 1996). Prior preparation of a management plan involved a questionnaire survey and formal public meetings in San Pedro (GOB 1995, McField et al 1996), and an advisory committee was established and convened (McField et al 1996, czmp3). At the public meetings, proposed boundaries, zones and regulations were presented for discussion, and there was reportedly considerable dispute between commercial fishermen and planners (acad3), which appeared to be viewed by planners as unconstructive, as “belly-aching” (Carr 1996) and resistance that “we had to crack” (czmp3). One compromise that was made was a northward shift in the section of reef that was to be protected, to permit continued
fishing at a specific lobster-rich site (Carter et al 1994). One planner implied, however, that the change was less of a compromise in terms of biodiversity protection than might be thought:

"We compromised, but it didn't really matter that much. We wanted to have an [representative] area of reef, and we ended up with the same length of reef" (czmp3).

Issues connected with the experience of Hol Chan are incorporated into the detailed studies of community involvement in protected area planning for Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker, in the chapters that follow. From the foregoing, however, it is apparent that official statements proclaiming a record of 'close' involvement of communities in planning (Vousden 1995) and effective channels of participation (gefl) are at least open to question.

4.5 Summary

Belize is a sparsely-populated, developing country, with a heavy economic reliance on primary products and, increasingly, on tourism. Since independence from British rule the country has experienced a stable democracy, characterized by entrenched bipartisan political divisions. External governmental and non-governmental intervention is common both in development projects and in conservation initiatives, as is private foreign investment in tourism facilities.

Though environmental degradation across Belize has been relatively slight, issues such as deforestation and marine pollution are raising increasing concern. During the 1980s and 1990s a number of conservation-oriented protected areas have been added to an older system of reserves, partly to protect forest sites and coral reef areas that can support nature tourism. However, the statutory protected area system is affected by financial and administrative constraints, and some uncertainties over political prioritization of conservation.

Environmental resource issues associated with coastal development, fishing and offshore tourism have prompted a recent drive toward integrated coastal zone management, a component of which is the establishment of new protected areas. The input of GEF funding,
though itself associated with political controversy, has augmented the protected area planning capacity of state agencies in the Forest Department and the Fisheries Department. Nine new sites have been designated in the coastal zone since 1990, including marine reserves zoned for multiple-use.

Conservation policy in Belize aims to foster community participation in planning and management of protected areas. But a culture of inclusion is not yet widespread in the country. Structures of governmental authority and grassroots passivity have long constrained local involvement in decision-making on developmental and environmental projects. In cases where community-based environmental projects have arisen, internal social tensions linked to divisions of interest have often hampered progress.

State agencies responsible for protected areas now incorporate participatory procedures into planning and management, especially in the planning of new coastal sites. The next two chapters examine the effectiveness of those procedures and the social relations of planning in general for two protected area sites: Bacalar Chico (Chapter 5) and Caye Caulker (Chapter 6).
CHAPTER FIVE

PLANNING THE BACALAR CHICO

PROTECTED AREA

The protected area projects selected for intensive study in Belize were the Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve and National Park and a proposed marine and terrestrial protected area at Caye Caulker. Both were state-sponsored initiatives, the first protected area projects in Belize conducted jointly by the Fisheries Department and the Forest Department (see 4.3.3) (McField et al 1996). The next two chapters provide details of each project in turn. In both chapters fieldwork material is drawn upon at length to provide a form of ‘thick description’ (see 3.1) of the processes of protected area planning. This will serve both to inform and to empirically substantiate the more analytical Chapters 7, 8 and 9 that follow. Throughout Chapters 5 and 6 issues are brought up that will be revisited in those later chapters.

This chapter first provides a contextual introduction to the Bacalar Chico project (5.1), before presenting a narrative of the planning process for the site (5.2) and describing the plans as they stood at the close of fieldwork (5.3). The fourth section then examines stakeholders’ perspectives on the project and on community involvement in planning (5.4).

5.1 Introduction

The fieldwork in Belize commenced four months after the formal designation of Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve and National Park in June 1996. The protected area is located in the northern extreme of the coastal zone, adjacent to the international border with Mexico (see Figure 5.1). The terrestrial National Park component occupies the northernmost section of Ambergris Caye, the largest of Belize’s cays, and the Marine Reserve occupies marine areas to the east and west of the cay, including a section of Belize Barrier Reef (Gibson et al 1996).
Figure 5.1 North-east Belize

- Corozal
- Sarteneja
- Xcalak
- BACALAR CHICO protected area
- San Pedro
- Caye Caulker
- CAYE CAULKER proposed protected area
- Belize City
- Mexico

The map shows the location of various places and protected areas in the north-east region of Belize and Mexico.
The protected area was planned by government agencies (from the Fisheries Department and the Forest Department), with the support of CZMP (see 4.3.2) and three international NGOs. Planning officials gained information on the usage of the site by local stakeholders from questionnaire surveys and informal interviews. Formal consultations on the reserve plans were carried out at four public meetings. An Advisory Committee was also set up to guide planning, its membership including representatives from local organisations.

The various planning documents for the project (Dotherow 1995, Dotherow et al 1995, Gibson et al 1996, Gill et al 1996) argue that conservation measures are required to preserve wildlife and natural landscapes in the area and to maintain viable fish stocks, and their result will be enhancement of the local tourism industry. The protected area is one of the seven locations that make up the Belize Barrier Reef World Heritage Site. In future, it may also become the Belizean component of a transboundary reserve straddling the border with Mexico (ITCF 1996, Harborne et al undated). Further details are provided on ecological and economic aspects of the site in Subsection 5.1.1 and on the neighbouring settlements in Subsection 5.1.2.

5.1.1 Site Characteristics

The Bacalar Chico protected area straddles the north of Ambergris Caye, stretching west across part of Chetumal Bay and east across the crest of the Belize Barrier Reef into deep water of the Caribbean. Ambergris Caye lies approximately 20km from the Belizean mainland and forms a southerly extension of the Yucatan Peninsula, from which it is separated by the narrow Bacalar Chico channel. The channel marks the international frontier with Mexico.

The draft management plan for the protected area describes the physical characteristics of the site (Dotherow et al 1995). Geologically, the cay is part of the Yucatan Platform, with a bedrock of Pleistocene limestone and a level surface of low elevation. The highest point on the cay stands at four metres above sea level, and large sections are tidally-inundated. Littoral forest formations dominated by semi-deciduous trees, shrubs and palms exist on the higher portions, with savannah, saltmarsh and mangrove swamps occupying lower

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elevations (see Figures 5.2 and 5.3). Brackish inland lagoons cover extensive areas and form networks connecting with the sea on either side of the cay.

To the east, the barrier reef stands up to 1km offshore and runs the full length of the island, separated from the coast by a lagoon containing a mixture of patch reefs, sea grass beds and bare sand. The lagoon narrows either side of Rocky Point, a headland within the protected area, which is the only site in Belize where the barrier reef touches the shore. The western shore of Ambergris Caye is marked with numerous inlets and embayments, leading out into the shallows of Chetumal Bay, where the water seldom exceeds two metres in depth. Here the bottom is a mixture of bare limestone rock, sandy mud and sea grass beds.

Though northern Ambergris Caye contains several Mayan archaeological sites, no permanent settlements exist today within the national park area and in modern times the area has witnessed little clearance of the natural vegetation. Temporary fishermen’s camps and the beachtraps erected by fishermen are the few structures visible during the boat trip up to the reserve headquarters (access to the area is solely by boat). The National Park has been established on the former Pinkerton Estate, an extensive private holding that was acquired by the government in 1990. A strip of land along the eastern coast remains in private ownership, and consists of a string of large plots, many of them now subdivided into smallholdings. Real estate companies market the plots to national and international clients as sites for future residences or for potential tourism development. Those properties that lie within the outer boundaries of the protected area are not included in the Statutory Instrument that defines the extent of the National park (GOB 1996d). At the time of the research little vegetation clearance had taken place on these properties and a house had been erected on only one plot. The seabed is all National Land owned by the Government of Belize (Dotherow et al 1995).

The natural resources of Bacalar Chico are utilized for economic gain almost solely by commercial fishermen and by tour guides, some of whom work part-time in both occupations. Evidence from the research and from official user surveys indicate that use of the area for hunting game is negligible (Gibson et al 1996).
Figure 5.2 Ecological zones of Bacalar Chico

Information sources: Gill et al (1996), Ordnance Survey (undated)
Figure 5.3 Mangroves at Bacalar Chico

Source: CZMP

Figure 5.4 Public meeting, San Pedro, 1995

Source: CZMP
Commercial fishing in the area consists mainly of the setting of beach traps for finfish and crustaceans, the use of nets and lines for finfish, and free-diving for lobster and conch (Gibson et al 1996, notes3, notes4, notes5). Beachtraps are erected perpendicular to the beach and function by diverting fish moving along the shoreline into an enclosure (notes3). The traps are erected for several months per year (April-November), and consist of a fence of chicken-wire running straight from the shore and culminating in a looped trap. In some cases the barrier is extended up to 200m out to sea with the use of gill-nets. Fish of catchable size migrating along the coast follow the line of the fence and become trapped in the looped section. Owners of the traps tend to use the same locations year after year, and a code of behaviour between beachtrap fishermen appears to ensure adequate spacing is maintained between neighbouring traps. Each owner may keep several traps and has a team working with him. Four beachtrap teams from the mainland were operating in the Bacalar Chico area during the research, one based in Sarteneja Village, three based in Corozal Town (notes 3, notes4, notes5).

Outside the fish migration season, beachtrap teams join the other crews fishing from boats with lines and nets and by diving. Few crews have their main fishing grounds within the Bacalar Chico area: the waters are principally utilized on an irregular or less than monthly basis. During the four month official survey noted above, 17 commercial fishing boats visited the waters, most of them only once or twice during the period (Gibson et al 1996). The crews are based either in Sarteneja, Corozal or San Pedro Town at the southern end of Ambergris Caye. Official sources and interviewees claimed that the area is also used illegally by Mexican fishermen from the nearby settlement of Xcalak, some of whom are believed to use spearguns for catching reef fish (Dotherow et al 1995).

Tour guides taking paying groups of tourists into the Bacalar Chico area are at present based almost exclusively in San Pedro, although guides based in Sarteneja and Corozal have occasionally been asked to provide such a service. According to the official survey, 28 tour guides entered the reserve waters from July to October 1995 (Gibson et al 1996). Three types of tour activity take place and are often combined: sport fishing, snorkelling and scuba diving. The western waters of Bacalar Chico and particularly the drop-off zone at Rocky Point are one of the principal local sites used by sport fishing guides. Fishing is by rod and line, and to some extent the activity is one of catch-and-release. Fishing guides
interviewed expressed that they visited the reserve on a weekly basis during the tourist high season (bctour2, bctour5, bctour6). Snorkel and dive guides were rather less frequent visitors, citing the proximity of alternative rich coral reef sites such as the Hol Chan Marine Reserve. Those that did undertake regular visits travelled exclusively to the patch reefs and barrier reef of the western waters. Planning officials suggested that designation of the protected area would generate extra tourism, from San Pedro and especially from Corozal and Sarteneja (fishery3, fishery5). They envisaged reef tours, fishing tours and walking tours of the National Park.

The sizes of the fishing sectors in Belize’s northern coastal towns and the tourism sector in San Pedro (see 5.1.2) indicate that the resources of Bacalar Chico make only a minor contribution to the local economies. However, some individual fishermen and tour guides make regular use of the site’s resources and therefore hold significant stakes in the outcome of the protected area project. Concerns expressed by them and other stakeholders suggest that the following official claim is open to question: “no one individual used the area enough to be adversely affected by any changes that may result from the establishment of the reserve” (Gomez 1996, p16).

5.1.2 Neighbouring Settlements

Corozal and Sarteneja lie on the mainland coast, within the District of Corozal (see Figure 5.1). Both have small harbour fronts on the Bay of Chetumal, a large marine inlet that extends into Mexican territory. Corozal Town is the largest settlement in the district, with an expanding population recorded as 4724 in the 1980 census and estimated at 7795 in 1995 (CSO 1996). The town stands on the Northern Highway route to Mexico and has a mixed economy that includes industrial, service and fishing sectors. In the 1991 census 64% of the population was recorded as Mestizo, 18% as Creole and 10% as East Indian, with the remaining 8% dispersed between several ethnic groups (CSO 1996). The town is located approximately 60km by sea from Bacalar Chico.

Sarteneja Village is by contrast one of the most remote settlements in northern Belize and almost entirely dependent on fishing. Its road connection with the Northern Highway was
only completed recently, and prior to that access to the settlement was principally by boat (notes3). The majority of the population is Mestizo, and the village is growing slowly, up from 1005 in 1980 to 1365 in the census of 1991 (CSO 1996). According to one interviewee (bcgen2) the village has several hundred fishermen, and they are renowned through Belize for their fishing practices. Sartenejan fishing crews typically use sailboats and fish all the way along the barrier reef, sometimes staying at sea for 10 days at a time and taking their catch to the Northern Fishermen’s Cooperative in Belize City. Lobster and conch are the main catches, and much of the fishing is carried out by free-diving. The village is about 40km by sea from Bacalar Chico.

In Corozal and, still more so in Sarteneja, the tourism sector is poorly developed at present. Corozal has several agencies and hotels, but Sarteneja has just one hotel, which is opened up only when visitors arrive (notes4, notes5). In both settlements interviewees expressed a desire for tourism development and an expectation that the designation of a protected area at Bacalar Chico would create a significant attraction for tourists.

San Pedro, on the other hand, is the primary tourist destination in all Belize. Located on the southern end of Ambergris Caye, about 25km from Bacalar Chico, the town has grown since the 1960s from a small fishing village to an internationally renowned resort (Carter et al 1994, Barry 1995). The town has one quarter of all the hotel rooms in Belize, most of them small or medium-size, with fewer than 40 rooms each (Furley et al 1996). Self-contained tourism developments, many of them foreign-owned, also exist outside the built-up area (Ishmael 1994). The diving and snorkelling attractions of the reef are the mainstay of tourism in the area, the Hol Chan Marine Reserve at the tip of the cay drawing nearly 38,000 visitors in 1994 (Furley et al 1996). The fishing sector still operates, but much of the catch now serves the local restaurants and active membership of the local Caribena Fishing Cooperative is declining (bcfish9). The second largest settlement in Belize District, San Pedro has grown in resident population from 1125 in 1980 to an estimated 3250 in 1995 (CSO 1996). In 1991, 74% of the population was classed as Mestizo. Creoles (12%), Garifuna (6%) and other ethnic groups (8%) made up the remainder (CSO 1996).

The rapid development of San Pedro town is argued by some to have taken place without adequate planning controls (Barry 1995, fishery5). Land speculation and the pressure for
large-scale development proposals elsewhere in the cay have also raised concerns. In an effort to regulate further development of the town and the remainder of the cay, the Ambergris Caye Planning Committee was set up under the CHPA (see 4.3.2) and has drafted an Ambergris Caye Master Plan (ACPC 1992) defining plot development and building regulations for different zones. A proposed revision to tighten restrictions covering the private land in the Bacalar Chico area has been prepared (CZMP 1996b). A quango, the North Ambergris Caye Development Corporation (NACDC), has also been appointed, with responsibility to develop and manage the former Pinkerton Estate (bcgen1). In 1993 it was presented with and rejected as inappropriate a cay-wide development proposal by a US company (the 'Broadhead proposals'), which included tourism facilities and retirement communities in the Bacalar Chico area (bcgen1).

5.2 The Planning Process for Bacalar Chico

This section provide a narrative of the key events in the planning process for Bacalar Chico, based on primary and secondary data collected during the fieldwork. The principal steps in the process are summarized in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Planning events for Bacalar Chico

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>year</th>
<th>event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>site visit by local stakeholder, state officials and INGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>submission of proposal to European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>EU funding disbursed to INGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>advisory Committee appointed and meetings commence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>draft management plan completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>surveys and public meetings in San Pedro, Corozal and Sarteneja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>surveys of user groups in Bacalar Chico area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>public meeting in San Pedro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>National Park and Marine Reserve declared</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first concrete move toward establishing a protected area at Bacalar Chico came in 1991, when a party of officials and INGO representatives undertook a visit to the site (ingo6, fishery5). The impetus for the visit was provided partly by a fisherman of Sarteneja who both was keen to have a tourism attraction for the village and argued that fish stocks within the area were declining owing to illegal fishing by Mexicans (see 5.4) (bcgen2, czmp3). He approached the director of ITCF (owners of the private Shipstern Reserve close to Sarteneja) and a boat trip to the area was arranged with the villager as a guide.

"I take him around there and I just asked him, like how they're working here in this reserve [Shipstern], if one day Bacalar Chico could be protected. So that time he told me yes, that is a good idea.... And I say, well, I would like if this dream would one day become a reality" (bcgen2).

The CZMU, national NGOs and ITCF had already identified the site as of conservation interest and a potential addition to Belize's protected area portfolio (Dotherow et al 1995). The idea of creating reserves in northern Ambergris Caye had also been put forward by the planning agencies for the cay (ACPC 1992, Ishmael 1994).

Following the site visit, the delegation decided to seek external funding to promote a reserve (ingo6). The CZMU official drew up a proposal and ITCF made a submission to the European Union (EU) in November 1992. The submission coincided with submissions by CCC and IUCN relating to coastal zone research and management in Belize, and the three initiatives were subsequently combined (czmp3). In 1993, EU approval for the 28-month project was granted. Funding of ECU 570,000 was disbursed in February 1994 to the three organisations: to ITCF for assisting the government in establishing a protected area at Bacalar Chico; to CCC to undertake training, research and marine surveys, relating largely to Bacalar Chico; and to IUCN for assisting with coastal zone management planning (Dotherow 1995, Gill et al 1996).

The subsequent planning of Bacalar Chico therefore became a shared venture between government agencies and INGOs, especially ITCF. The INGOs (and later the CZMP) formally provided support for planning officials from the Fisheries Department and the Forest Department. The process of gathering and analysing technical baseline data for planning on the biodiversity, ecology and physical characteristics of the site was carried out from the outset by government and INGOs, and as an operation discrete from what might be
termed 'participation'. Details of those studies are not set out here: instead the narrative focuses on interactions with the local community, the gathering of socio-economic data and the evolution of plans through the planning process.

One of the first actions undertaken in the planning process was the appointment of a Bacalar Chico Advisory Committee (see Box 5.1), in accordance with emerging coastal zone management policy (see 4.4.3). The first meeting of the Advisory Committee took place in October 1994 (BCPAC 1994) and further meetings were scheduled roughly every six weeks up until the declaration of the protected area. Minutes of the meetings indicate that attendance varied considerably, but all appeared to be quorate. Meetings agendas were based on report backs by the planning officials and discussion of issues arising from them. The Committee did not have executive powers (see 5.4.3).

Box 5.1 Bacalar Chico Advisory Committee

Established initially as a 12 member board, the Committee was to comprise of four governmental officials, two representatives from the Project INGOs, one from a national NGO, and five independent representatives drawn from the local communities. Of the community members, four were based in San Pedro: representatives of the NACDC, the local landowners association, the local fishermen’s cooperative and the tour guide association. The fifth was a representative from Sarteneja. The remit of the Advisory Committee was set out in a ‘terms of reference’ document. It was to assist, advise and recommend, to establish liaison links with higher government and local people, and overall to “assure proper management of the project by the participating agencies, and with the input of local communities” (BCPAC undated, pages not numbered).

By the end of 1994, a team of INGO and governmental planning officials had prepared a draft management plan for the reserve for formal submission to the EU. The document contained suggested but not definitive boundary details for the protected area and zoning was introduced in theoretical rather than spatially-defined terms (Dotherow et al 1995). It was introduced as a working document, intended for continual revision and open to wider input in future, including that of local communities.

Shortly after the submission of the draft plan, wider community participation was initiated, reportedly urged by the then Minister of Tourism and by the representative of the NACDC
on the Advisory Committee \textit{(ingo6, BCPAC 1995a)}. In March and April 1995, planning officials conducted a series of questionnaire surveys and public consultation meetings in each of the three settlements. According to the planners, the purpose of these exercises was to inform people about the project, gauge their opinions and gain information on usage of the area \textit{(fishery5, fishery7)}. Separate questionnaires (of 6-11 questions) were prepared for tour guides, commercial fishermen and members of the general public, and conducted as interviews (Gomez 1996). Guides and fishermen suspected of using the area were deliberately targeted by the interviewers, while the general public were approached opportunistically. Following the survey, public fora were held in San Pedro, Sarteneja and Corozal. At each consultation meeting, planners introduced the project, its objectives and potential benefits, and opened the floor to questions \textit{(fishery5)} (see Figure 5.4 in Subsection 5.1.1). The San Pedro forum was appended to a tour guides association meeting, and an (officially) estimated 60 people attended, most of them guides. The Sarteneja and Corozal meetings had 50 and 20 participants respectively, most of whom were fishermen.

By this time, Fisheries Department staff had been specifically appointed to work as researchers and rangers for the Bacalar Chico project. From July to October 1995, these officials carried out further surveys of fishermen and guides as they operated within the site. These in situ surveys involved visits to beachtraps in the area to record fish species and catch estimates, and attempts to stop all boats seen in the area and question the boat parties on their activites (Gomez 1996). In addition to these various formalized consultations, at the project’s inception and throughout the duration of planning informal meetings and consultations took place between officials and community members \textit{(fishery5, forest3, bcfish1)}. These again acted as channels through which the public gained information and the different stakeholders exchanged opinions. At least one official deliberately sought out informal discussions while he was stationed in San Pedro.

“A couple of times I made an effort to go and sit where the fishermen were in San Pedro, they hang out at this place Tarzans in the evening, you’ll meet six or seven of them sitting there. Some were upset, some would be supporting it, some wouldn’t, some were indifferent, and they were arguing with each other about what’s good and what’s not good, and sometimes I’m just listening to them - just ask one question and that sparks them and they’re having their own conversation” \textit{(fishery5)}. 

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Utilizing scientific and socio-economic information, the planning team next produced a draft zoning scheme for the marine section. The planners had recognised from their consultations that the details of zoning were likely to cause concerns for the public (BCPAC 1995b), especially with regard to fishing areas (see 5.4). They decided to arrange another public forum in San Pedro, in February 1996, again attended mainly by tour guides. The expressed purpose of the second meeting was to update local people but principally to present ideas and gain feedback on the proposed zoning scheme, a proposed extension to the southern marine section, and a proposed seasonal closure of the grouper fishery at Rocky Point (BCPAC 1996b). The issue that engendered the most discussion was the Rocky Point proposal (see 5.3) (BCPAC 1996b, Gomez 1996). The planners were confident that the zoning scheme would not affect the interests of commercial fishermen and therefore did not decide to hold further meetings at that stage in Sarteneja and Corozal (fishery5). During the fieldwork period, revision of the zoning scheme remained ongoing.

Nevertheless, on 14th June 1996, Statutory Instruments were signed by respective government ministers formally declaring the Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve and the Bacalar Chico National Park (GOB 1996c, GOB 1996d). Boundary coordinates had been defined and the draft management plan for the Marine Reserve was deemed sufficient for the purposes of designation, with the expectation that zone boundaries and regulations would be legislated in the future (Gibson et al 1996). The protected area therefore successfully proceeded to designation within the initial funding window provided by the EU Project. Extensions to EU funding were also secured until the end of 1997, and possibly beyond, to provide finance during the phase of finalizing the management plan and its early implementation (BCPAC 1996c). By the close of the field study in March 1997, the full management plan with designated boundaries and zoning scheme had yet to be presented to the public and finalized, and full implementation had yet to commence.

### 5.3 Plans as of March 1997

This section outlines the planning regulations and proposals as they stood at the close of fieldwork, and describes the rationale for them as expressed by the planners. It focuses on the spatial elements of the protected area and regulations with regard to utilization of land
and sea resources: on the designated site and its boundary; the zoning proposals; and associated, specific regulations proposed for fisheries and the adjacent private land.

Figure 5.5 shows the boundaries of the protected area, as designated in the two Statutory Instruments signed in 1996 (GOB 1996c, GOB 1996d). The protected area encompasses 10,700ha (WCMC 1999). Though official maps and measurements suggest that all of the land within the outer boundary is included in the Park, the Statutory Instrument explicitly excludes any private land lying within the boundary coordinates (GOB 1996d). In fact, a strip of private holdings runs from north to south through the area between the eastern coast and Laguna de Cantena. At the time of study the planners were still collating details of the holdings, but the available information suggests this enclave of private land runs the length of the coastline and stretches up to 1000m inland, in some cases into the lagoon itself (Gibson et al 1996).

All decisions on the siting of the boundaries were carried out by planning officials and approved by successive government officers during the passage of the Statutory Instruments through the echelons of the state and up to the Ministers’ desks (fishery3). Only in the case of the southern boundary noted below was there demonstrable external input into a boundary decision.

The northern boundary of the protected area simply follows the international border with Mexico across both land and sea. Not only does it therefore include Boca Bacalar Chico, the marine outlet for the main inland lagoon system, but it also creates the possibility of a future cross-border park. The presence of a regularly-patrolled area along the border was also seen as a means to control illegal entry of Mexican fishing vessels into Belizean waters.

The eastern boundary of the Marine Reserve runs roughly parallel with the reef, and was defined on an arbitrary but standardized basis at a distance of 1200m from the reef crest, so as to include the reef drop-off and a section of deep water habitats (fishery3). Initially drawn past Rocky Point to match a turtle nesting beach between Rocky Point and Robles Point, this portion was later extended south another 3200m so as to include a channel through the reef where boats travelling north to the Bacalar Chico area have to move out
Figure 5.5 Protected area boundary and proposed zonation

Information source: Gibson et al (1996)
into deep water. Planning officials wanted to be able to establish a reserve entry post at this point of passage, the Basil Jones Cut (fishery5). The western boundary of the Marine Reserve was established to include several mangrove-lined inlets, including Santa Cruz in the far south, and an arbitrarily defined section of shallow-bottomed habitats in Chetumal Bay (czmp3).

The position of the southern land boundary was a compromise between conservation and land development considerations (fishery3). Apart from the private enclave along the coast almost unlimited land was technically available in the north of the island through the acquisition of the 8,800ha Pinkerton Estate. Much of this Crown Land consists of low-lying swamp and lagoons and is of low land value, though it can be developed through infilling and drainage. Along the eastern coast, however, the ground is slightly higher. More easily developed and lying opposite the reef, this land attracts a much higher value, but it is also the terrain on which coastal forest grows (fishery3, forest3). During the early Advisory Committee meetings discussion was held as to whether a Wildlife Sanctuary area defined in the Broadhead proposals could form the basis for the southern land boundary (BCPAC 1994). This would enclose a cross-section of terrestrial habitats, including a small portion of coastal forest behind the private plots in the south-east, but leave most of the high ground on the island free for development, and especially expansion of tourism facilities. The Broadhead line did in the end from the basis for the National Park boundary in the south-east, but the planners extended the Park through the lower value land of the south-west to meet Santa Cruz bay.

Figure 5.5 and Table 5.2 indicate the zoning scheme and attendant regulations proposed for the Marine Reserve as at the close of the fieldwork. Again the proposals were drawn up solely by planning officials. The ‘Preservation Zone’ in the far north-east would be the most strictly protected portion of the reserve, essentially a no-entry zone. It reflects a desire in coastal zone policy to have “within each protected area some core area that is more or less inviolate” (czmp3). Its location on the border would also help the control of cross-border boat traffic. The ‘Conservation 1 Zone’ immediately to the south extends the core conservation area along the barrier reef. It would be a no-take zone, an area where tourists could enter to snorkel and dive but no fishing or other extractive use would be permitted.
Table 5.2 Zoning regulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>zone</th>
<th>regime</th>
<th>function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preservation (P) Zone</td>
<td>no entry</td>
<td>closed area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation 1 (C1) Zone</td>
<td>no extraction</td>
<td>area free from all fishing and collecting, but where recreational diving and snorkelling are permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation 2 (C2) Zone</td>
<td>controlled extraction</td>
<td>area free from commercial fishing/collection, but where diving and snorkelling and sport fishing (catch-and-release) are permitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Use Zone</td>
<td>sustainable established uses</td>
<td>area where established fishing and recreational uses may continue under special licence and with specific regulations on fishing techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Park</td>
<td>no extraction</td>
<td>terrestrial area where hunting, collecting and residence is banned, but where recreational visits are permitted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GOB 1981, CZMP 1996a

Fishing would be allowed to continue in the 'General Use Zone', but with some regulations designed to stop or prevent over-exploitation. This zone extends in a strip along the coastline to the north to allow for boat access but also to permit the traditional beachtraps established there to remain in operation (fishery5). It also covers most remaining parts of the Marine Reserve including the whole western section, where fishing is light offshore and the beachtraps along the coast could be specifically regulated (see below). The 'Conservation 2 Zone' around Rocky Point does not permit commercial fishing but allows sport fishing tours to operate. It is designed to protect the grouper and other fisheries as well as turtles approaching the nesting beach, but reflected the desire expressed by sports fishing guides to be able to continue taking tours to their favourite spot in the area (fishery5).

Along with the general zoning regulations, additional measures have also been proposed for specific fishing activities in the Marine Reserve. Planners indicated that existing beachtraps are to be allowed to continue operating throughout the reserve, but no new operations will be permitted and no new traps erected (czmp3). In addition, one of the reserve officials was pressing to ban the use of gill nets as seaward extensions of beachtraps (fishery5). Officials also aim to enforce within the reserve a catch-and-release policy for sports fishing in advance of proposed national legislation. At the public meeting in San Pedro, the guides
reportedly claimed that the policy would harm their trade because tourists like to keep their catches. The claim was refuted by one of the planners (fishery5), and some local people were also skeptical that it was the tourists that keep the fish: “they no want it, well they give to the one who carry they” (bcfish4).

Thirdly, and this time pre-empting forthcoming national legislation on grouper fishing, the planners proposed to designate a seasonal closure area at the site the 'grouper bank', where Nassau and yellowfin groupers traditionally spawn (czmp3). The site lies within the Conservation 2 zone. Initially, the planners tentatively suggested a two to three month closure of the area during the spawning season (BCPAC 1996b).

“We didn’t know exactly how to approach it because we knew that we would have problems with the sports fishermen there....I was letting them know that we need to protect the groupers, and while we want to protect the groupers we don’t want to inhibit your capacity to make money, we don’t want stop your sports fishing because one of our main goals here is to not really stop traditional practices but make little adjustments so that they can continue” (fishery5).

The tour guides successfully argued against a full seasonal closure at the second public forum in San Pedro, claiming this would be too much of a sacrifice since the grouper are the key fishing attraction of the site (fishery5, Gomez 1996). It appears that one guide suggested the area be closed only during the peak times of the spawning season, for five days before and after the full moon of December and January. The meeting reportedly endorsed this suggestion, as did the planners, noting it “may be enough time for the groupers to aggregate, spawn and disperse” (Gomez 1996, p24).

Ostensibly outside the remit of the protected area planners, but firmly within their sphere of influence are regulations regarding the enclave of private land within the National Park. Regarded as too high in value for compulsory purchase and never really intended for inclusion in the reserve, the private land strip nevertheless has an ambiguous status. Control of development within the plots is regarded as crucial for the integrity of the surrounding protected area since it effectively divides the reserve in two, contains some of the best tracts of coastal forest in the reserve area and is fronted in part by a turtle nesting beach. Two of the planning officials expressed their fear that development of subdivisions in the area
represents the biggest threat to local ecology in terms of pollution and vegetation clearance (forest3, ingo6).

To some extent, the planning agencies hope to rely on the goodwill of landowners (fishery5), but they also hope to contain their potential usage of the sites through regulations. Under the Ambergris Caye Master Plan permissible development in the area is limited to low-rise, low density buildings with tight controls governing the proportion of a lot that can be developed (ACPC 1992). Through the CZMP, a proposal was drafted in 1996 to tighten these controls still further by making the entire strip a Special Co-ordinated Development Area within an emphasis on minimizing building and maintenance of most of the land in its natural state (CZMP 1996b). However, doubt was expressed by the NACDC representative whether this amendment would gain the political support it required from central government (bcgen1).

5.4 Stakeholder Perspectives

The next section turns explicitly to findings from the interviews on local people’s knowledge of the evolving protected area plans (5.4.1), their support for the concept and details of a reserve in the north of Ambergris Caye (5.4.2) and attitudes with regard to the channels of consultation and participation incorporated into planning (5.4.3).

5.4.1 Awareness

All local stakeholders interviewed were aware that the government was in the process of setting up a reserve of some kind in the north of Ambergris Caye, but their knowledge of the plans were mostly vague. The only people who had seen an outline of the protected area boundary were four who were members of the Advisory Committee (bcgen1, bcgen2, bcgen4, bctour1), a fisherman from Corozal who helped with the questionnaire surveys (bcfish2), and three San Pedrans (two guides, one fisherman) who attended the consultation meetings (bctour5, bctour6, bcfish6). Many people expected the Marine Reserve would be zoned for multiple-use, following the example of Hol Chan, but only three expressed any
knowledge of the emerging zoning proposals \( (bctour1, bcfish2, bcgen4) \) and none exhibited comprehensive knowledge. Even one of the Bacalar Chico staff members who helped conduct the surveys and meetings in Corozal and Sarteneja described the proposed zoning scheme incorrectly \( (fishery7) \).

Several interviewees had learned of the reserve, and especially of the proposed grouper restrictions solely through rumour \( (e.g. \ bctour3, bcfish4) \). The tour guides representative newly appointed to the Advisory Committee stressed that the community needed to be better informed on the plans, so that the tour guides and especially the fishermen could address the concerns they had over possible zoning restrictions \( (bctour1) \). This view was backed up both by a tour guide and by the chair of the fishing cooperative: “we need more informations, more meetings about this.... so everybody knows what is happening” \( (bctour4) \); “we as members of the committee, the cooperative committee, don’t know anything about it” \( (bcfish8) \). According to the Corozal fisherman mentioned above, many people do not even know that Bacalar Chico has been declared \( (bcfish2) \).

In tandem with the limited dissemination of information there existed clear misconceptions over the form and function of the protected area. Two guides and a fisherman indicated they thought the protected area project concerned only the far northern section around the Boca Bacalar Chico \( (bctour2, bctour4, bcfish6) \). Another guide/fisherman expressed his perception that the reserve existed solely to create an attraction for tourists, stating his belief that it had therefore been located “too far” away from San Pedro \( (bcfish5) \). Two fishermen made clear their perception that the term ‘reserve’ indicated a no-fishing area \( (bctour3, bcfish7) \), despite the efforts planning officials made at the meetings to clear up confusion over terms \( (fishery5) \). Planners accepted that widespread confusion had existed. At the Corozal meeting there was reportedly some angry reaction to the announcement of protected area plans for this reason:

“They say government is just doing another reserve, and fishermen can’t catch their fish, because they won’t be able to go in the reserve. But we tried to convince them, it’s not like that this one, it’s a different project this reserve” \( (fishery7) \).
5.4.2 Support

The planners claimed there was general support for the protected area project in the local communities, with just a few people expressing opposition (ingo6, fishery6). This support was reportedly made clear at the meetings in San Pedro (fishery5) and at Sarteneja and Corozal (fishery7). One official felt able to claim:

"We went and we got the mandate from the people to do it. And I guess that the opposition was less than one percent, I would say" (fishery3).

Another member of the planning team said that people were generally supportive by the end of the consultation process, but that individuals tended only to be interested over matters that would directly affect their own livelihoods (fishery5). One of the reserve staff perceived people in Sarteneja and Corozal supported the project because they were told fishing could continue in places and the area is not heavily fished anyway (other reserve projects in their fishing grounds have raised more concern) (fishery7). Two officials specifically linked support for the project to its role in curbing fishing by Mexicans (fishery3, forest3), a point echoed by one fisherman who saw that issue as the lynchpin for support from Corozal and Sarteneja (bcfish2). Box 5.2 elaborates on this attitude toward Mexican fishermen expressed by officials and local stakeholders, an issue discussed further in Chapter 8.

Interviews with local stakeholders revealed there was indeed general support for the idea of a protected area in the north. Some interviewees specifically referred to the breadth of community support, some citing the positive experience of Hol Chan (bcgen1), others noting that the project aroused little controversy in the first place (bctour8). One emphasized that the tour guides all "already gave their blessing", but that fishermen need more incentive, stressing "we cannot abandon the commercial fishermen" (bctour1).

Support for the project was expressed on the grounds of tourism (e.g. bctour4, bctour7, bcfish5) and control of resource depletion (e.g. bcfish2, bcfish6, bcfish7). However, support was clearly conditional. Some stated they could give their support as long as local people were adequately consulted (bctour4, bctour6). Qualified support was often based on personal interests. One real estate agent, for example, was strongly in favour if conservation
in the area was balanced with land development considerations: “we need to find a midway point between development and conservation” (bcgen5). Others were willing to give support so as long as they could continue to utilize the area (e.g. bctour4, bcfish5, bcfish8). Commercial fishermen frequently stressed the need to keep at least some areas open for fishing of lobster, conch and finfish (e.g. bcfish1, bcfish5, bcfish7). One said:

“[It’s] a good idea, but if no left for fishing what will I make, how will I live. You have to let the people do fishing.... Every man got two, three, four child. I’ve got six people working.” (bcfish1).

Box 5.2 Mexicans and fish stocks

The planning team argued that fisheries stocks in the area had suffered widespread decline in recent years, a claim based on perceptions of certain local fishermen (Dotherow 1995, ingo6). Much of the blame was laid at the door of Mexican fishermen, who were caught making illegal incursions across the border from Xcalak and reportedly heavily fished for lobster, conch and finfish in the area (czmp3, fishery5). They did not respect Belizean catch regulations and set nets across the mouth of Laguna de Cantena (forest3). The creation of a protected area would stop illegal fishing practices and enable the fishery to be managed sustainably (fishery7).

Local interviewees argued that Mexicans acted as if there was no border (bcgen1, bctour1) and confirmed the accounts of overfishing of lobster and conch and the depletion of fish populations in Laguna de Cantena (bctour1, bctour6, bcfish2), regarded as a vital fish nursery area. The effect of patrolling would be to keep out Mexican fishermen (bctour3, bctour5, bcfish6), and enable fish reproduction on the reef and in the lagoon to restore stocks there and in the wider area (bctour1, bcgen5). Referring to Laguna de Cantena, one sports fishing guide said:

“And if this place were to come back again the same way it was, 10 or 12 years behind, it is good because then tourists would want to come back again in this lagoon and do sport fishing” (bctour6).

Expressions of specific concerns were constrained by the low level of awareness of the details of planning. Most related to the special fishing regulations announced for certain fishing activities. One beachtrap fisherman argued that he would be unfairly penalized if his competitors established outside the reserve could continue to add nets to their traps, though he would be happy to comply if the rule was universal. “They put gill-nets, I have to put.... They no set it, I no set it. I only want to put my wire.... You have to stop everybody”
Another beachtrap fisherman stated that the nets he used could increase his catch when fish migrated along the coast, and that the restrictions would therefore have some effect on his living (bcfish4).

Sports fishermen wanted continued rights to take trips into the area, including seasonal fishing for grouper at the Rocky Point spawning bank (bctour2, bctour3, bctour4). Problems were also anticipated if commercial diving for lobster were to be denied at Rocky Point (bctour6, bcfish6) - a measure that would apply to the Conservation 2 Zone (see Table 5.2). One sports fishing guide was indignant:

"I went to the [first] meeting in San Pedro. Can't remember if I said anything or not, but if I did I certainly didn't agree. But those people don't care. Whether people object or not they still go to Belize [City] and do what they want" (bctour2).

Official claims of near-universal support therefore need more critical analysis, one of the issues taken up in Chapters 7, 8 and 9. The same applies to confident statements regarding consultations with the public, the subject of the next subsection.

5.4.3 Consultation Fora

State and INGO actors involved in the planning process generally expressed confidence that the community consultation efforts were comprehensive and provide effective local input into planning. One official present at each of the public fora was particularly bullish, claiming that the results of prior consultation enabled them to produce plans that were unproblematic to local people. "We justify what we are proposing after consultation with the users..... And what we present is what they'd really like to see" (fishery3). He argued, for example, that concerns over grouper fishing restrictions at the second meeting in San Pedro were discussed and unanimously resolved by the end of the meeting.

Another Fisheries Department official confirmed the view that the public fora proceeded smoothly, with no controversy stirred at Sarteneja and with issues that were raised at Corozal resolved by the end of the meeting because people were assured the reserve would be multiple-use (fishery7). One official suggested that the consultation process was smooth
partly because of people's self-interest. They were only interested in matters that might directly affect their economic livelihood, and as long as their input was solicited on these they were unconcerned about other matters. He admitted that this meant it was easy to create the impression that planning was bottom-up in input, even though most decisions were in effect top-down (fishery5) (see 2.3).

Opinions on the consultation process varied greatly among local stakeholders. Several were happy that people had been given the opportunity to express their opinion and that their voices were heard (e.g. bcfish2, bcfish6, bcgen2), although some noted that few substantive issues were raised anyway (bcgen2, bctour7). The NACDC representative regarded the meetings as having been a genuine attempt to consult local people and an important forum for raising awareness and exchanging information (bcgen1). They therefore gave people the chance to object, although not to propose.

Others were not so positive about the consultation efforts. Two tour guides emphasized that people, especially fishermen, were still too ill-informed about the project (bctour1, bctour4). Three denied that people had been given proper chance to express their opinion (bcfish4, bcfish7, bcgen3), and one stressed that there had been minimal consultation with fishermen from San Pedro (bcfish8). Some questioned the effectiveness of the San Pedran meetings as fora for discussion, stating that there was little input from the floor at the first meeting (bctour4) or that people did make comments but the planners were not interested in what was said (bctour6). Some denied there was any real participation at all, believing that the planners simply stated what they wanted to do, and would continue with it regardless (e.g. bctour2, bctour5, bctour6). One repeatedly complained:

"They don’t ask the opinion of the people what they are going to do. First they do it, and then they come and ask you your opinion. Why do they do that?" (bctour6).

This interviewee and the NACDC representative emphasized the importance that should be attached to gathering local knowledge of the area through consultation. The latter, however, explained that the effectiveness of public meetings is hampered by lack of motivation to attend by the majority, coupled with the tendency for a vociferous minority with vested interests to dominate proceedings (bcgen1) (see Chapter 7).
For this reason, the NACDC representative saw the Bacalar Chico Advisory Committee as a valuable organ of participation, performing an important bridging role between agencies and community. He argued that it represented a good cross-section of the local communities, with four seats from San Pedro and one (shared) from Sarteneja. Those local representatives were able to provide local knowledge, and to act as a communication channel, relaying messages to the wider public (bcgen1). The tour guides and the landowners representatives also thought the Committee was a potential channel for relaying messages from their constituencies, from the bottom-up (bctour1, bcgen5). Two other participants also valued the work of the Committee (bcgen2, bcgen4).

Analysis of the Committee minutes and of interviews, however, reveals some noteworthy caveats. First, neither the tour guides nor the fishermen’s cooperative representative attended any of the meetings prior to November 1996. Internal problems within the tour guides association coupled with lack of financial assistance accounted for their non-attendance (bctour1), but the chair of Caribena fishing cooperative had never been able to attend because of work obligations (bcfish8), despite the claim of one official that the cooperative was always represented (fishery3). Second, there are few records in the minutes of contributions by the community representatives. As the NACDC representative put it, “it was like a committee that went and listened to a progress report” (bcgen1). Planning officials appeared to set the agenda and dominated what was reported in the minutes. The Sartenejan village representative described his rather passive role:

“I just hear the ideas, and I say well that’s a good idea, I see that is good, and I say that is a good idea. And [pauses] – that’s it.
* Has there been anything that you’ve disagreed with, that they’ve suggested? Um, no. No” (bcgen2).

Though he maintained that the Committee was a genuine decision-making body (bcgen2), others stressed that its capacity was advisory only with no true executive power (acad4, bcgen1). All the major decisions were taken by the planning agencies, either by government or by those external agencies providing the finance for the project (bctour2, bctour6, bcgen1). Direct input into planning by the local members of the Committee therefore appeared to be minimal. Concerning the proposals for the protected area boundaries, for example: “we never questioned it, the Advisory Committee, we just went ahead with it” (bcgen1).
The Committee was supposed to form the cornerstone of community involvement (Gibson et al 1996). Yet even for this body of local people, seemingly vested with authority, ‘participation’ was (at best) limited to consultation, an argument explored further in Chapter 7.

5.5 Summary

Bacalar Chico Marine Reserve and National Park was declared in 1996. Local people with a direct economic stake in the resources of the protected area included some fishermen and tour guides who regularly worked in the area, and private landowners who maintained landholdings adjacent to the National Park. In the words of one actor involved in planning, the establishment of the protected area “all hinges on the initiative of a few people” (ingoi6). Planning commenced after an appeal from a local stakeholder and the successful procurement of external funding for a joint project by government agencies and INGOs. During the course of planning, questionnaire surveys and public consultation meetings were organised, and an advisory committee with local representation was appointed. Officials also met with local stakeholders on an informal basis.

The protected area comprises a portion of Ambergris Caye and two adjacent marine areas. The siting of the southern land boundary was partly influenced by local arguments for the exclusion of readily-developable ‘high’ ground. The marine sections were to be zoned for different levels of access, and discussions with the public influenced proposed restrictions for one zone on the reef side (the ‘Conservation 2 Zone’). There was little demonstrable local input into other boundary and zoning decisions, and all planning decisions were ultimately made by state agents. Protected area officials also wanted to link development control on adjacent land with conservation objectives. Local stakeholders generally exhibited scant knowledge of the details of plans. Though overall support for a protected area was often expressed, specific concerns and caveats were also evident. Channels of participation for local people were often valued by local people, but they proved limited in scope and did not function as decision-making fora. Chapter 6 now examines how events and processes were played out in the parallel case of Caye Caulker.
CHAPTER SIX

PLANNING THE CAYE CAULKER PROTECTED AREA

Following the pattern of Chapter 5, this chapter details the protected area project at Caye Caulker. After a contextual introduction (6.1), the chapter provides a narrative of the planning process for the site (6.2) and describes the draft plans that existed at the time the field study ended (6.3). The final section then goes on to examine perspectives of stakeholders on the project and on community involvement in planning (6.4).

6.1 Introduction

The proposed Caye Caulker protected area was in the final stages of planning during the case study fieldwork. As Figure 5.1 shows, Caye Caulker lies to the south of Ambergris Caye. The draft plans for the protected area were for a marine reserve stretching along the reef fronting the cay, and then extending west to surround a proposed terrestrial reserve covering the northern tip of land (August 1996a).

Proposals for a reserve at Caye Caulker have been in existence since 1990, spearheaded first by a local NGO and then by government (Fisheries Department and Forest Department) with support from the CZMP. No international NGO was formally involved in planning, but approaches for associated funding had been made to the GEF via its Small Grants Programme allocation for projects in Belize (see Box 4.5). Planning for the current proposals had involved one major public meeting in Caye Caulker and a series of consultations with village groups, and an extensive socio-economic survey had been carried out by a Fisheries officer. An advisory committee had yet to be set up at the time of the research.
The rationale for creating a protected area at Caye Caulker is expressed largely in terms of support for local economies. Indeed, when referring to biodiversity conservation in the coastal zone as a whole, one planner stated:

"We don’t really, from an environmental point of view perhaps, need specifically the Cay Caulker area, because we have that represented, this northern Barrier Reef sector, already. But there are social needs for the protected area" (cmp3).

Fishing declines have been reported in the area (August 1996a) and several local people argued that the reef had been visibly degraded by fishermen and tourists (e.g. cres5, cctour6, ccfish4). One local stakeholder saw the reserve’s purpose as preventing coral death by tourists which would threaten the future of tourism (ccgen3). One of the planning documents describes the reserve’s foremost objective as ensuring “enduring livelihood through environmental protection” (August 1994, p3). Further details on the site and local economies is provided in Subsections 6.1.1 and 6.1.2.

6.1.1 Site Characteristics

Precise co-ordinates for the protected area had not been defined at the time of the field study. However, outline maps showed plans taking shape to include the northernmost tip of Caye Caulker known as North Point (see Figure 6.2), a surrounding block of sea to the west, north and and east, and a long marine stretch running southward along either side of the reef crest for some 11km (August 1996a, August 1996b).

Caye Caulker is a medium-sized cay of some 380ha (August 1994), approximately 7.5km in length, but only 200-1400m in width. It lies approximately 34km north-east of Belize City, just inshore from the Barrier Reef. Built from coral sand initially trapped by mangroves growing in the shallow coastal lagoon, it is of low elevation throughout. No ground in the proposed protected area rises to more than two metres above sea level (Zisman 1996). In 1961 severe waves generated by Hurricane Hattie severed the cay in two, cutting a narrow breach called ‘The Split’ that now separates the partly developed South Island from the mostly undeveloped North Island.
Figure 6.1 Ecological zones of Caye Caulker

Information source: August (1996a)
The ecological diversity of the site is described in the draft plan (August 1996a) and mapped in Figure 6.1. Where the cay has not been cleared for development, the natural vegetation consists mostly of mangroves covering the lowest portions and surrounding a few small inland lagoons, with the thickets and trees of coastal forest formations on higher ground. Patches of cocal (groves of coconut palm) dominate parts of the cay, and these non-native plants are regarded as competitors with native forest trees.

The barrier reef section off Caye Caulker slopes gently from the open sea bed up to the reef crest, where in places growths of elkhorn coral break the water surface at low tide. A series of perpendicular channels or ‘cuts’ cross the reef crest and the backreef corals. These breaches connect the offshore waters with the shallow inshore waters of the coastal lagoon that surrounds the cay and continue to the mainland. The bed of the coastal lagoon has a mosaic of bare sediment, sea grass beds, sea grass and algae, and patch reefs.

No settlement exists at present in the land area proposed for the reserve. Patches of cocal are associated with former small-scale coconut plantations, but the plantings are no longer managed and the palms grow wild (McRae 1996). The proposed terrestrial reserve area at the North Point stands on land formally acquired by the government. As later sections discuss, however, the legal status of the acquisition was being challenged by the former owner at the time of the research (see 6.2.2). Land immediately to the south of this area is also national land, but is likely to be subdivided for private sale in the coming years (McRae 1996). The sea bed is the property of the Government of Belize (August 1996a).

As at Bacalar Chico (see 5.1.1), evidence from the research and from official data-gathering (August 1994) indicates that the natural resources of the proposed protected area were being utilized almost exclusively by commercial fishermen and tour guides, some of whom again combined both occupations. The terrestrial portion was not used significantly either for coconut collecting or for commercial or subsistence hunting.

The waters around Caye Caulker have long supported commercial fishermen, most of them operating on daily trips out of Caye Caulker village, but some visiting the area during week-long trips from Sarteneja. Lobster, finfish and conch are all taken from the reef and lagoon areas within the proposed marine reserve. Official sources note that ‘approximately 80
fishermen regularly work within the vicinity of the Caye Caulker MR” (August 1996a, p13).

Lobster is by far the most important fishery in terms of employment and overall revenue. The crustaceans are mostly caught in traps set on the lagoon bed or removed from cavities in the reef by divers using hooked sticks. No fewer than 96% of all fishermen officially surveyed set lobster traps, most of them locating the wicker devices in customary ‘territories’ on the sea bed that were on the whole respected and avoided by other lobster fishermen (August 1996a, King 1997). Finfish were regularly caught by 22% of the fishermen surveyed, most caught by hand line or by speargun in the waters either side of the reef, but fish traps were also set. A shallow site close to the North Point was regularly fished by cast net for small bait fish. Only 8% of fishermen stated that they fished for conch, collecting the heavy shellfish from the bottom by diving (August 1996a).

Over the last two decades Caye Caulker village has built up a tourism industry that relies heavily on the attractions of the adjacent reef and marine areas. Official surveys reported that by 1994 the settlement had 34 tour operators or independent guides, most of whom regularly and frequently take visitors into the marine reserve area (August 1996a). At the time of the research, the local tour guides association suggested the number of guides was closer to 70 (ectour1). According to the official survey, snorkelling on the reef is “the most commonly requested activity”, sought after by 94% of tourists to the island, “and the most commonly offered by both guides and hotels” (August 1996a, p12). But tourists are also taken into the reserve area for scuba diving and sport fishing, and at least by one guide for occasional birdwatching tours in the terrestrial portion (ccgen1). Most guides or tour operators offer their services for more than one type of tour, but the settlement has a few outfits that specialise in scuba. Some tour guides from San Pedro on Ambergris Caye also visit the Caye Caulker area as part of day-long snorkel of fishing trips that also feature the Hol Chan Marine Reserve located between the two settlements (ectour7, ectour8).

Given the proximity of the planned reserve to Caye Caulker village and the frequency with which the area is visited by fishermen and tour guides, the potential socio-economic repercussions of this protected area are arguably much greater than for Bacalar Chico. The linkages have long been recognised by local people and planners alike. To help set the
context for the actions and opinions of local people in the planning of the proposed reserve, the following subsection takes a closer look at the history and characteristics of human settlement on Caye Caulker. For details of the communities of San Pedro and Sarteneja see Subsection 5.1.2.

6.1.2 Caye Caulker Settlement and Development

The historic settlement of Caye Caulker dates back to the 19th century, when refugee settlers of mixed Spanish and Mayan descent colonized the sandy island (see 4.1). The higher portions of the island were unsuitable for farming, but the settlers worked on coconut plantations, and later began to become engaged in lobster fishing. By the time the nucleus of Caye Caulker village had formed, most of the islanders were reliant on fishing (Sutherland 1986).

Sutherland (1986) and King (1997) describe the development of the local economy over recent decades. In the early 1960s individual fishermen and family operations on the island decided to join forces to market their catches and formed the Northern Fishermen’s Cooperative. As a vehicle for marketing the cooperative proved highly effective over the ensuing decades, raising the prices of lobster from the island and increasing the revenue of individual members. As the organisation grew in size, so it began to take members from other Belizean communities and established a major processing and export plant in Belize City. Formerly rather an isolated community, Caye Caulker’s links with the rest of the country were increasing and its prosperity was rising. Starting in the 1970s, the first tourists began to arrive in Caye Caulker and homeowners on the island began to offer rooms and meals. As Belizean tourism gathered pace, so the influx to the island steadily increased and more and more guest houses, hotels, restaurants, tour operations and souvenir shops became established. In 1995 the island had 33 registered hotels and received a total of 9219 overnight visitors, making it the fourth most popular destination in Belize (August 1996a).

At present the island is widely regarded as undergoing a transition from a fishing village to a tourism resort (King 1997, ngo4). The population of the settlement has also roughly doubled since 1980 to an estimated 800 in 1996 (ccgen2). During interviews the desire to
avoid runaway development of the village was stressed by some villagers, who cited San Pedro as a case in point (ccgen2, ccres2). An official planning document claims:

"The locals of Caye Caulker have over the years maintained possession of their land and refuse to see what happened to the nearby San Pedranos.... happen to them. They prefer to develop their island at a slow but consistent pace rather than become employees in a restaurant that they once owned." (August 1996a, p11).

The village remains low rise with only small-scale tourism developments (see Figure 6.3). But the image of concensus toward gradual, small-scale development belies evidence of increasing friction over the future of Caye Caulker both between local people and between locals and outsiders (see 8.2.2). Argument surrounded the construction of an airstrip just to the south of the village and a controversial condominium development was being constructed within the village near The Split at the time of the research (ccgen1, Villagers 1997). Meanwhile, extensive plots of land covering the broad southern end of South Island had been sold to foreign owners since the 1970s, and large-scale bush clearance, drainage and construction of houses and other developments had commenced (Sutherland 1986, ccgen1). Large plots on parts of North Island had also entered private ownership, though only two had so far been built upon (August 1996a). The subdivision and allocation of national land on North Island (see 6.1.1) is the responsibility of a government-appointed Lots Committee. At the time of the field research, a new chair of the Lots Committee was taking office and he indicated he wished to prioritize the landholding needs of the expanding village population rather than external investors (ccgen4).

Complaints of natural vegetation loss, waste disposal and groundwater contamination on the cay had already been raised by some village residents (cctour2, ccgen6), and one document warns of further environmental degradation should large-scale developments or subdivision of the remainder of the island proceed unchecked (McRae 1996). Approaches had been made to the CHPA (see 4.3.2) by the local Village Council and other parties for the preparation of a development plan on the lines of the Ambergris Caye Master Plan (Zisman 1996, ccgen2), but at the time of the research no such document existed. The Village Council itself is a body with highly circumscribed responsibility and authority, and no formal role in land allocation or development control. It is elected every two years by residents of Cay Caulker (Sutherland 1986).
Figure 6.2 North Point, Caye Caulker

Figure 6.3 Caye Caulker Village street
6.2 The Planning Process for Caye Caulker

The attempted establishment of a protected area at Caye Caulker proved to be a far more complicated process than at Bacalar Chico. It was a process that more closely involved local actors and their competing interests, and it had yet to be resolved at the close of field study owing to a dramatic twist of events. This lengthy section is divided into two subsections covering the period prior to the field study (6.2.1) and events that took place during the research (6.2.2). Table 6.1 lists the key steps.

Table 6.1 Planning events for Caye Caulker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>year</th>
<th>event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>proposal for a nature preserve at South Island (later abandoned)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>local stakeholders lobby government to investigate an alternative site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>questionnaire surveys in Caye Caulker village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-96</td>
<td>consultation meetings in Caye Caulker village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1994-96 Village Council opposes land portion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>draft management plan prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>local conservation NGO prepares funding application for planning/management work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>local tourism industry association initiates community management group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>former landowner announces legal challenge and presents new proposal for land portion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Village Council lobbies for community management role</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.1 Initiation, Consultation and Preparation of a Draft Plan

The impetus for the creation of a protected area at Caye Caulker came predominantly from local people (August 1996a, cctourl, ccgen6). The first concrete move came in 1990 when a local NGO proposed that part of South Island and adjacent marine habitats be turned into a nature preserve. The conservation-oriented Siwa-ban Foundation, spearheaded by a village resident, proposed the purchase of 44ha of land to preserve the best coastal forest
habitat of the organisation’s cause celebre, the black catbird or ‘siwa-ban’ *Melanoptila glabirostris* (SbF undated, *czmp3*). A draft proposal was drawn up and 150 copies distributed through the village, and in 1991 a series of three public meetings were held in the village with invited speakers. According to the organiser, attendance at the first was about 160 people, but dropped considerably for the latter two (*ccgen1*).

Despite a canvassing tour in the USA (*ccgen1*), however, it soon became clear that the Siwa-ban Foundation would not be able to raise the finance to buy the land portion from its North American owners. As a government officer put it, “it would have meant raising goodness knows how many hundreds of thousands of dollars to purchase the land” (*czmp3*). The proposal was effectively abandoned, and, according to the same official, the catbird habitat in the south has since been virtually eradicated by subsequent land clearance and construction of the airstrip (*czmp3*).

Meanwhile, other people in the village had started to show interest in the economic potential of having a protected area close to their island. The country’s first marine reserve, Hol Chan, had been established to the north, in 1987 (see 4.2.2), and was already attracting a large number of tourists, most of them staying in the resort of San Pedro but some based in Caye Caulker. Certain members of the community looked on in envy:

> “Everybody thought, OK, for some people if that’s an attraction and a protection for San Pedro why can’t we have one too. And a few people, in fact myself probably was one of the first that recommended, that the whole reef in front of Caye Caulker be declared into a reserve.” (*ccgen6*).

Though the details of these early actions proved difficult to clarify, certain local people and groups began to lobby government, especially after the failure of the conservation NGO’s proposal. They gained the formal support of the Minister of Tourism, and in 1992 he requested government agencies to look into the prospect of designating an alternative site (August 1996a).

The government was reportedly supportive of the initiative, though concerned about sources of future funding for maintenance of the protected area (*ccgen6*). But within a few years, initial feasibility studies began to evolve into draft planning (*fishery8*). The Fisheries Department was to take the lead role in planning, later supported and partly financed by the
CZMP (fishery8, acad4). The Forest Department, which had legislative responsibility for the land portion, was also closely involved.

Like the conservation NGO, the state agencies wished to establish a protected area incorporating both marine and terrestrial sections. They too saw it is imperative to include some of the island's coastal forest (August 1996a, fishery3). It was soon decided that the most feasible available land was at North Point (see Figure 6.2), where the government had acquired 82ha as National Land in 1990 following non-payment of taxes by its North American owners (August 1996a, ccgen1, meeting4).

Protection of marine areas off Caye Caulker was justified in part on the grounds of biodiversity, but in both planning documents and interviews with officials much more stress was placed on its role in facilitating the sustainability of fishing and tourism (e.g. August 1994, czmp3). The planning agencies decided to extend the proposed marine reserve along the reef the full length of the island, but with a zoning system allowing different levels of access, including established fishing practices in some sections (see 4.3.3).

Formal community participation exercises for the proposed reserve commenced in 1993, and from late 1993 to 1996 a government officer was seconded to the project on a part-time basis to carry out a series of feasibility studies and consult with local people over plans for the reserve (fishery8). In 1993 and 1994 she conducted a questionnaire survey of hoteliers, fishermen and tour guides/operators in Caye Caulker to ascertain usage of the marine area and support for a reserve (August 1994). From 1993 to 1996 she and/or other government representatives held one meeting with the general public of the village (in early 1993) and a series of separate meetings with the the local Tour Guides Association, the local branch of Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA), the Northern Fishermen’s Cooperative, the Village Council and the Lots Committee (August 1994, fishery8, forest3, ccgen4). The overall objectives of these meetings “were to present the proposal and seek support for the Caye Caulker reserve” (August 1994, p3). Officials also had informal conversations with villagers during the early planning period, and both local people and officials claimed the result was that the proposal to create a reserve was known and discussed widely in the village (ccgen4, ccgen6, fishery2, forest3).
A draft management plan for the reserve was finally prepared in 1996, boundaries were outlined and a draft zoning scheme submitted for internal approval by the government departments. The Fisheries officer specializing on the project prepared the draft plan in consultation with her Forest Department counterparts (forest3). The zoning scheme was preliminary only. Not yet intended for formal presentation to the communities, it was drafted primarily to enable the protected area to be designated, and was expected to be revised in due course (czmp3, fishery8).

At this stage in the narrative it is useful to set out how the major groups in the village became involved in the planning process prior to the field research period (see Box 6.1).

6.2.2 Progress Toward Designation?

At the commencement of the field research in October 1996, planning staff indicated that the Caye Caulker protected area was almost ready for formal designation, and was awaiting only the Forest Department to finalize the land boundary (czmp3, forest2). The CZMU protected areas coordinator deemed the preliminary draft management plan ready for drafting into legalized form and submission for governmental approval (fishery3). He suggested community consultations over the proposed zoning scheme would take place before the end of the year (fishery3). Following declaration of the protected area the repeatedly delayed establishment of an advisory committee would then take place (fishery2, fishery8, czmp3).

There had been another change in the Village Council in September and the new 1996-98 chair was regarded as more supportive of the reserve project (fishery8). Meanwhile, the Siwa-ban Foundation was applying for external funding to carry out extra work on the reserve’s management plan and start implementation of the plan (McRae 1996, fishery8). The application to the GEF’s Small Grants Programme was put together jointly by the NGO and Fisheries staff, because of shortage of government funds for start-up and initial management of the protected area (SbF 1995, fishery8).
Box 6.1 Involvement of Caye Caulker village groups (prior to October 1996)

**Siwa-ban Foundation**
Having shelved its proposals for a reserve at the southern end of Caye Caulker, the Siwa-ban Foundation continued to play a lobbying and consultative role behind the scenes. It continued to press for the inclusion of catbird habitat in the protected area (forest3), was frequently consulted on an informal basis during planning, and helped suggest which marine areas should be no extraction zones (ccgen1).

**Tour Guides Association**
From 1993 to 1995 the Tour Guides Association invited the protected area planners to one of its meetings, had informal liaison with the planners and expressed its formal support for the reserve project (August 1994, cctour1, fishery8). One of the planning team indicated that the future presentation of the draft plans to the community would likely take place at a tour guides meeting (fishery3).

**Tourism Industry Association (BTIA)**
The local BTIA, representative of hoteliers and other tourism proprietors, also gave its formal support to the project (ccgen5, ccgen6) and was met early on by the planning staff (August 1994). The group secured an independent grant for outreach work related to the reserve, and in 1996 held two training seminars on local protected area management (fishery8, ccgen6). Fisheries staff were invited to speak, and the meetings were open to the general public, but attendance was reportedly low (fishery8).

**Northern Fishermen’s Cooperative**
The Northern Fishermen’s Cooperative appeared to have had little role in proceedings. One meeting reportedly took place between planners and fishermen’s representatives, but no follow-up meeting was held, and the cooperative gave no formal letter of support (August 1994).

**Village Council**
One of the most significant, but shifting, roles was played by the Village Council. The council of 1992-1994 gave its support to the project and helped arrange the early meeting between planners and the general public (August 1994, ccgen6, cctour1). The chair of the time was highly positive about the protected area. “The first idea came up when I was chairman of the village council and since then we’ve been fighting and pushing and doing everything we can to see it become a reality” (ccgen4). But a change of council brought more opposition. The 1994-96 chair wanted assurances that access to traditional fishing sites would continue before the council could express its support for the marine reserve (ccgen3). More significantly, the chair would not give his full support for the proposed extent and position of the land portion, arguing first for it to be limited to mangrove swamp rather than higher, forested ground and later for it to be confined to less than 30ha (fishery8, forest3, ccgen3). After three meetings were held between planners, the Village Council and the Lots Committee to discuss the issue, negotiations between officials and these local key figures effectively stalled (fishery8, ccgen3).
In November, the Tour Guides Association invited the Minister of Tourism to their meeting, partly to discuss the marine reserve. Both the association president and vice-president expressed their expectation that the government planners would be holding further community consultations before the protected area was declared.

During the course of the fieldwork, however, the positive image of planning progress painted by the planners and these other organisations soon began to fade, as a succession of delays and thwarted expectations befell the project. By the end of the field study no consultations had taken place, no external funds had been granted, the management plan had not been submitted to government and the protected area was no closer to being gazetted. Table 6.2 notes how delays were successively expressed in interviews with officials.

It soon became clear that delays in delimiting the land portion were not purely administrative. One official at the Forest Department revealed uncertainty both over the extent and designation status of the terrestrial area, and said he wanted to meet with local people to gauge their views before proceeding. A senior officer stated that the main issue was over how much land would be needed for the community’s expansion. Another official explained that it still had not been decided whether to declare the land as a national park or as a forest reserve, saying it is “still to be decided on, at high level.”

In early 1997 actions surrounding the planning process began to get still more complicated. The local BTIA now started to become involved more closely:

“This year our thrust has been... to get things moving to where this thing will either become a reality or we’ll stop wasting resources on it. And to that end we called a meeting... What we were aiming for was to get a committee of representatives including representatives of all community groups, and that this would be the local management group that the authorities would deal with in relation to any protected area that wound up on Caye Caulker.”

Government officers were invited and a Forest Officer attended and addressed the January meeting. Representatives of some 10 community organisations also attended, including the Village Council, the Tour Guides Association and the Siwa-ban Foundation.
Though a further meeting was tabled no date was set, and the group was not formally established (ccgen6, forest2).

### Table 6.2 Comments by officials on the progress of planning during the field research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>date</th>
<th>codename</th>
<th>comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23/10/96</td>
<td>czmp3</td>
<td>Protected area nearly ready for gazetting. Waiting for the Forest Department to define the land boundaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25/10/96</td>
<td>fishery3</td>
<td>Zoning scheme for the marine reserve should be presented to the community within a month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/11/96</td>
<td>forest2</td>
<td>Forest Department has made site visits and submitted co-ordinates, but the spatial extent still has to be finalised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/11/96</td>
<td>fishery3</td>
<td>Schedule for the next community consultations should be sorted out by the end of November. January may be the earliest that presentations take place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/12/96</td>
<td>forest3</td>
<td>Land boundaries being finalized: “Yeah, they should go through pretty soon. Its about a month ago I was asked to send all the details of that area for them to revise it once more.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/1/97</td>
<td>fishery3</td>
<td>Draft management plan to be submitted for ministerial approval “within one week”. Zoning scheme to be presented to community “very soon, within two weeks I hope that will happen”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/1/97</td>
<td>meeting4</td>
<td>Legal challenge over North Point will delay designation of the reserve because the Forest Department cannot set the boundary until the issue is sorted out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/3/97</td>
<td>forest2</td>
<td>Been told to ignore the legal challenge and proceed with planning the land portion, which is “almost basically drafted”. But it is not top priority. “Again it’s one of those things that takes someone pursuing the issue. Unfortunately we don’t only have one park, we have other things, if not we could finish it in one month”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/3/97</td>
<td>fishery2</td>
<td>Issue of which community body is to take on a management role needs to be resolved first. “We prefer to know exactly who will run it and how it will be run before declaring it”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the same month, all those involved in planning were taken by surprise when the American former owner of the proposed terrestrial portion announced that he still had legal title to the northern 82ha of North Island. As the tour guides president said, “everything was going good, you know, all the agreements, everything, and all of a sudden it’s like a bomb” (cctourl). Though the former owner accepted his land had been officially acquired by the
state, the acquisition was under challenge because the government had not paid him compensation (ccgen7), and he had since paid the back taxes he owed (ccgen1). The claim was not considered watertight (ccgen1, forest2), at least initially, but a new obstacle to designating the reserve seemed to have been erected.

The Forest Department began to investigate the title issue (fishery4), at the same time as they stressed they would continue with planning as already set out (forest2). Planners responsible for the proposed marine reserve raised the possibility of enacting the marine section of the protected area in advance of the land, though they would only do so if a long delay was otherwise likely (czmp3, fishery4). And the Siwa-ban Foundation’s application to the SGP was soon postponed at the advice of government and UNDP personnel, because of the uncertainty over the land (meeting4).

The landowner intended to pursue his claim through a tribunal if the need arose (ccgen7). However, he had devised a scheme that he hoped would persuade the government to reverse the formal acquisition of the land and thereby settle the issue out of court (see Figure 6.4). He proposed to retain the northern portion of the land for his own use, donate the next 42ha for a land reserve of some form, and the southern section he would sell to government (or swap for an equivalent mainland plot) (ccgen7). The purchased section could then be added to the reserve or made available for sale to the public as lots as originally planned (ccgen4).

He had approached the Village Council with the scheme, asking for their formal support. They directly approached the Minister of Natural Resources to discuss the offer and he reportedly indicated his approval (cctourl, ccgen7). The result of the scheme would be that the ownership issue would be settled quickly and a protected area could be declared, albeit with a 20ha private enclave within its boundaries at the North Point. One member of the council emphasized:

"Suddenly we stop again because of the land portion that is owned. But I think we will get that resolved... because this guy that owns the land he is really cooperating with us" (ccgen4).
Figure 6.4 Former landowner's scheme for North Point area

Source: fax copy provided by interviewee (ccgen7)
For its part, the Village Council was also now expressing a desire to be the key local body responsible for the reserve (ccgen2). As an elected alternative to either the Siwa-ban Foundation or the proposed umbrella group spearheaded by the BTIA, the suggestion that they should work with the Village Council was now finding support among government officials (fishery2, forest2). However, both Fisheries and the Forest Department were proposing a community role confined to a form of 'co-management' (see 4.4.3), with a local body taking on day-to-day running of the protected area, but under governmental supervision (fishery2, forest2, ccgen6).

6.3 Plans as of March 1997

At the close of the field research the ownership issue over the North Point land had yet to be settled, and spatial planning for the protected area had not moved on since the preparation of the draft management plan and proposed zoning scheme. This section is therefore necessarily limited to the rationale and decision-making behind those planning proposals of 1996. Figure 6.5 reproduces sketched versions of the proposed boundary: at the time of the research the precise co-ordinates of the boundary had yet to be defined or mapped accurately. The data available suggested that the total coverage of the protected area would be roughly 2500ha, only 2.5% of which would be made up by the terrestrial portion. At the close of the research it was still not clear whether the terrestrial portion would be declared a national park (no extraction) or a forest reserve (some extractive activities allowed) (forest2).

As with Bacalar Chico, decisions on the proposed boundaries and zoning scheme for the Caye Caulker protected area were undertaken by members of the official planning team. However, input from the community over land development, fishing and tourism helped shape their decisions (forest1, fishery8, ccgen4).

The land boundary was initially set to coincide with the northern limit of residential development suggested in a draft development plan for the island (August 1994). According to one of the planners, the development plan had marked the reserve area as a hotel zone but people in the village opposed such a scale of development (fishery8). The development
Figure 6.5  Draft boundary and zoning plan for protected area

Information source: August (1996b)
plan has not been enacted, and in the mean time the Lots Committee was steadily releasing plots of the government land for sale, on a section-by-section basis progressively northward up North Island (forest3, ccgen2). As the official put it “so the north is all that we had to work with” (fishery8).

The principal justification offered for conservation of the land in the north of the cay was to ensure preservation of at least some coastal forest habitat on the island, as well as mangrove swamps nursery habitat for marine organisms. Initially plans were proposed for a terrestrial reserve covering the northernmost 50ha, but a Forest Department official later redrew the boundary farther south to encompass a further 10ha surrounding a small lagoon (forest3, ccgen1). It is worth noting that the scheme ultimately put forward by the former owner of the North Point land would only slightly alter the line of this southern land boundary (meeting5).

The location of the proposed marine reserve reflected the desire to protect a large section of the Barrier Reef directly off the island, along with a cross-section of adjacent marine habitats, and to extend the reserve west to surround the terrestrial portion (fishery8). The draft boundary had been located arbitrarily rather than precisely on the basis of straight lines and standardized distances from the shore and the reef. It did, however, encompass a range of reef, lagoon and deep water habitats, among them lobster fishing grounds and several cuts and reef features visited by tour guides, including the inshore patch reefs known as Coral Garden (August 1994, fishery3, fishery8, meeting4). The section of sea lying outside the reserve along the front of the cay was left aside because it is heavily used for setting traps and for access:

“There’s a lot of activities and it’s very close to the island to have total control. You have boats running all the time here, so we don’t want to get involved in traffic restrictions and those kind of problems” (fishery3).

The spatial extent of the different elements in the proposed zoning scheme (see Figure 6.5) was similarly imprecise at the time of the research, but the draft map produced by planning staff (August 1996b) broadly correlated with findings from the official survey of user groups (August 1996a). Table 5.2 indicates the regulations set out under the standardized zoning guidelines employed in the scheme for Caye Caulker (August 1996b). The location of the ‘General Use Zones’ accommodated most of the lobster fishing sites mapped by the
planners. The 'Preservation Zone', 'Conservation 1 Zone' and 'Conservation 2 Zone', however, would place heavy restrictions on fishing along most of the reef fronting the cay where some commercial diving and spearfishing took place (August 1996a). The 'Preservation Zone' was located on a stretch of reef seldom used by the tour guides surveyed. One of the planners, however, indicated her disagreement with colleagues that such a no-access zone was at all feasible in the case of Caye Caulker (czmp3), and the incorporation of the zone was under review (fishery8).

6.4 Stakeholder Perspectives

This section again turns to findings from the interviews on people's knowledge of the evolving protected area plans (6.4.1), their overall support for the concept of a reserve off Caye Caulker (6.4.2) and attitudes with regard to the channels of consultation and participation incorporated into planning (6.4.3). The findings highlight the very different character of planning for Caye Caulker as compared with Bacalar Chico.

6.4.1 Awareness

Given the preliminary nature of spatial planning for the Caye Caulker protected area it is perhaps unsurprising that local people's knowledge of current plans tended to be rudimentary. Though there was widespread awareness in Caye Caulker village that some form of planning had been under way, it was only individuals who had become involved in negotiations that expressed knowledge of the proposed extent of the reserve (ccgen1, ccgen2, ccgen3, ccgen4, ccgen6, cctour1). Similarly, few of the villagers who had not been actively involved in planning or associated events expressed any knowledge of the North Point ownership issue.

Different perceptions regarding the function and form of the proposed protected area were again commonplace. There was a common lack of understanding that the reserve was to be multi-use. As for Bacalar Chico (see 5.4.1), fishermen tended to regard the term 'reserve' as a no-access 'preserve' (ccfish4, ccgen8), while some tour guides saw it as a 'park' reserved...
for recreation: “if it’s gonna be a park then it has to be controlled very, very hard because people will go there and fish” (cctour5). Others perceived there would be no fishing permitted at all along the reef (cctour1, ccgen5), which appeared unlikely to be the case if a ‘Conservation 2 Zone’ and a ‘General Use Zone’ were to be included there (August 1996b).

Most interviewees talked of the protected area solely in terms of the barrier reef, with little recognition of the inclusion of other habitats such as sea grass beds and mangroves. The planners’ ecological arguments for including a land portion had also failed to penetrate. Even one of the key figures involved in early negotiations over the land portion had not grasped their argument: “we understood that they wanted some land which would be link along with siwa-ban [the black catbird], I don’t know for what reason” (ccgen3). Interestingly, the former landowner contesting the North Point land labelled and referred to the reserve component in his scheme as a ‘crocodile sanctuary’, though no such emphasis had been placed on crocodiles in any plans prior to his proposals (ccgen7).

Several interviewees complained of a lack of information regarding the plans (e.g. ccfish2, ccres3, ccres6). In a document prepared by the Siwa-ban Foundation, rumour within the village and lack of understanding were identified as key potential problems for the project (McRae 1996). Confusion over the function and form of the protected area have a crucial bearing on the degree of support for the emerging plans expressed within the community.

6.4.2 Support

Here it is useful to divide research findings into the views expressed by planning officials, by ‘key players’ (see 3.2.2) actively involved in the planning process, and by local stakeholders in general.

Virtually all officials suggested that the majority of stakeholders from Caye Caulker and other affected communities supported the idea of a protected area (e.g. forest3, czmp3), citing the response from meetings, letters of support from local organisations and survey results as evidence. The official who carried out the surveys claimed 100% of local people were in favour of a reserve (fishery8), but also noted there was some ‘resistance’ from
fishermen and from the 1994-96 Village Council over fishing restrictions and the land portion (fishery8, August 1994). She saw hoteliers and tour guides as most supportive, and pointed out some conflict of interest apparent between fishermen and guides (fishery8). The manager of Northern Fishermen’s Cooperative touched on the issue:

“Fishermen initially are hesitant to support any development of reserves, because they feel that, you know, it’s gonna affect their livelihood. Those people who were once fishermen but are now engaged more heavily in tourism are naturally in favour of the creation of reserves because their means to making a livelihood have changed.” (ccfish1).

Regarding the inclusion of a terrestrial portion, one official argued “it is the people from Caye Caulker that are actually asking that they have a reserve because they realize some of the benefits that a reserve will have for them” (forest3). However, one of his colleagues expressed his uncertainty over whether the community could truly be said to be in favour, because some people appeared not even to be aware of the proposal for a land portion and he had been receiving “mixed signals” (forest2).

All the key players interviewed from Caye Caulker - chairs of the Village Council, and key figures in the Siwa-ban Foundation, the Tour Guides Association, the BTIA and the Lots Committee - expressed their support for a protected area and their belief that it would benefit the village economy through increased tourism and maintenance of fish stocks. The leading figure in the conservation NGO stressed that the reserve needed full community support if it was to succeed, and that tour guides especially realized conservation of the reef was the key to their survival (ccgen1, meeting4).

The tour guides president claimed in meetings his members had given their unanimous support, and stated “it’s a dream, it’s a dream for everybody” (cctour1). However, he and others often referred to the project as the ‘marine reserve’ or ‘marine park’, omitting explicit reference to the land portion. Though he suggested the majority of people in the village favour a small land reserve too, he did ponder the question: “you think they could do only the marine part, you know, reserve only the marine part?” (cctour1).

He and the 1994-96 council chair also stressed that support for the reserve among villagers depended on existing lobster fishermen being allowed to continue their practices, “otherwise, then, definitely there would be a controversy” (ccgen3).
The 1994-96 council chair was also one of the leading figures who opposed plans for the land portion during early negotiations. Opinions relating to that opposition are noted in Box 6.2, and this is one of many actions analysed more closely in Chapters 7, 8 and 9.

**Box 6.2 Early negotiations over the land portion**

The Fisheries official assigned to planning explained that there had been early concerns in Caye Caulker village to ensure that enough land would be available on the island to accommodate future generations. The 1994-96 Village Council and the Lots Committee could not give their full support to the project for this reason (*fishery8*, August 1994). The chair of the council explained they had suggested taking less land or using the mangrove swampland rather than prime, solid land which could be used for residential purposes (*ccgen3*).

However, two officials (*forest3*, *fishery3*) and one local stakeholder (*ccgen1*) questioned the motives for such opposition. A Forest officer suggested that there were certain key local people who had personal interest in the land. “A couple of people wanted the northern portion since it has a bit of littoral forest which means a bit of highland. They wanted that area for development. People from Caye Caulker” (*forest3*).

Another planning official from Fisheries also talked of certain individuals who wanted that land portion to build tourism developments (*fishery3*). Perhaps significantly, none of the non-active stakeholders interviewed indicated any concern about the north of North Island being set aside as a protected area.

Among general stakeholders within Caye Caulker and other communities, the majority interviewed stated they would like to see a protected area declared. Reasons expressed for supporting the marine reserve included: recovery of declining fish stocks (*ccfish7*); prevention of outsiders fishing island waters (*ccgen8*), especially conch divers (*ccfish3*); protection of the reef and improvement in reef life for tourism (*cctour6*, *ccfish5*, *ccres5*); and economic benefits for those involved in tourism (*ccres2*, *cctour8*, *ccfish7*). One tour guide, for example, stated:

“I think it would be a very good idea.... I see the difference between the Hol Chan reserve and our reef, you know, there is more fish life at the Hol Chan than at our local reef” (*cctour4*).

In Caye Caulker, outsider sailboat fishermen (from Sarteneja) were accused of standing on live corals and breaking coral to remove lobster (*cctour1*). Snorkel and dive tourists were
also accused of touching and damaging corals, collecting live shellfish and using spearguns to kill reef fish for sport (ccres3, cctour4, ccgen3). Reserve status with regular patrols was seen as a means of better controlling tour groups in the area (e.g. ccres1, ccres4, ccgen3).

Opinions on protection of a portion of land, however, were much less in evidence. When expressed, they ranged from indifference (ccres5) to the mild support of one villager who thought that a reserved section of North Island would help prevent over-development of the cay (cctour4).

Despite statements of overall support for the marine reserve, several interviewees expressed mixed opinions on specific aspects of the protected area plans. Some had major reservations concerning the possible denial of fishing access, and wanted assurances that fishing would be permitted in traditional areas (ccgen8, ccres5). Four people pointed out that the reserve would benefit tour guides but harm fishing guides and fishermen (ccfish3, ccfish5, cctour8): “it will benefit us, but not the fishermen, because they need a place to go to, they have to have a living too” (cctour5). Another stressed that tourism could not sustain livelihoods all year round and so people needed to fish as well (ccgen8).

Though social ties and economic links clearly exist between fishermen and tour guides, there was some evidence of conflict of interest (cctour5, ccres6). Discussion of the spatial extent of the marine reserve revealed some polarization between tour guides, who often wanted more area reserved, and fishermen, who tended to take the opposite view. Two people suspected that objections from fishermen were the cause of delayed progress in establishing the protected area (cctour6, ccfish3). On the other hand, one villager argued that increased tourism resulting from the protected area might bring too many changes to the island and to village life (ccres2).

Only one person, a spearfisher, expressed his outright opposition to the protected area, on the grounds that it would ruin his livelihood: “I am totally against it” (ccfish4). He and another spearfisher argued that deeper sites over the barrier reef were prime locations for their work (ccfish4, ccfish6). It was also questioned why there should be another marine reserve at Caye Caulker, so close to the one at Hol Chan (ccfish4, ccfish7).
Two final comments are also worth noting. One stakeholder, a fisherman, reflected that there would always be some people in a community who disagree with a project (ccfish5). Another stakeholder claimed that the protected area project lacked support only because of the involvement of the leader of the conservation NGO, who she suggested was unpopular in the village (ccres6).

6.4.3 Consultation Fora

Few of the interviewees in Caye Caulker and none outside the island had taken part in the official questionnaire survey, and of the local user groups only Caye Caulker tour guides appeared to have been well represented in consultation meetings. However, given the qualitative nature of this research the emphasis is again on opinions regarding the consultation process rather than an attempt to express a quantitative assessment of the ‘reach’ of consultation. Throughout this subsection it is important to note that confusion was evident in the community, and within government, over the term ‘consultation’: the term took on a range of meanings from the act of providing information to people to the act of consulting them for their direct input into planning.

Two officials closely involved with the planning for Caye Caulker were confident that consultation had been thorough. The CZMP officer claimed there had been considerable community participation, although the creation of an advisory committee had been delayed (czmp3). The Fisheries officer who carried out most of the groundwork stated: “we had quite an interaction with the public in general” (fishery8).

However, during meetings relating to the Siwa-ban Foundation’s application for funds, the Small Grants Programme coordinator stressed that he was concerned to hear the viewpoints of local people opposed to reserve plans. The key figure in the NGO replied that it was difficult to get people opposed to attend meetings (meeting4).

Other key local players also gave a mixed response to questions regarding the consultation process. The 1992-94 council chair and the tour guides president, both of them also involved in the conservation NGO, were most positive. The former explained that the
government had carried out much consultation, especially with fishermen, and that he was
certain there would be more liaison in future (ccgen4). The latter also praised the breadth of
consultation, and argued that inputs into decision-making had already come from the
community:

“The decision is not only the government. It has to come from the people.
That’s why the boundary is there now, it came from the people. We want it,
right, one mile out. We want it zoned off.” (cctour1).

The leading figure in the local tourism industry association believed officials had tried to
reach all groups and allowed people to have an input (ccgen6), and the 1994-96 council
chair praised the extensive nature of the fishermen’s survey (ccgen3). But both also noted
that not everybody affected had been informed or consulted over the planned reserve and
their efforts to extend consultation to all should continue. The secretary of the BTIA branch
suggested that local groups had so far had little direct access to planning materials, noting
“actually we have only seen them hold up the documents, we haven’t really looked at the
documents” (ccgen6).

The manager of the Northern Fishermen’s Co-operative suggested that fishermen tended
not to be consulted readily by planners, and confirmed that his organisation had not yet
been approached for formal consultation (ccfish1). Prior to the researcher’s interview with
him, he was not aware of the likely location or shape of the protected area. “This interview
that we’re doing right now is an eye-opener for me” (ccfish1).

Among stakeholders who had not played a key role in the planning process, opinions on
consultation fora were expressed in markedly more negative terms. One lobster fisherman,
who had attended public meetings where fishermen had raised concerns and had been
reassured they could continue their operations, did feel positive about consultations, but
pending what emerges in the “fine print” (ccgen8). Numerous complaints were, however,
expressed about insufficient consultation effort on the part of the planners (e.g. cctour5,
ccfish2, ccres3). Some said they had not had the chance to offer their opinions but would
do if asked (cctour4, ccfish4), though one doubted if his opinions would make any
difference (ccfish4). The president of the local water taxi association was particularly
damning:
"I don’t think there’s been enough consultation, and I don’t think there’s been enough study of the whole programme.... There’s a lot more they can do. They can listen more.... They don’t announce it properly. They don’t get it across that people are having these meetings.... It’s not very well attended, I don’t think. I don’t think they gave enough time" (cctour2).

Another village resident argued that the meetings held were not really intended for village people in general. Though everyone needed to know about the plans and express their opinions, she suggested, often the people met with first were those “with money” or those on the village council (ccres1). A contrasting view was taken by a tour guide who claimed that the government only consulted with fishermen, who ended up delaying progress in designating the reserve (cctour6). He was therefore not in favour of any more consultation. Another villager simply stated that the government should do what they thought was best, because fishermen and tour guides were the ones who were damaging the reef (ccres5).

References were, however, also made by some officials and local stakeholders to people’s motivation to attend meetings and become involved. One official claimed that a great deal of effort was expended on arranging meetings in the early phase of planning and only a “handful of people” attended (czmp3). One tour guide suggested it was mainly a few interested parties that have become involved (cctour2). Another complained that the fishermen who could not be persuaded to attend were those who had not understood that the reserve was to allow for multiple-use (cctour1). A third guide explained that he had not participated to date because he did not believe he had anything to add (cctour3).

The application made to the Small Grants Programme listed motivation as a general problem in the village:

“There is a difficulty in inducing Caye Caulker residents to attend meetings. This may be overcome by informing families via circulated announcements of the meetings’ time and venue, as well as their importance to the future of Caye Caulker. Refreshments (non-alcoholic) will be offered” (McRae 1996 p8).

Motivational factors form one of many issues that have been raised in Chapters 5 and 6 and that are analyzed in detail in the chapters to follow.
6.5 Summary

Planning of a proposed marine and terrestrial protected area close to the island of Caye Caulker was still under way at the close of the field study. Direct economic users of the proposed site included fishermen and tour guides, and, given its close proximity to the resort settlement of Caye Caulker village, it was widely expected to impact on the local tourism economy. The creation of the terrestrial protected area also had implications for potential landholding interests. Planning of a statutory protected area commenced after the failure of a private conservation initiative and subsequent lobbying from local residents. Consultation exercises conducted with local stakeholders involved a questionnaire survey, one full public meeting with Caye Caulker villagers and a series of meetings with local bodies. Informal meetings with villagers also took place. During the course of the fieldwork progress with planning was delayed, and the process became complicated by uncertainties over protection status, state-local management links and a legal challenge concerning ownership of the proposed land portion. One local man remarked: "the reserve is bullshit. Been waiting a long time and nothing has happened. It is all politics" (ccgen8).

The proposed site extended along the reef fronting the island and extended west to take in the northernmost land. Marine boundaries and zones were influenced by stakeholder usage, permitting continued access to most established locations for lobster fishing and snorkelling/scuba diving. The land boundary was influenced by plans for private sale of public land. However, again, all planning decisions were made by state agents. Local stakeholders possessed little knowledge of the details of plans, but most expressed support for the concept of a marine reserve. Concerns were expressed by some over fishing restrictions and the extent of the terrestrial portion. Consultation efforts were widely valued even though active involvement in the planning process largely hinged on the roles of certain local ‘key players’. Chapter 7 now brings together findings from both case study sites to analyse patterns of community involvement in greater depth.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CHARACTERIZING PARTICIPATION:
FORMS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
IN PLANNING

Drawing from the preceding narratives, Chapters 7, 8 and 9 now advance the analysis. Findings from both case study sites are combined and compared in an attempt to elucidate the processes and power relations at work in community participation and public involvement in protected area planning. In doing so, the analytical chapters draw additionally on the contextual case study material in Chapter 4 and some of the broader debates outlined in Chapter 2, as well as postulating theoretical contributions of their own. As the analysis proceeds it becomes progressively more conceptual in character.

In Chapter 7 the thesis first characterizes and evaluates participation and other forms of community involvement in planning at the study sites, revealing the underlying social and political complexity inherent in the involvement process.

The chapter commences by examining the overall approach taken by planners toward involving people in the communities affected by the Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker projects within the planning process (7.1). It includes a discussion and evaluation of the formalized participation exercises conducted by the planning teams (7.2), and explores other non-formal or non-consultative means by which people participated (7.3). It then points to the heterogenous nature of the communities and the differing roles played by different stakeholders in the process (7.4), and also takes a critical look at the antithesis of involvement: exclusion from the planning process (7.5). Such considerations inevitably lead to discussions of social power, the prime focus of Chapter 8.
7.1 The Form and Scope of ‘Participation’

Planning for the Belizean protected areas reflected wider socio-political critiques of biodiversity conservation practice and the new global discourses of conservation discussed in Chapter 2. It did not match the ‘classic’ pattern of imposed fortress conservation because some elements of the people-oriented approaches discussed by writers such as Brandon and Wells (1992) and Pimbert and Pretty (1997) were evident in the processes and outcomes of planning (see 2.2.4).

The spatial outcomes of planning were influenced by factors other than biodiversity criteria such as traditional use of fishing areas, favoured locations for reef tours and demand for land on the cays. Indeed, the marine sections utilized a multiple-use zoning system that allowed for areas of regulated extraction and recreational use inside the boundaries of the protected areas. In this respect, they applied a planning model increasingly incorporated in the design of protected areas around the world (e.g. Richard & O'Connor 1997, Cocklin et al 1998).

Moreover, and of crucial interest for this study, planners expressed a commitment to community involvement in the process of planning, reflecting growing calls for public participation in people-oriented conservation discourse (e.g. World Bank 1994, Furze et al 1996). Exercises to gauge local people’s needs and opinions and to provide channels for them to convey their concerns were incorporated into planning policy and procedure. In both cases questionnaire surveys and consultation meetings took place, as well as informal exchanges between planners and stakeholders. In the case of Bacalar Chico an Advisory Committee was convened with local representation (see 5.2), and for Caye Caulker the possibility of some form of local management was aired (see 6.2.2).

However, it is vital to make clear the relative scope for participation that existed for Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker. The form of community participation built into the planning process was one set within closely defined parameters, and the planning that resulted was far from ‘bottom-up’ in style.
Formal efforts by the planners to gain local input were limited to consultation exercises. Local people had the opportunity to provide information and express their viewpoints, but decision-making was carried out by the agents of government and of NGOs engaged in planning (see 5.3 and 6.3). In consultation meetings, the communities were generally presented with proposals drawn up by planners, such as suggested boundaries or zoning schemes, and invited to comment. Their input was therefore more reactive than active, and all the spatial planning decisions were ultimately taken by the planning officials. One of the CZMP officers argued that in her view such a consultation procedure was inevitable:

"You can't get a big public group to sit down and do a plan, basically. You have to propose something and have discussions, go back, change, go back again, that sort of thing" (czmp3).

Even the potentially more active involvement of community members in the Bacalar Chico Advisory Committee was ultimately constrained (see 5.4.3), despite policy claims that such committees ensure 'adequate community participation' within Belize's new protected area initiatives (see 4.4.3). Local representatives on the Committee formed the minority (with only one seat jointly representing Corozal and Sarteneja). The agenda for each meeting was drawn up by planning officials. The Committee minutes were dominated by contributions from the planners and there were few records of input from the community representatives. Moreover, the Committee was explicitly an advisory body: it did not have executive powers.

Section 2.3 has underlined the potential that exists for varied interpretations of the term 'community participation'. Within conservation projects use of the term has varied from the mere dissemination of protected area regulations among local populations, at one extreme, to the co-planning of reserves between communities and state agencies or, still further, to community-led management of communal resources (IIED 1994). The modes of participation formally solicited by planners for both study sites in Belize conformed to types classed long ago as tokenistic by Arnstein (1969), in that they granted people a chance to air views and (for a limited few) to advise but no rights to decide. Under the typology of participation listed in Pimbert and Pretty (1997), the case study examples reach no further than the level termed 'participation by consultation' (see Table 2.5). To reiterate, participation by consultation is defined thus by Pretty (1995, p5):
"People participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and information gathering processes, and so control analysis. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on board people's views".

Further evidence for this categorisation springs from views and opinions expressed by interviewees. One official described participation not as a forum for generating plans but as an exercise in compromise on the part of planners, in which officials are prepared to "bend a little" on their proposals (fishery2). Another explicitly conceived of it as a process of modifying proposals until they gain majority approval (fishery3).

Findings from a number of interviews directly question the underlying commitment of some planners to active and broad-based community involvement. For the Caye Caulker project, no consultation meetings took place in the communities outside Caye Caulker village, and many people within the village itself regarded consultation efforts with cynicism. In the case of Bacalar Chico there is evidence that the need for broad public participation was urged initially by actors other than the government and INGO officers responsible for planning (see 5.2). Several local stakeholders in San Pedro raised doubts over the planners' preparedness to actually take local views and concerns on board. One complained that decisions had already been made in advance of meetings:

"They had already done what they wanted to do. I'm not saying that it's a bad project....But we should have participated on that project, which we didn't." (bctour6).

A local member of the Advisory Committee suggested that decisions were effectively predetermined by the agendas of the INGOs:

"Decisions were being made by the people that were paying for it, I think.... when these people finance a project I think they already know what they want" (bcgen1).

Section 4.4 has already argued that experience in community participation in general has been limited within Belize for citizens, for governmental agencies and for external funding bodies. The state agencies engaged in protected area planning likewise had yet to demonstrate the capacity and commitment to foster active local involvement in projects, a tendency revealed elsewhere by Little (1994), Murphree (1994) and Sanjayan et al (1997). It is perhaps telling to note that, during interviews, two high-placed officials were offhand
about participation, and dismissive over questions aimed toward a critical appraisal of the process (*fishery*, *forest*). And though participatory rhetoric had entered some policy statements regarding reserves (McField et al 1996), it was notably absent from others. None of the 26 recommendations of the National Protected Areas Systems Plan, for example, explicitly emphasized community participation in the planning of statutory protected areas (Programme for Belize 1996).

It is important to point out at this stage, however, that community involvement in planning for Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker was not limited to formal participation exercises. As actor-oriented studies emphasize (Arce et al 1994, Long and van der Ploeg 1994), the planning process was also subject to the independent involvement of local stakeholders. Certain individuals and groups within the community brought influence to bear through their actions and lobbying outside the official participation channels. Once again they seldom played a direct hand in decision-making, but to varying degree their actions did impinge on planning. In the case of both Bacalar Chico and, especially, Caye Caulker, several local people developed informal social access to government personnel. Some occupied, or tried to occupy, a bridging position between community and planning agencies (see 8.4).

This section has set out the broad parameters of community involvement in planning for the protected areas. The planners paid explicit attention to social issues and the involvement of local people, but, in the terms defined by Wells and Brandon (1992), the modes of ‘participation’ they fostered equated only to information-gathering and consultation (see 2.3.3). They did not extend to involvement in decision-making, which Ribot (1999) argues is the essence of meaningful participation. The case study therefore corroborates the findings of other studies that suggest the persistence of structural limitations on participation in state-led conservation projects (Wells & Brandon 1992, Little 1994, Pimbert & Pretty 1997). However, the study also notes that it is not only formal channels of involvement that come into operation when planners engage with local communities. This involvement of people through other means is taken up further in Section 7.3. The following section now turns to examine and evaluate in detail the officially-organised exercises in ‘participation by consultation’ (Pimbert & Pretty 1997).
7.2 Evaluation of Consultation

Given that the form of community involvement solicited by protected area planners fell within the parameters of participation by consultation, the next task is to analyse the conduct of the consultations. The following questions address how open and effective the consultation process proved to be, in the context of those limited terms of participation. To what extent did social considerations shape reserve plans? Did the communities have an ongoing input into plans? Did consultation reach to and engage a broad cross-section of local stakeholders? Such questions flow from the requirements of 'comprehensiveness' and 'openness' modelled in Figure 2.2 and from some of the challenges of public involvement discussed in Section 2.3, including commitment of sufficient time, resources and trust to ensure participation is widespread and equitable (Furze et al 1996, Mitchell 1997). They also relate to the recommendations of consensus, accountability and comprehensive public involvement set out in Belize's Cayes Development Policy (see 4.3.3).

This section looks first at the planning decisions made, their links with local input and their sensitivity to local opinion (7.2.1), before analysing the 'openness' of the consultation procedures that took place (7.2.2).

7.2.1 Local Input and Support

In the key planning documents for Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker, frequent reference is made to socio-economic considerations (August 1996a, Gibson et al 1996). There is indeed clear evidence in the research data of attempts by protected area planners to gather socio-economic information related to the reserve areas, build it into the plans and gain feedback from the communities through consultation. The marine zoning schemes drafted seem strongly to reflect social considerations, with no-access zones kept to a small size and traditional fishing permitted across large areas, including approximately two thirds of the Bacalar Chico marine sections. In both cases, the terrestrial portion could, at least in theory, have incorporated more of the national land in northern Ambergris Caye and north Caye Caulker, but considerable space was left aside for the expansion of island communities and
tourism development. Referring to Caye Caulker, one high-ranking Forest Department official stated:

“Assessment as to how much land will be needed for the community’s expansion.... that will be a determining factor, an influencing factor, as far as the boundary of the reserve” (forest).

It appears that information provided through the social surveys and early consultation meetings held by planners helped shape some of the decisions on the boundaries and zones, if not on the location of the protected areas. Arguments put forward by the NACDC representative on the Advisory Committee were reflected in the extent of high, developable land included within the terrestrial portion of Bacalar Chico (see 5.3). Concerns expressed in early consultation meetings by the Caye Caulker Village Council that traditional lobster fishing areas should remain open was similarly reflected in the emerging zoning plans for the proposed marine reserve off the island (see 6.3).

Once the preparatory discussions were over, and planners began to draw up reserve boundaries and zoning restrictions, however, local input into the process seemed to dry up. There was little evidence of feedback from the communities through consultation fora leading directly to modifications in the proposals put forward by planning officials. The only example that stands out was when concerns over fishing restrictions on grouper around Rocky Point within Bacalar Chico were raised at the public meetings in San Pedro, and appeared likely to lead to modifications in the length of the proposed close season (see 5.3).

Overall, the participation of local stakeholders appears to have operated more effectively at the information-gathering or ‘social assessment’ stage (World Bank 1994) rather than at the consultation stages when feedback was solicited. Once the planning process was under way, local people had some chance to respond with their views but ultimately they had little demonstrable direct input into the design of the reserves. Yet people-oriented approaches call for effective participation throughout the planning process (Furze et al 1996).

Arguably, the lack of input could be because planners simply did their job well and put forward proposals that people supported, as suggested by one Fisheries officer (fishery). But, alternatively, it could be because planners failed to foster effective, broad-based consultations that facilitated local input. Definitive judgement on this issue is difficult, but a critical appraisal of the issues at stake yields some pointers.
Interviews with local stakeholders did reveal broad, though not unanimous, support for the concept of a protected area. In particular there was a widespread belief that local benefits could result from a reserve through resource replenishment and the generation of tourism. But support for the concept does not necessarily imply support for plans, and even statements seemingly supportive of plans can be open to misinterpretation.

With a critical eye, a simple statement of support can beg as many questions as it answers. An extract from the results of the questionnaire survey carried out by Bacalar Chico planning staff (Gomez 1996) is reproduced in Figure 7.1. These three questions were the only ones specifically asking for opinions on proposed plans (the other questions referred to resource usage). The views of respondents (in this case tour guides) were rather simply categorised. The collated results did not display people’s views on the spatial configuration of boundary lines and of restricted zones. And the limitations inherent in asking people simply whether they are in favour or not in favour of a reserve should be recognized. An overall expression of support masks specific interests and misgivings, and it obscures shades of opinion over the preferred function and form of a reserve.

**Figure 7.1 Extract from published results of Bacalar Chico planning survey**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. THOUGHTS ABOUT BOUNDARIES</td>
<td>83% - think boundaries are adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10% - think boundaries are too large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>07% - think boundaries are too small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. THOUGHTS ABOUT ESTABLISHING DESIGNATED ZONES</td>
<td>80% - think it is a good idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>06% - think it is a bad idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14% - are not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. THOUGHTS ABOUT ESTABLISHING THE BACALAR CHICO PROJECT</td>
<td>92% - think it is a good idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>05% - think it is a bad idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>03% - did not answer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gomez (1996, p18)

In fact, as Subsections 5.4.2 and 6.4.2 show, misgivings over specific details of plans were expressed by many local stakeholders during interviews. Yet ‘packaged’ survey responses referring to broad concepts could be conveyed as representing majority support for
proposals. For Caye Caulker, a planning report simply and ambiguously states “from the fishermen sample that was interviewed, 100% support the reserve” (August 1994, p4). Does that refer to the idea of the reserve or the reserve as planned? Unqualified statements on community support run the serious risk of being misleading.

7.2.2 Openness of Consultations

Statements of support for the project overall also cannot be conflated with support for the planning process - the key interest of this thesis. Several people did praise the efforts put into consultation by planners: the questionnaire surveys, the meetings with user groups, the larger-scale public meetings and the establishment of the Advisory Committee. Referring to the community meetings for Bacalar Chico one interviewee remarked:

“It was a genuine effort to try and involve the community in the process. I think the people that were doing it were genuinely trying to talk. How effective it was, I don’t know” (bcgenl). 

But certain fundamental criticisms of the transparency and openness of the planning process were common to both sites. As recorded in Subsections 5.4.1 and 6.4.1, there were repeated complaints of a lack of information on reserve plans as they developed. A few people stated they were unaware even of the intention of government to create the reserves. Limited public knowledge over issues such as zoning and access to fishing areas caused much confusion and uncertainty in the communities, and hampered people’s contribution to planning when the opportunity arose. For Bacalar Chico, rumours of the emerging zoning scheme were commonplace, but few local interviewees showed any detailed knowledge of where specific zones might be located in the Marine Reserve. Box 7.1 summarizes some general points concerning local people’s awareness and understanding of plans and the planning process.

Criticisms were levelled too at the breadth and depth of consultation exercises (see 5.4.3 and 6.4.3). Even among users of the areas (fishermen and tour guides) many of the individuals interviewed had not taken part in surveys or attended consultation meetings. There were calls for there to be more meetings designed to attract the general public rather than meetings with select groups or individuals. There were further complaints that
consultation meetings were not always organised so as to encourage wide attendance, that prior announcements were not circulated effectively and that certain sectors of the communities were not invited. Fishermen, in particular, commonly expressed frustration at having insufficient chance to present their views: "the tour guides, they did, but the commercial fishermen I don’t think they had much say about it" (bcfish8).

Some of the criticisms of planning echoed themes already identified in the wider literature on public participation discussed in Section 2.3. Several interviewees criticized consultation exercises for operating more as vehicles for information dissemination or ‘passive participation’ (Pimbert & Pretty 1997) than as channels for active public participation. There were accusations that involvement was biased toward village elites (as noted by Brohman 1996 and Ahluwalia 1997), and that the process did not encourage people opposed to plans to voice their views (White 1996, Richard & O’Connor 1997). In the case of Caye Caulker, two officials even expressed their uncertainty over whether the full range of opinions on planning issues had been given an airing (forest2, fishery2).

**Box 7.1 Local perceptions**

It is useful to note here some trends in public perceptions that were common to both case study sites (for further details see 5.4.1 and 6.4.1).

The purpose of the protected area was viewed in different ways, ranging from securing fisheries against foreign incursions to creating a recreation ‘park for tourists’. Few stakeholders referred to the conservation of biological diversity for its intrinsic worth.

There was a widespread acceptance among local people of the sensitivity of reef habitats, and a widely-held belief that the creation of a reserve would help restore marine life. There was a more limited recognition/acceptance of the ecological interdependence of coastal habitats, and of the rationale for preserving mangroves and sea grass beds.

Confusion arose especially over the use of the term ‘marine reserve’, which many stakeholders continued to take to mean a blanket ‘no-take’ preserve rather than a multiple-use area. The confusion inevitably impacted on perceptions and opinions regarding the protected area.

Confusion was also evident in the community over the term ‘consultation’. Some stakeholders simply took the term to mean provision of information, while others assumed it must mean asking local people for their direct input into plans.
One central issue in relation to this study is whether an underlying commitment to participation through the consultation process could really be demonstrated. A number of further points add weight to the suggestion that, even if commitment was expressed by planners, it was not ultimately put into practice.

Long delays arose in feedback-stage consultations over Caye Caulker (see 6.2.2). Though a rough draft of zones for the reserve had been prepared, no public discussion over possible zones had taken place by the close of the field research. And despite stated intentions, no advisory committee was set up to help guide planning for the proposed protected area. People did not know for sure whether the concerns about access to traditional lobstering areas, for example, had been taken on board. One villager who had been consulted early on complained:

"Now, whether they're gonna take the fishermen's recommendations or not, we don't know. They go up top with that, and they won't provide us with that information" (ccgen3).

In the case of Bacalar Chico, plans were written up in draft form even before extensive consultation exercises even took place (see 5.2). During the public meetings, agendas for discussion were pre-determined, and people effectively had the chance only to react to proposals that were already in the project pipeline and awaiting formalization. The stated purpose of the second meeting in San Pedro, for example, was to present and gain feedback on three proposals put forward by the planning team, including a zoning scheme. Following the meeting preparation of a finalized plan for the protected area and presentation of the revisions back to the communities became repeatedly delayed, even after the reserve itself was declared.

Commitment to consultation, of course, does work both ways. It was also the case that, where consultations had been arranged, the size of the turnout among local people sometimes disappointed planning officials - a problem expressed in particular with regard to the initial stages of planning at Caye Caulker (czmp3). These points are revisited in Section 7.5. Nevertheless, the issue to note here is that vital ingredients of effective participation such as information disclosure, flexibility of planning approach and broad-based consultation effort were in short measure. As Mitchell (1997, p158) writes: "trust,
communication, opportunity and flexibility are the crucial elements that ultimately determine the effectiveness of a public participation program”.

The detailed analysis presented in this section permits a critical evaluation of consultation procedures. It reveals that, though social considerations helped shape the protected area plans, community involvement was greater in terms of information provision than consultative feedback (Wells & Brandon 1992). The involvement procedures approximated to a ‘bureaucratic model’ of participation described by Lyons et al (1999), in which pre-defined and externally-driven parameters restricted the scope and flexibility for input (Furze et al 1996). The analysis also points out that generalized statements of community support can be open to manipulation and shows how a lack of transparency in planning can be highlighted in public misperceptions of evolving plans. In spite of often laudable efforts, the consultation exercises did not appear to reach and engage the breadth of local opinion indicated in interviews with planners, and did not operate as effective channels for ongoing community input into plans. Representing them as such serves only to mask over any unresolved tensions. Indeed, such mis-representation even threatens to inflame tension.

7.3 Other Forms of Public Involvement

Consultations formed the channels of participation officially and formally incorporated into the planning process. But they were not the only means through which local people became involved in planning and sought to influence its outcome. Certain local actors also had the opportunity to participate informally or in a non-consultative manner. Some did so by virtue of pre-existing social access to planners. Others did so through advancing their own initiatives, establishing liaison links with planners or lobbying politicians and state functionaries who could influence planners.

Some of these independent forms of involvement are examples of the ‘initiating actions’ identified by Wells and Brandon (1992), in which local actors take steps to initiate conservation-related projects (see 2.3.3). But most equate to informal or less visible actions (Healey 1997), in which actors utilize and develop channels of contact with planners to try to influence ongoing events outside the formal consultation settings. As Subsection 4.4.1
has argued, Belizean citizens are more accustomed to a culture of political lobbying and patronage than to a culture of open community participation.

Figure 7.2 summarizes the instances of informal involvement in the planning process, as well as noting the stages where formal participation took place. Independent involvement played a role in planning for both sites, but was particularly prominent in the case of Caye Caulker, highlighting the variability of the planning process from one location to another. At Caye Caulker opportunities for formal involvement had been fewer but there was also greater local interest in the impacts of the project (see 6.2). Hence the impetus for more informal actions by local stakeholders. Success in opening up such informal channels of participation depended to large extent on the ability to deploy social power. The interests, motivations and power relations involved in these actions are analysed in detail within Chapter 8. The remainder of this section concentrates on collating the informal actions that took place.

For both sites, initiation of reserve planning itself actually evolved from the aspirations and independent actions of local residents. The initial trigger that set planning for Bacalar Chico in motion came from a resident of Sarteneja (see 5.2). He utilized his existing social contact with the INGO working in the area to help galvanize the interest already shown by government officials in establishing a protected area. His liaison role with planners was then to continue when he became a village representative on the Advisory Committee.

In Caye Caulker the initial campaign by the local Siwa-ban Foundation to conserve the south of the island, followed by lobbying of government by a number of other village residents, provided early momentum for the island’s proposed reserve (see 6.2.1). One of those who had long been in favour of a protected area re-iterated that the impetus came from the island, claiming “it’s the people who want it, you know, it’s not the government. It’s the people who want it” (cctour1).

The informal or independent involvement of certain Caye Caulker residents continued, with varying degrees of influence, throughout the subsequent planning process. The founder of the Siwa-ban Foundation had frequent informal discussions with official planning staff and her input was solicited for the zoning scheme. The Tour Guides Association continued to
Figure 7.2 Formal and informal public involvement in the planning process

**BACALAR CHICO**

- **formal**
  - liaison/invitation to visit
  - advisory committee
  - surveys, meetings
  - advisory committee
  - initiation of planning
  - lobbying/liaison: marine reserve
  - draft plan
  - liaison: marine reserve
  - declaration

- **informal**
  - lobbying/liaison: land extent & restrictions
  - surveys, meetings
  - advisory committee

**CAYE CAULKER**

- **formal**
  - private reserve initiative
  - lobbying
  - liaison:
    - marine reserve & land extent
  - lobbying/liaison:
    - management role

- **informal**
  - initiation of planning
  - surveys, meetings
  - liaison:
    - land status
  - legal challenge & lobbying/liaison:
    - North Point
  - lobbying/liaison:
    - management role

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lobbying = appeal to those with political/executive influence over planners
liaison = direct contact with planners

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communicate with officials and invited them to speak at its own meetings. The local BTIA also liaised with officials, and staged seminars related to the proposed protected area. Later, two of these bodies undertook initiatives to secure potential involvement in the finalization of plans and their future implementation. The conservation NGO prepared an application for Small Grants Programme funding, while the BTIA moved to set up a community-based reserve committee. The Village Council then also started actively lobbying for a local management role, its chair acknowledging that it was now one of three competing organisations (ccgen2). Reflecting on these rivalries, one tour guide stressed that most villagers believed control of the reserve should lie in the hands of Caye Caulker rather than government, but that it needed to be taken up by one body alone (ctour3). Kepe (1997) noted similar rivalries in south Africa among civic organisations vying for a representative role in a protected area.

Such independent initiatives did not feature highly for Bacalar Chico, once planning was under way. But informal channels existed through which people might influence the process in a more subtle fashion via social contacts. The protected areas coordinator in the Fisheries Department was from San Pedro and some local interviewees referred to informal discussions with him. Similarly, one of the staff based at the reserve’s headquarters was a resident of Sarteneja. A young man who often assisted at the headquarters and had frequent social contact with staff also worked in the area for his father, a beachtrap fisherman from Corozal.

One common feature of planning for both sites was the seemingly pervasive influence of people with landholding interests and those who lobbied to reduce restrictions on land development. As well as serving on the Advisory Committee for Bacalar Chico, the representatives of the development corporation (NACDC) and of the landowners association had networks of contacts with government officials and with national politicians to whom the planning staff were ultimately answerable. Some interviewees for Caye Caulker (meeting4, forest3) suggested that people with interests in owning and developing land in the North Point area had been attempting to influence planning all along through lobbying (first to restrict the inclusion of developable land in the protected area, then to downgrade its protected status). According to one planning official “certain individuals want to have access to the land for more development like bigger hotels” (fishery3). If so,
their efforts were eclipsed at the end of the field research period by what was surely the most directly influential of all independent actions by stakeholders that impinged on planning - the former owner’s legal claim to the North Point and his submission of a substitute plan for the land.

The important point to stress from this section is that community involvement in protected area planning is clearly not confined to formally-organised channels of participation such as public consultation exercises. As actor-oriented studies in other fields have recognised, citizens can act independently to influence or try to influence projects (Arce et al 1994, Long & van der Ploeg 1994). The recognition of such informal, or at least non-formalized, involvement outside the official participatory fora adds a further stream to the complexity and fluidity of the participation process described in recent studies of conservation projects (e.g. Goodwin 1998, Sharpe 1998).

7.4 Different Opinions, Different Capacities

Another crucial theme that emerges from the foregoing sections is the confirmation that social heterogeneity inevitably imprints itself upon the planning process. Discussions by Ghimire and Pimbert (1997), Leach et al (1997) and Sharpe (1998) stress that stakeholders in conservation-related projects have different interests and different abilities to promote their interests (see 2.3 and 2.4.3).

In the case study, disparities in the opinions and capacities of actors were evident at all levels. They were most readily perceived in the differences between planners and local stakeholders, but they were also manifest among planners and among stakeholders. The recognition of such differences is fundamental to an analysis of the social character of planning and of both formalized and non-formalized participation.

Individuals and agencies within the planning sectors did not always operate in a co-ordinated, harmonious fashion, for as Schmink and Wood (1992) revealed in Amazonia, the roles of these bureaucratic agents were complex in both sites and interests and viewpoints were not uniform. Actors at the decision-making level in the planning of
Bacalar Chico, for example, included personnel of the Fisheries Department, the Forest Department and the CZMP, and staff of three INGOs (see 5.2). The head of the INGO principally engaged in planning revealed a difference in imperative from the government planners, viewing the promotion of tourism in the reserve as expedient rather than an economic goal in itself (ing6). As McNeely & Ness (1995) note, conservation professionals commonly differ in their acceptance of people-oriented approaches.

The decision-making actors for Caye Caulker were confined to government personnel, yet examples of disharmony also existed among them that, as Section 9.4 argues, may have crucially undermined their unity of purpose. Two officials in the Forest Department had differing opinions on what should be the status of the terrestrial portion (see 6.2.2). And the issue of the North Point land claim revealed poor communication and co-ordination between that department and the Lands and Survey Department, a division of the same Ministry (meeting4, ccgen1).

Differences in opinions and capacities were yet more apparent at the local level. As Section 2.3 has emphasized, studies of participation in practice have repeatedly demonstrated the inappropriateness of “assumptions concerning the existence of homogenous, consensual ‘communities’ ” (Leach et al 1997, p2). In a study of forest conservation initiatives in Cameroon, Sharpe (1998) observed that naive conceptions of ‘community’ were confounded by highly contested and historically constructed local interests in the forest and visions of its future, belying the notion of a single community ‘voice’. Subsections 4.4.2 and 4.4.3 have already noted cases in Belize where heterogeneity of interests, lack of solidarity and even social conflict within communities have characterized conservation-related activities. At Five Blues Lake and the Community Baboon Sanctuary such issues have threatened entire projects. Indeed, one Forest Department official remarked of ever-present competition and infighting within communities (forest2).

For both case study sites, varying shades of opinion relating to the protected area plans existed within local communities. Disparate views were exemplified by some sports fishermen from San Pedro and spearfishers from Caye Caulker who voiced strong opposition to planned fishing restrictions that some other stakeholders strongly supported (see 5.4.2, 6.4.2). The planning official who carried out most of the groundwork for the
Caye Caulker plans talked of this conflict of interest (fishery8). Tour guides had at times said to her that they witnessed harmful fishing practices and voiced the opinion that there should be no fishing at all within the reserve boundaries, especially no spearfishing. This was confirmed by one tour guide interviewed (cctour6), but it was also echoed by the manager of the island’s fishing co-operative station:

"The way I believe is if you’re gonna put a conservation place, to conserve, every living fish or species should not be caught in that area. That’s the way I figure out.... So for conservation to work you have to exclude all types of fishing, only snorkelling but no spearfishing or nothing. It should be conserved as the name states" (ccfish2).

Similar differences in opinion arose over land coverage and land development restrictions, the arguments of the development lobby contrasting with those of local people opposed to the large-scale acquisition and clearance of land. Land ownership is one of the resource conflict issues that Warner and Jones (1998) identify (see Box 2.10). Intra-community friction over development was particularly evident in Caye Caulker, and had contributed to factionalism within the village that impacted on the planning process. Box 7.2 takes a closer look at these factions and rival interests.

Individuals and social groups differed not just in their interests with regard to the reserve, but also in their knowledge of the project and their capacity to exert influence, as found in the case studies by Goodwin (1998) and Sharpe (1998) The result was that certain individuals, representatives and select interests took a more prominent role than others in both formal and informal community involvement. As a group, tour guides appeared to have greater ability than fishermen because of an inbuilt bias in the consultations (see 7.5 and 8.2). In public fora, meanwhile, there was a tendency for vociferous, highly-motivated individuals to dominate discussions according to one interviewee from San Pedro:

"A few people, the same people that seem to have a vested interest in it and want to think they express the opinion of the rest of the people are the ones that come over to make an opinion" (bgen1).

He and other local appointees on the Advisory Committee, however, arguably already had a privileged and legitimized position from which to argue their case through their representational role in that planning forum. In Caye Caulker, certain individuals and groups also came to dominate liaison and negotiations with the planning officials. As
already noted in Section 7.3, by the close of the research three groups of citizens were vying with one another to take on a formalized management role, ostensibly as representatives of the community.

Box 7.2 Factions and rivalries in Caye Caulker

The postcard image of Caye Caulker as an idyllic and laid-back resort hides some simmering tensions within the community. Some interviewees referred directly to a history of intra-community conflict. An interviewee from the mainland talked of petty rivalries on the island (acad4), while a villager claimed that factionalism among fishermen, among tour guides and over land development issues had long hurt the island (ccgen1). Since its inception in 1990 planning for the reserve became embroiled in these tensions, and seemed in part to help generate them, with extra friction created as different people or groups on the island started to vy for influence. Indeed, one planning official lamented “right now that is one of the holdbacks in getting funding from the GEF small grants programme” (fishery2).

Just how and why different interest groups and factions pursued their aims is a major analytical topic to be explored in Chapter 8. It is, however, worth noting here a little direct evidence of conflict within the community and accusations of self-interest among villagers.

One villager openly resented the involvement of the leader of the local conservation NGO in reserve planning and stated that villagers would not be supportive if she were to take control, if the reserve were “given to her” (ccres6). Another expressed conservation-oriented concern over who would be in control of the land portion, noting there were several people who wanted to be in charge, some of whom she thought might act in their own interests rather than those of the village. What was needed was somebody “who really would protect everything” (ctour5). A third, a commercial spearfisher, accused all those promoting the marine reserve of running roughshod over other people’s, or at least his, interests:

“Some people on the island don’t give a shit about little people like me. They may have a hotel and set traps on the west side, they are OK. But I work on the reef and I only have my boat” (ccfish4).

In effect, much of the public involvement in the planning for both sites hinged on the actions of a limited number of individuals or groups: actors that had the role of key players in the process (see 6.4.2). A number of authors (Desai 1996, Goodwin 1998, Ribot 1999) note how local elites and select interest groups in practice often come to dominate
participatory fora (see 2.3.2 and 2.4.3). Prominent local players in the case of Bacalar Chico included the NACDC representative, the head of the landowners association and the Sartenejan fisherman who triggered the protected area project. Actors influential in the planning of the Caye Caulker protected area included figures in the Siwa-ban Foundation, the Tour Guides Association and the local BTIA. Other key players included members of three successive Village Councils and the Lots Committee, individuals with landholding interests in the proposed area and the former landowner of North Point.

The negotiations performed by planning agencies tended to be channelled through, and by, these key actors and favoured social groups, the planners thereby forming unequal links with different sectors of the community. Such differential access to participation might suggest that a degree of exclusion was in operation for other local stakeholders. But there are interesting subtleties to the connections between non-participation and exclusion which are taken up in Section 7.5.

The discussion in this section has emphasized agency and made clear that an in-depth analysis of protected area planning as a social process must take account of social heterogeneity and the differential roles of actors. It shows that any idealized notion of community consensus runs the risk of overlooking differing interests and rivalries (Leach et al 1997) and adds weight to the call for addressing “local politics, local hierarchies and the frailties of human behaviour” in debates on communities and resources (Mehta 1997, p81). In noting the differing capacities for action of stakeholders, it puts forward the idea that community involvement hinged largely on the roles of key actors, whose activities are therefore of prime analytical interest.

7.5 Non-participation and Exclusion

The focus of this section is not on activism but on the failure of many users and other stakeholders to become involved in the consultation exercises that were staged for Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker. It examines first whether certain user groups in the community were systematically excluded more than others, and then discusses more generally whether instances of non-participation were necessarily caused by exogenous forces of exclusion.
Contributions to debate by other authors refer to state officials selectively consulting with certain actors over others (Desai 1996, Goodwin 1998) or of the participation of opponents being delegitimized (White 1996, Richard & O'Connor 1997). The denial of a role in participation, whether intentional or not, is referred to here as 'exclusion'. The most plausible cases of systematic exclusion in the case study surround the role of commercial fishermen in consultations. The starkest examples applied to the ‘outsider’ fishermen who utilized the sites: the Mexican fishermen who crossed into the Bacalar Chico waters and the Sartenejan fishermen who dived in the waters off Caye Caulker (see 5.1.1 and 6.1.1). No consultation meetings were arranged for these user groups and they had no chance to voice their opinions on the emerging plans (see 8.4 and 9.2).

But even in the other communities, planners seemed much less ready to consult with fishermen than they did tour guides (see 5.4.3 and 6.4.3). For both sites public meetings were arranged to coincide with tour guides meetings. At Caye Caulker this was expressly for planners to “take advantage” of the fact that people were already gathered together (fishery3). Yet the effect was that consultation was biased toward tour guides. For Bacalar Chico, two fishermen claimed that only tour guides were invited to public meetings (bcfish7, bcfish8). And the meeting to discuss zoning plans for Bacalar Chico was held only in the tourism resort of San Pedro, one planner stating that he and his colleagues were confident the fishing communities of Corozal and Sarteneja would have no objections and so did not prioritize meeting them (fishery5). Moreover, according to one interviewee, those residents of Sarteneja and Corozal who appeared to have the most participation in planning were the few people involved in tourism (bcfish2). It is noteworthy that the minutes of an early Advisory Committee meeting justify the presence of a representative of those settlements on the committee solely in terms of their potential to engage in tourism at Bacalar Chico (BCPAC 1994).

Fishermen widely felt neglected, and their concerns were echoed even by tour guides. The tour guides’ president in San Pedro repeatedly emphasized the need to inform and consult with fishermen more. “We have to make sure that we are fair on both tour guide and commercial fisherman. I really stress that: it has to be studied properly” (bctour1).
It would be naïve, however, to conclude that all non-active local stakeholders were excluded through the agency of planners. When discussing consultation meetings, one interviewee commented:

"The only reason public forums are not too effective as far as I'm concerned is because a lot of people that are in the community don't care. You know, you invite them to a public forum, you give them an opportunity to express their opinion, but they don't come" (bcgen1).

The issue of people's motivation to become involved was raised a number of times by interviewees at every level. And the spectrum of factors that affected motivation cannot all be linked easily to the notion of exclusion by planners. Writers such as Arnstein (1969), Potter (1985) and Utting (1994) have long pointed to factors working against participation at the structural level on the one hand and through the agency of stakeholders themselves on the other (see 2.3 and 2.4).

Section 4.4 has already suggested that Belizean society had a limited culture of grassroots organization and public participation. Ordinary citizens were not used to being involved in discussions with state agencies and NGOs and sometimes viewed approaches by agencies with suspicion. Mistrust of conservation institutions is by no means confined to Belize, for in Goodwin's (1998) study in the UK local people often viewed participatory conservation initiatives as attempted recruitment of 'hired hands' to meet the institution's agenda.

Such structural conditions inevitably impinged on people's motivation to become involved in the consultations for the case study sites. A sense of disempowerment was commonly conveyed by people in the communities. People's attitude toward the planning process was to some extent shaped by previous experience of exclusion. Rightly or wrongly, a sense of having little capacity to influence plans was commonplace among stakeholders. Some people indicated their unease with the notion of speaking out openly against government proposals, and a few criticized the very idea that government should consult people (cctour6, ccres5). Several expressed the view that government agencies would carry out their pre-established intentions regardless of what local people said they wanted (e.g. bctour6, ccfish4). This, and a common belief that foreign landowners and investors as well as the more 'powerful' interests within the local community have a much more ready
influence on planning, sowed doubt among people that their voices would be valued and their concerns acted upon.

At the same time, non-participants were not merely passive victims of a process that gave them no choice over participation. Some people actively chose not to become involved in consultations. Impatience and scepticism served to dim people's motivation. At Caye Caulker, the raising of expectations followed by a protracted delay in designating the reserve and in keeping people informed blunted the motivation of some stakeholders to become involved in future \textit{(meeting5, ccgen8)}. For Bacalar Chico public scepticism was linked to the perception that the work commitment of Hol Chan reserve staff dwindled after designation. One San Pedran noted "chatting is easy, but doing the thing, that will take a lot" \textit{(bctour1)}.

There was also a demonstrable lack of interest in the protected area projects among many local people, and even a lack of concern shown by some users likely to be affected directly by restrictions. The reasons for this were complex, a combination of the factors already discussed along with lack of information and a perception that personal interests would not be affected. The attitude of some sports fishermen, for example, suggested that they were not overly concerned about catch-and-release regulations because they perceived reserve staff would have difficulty enforcing them \textit{(bctour2, bctour6)}. An interviewee from Caye Caulker stated that it was mainly just parties with definite interests to promote that participated in meetings \textit{(cctour2)}.

On the other hand, there was also the suggestion that some people, particularly fishermen, had deliberately withdrawn from the process because they perceived they would lose out from restrictions \textit{(cctour1)}. Such withdrawal may have constituted a deliberate tactic of non-cooperation, a form of passive resistance envisaged by Scott (1985) through which these fishermen tried to undermine a participatory process perceived as ill-equipped to accommodate opposition (see White 1996).

The contention in this section is that patterns of non-participation relate both to exclusion through the agency of planners and to demotivation and withdrawal on the part of non-participating stakeholders. But both actions are crucially linked with structural factors
within society, culture and politics that condition actors' approaches to participation. It underlines that analysis of the social process of protected area planning needs to address both agency and structure.

Non-participation, in this case of protected area planning, did not necessarily equal social exclusion. But where exclusion did operate, even if only partially, it raises further issues of power regarding who can be excluded and how. The deployment of power and the analysis of power relations in planning forms the subject of the next part of the thesis, Chapter 8.

7.6 Summary

Community involvement in planning for both sites followed a broadly similar pattern. Official channels of involvement conformed to the passive category of 'participation by consultation', in which citizens are invited to provide information and respond to proposals but not to take an active role in decision-making. There is clear evidence that social assessment considerations helped shape plans for the protected areas, but stakeholders provided little input into planning via the consultation fora. Consultations did not reach to and engage the opinions of a broad cross-section of stakeholders. Since planning did not address all the concerns of stakeholders, the limited effectiveness of consultations may have repercussions for the 'sustainability' of the protected area project.

Informal and independent channels of involvement operated alongside the official channels. Some local stakeholders undertook actions of their own, including liaison with planners and lobbying of politicians, that arguably also constituted forms of participation in planning. Those that did so tended to take on the role of local 'key players' in the planning process, the actors whose participation was most prominent in both informal and formal modes of involvement. Their pivotal roles highlighted the lack of homogeneity among actors, not just in terms of abilities to act but also in terms of interests and viewpoints. The failure of most other local stakeholders to become actively involved resulted from the interplay of a number of factors linked both to structure and agency. Wider social and cultural forces counteracted public involvement, and there was some evidence that planners effectively excluded certain user groups from participation. But the motivation of stakeholders to
participate or not was also shaped by private interests and by perceptions of the efficacy and openness of the planning process. All in all, Chapter 7 has demonstrated the social complexity masked by over-simplistic accounts of participation in protected area planning. Chapter 8 now goes on to analyse that complexity in terms of concepts of power and power relations.
CHAPTEER EIGHT

POWER RELATIONS:
STRATEGIES AND OUTCOMES IN THE POWER ARENAS OF PLANNING

The next stage in the analysis applies and elaborates on some of the conceptions of power and power relations discussed in Sections 2.4 and 2.5. This chapter analyses in depth how relations were played out in the context of community involvement in planning for the Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker protected areas (see Chapters 5 and 6). It examines the power relations between the planning agencies and local stakeholders and also the power relations among stakeholders, revealing how actors' motives, resources and tactical social actions differentially shaped planning outcomes.

The introductory section explains how the analytical framework on power devised in Table 2.7 applies to the case study material and justifies the notion of viewing the planning process as a power 'arena' (8.1). The chapter then devotes most of the discussion to a close analysis of the strategic actions of actors in terms of motives, power resources and power tactics (8.2). Having analysed the power strategies of both planning officials and stakeholders, the discussion then turns to the outcome of the strategies pursued by non-planners. It briefly defines what demonstrable impacts the actions of stakeholders had on the plans that planners produced (8.3), before setting out a possible typology of actor roles in the arena in terms of power relations and power 'effects' (8.4). The roles of planners themselves in the context of community involvement forms the core subject of Chapter 9.

8.1 Planning as a Power 'Arena'

Chapter 7 has made clear that planning constituted a complex social process. It also hinted at the micro-political complexity that underlies public involvement in the process. Drawing
on the theoretical ideas from sociology (see 2.4.1), and the power dimensions of political ecology (see 2.4.2) and participation (see 2.4.3), this chapter contends that planning for the case study sites operated amid an intricate and shifting web of power relations.

Power is analysed in this study along the conceptual guidelines devised in Table 2.7. To reiterate, power refers to a capacity to alter outcomes. It is exercised by agents, with varying degrees of success dependent on dynamic power relations between social actors. Agents draw on unevenly distributed resources and employ tactical actions in their deployment of power (see 8.2). Structural conditions can contribute to power resources or alternatively act as constraints on the exercise of power. This chapter (and Chapter 9) will reveal that the terrain of power relations in the case study was only partially stabilized, remaining susceptible to individual interventions and instances of collective resistance (see e.g. Clegg 1989, Bryant 1997). As Schmink and Wood (1992) have shown, agents mobilized resources that included knowledge, idea systems and discourses, sometimes manipulating them in the process (Skillington 1997). The mechanisms through which power was exercised included not just tools of domination and resistance, but strategic actions associated with cooperation, bargaining and micro-political manoeuvre (Arce et al 1994, Rocheleau & Ross 1995).

Chapter 4 has already introduced the socio-political environment of planning at a variety of geographical scales. It has indicated the high incidence of party-political favouratism, electioneering and bureaucratic rivalries within governance and planning in Belize (see 4.1 and 4.3.2). The context of conservation projects tended further to be politicised on the international scale by the policies of external funding bodies (see 4.4.3), and on the local scale by community-level competition, manipulation and domination of consultation channels by select interest groups (see 4.4.2 and 4.4.3). Planning and participation activities for the two case study sites operated in just such an environment. As K. Brown (1998) and Sharpe (1998) found in Nepal and Cameroon, actors involved in projects had different interests in the protected areas and the site’s resources (see 7.4). As actors at various levels attempted to control or influence the process and its outcome, so they deployed power resources and employed strategies to enhance their role. In some cases, this involved attempts to enlist the support or block the actions of other actors.
Bryant and Bailey (1997) emphasize the complexity of power relations in the topical realm of political ecology. To make sense of that complexity, it is useful in this case study to conceive of the protected area planning process as an arena, as a forum for the play of social power. The arena concept developed in the thesis parallels an ‘arena model’ used to analyse the practices of development policy in actor-oriented studies. The model views the policy process “as a series of multiple negotiations between different groups of participants” (Quarles van Ufford 1993, p139), and:

“The relations between these different groups constitute an arena, a space in which the problems of differential interests and interpretations of what should be done must be settled”.

In the case of the study sites, the power arena hosted both individual actors and group representatives. Some sets of local actors were connected by interlocking interests and joint actions, and they were juxtaposed with other actors that held conflicting views or undertook counter-actions. At the centre of each arena stood the planning agencies that ultimately produced the plans. They exercised forms of domination over local actors through their decision-making role but they were also obliged to engage in negotiations and thereby found themselves subject to power tactics designed to influence decisions (see 8.2.2). Given the centralized nature of the planning procedure, it was toward these actors that local people who wished to influence planning ultimately had to direct their efforts.

Planning experiences at Caye Caulker amply conveyed the complexity of power relations that can surrounded protected area planning (see 6.2). Here, for example, there were repeated negotiations over the land portion. There were also attempts by a number of local ‘key players’ to secure involvement and influence, set in the context of intra-community factionalism. The words of one coastal zone planning official provided further illustration:

“What we find is that there are kinds of personal differences.... And you have that friction that this belongs to me, you know, it doesn’t belong to you, I have more say than you.... And it has been a major headache because when you go there and you touch on that topic people get very sensitive and they really get heated up.” (fishery2).

For Bacalar Chico the exercise of power turned out to be simpler and predominantly ‘top-down’, though complications to the pattern did emerge, such as the influence achieved by those local stakeholders opposed to proposed restrictions for Rocky Point (see 5.3). The implications of the differences between the two sites are analysed in Chapter 9. Section 8.2
now adds flesh to the bones of the power arena concept by setting out at length the patterns and specificities of actions and interactions in those power arenas of planning.

8.2 Strategies of Power

This section arguably forms the analytical heart of the case study. It discusses in detail why and how different actors in the planning arenas attempted to secure influence, including their motives for action, the resources they could draw upon, and the tactical means through which they tried to enhance their social power and influence decisions.

Before doing so it is necessary to map out how the researcher defines the roles of motives, resources and tactics in strategies of power (see Figure 8.1). Building on the analytical framework devised in Table 2.7, power is seen to be exercised when an actor intervenes in social events (Giddens 1985), such as putting forward a proposal, initiative or argument in a participatory planning forum. Motives refer to an actor’s reasons for intervening and they typically include strategic objectives (based on interests) regarding the outcome of planning. The test of actor power is the ability to order social interactions so as to effect objectives (Law 1991). Power resources enhance that ability. They refer not only to personal skills and social connections, but also to structural properties of social systems including discourses. Power tactics are strategic social actions that draw on resources and which agents employ in power systems characterized by negotiation (rather than domination). Tactics such as alliance-formation, enrolment, persuasion, manipulation, compromise and exclusion are all designed to improve negotiating position and order interactions so as to effect objectives.

The analysis of power strategies in this section turns first to the officials responsible for drawing up plans (8.2.1), and then analyses the roles of local key players and the principal user groups (8.2.2). Some important methodological issues relating to the discussion are noted in Box 8.1.
Each actor possesses motives for action, draws on resources and pursues tactics in the power arena in an attempt to generate outcomes.

**Box 8.1 Researching power**

Two methodological points should be stressed here. First, sensitive issues such as personal motives and power tactics are, to say the least, difficult to tease out directly through non-covert research methods. To some extent they have to be inferred through interpretation of interviews and from the comments of other interviewees, from the chain of events and from context. Triangulation from different data sources is a key tool in this respect (see 3.4.1). Second, the researcher regards it as unrealistic to attempt to portray the full, intricate complexity of social relations and conflicts between the various stakeholders in the planning process. It would be neither feasible in terms of data nor necessarily constructive in terms of the flow of argument. The analysis therefore concentrates on discussing the most significant actions and power relations within the planning arena.
8.2.1 The Planning Teams

This subsection draws together findings from the case study sites to conceptualize on the power relations of planners within the power arenas. It discusses planners' motives and the resources they could bring to the power arenas, before setting out the tactics they employed.

Motives

The government and INGO agencies that constituted the planning teams had a professional objective in their negotiations with stakeholders. Their aim was to establish spatially-defined protected areas at the sites subject to management regimes oriented toward the conservation of biodiversity (Dotherow et al 1995, August 1996a). In so doing, they were also under pressure to perform actions that dovetailed with the environmental, economic and social policies of government and of non-governmental funding agencies, including a commitment toward public participation. The planners were ultimately answerable to line managers and the national government, and, in the case of Bacalar Chico, they also had to meet the funding requirements of the EU.

The motives of individual planners must also have included enhancement of career position through creating the perception in others that they successfully met their professional objectives. A study of policy change in developing countries has noted the importance of taking career advancement and other ‘bureaucratic motivations’ into account when analysing governmental decision-making:

"With regularity, decision makers within government were concerned with making decisions or supporting positions that would enhance their own career opportunities and/or the fortunes... of the bureaucratic entities they led or were part of" (Grindle & Thomas 1989, p225).

Personal motives also included concern for the welfare of affected communities as well as belief in the value and effectiveness of protected area conservation. Some members of the planning team for Bacalar Chico expressed a long-held interest in the site's conservation (czmp3, ingo6), and one planner for Caye Caulker demonstrated personal interest in conservation at the island, through his involvement in the local conservation NGO (forest3).
Resources

Giddens (1985), Griggs (1996) and Healey (1997) show that the resources actors can draw upon in their mobilizations of power can derive from personal attributes, relational bonds and structural properties of social systems. The power resources available to planners constituted such a blend of the personal, social and structural. In their interactions with other actors, the planners in Belize drew on ready resources of knowledge, organization and authority. Arce and Long (1992) and Schmink and Wood (1992) have already stressed the potential of knowledge to act as a power resource (see 2.4.1). In collating data regarding the site and directly preparing plans, the planning teams not only had access to information but also had the capacity to construct knowledge and largely control its dissemination - two of the facets of power/knowledge raised by Greider and Garkovich (1994).

Planners also had access to the logistical resources of their organisations and the resources of authority vested in those institutions. For Bacalar Chico, the team’s role was augmented by cross-linkage with the CHPA, in that the CZMP had a key role both in planning the protected area and in preparing land use proposals for adjacent land (bcgen5). State officials acted in the context of a discourse of governance ‘from above’, which, as Subsection 4.4.1 argues, is deep-rooted in Belizean society. The lead INGO for Bacalar Chico was also able to draw on that legitimizing discourse because of its partnership with the state. In the words of one San Pedran, “government gave them the power to take it” (bctour6).

Perhaps most crucially, the planning team had a direct decision-making ‘role’ - a power resource denied to any local actors. They could decide how to prepare plans and how to consult with local people, subject to approval from their line ministries. In the case of Caye Caulker, much of the initial pressure for a protected area was generated locally, but once planning became a government-led project the resources of authority of the agencies came to the fore. Vested with the decision-making role in planning, they dominated the production of plans.

Tactics

By virtue of their institutional resources, planners were able to exercise mechanisms of domination over local stakeholders in decision-making (Scott 1994). Their consultation
procedures, for example, were largely imposed on the public. Nevertheless, the planning team were constrained in their actions by policy and by politics. The political approval and public acceptability of their planning decisions required them to gain or at least demonstrate a semblance of local involvement and community-wide support (see Chapter 9). Negotiation therefore become a necessary process within planning, drawing planners into more tactical mobilizations of power.

In their relations with the public, persuasion and manipulation featured highly in the (witting or unwitting) tactics employed by the planners to promote their planning efforts. **Persuasion**, the most basic of negotiation tactics, refers here to social actions designed to convince stakeholders that an outcome is preferable. In their persuasion tactics planners often invoked the interests of stakeholders and promoted the concept of ‘reward’ (Scott 1994). They worked hard to persuade local stakeholders that the protected area would be of economic benefit in terms of commercial fishing and tourism. In both cases they were able to tap local perceptions over the benefits of the Hol Chan reserve, such as “we saw the result of Hol Chan - since it’s been reserved, there’s so many fishes around....and the same thing could happen here” (ccgen3).

As noted by Arce et al (1994), often the persuasion tactics drew on supportive discourses, especially those associated with territorial integrity and the national potential for tourism (see Box 8.2). The planners for Bacalar Chico, for example, emphasized that the new protected area would provide a means to control incursions by Mexican fishermen. In stressing the latter, the planners were tapping a pre-existing local sense of resentment against the actions of foreign fishermen to help justify spatial planning. But they were also mobilizing discourses relating to nationhood and threats to territorial sovereignty (see 4.1 and 4.3.1), echoing the mobilization of ethnicity identified as a power tactic by Griggs (1996). Time and again, officials justified the protected area on the grounds of controlling Mexican exploitation, with statements such as “it stays for the Belizeans instead of going out of the country” (fishery3).

**Manipulation** refers here to acts of negotiation that involve a measure of distortion, deception or exploitation. Manipulation may be wilful or unintentional, and it often goes hand in hand with acts of persuasion. In the case study, manipulation largely centred on the
representation of data, opinions or actions. By controlling much of the flow of information, planners were able to represent knowledge through their own lenses and use these constructions to mobilize support - the third aspect of power/knowledge discussed by Greider and Garkovich (1994). In Bryant’s (1997) terms, they exerted strong influence over the ‘public transcript’ (see 2.4.2).

**Box 8.2 Bacalar Chico and the promise of tourism**

The tourism potential of Bacalar Chico was strongly promoted by planners, and proved a highly persuasive argument, even though no detailed feasibility study had been carried out and despite reservations expressed by some people over the distances of travel involved (bctour3, bcfish5). In invoking the promise of tourism, the planners were mobilizing a potent discourse regarding Belize’s potential for tourism (see 4.1). The protected area, it was argued, would not only enhance tourist numbers on Ambergris Caye, but also help kick-start the industry on the mainland. In the words of one official, “we showed the example of Hol Chan and how it had changed their lives in San Pedro and how this one could also change the lives of the people of Sarteneja, possibly Corozal” (fishery5). Arguably, by heavily promoting the protected area as a vehicle of economic benefit for local communities planners represented it as much as a ‘development project’ as a conservation project.

The misuse of data has already been identified in protected area management by K. Brown (1998), who notes how questionable assumptions about local biodiversity and local resource usage in Nepal’s Royal Bardia National Park were circulated by conservation agencies. Equivalent examples of mis-representation in the case study included official knowledge claims over the depletion of fish stocks (see Box 8.3). But mis-representation was also evident in interview statements for both sites regarding full community support and the inclusiveness of community participation (see 7.2). Statements of overall support tended to over-generalize and conceal specific issues over which many people were opposed or indifferent. In fact, many local people complained strongly about the quality of consultation efforts. Even some planners revealed their uncertainty over the reach of consultations. Referring to the land portion, one said “I don’t know what the people really want” (forest2). Mis-representation arguably was inherent in the establishment of the Bacalar Chico Advisory Committee, which was promoted as a participatory body. Yet appointed community ‘representatives’ held the minority of seats and took a minor role in agenda-setting and discussion. In creating the impression of widespread backing from local
stakeholders, the planners perhaps both disarmed potential dissenters within the communities and also sent the right messages to higher levels of government or to EU paymasters (see Chapter 9).

**Box 8.3 ‘Facts’ and fish stocks**

For both case study sites, official arguments regarding decline in fishery stocks were based on anecdotal reports, yet decline was represented as fact, with an attendant credence of ‘scientific objectivity’. Their discursive backdrop was provided by national reports warning of a ‘threat’ of over-exploitation of lobster, conch and finfish across the coastal zone (see Subsection 4.3.1) and a reported resurgence of fish stocks at Hol Chan Marine Reserve (McField et al 1996). Several Caye Caulker residents echoed the reasoning, citing the greater abundance of reef fish at Hol Chan as evidence of overfishing around their island and of the potential recovery a reserve could foster (*ccoctour4, ccoctour5, cccgen3*).

However, not all fishermen were convinced fishery stocks had actually declined off Caye Caulker (*ccgen2*), and, for Bacalar Chico, several fishermen and fishing guides questioned the claims of decline in the general area of the reserve (*e.g. bcfish1, bctour5, bcfish5*). Fluctuations in yearly catches were the norm, they argued, casting doubt on the scientific validity of the planners’ claims. One guide claimed this was the case at the grouper spawning bank (*btour2*). Another described how fish on both sides of Ambergris Caye migrate down the coast:

“Just like the fruit, sometimes one year the fruit no give plenty, the next year it give more. That is like the fish. Sometimes this year the fish no run, and next year they run good” (*bcfish4*).

It is significant to note that the planning documents for Bacalar Chico admitted the lack of scientific data on fish population trends for the area (*e.g. Dotherow et al 1995*). Even the Advisory Committee minutes of late 1996 that noted apparent recovery of fish in the marine areas and the lagoon since protection also warned that such trends had yet to be documented scientifically (*BCPAC 1996c*). The planners’ tactics in interactions with stakeholders also included *compromise*. Arce and Long (1992) identified compromise processes when they highlighted the way actors often make strategic trade-offs in negotiations. In the case study, efforts by planners to accommodate stakeholders’ concerns through compromise were evident, for example, in negotiations over the terrestrial extent of Bacalar Chico:

“We wanted to take a much larger chunk out of that littoral forested area. You can’t just impose such laws on people. You need the cooperation from them
for it to function properly. So we divide a portion, we took a portion of the littoral forest and the other here would be left for development” (forest3).

The tactical value of a compromise approach on selected issues lay in facilitating broader cooperation from the public (forest3, fishery2). By making specific concessions toward access to resources for user groups, planners could gain leverage for other measures through public perception of their willingness to compromise. In some cases the trade-off may have been more apparent than real. The planning team for Bacalar Chico knew that strict fishing restrictions around Rocky Point would prove problematic. By presenting more restrictive proposals first and then revising them, planners could be seen as having compromised, thus blunting momentum for a further loosening of restrictions. One official felt able to present the results as “everybody unanimously said yes, that’s good, that’s what we want” (fishery3), though Box 9.2 (in Chapter 9) raises serious doubts over this alleged unanimity.

Yet accommodation of selected concerns was only one tactical route for planners. An alternative was to negate other concerns through a mechanism of exclusion, introduced in Section 7.5. Exclusion refers to tactics to limit people’s access to decision-making fora. It equates to “power mobilized through decision processes”, through which the voices of potential opponents are “sidelined rather than directly confronted” (Hardy & Leiba-O’Sullivan 1998, p455). In the case study, exclusion may have acted as a means to block dissenting voices, an action discussed in detail in Chapter 9. Full or partial exclusion of stakeholder groups from involvement in the planning process may not always have been a conscious strategy, but it operated nonetheless. Its functioning was dependent on power relations that prevented resource-poor groups (see 8.4) effectively challenging their exclusion. It operated most clearly in the case of ‘outsider’ fishermen, such as the sailboat fishermen from Sarteneja who sometimes worked the waters off Caye Caulker and who received only minimal contact from planners. Fishermen from the Mexican village of Xcalak played no role in planning for Bacalar Chico and plans evolved directly to prevent their usage of the area. Indeed, such exclusionary actions actually provided a strong motive for other stakeholders to support the Bacalar Chico project.

The final power tactic identified in the actions of planners was that of enrolment, an action that served to enhance their negotiating position through legitimation. Enrolment is identified as a power tactic in negotiations by Arce and Long (1992). In a more elaborated
form it is also prominent in the ideas of actor-network theorists (see 2.4.1), who seek to explain how networks of social order develop through space and time. The key to the process is the capacity to rechannel the behaviour and redefine the interests of other actors. In this view, the powerful “are those able to enrol, convince, and enlist others into networks on terms which allow the initial actors to ‘represent’ the others” (Murdoch 1995, p748).

The planners enlisted the support of certain local actors, co-opted them on to their projects and thereby mobilized their influence within the community. Such enrolled actors included individual tour guides and the Sartenejan fisherman appointed to the Bacalar Chico Advisory Committee. At Caye Caulker, planners directed much of their consultation effort toward tour guides, whose support was regarded as pivotal in terms of generating wider support from the local community. Indeed, in interviews, the guides’ president strongly supported both the plans and the consultation process (*cctourl*), even though there was no evidence of direct decision-making input by the tour guides. In his representative role he helped bridge the social gap between planners and ordinary stakeholders (see 8.4). For Bacalar Chico, planners praised the promotional role that the Sartenejan fisherman could play in his community in “speaking up strongly in favour of the reserve” (*ingo6*). He was appointed on to the Advisory Committee as community representative, where he continued to give unqualified support for planning proposals. His subsequent role in planning was therefore more symbolic than active.

### 8.2.2 Other Actors

This subsection analyses the strategies of power of other actors that feature in the case study. It brings together findings on the motives, resources and tactics of local stakeholders and other non-planners involved in the power arenas for the two protected area sites.

**Motives**

For both Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker, the interests of most actors were oriented strongly toward economic factors. Stakeholders mostly expressed their support or their concerns in terms of the local economies and livelihoods rather than conservation of
biodiversity for any intrinsic value (the implications of this are taken up in Chapter 9). An economic imperative for the protected areas, for example, was argued by some on the grounds of maintaining the commercial fisheries, protecting the reef as a visitor attraction and boosting tourism (see Box 8.4).

**Box 8.4 Tourism benefits**

Many Caye Caulker villagers felt strongly that a reserve would help draw visitors to the island (e.g. ccgen4, ccgen5, cctour1). One village resident noted that Hol Chan was becomingly heavily visited and that a marine reserve at Caye Caulker could share the burden as well as distribute more tourism income in the direction of the island (cctour2). The president of the local BTIA also promoted the benefits of the land portion of the proposed reserve both as a site for tourists to view wildlife and, somewhat perversely, as a means of keeping tourists and ‘dangerous’ wildlife apart. “It is part of all this ecotourism philosophy that the country is promoting. And if we get a reserve then we can participate fully, we could say, in this kind of tourism” (ccgen5).

Others stressed their belief that a reserve would not only be desirable but necessary if tourism on the island was to be sustained. Protection of the reef from damage and overfishing was seen as critical to the future of tourism (cctour3, ccgen3, ccgen6).

“If we don’t have this to offer then what will happen, we won’t be getting tourists. Why go to Caye Caulker if you cannot snorkel and see a beautiful reef and all the fishes around?” (ccgen3).

The Sartenejan fisherman whose approaches to officials triggered planning for Bacalar Chico into motion portrayed his motives as driven by the community’s needs, especially for the development of tourism to sustain the next generation:

“But in the future I think the young guys they will find something to do around there.... If we have some hotels, they could manage that, they could deal with people, and maybe the industry of tourism will be here in the village. So they don’t have just to live in being a fisherman” (bcgen2).

Though some tour guides expressed concerns on behalf of fishermen, stakeholders mostly preferred arguments motivated by economic self-interest. Different user groups exhibited different priorities over resources (Leach et al 1997). Hence, at both sites, snorkel/dive guides tended to press for designation of the reef to bolster touring, sports fishing guides and commercial fishermen tended to express concerns over being denied access to fishing sites, and those with landholding interests expressed concerns over the terrestrial portions.
The representative of the North Ambergris Caye Landowners’ Association was also the owner of a real estate agency in San Pedro with holdings for sale along the coastal strip within Bacalar Chico (bcgen4). His primary objective for involvement in planning appeared to be to limit any increases in development restrictions for the private land in the area caused by the establishment of the reserve.

In Caye Caulker tour guides focused almost exclusively on protection of the coral reef. “It seems to me this whole reef should be a park” stated one tour guide, indicating her wish to see fishing prevented along all the reef crest and inshore reef areas fronting the island (cctour5). But she added “just stay along with the corals; not really the sea grass, maybe”. Accusations of self-interest, as well as personal rivalry, were also aimed at many of the key players in Caye Caulker, including actors from the Siwa-ban Foundation, the BTIA and the Village Councils. The BTIA, for example, was suggested by some interviewees as working to a private business agenda in trying to secure a management role (fishery2, ccgen1).

However, it is important to note that motivations often had more subtle dimensions. Economic motives meshed with political motives and also intertwined with discourses of identity and sovereignty (see 8.2.1). Matose (1997) shows how resource control issues can articulate with social constructions of identity, associated with place. In his case study of resource conflicts in Zimbabwe he notes that “legitimate command is very much associated with who people are and where they come from; in other words with how their identities are constructed” (Matose 1997, p77). In both case study sites place-based identities coincided with local perspectives on legitimate access to resources. Caye Caulker villagers commonly viewed the activities of Sartenejan fishermen in the local waters as intrusive, as well as destructive, and welcomed moves to restrict their access. At Bacalar Chico local opposition to resource use by ‘outsider’ fishermen resonated with national-scale concerns over territorial integrity. In interviews with local fishermen and guides, the issue was raised repeatedly, and without prompt: “we have people from the Mexican side coming and fishing our waters - that’s our problem” (bcfish6). One beachtrap fisherman claimed that this was the main reason why people in Sarteneja and Corozal supported the reserve project (bcfish2).
Resources

The distribution of power resources among local actors proved to be highly uneven. Most of the key actors from Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker drew on a range of resources listed by Giddens (1985), Schmink and Wood (1992) and Healey (1997). They typically possessed relatively good communication skills, access to information, channels of access to officials, networks of influential social contacts, and a degree of authority related to their roles as, or in, NGOs. Through his official and party political links, the NACDC representative, for example, had a network of influential social contacts and ready access to state apparatus, resources he could further bring to bear via his seat on the Bacalar Chico Advisory Committee. The founder of the Siwa-ban Foundation similarly had certain specialist resources, including biological training, knowledge claims over local biodiversity, access to officials, and contacts with national and international conservation NGOs. According to one official she was likely to be granted a continuing advisory role because her knowledge and experience of the project endowed her with scientific authority:

"That’s the most outstanding reason why, I think, she’s given that respect.... respect as a party that should be considered in having the level of participation that she wants to have" (fishery2).

Key actors not only brought these resources to bear in their negotiation with planners, but there was also a tendency for planners to liaise with these local ‘elites’ because of their possession of such resources (see 2.4.3 and 7.4). Part of the reason may have been that their knowledge base extended to concepts behind nature conservation, ecotourism and sustainable development flowing from discourses with an international reach (Blaikie 1995) (see 2.1). The ability to draw on such potentially legitimizing discourses constituted a further power resource. The work of Sharpe (1998) and Sundberg (1998) suggests that conservation agencies are more ready to work with those actors that can articulate their interests through a shared discourse. Goodwin’s (1998) study of participatory conservation programmes in the UK reveals that professionals’ perceptions of competence often influenced their readiness to listen to opinions that ran counter to their own discourse.

A similar level of resources must have been held by many of those people with land ownership and land development interests who played a less overt role yet still appeared to influence planning from behind the scenes, often via the lobbying of the local key players.
(see Box 8.5). The researcher was unable to confirm the identities of these covert actors, though they apparently included non-local Belizeans and non-nationals with access to national political networks as well as associations with local actors more overtly involved in planning. The power of the land lobby with respect to Caye Caulker was bemoaned in an open letter to the Amandala newspaper, reproduced in Figure 8.2. The letter complains of government authorities allowing 'outsiders' to take over the limited land available for development on the island, and disregarding the needs and concerns of villagers who lack 'any power' to resist. The ability of 'potential landowners' to influence politicians was also highlighted when planning officials stated their fear over designation of a forest reserve rather than a national park. The land in a forest reserve could be released for development more easily, if the Minister was so persuaded. "The Minister has a lot of rights, he can dereserve at any time; he has the power" (forest3).

**Box 8.5 Landowners and development restrictions**

The proposed amendment to the Ambergris Caye Master Plan for private land adjacent to Bacalar Chico faced powerful opposing forces. The majority of holdings in the area were owned by non-residents of Belize, but the landowners and speculators had local representation through the real estate companies of San Pedro. One company executive participated in discussions at the Advisory Committee over the proposed amendment to the Master Plan (bcgen4), indicating with some success that landowners wanted more relaxed restrictions.

The NACDC representative, however, did not expect the matter to rest there. He suggested the proposed amendment to tighten the restrictions was unlikely to be passed at all without intensive counter-lobbying against opposition by landowners (bcgenl). He even feared the present regulations could be downgraded, if the authorities were so persuaded:

"The people who own the land there do not want them to put any more restrictions on it. Most of those people there want that land for speculation, want that land so that when, and if, Mexico brings a bridge across from there, then the price on that property could be sky-high, and they can make a lot of money selling it" (bcgenl).
Dear Editor,

You don’t know us; we live on Caye Caulker, a small island ignored and out of reach from help. We decided to explain to you what is happening in our community and maybe you can help us by putting something in the newspaper, so the government can know we exist. And we need help.

First of all, we islanders are denied property; we who live and grow up here, we who belong to Caye Caulker. The land is being taken away from us and given to outsiders and that is not fair to us. We try to fight, but we are always being put down as if we are no one. This is the cause of all our other problems - the big buildings being built, the condominium being built on the "Split", the only beach we have ever had, which is now destroyed. Also, our streets are being destroyed for the big trucks and other vehicles used to transport goods for building. Why can’t we be listened to? It’s our beach, our streets, and we have no say or authority to stop these types of problems without the help of higher authorities. We need this help very urgently and badly.

People, strangers coming in owning hotels, restaurants without proper sewerage, without proper water. Our little island is being taken from us and we don’t seem to have any power or any rights to fight this. Please try ask the higher authorities to help our little island, for the future of our children. We can speak our rights, but no one hears us. We are a sinking ship and have no one to save us.

We have another problem: for many years, we were given the rights of the streets going to the Split. Now, out of all the years these people gave us the right of the streets, they are now taking it away from us. We, the villagers, find it insulting and very disturbing to be cut out of our rights without an explanation of some sort. The villagers should boycott these people.

It is unfair and the higher authorities seem unable to help the Village Council. Where does the Council stand without any authority to fight for what is rightfully ours; also, what was given to us is now taken away.

They have been elected just a few months, doing a very good job, but they can’t seem to get help to defend us villagers.

Now a Justice of the Peace is threatening our villagers if they try to clear the walk and roadside. Please print something in the newspaper, because Caye Caulker villagers need help and attention. We are very concerned.

(Signed) Villagers

Source: Amandala newspaper, 19/1/97 (p22)
If the lobbying resources of the land interests was greater than that of the user groups dependent on marine resources, the position of the tour guides in turn appeared stronger than that of the fishermen. The tour guides could draw on the national discourse promoting Belizean tourism (see 4.1) and local perceptions of community prosperity through tourism. The tourism sector was expanding in both Ambergris Caye and Caye Caulker, fishermen were being attracted into the industry, and many people viewed their settlements' as being in an economic transition, with a destiny primarily as resorts. Tour guides in general were granted better access to the planners through the consultation process. And even though the Northern Fishermen’s Cooperative was well-organised and had achieved lobbying success within its sector, its involvement was not solicited in negotiations over the protected areas. The bias had a geographical effect too, since it caused consultations to be directed more to the cay communities than to the mainland settlements, which generated few tourism visits to the protected area sites.

Tactics

The power tactics employed by the various stakeholders echoed and extended those exhibited by the planners. *Persuasion* and *manipulation* were commonplace, as people tried to influence the planners via formal and informal channels. Persuasive lobbying of politicians, for example, set planning for Caye Caulker in motion and a direct appeal to planning agencies by a Sartenejan fisherman helped launch work on Bacalar Chico. Through lobbying both inside and outside the official participation exercises actors tried to influence the extent and status of the terrestrial areas and the proposed development restrictions for adjacent private land. The landowners’ official representative, for example, successfully persuaded a CZMP planner to raise the proposed maximum number of rooms from 20 to 30 for hotels in the private coastal strip area at Bacalar Chico *(bcgen4, BCPAC 1996b).*

In the case of Caye Caulker, the former landowner used the threat that he could delay planning of the protected area and perhaps win a court case as a bargaining tool to advance his scheme for the land. At the same time he highlighted his donation of 42ha of land for a protected area, thereby attempting to present his scheme as compatible with conservation objectives. He therefore engaged the discourse of biodiversity conservation to bolster his
persuasion tactics. Sharpe (1998) describes how large-scale farmers in Cameroon similarly aligned their landholding interests with the aims of forest conservationists, arguing that their usage of the land was more in tune with conservation than that of ‘peasants’ who practiced shifting cultivation. Sundberg (1998) reveals a particularly manipulative instance of this tactic in her study of the Maya Biosphere Reserve in Guatemala. NGOs operating in the reserve constructed a highly contestible view of established ‘Petenero’ farmers following ancient traditions of benign resource use with a view of immigrant farmers practising destructive slash-and-burn techniques. Some Petenero communities subsequently reinvented their identities in line with the construction to support their claims for greater land and resource control to the exclusion of immigrant groups.

The case study findings from Belize reveal that people not only mobilized discursive resources in their acts of persuasion but selectively and strategically utilized them, as if ‘cherry-picking’ discourses. Hence one real estate manager could, on the one hand, denounce potential land development restrictions at Bacalar Chico as “extremist” anti-developmentalism that would discourage foreign investors (bcgen5), thereby mobilizing a national discourse of economic growth through external investment (see 4.1). Yet, on the other hand, he invoked stringent conservationist measures against other resource users: “I totally agree with the prevention of hunting or of fishing of the wildlife that is there” (bcgen5). In so doing he was exploiting and manipulating the ambiguity surrounding the collective discourses of protected area conservation (a topic discussed further in Chapter 9). Skillington (1997) has shown how actors can combine and manipulate contradictory discursive elements to re-articulate notions of ‘sustainable development’. What resulted in this case study was not so much a blending to create ‘hybrid’ discourses (Williams 1997) as the ability to invoke and entwine elements of separate discourses in a single argument.

Stakeholders also appeared to make tactical use of compromise. Tactical compromises were most evident in the efforts by fishermen (and by those arguing on their behalf) to preserve access to fishing grounds. Overt, active opposition to fishing restrictions was seldom expressed as a viable option; instead some fishermen expressed a readiness to trade-off the right to intensify their operations in order to preserve the right of continued access to customary areas (e.g. bcfish1, ccgen3, ccgen4). They saw the tactic of cooperation on one issue giving them ‘room-for-manoeuvre’ on others (see Arce and Long 1992).
However, some fishermen may have opted for an alternative tactic of withdrawal (see 7.5). In Caye Caulker, for example, one tour guide suggested there was a difficulty in getting fishermen who perceived restrictions would be strict to attend meetings (cctour1). They registered their opposition in a passive sense, through refusal to become engaged in planning discussions. It is plausible that their withdrawal from consultation and cooperation was an attempt to delegitimize planning as a participatory process and thereby undermine plans, through a form of passive resistance (Scott 1985). Bryant (1997) has shown how, in seeking public legitimacy, environmental agencies can render their actions susceptible to the power tactics of others, including resistance tactics from ostensibly ‘weak’ actors.

Finally, strategic attempts to increase bargaining power by local actors included the formation of alliances and the tactic of enrolling other stakeholders to their cause. Alliances were formed where people perceived they could gain mutual benefit through cooperation in terms of influencing planning. The concept of cooperation through alliance-formation recognises the existence of non-zero-sum ‘generative’ mechanisms of power (Nelson & Wright 1995) (see 2.4.1). Through alliances, people could not only share the lobbying workload but also portray shared concerns and therefore greater legitimacy as community representatives. Alliances were particularly characteristic of Caye Caulker. They included joint opposition to the proposed land portion from the 1994-96 Village Council and the Lots Committee, an alliance of interests and actions between the Siwa-ban Foundation and the island’s tour guides association, and joint lobbying action by the former landowner of North Point and the 1996-98 Village Council. In promoting the landowner’s scheme for the land portion - the new Council’s first direct involvement in planning - the chair perceived that the Council would gain greater leverage with central government in its lobbying for future involvement in the protected area.

“Well, for him, for the guy that has the dispute with the government over the land, for the minister to reverse the acquisition he would have to get a letter from the council. And then by doing so, we might say, well, if we are writing this letter we are writing also that we would want to take control of the marine reserve. That it would be channelled solely through us, you know, anything that needs to be implemented” (ccgen2).

Alliance-formation had subtle connections with processes of enrolment (see 8.2.1). Interests (and power resources) of partners did not always match, such that actors sometimes co-opted
the support of their allies to advance private causes. The former landowner of North Point, for example, could be said to have enrolled the Caye Caulker Village Council to demonstrate local backing for his business scheme. Enrolment or attempted enrolment also took place on a broader scale as key players tried to enlist the support of other actors to advance their initiatives and strived to make representation claims on behalf of the community (see Box 8.6). The representing of silent actors is a fundamental exercise of power in social networks: “powerful actors speak for all the enrolled entities and actors, and control the means of representation” (Murdoch 1995, p748). In Cameroon, Sharpe (1998, p38) noted that large-scale farmers’ ability to advance their version of the environmental future for rural areas was especially enhanced if they “can successfully represent themselves or their village agents as ‘the community’”.

Box 8.6 Representation claims

Conflation of the personal with the public occurred within the planning processes as actors tried to represent personalized opinions as voices from the communities as a whole. One commentator from San Pedro, for example, complained that vociferous participants in public consultation meetings tended to make broad representation claims though they were in fact standing only for their own vested interests (bcgen1). The chair of the 1994-96 Village Council in Caye Caulker claimed that he represented the interests of the community in his opposition to the proposed extent of the terrestrial reserve (ccgen3), though there was little evidence of concern over the land in question among most villagers.

Representation claims were particularly important for the three factions in Caye Caulker village pressing for a local management role in the later stages of the fieldwork (the Siwa-ban Foundation, the local BTIA and the 1996-98 Village Council). The task for each of them was to persuade government agencies that they were not only the best capable of fulfilling that role but that they would act legitimately in the interests of the village community as a whole. Each therefore presented itself as representative of local opinions on the protected area. The BTIA presented its liaison committee initiative as representative of the community, but planning officials and some rival key actors remained to be convinced. Reports of the first meeting of this body suggested that the BTIA dominated discussions. Moreover, a key figure in the organisation saw the committee as obviating the need for more broad-based public participation because “the committee actually represents the population” (ccgen5). The NGO may also have been trying to enhance its bargaining power with government through attempted legitimation. By inviting selected government officials and figures from a range of community groups on the island, the NGO was then able to present its initiative as a community venture that had government support.
This section applies detailed micro-political analysis to the study of community involvement in protected area planning. In setting out power strategies at length, it reveals many parallels between the findings and the emerging literature on actor power in conservation (e.g. Brown, K. 1998, Goodwin 1998, Sharpe 1998, Sundberg 1998) as well as extending the conceptualization of power in this field in new directions. In discussing the motives of actors, it identifies the primacy of livelihood-based interests among local stakeholders and the significance of place-based identity, and in elaborating on the power resources of actors, it notes the importance of discursive resources and access to political and bureaucratic networks.

The section also identifies and discusses a range of power tactics employed by different actors. These are summarized in Table 8.1 (overleaf). Some of them can be seen as mechanisms relating to Lukes' (1974) interest-based dimensions of power (see Table 2.6), namely: persuasion (first dimension); exclusion (second dimension); and manipulation (third dimension). But others relate to less overtly conflictual mobilizations of power (Law 1991) including compromise, alliance and enrolment and related themes of legitimation and representation. The analysis particularly stresses the mobilization of discourses in strategies of power, including their selective and manipulative mobilization by both planners and non-planners. The next two sections of this chapter focus further on the roles of non-planners in the power arenas of planning.

8.3 Input into Plans

Before attempting to categorize the roles and power relations of different actors in Section 8.4, it is necessary first to set out briefly what concrete impacts non-planners are known to have had on the spatial plans that emerged for Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker. After all, direct input into the plans themselves was the ultimate test of actors’ power strategies. The stress here is on agency, on the effects people achieved through their own independent actions and through challenging proposals announced at consultation meetings. The impact different actors had in positively supporting proposals already generated by planning staff is much more difficult to clarify, though it must also have played a part in the planning process.
Table 8.1 Power tactics

**BACALAR CHICO**

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<th>strategic tactics identified</th>
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<td>persuasion, manipulation, compromise, exclusion, enrolment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sartenejan fisherman</td>
<td>persuasion, alliance-formation</td>
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<td>landowners' representative</td>
<td>persuasion</td>
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<td>NACDC representative</td>
<td>persuasion, compromise</td>
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<td>persuasion, withdrawal?</td>
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<td>fishermen</td>
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<td>Mexican fishermen</td>
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**CAYE CAULKER**

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<tr>
<td>BTIA</td>
<td>persuasion, manipulation, enrolment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Council 1994-96</td>
<td>persuasion, manipulation, alliance-formation, enrolment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Council 1996-98</td>
<td>persuasion, alliance-formation, enrolment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>former landowner</td>
<td>persuasion, alliance-formation, enrolment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potential landowners</td>
<td>persuasion, alliance-formation, enrolment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tour guides</td>
<td>persuasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lobster fishermen</td>
<td>persuasion, compromise, withdrawal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spearfishers</td>
<td>persuasion, compromise, withdrawal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'outsider' fishermen</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Bacalar Chico the first concrete input came from the persuasion efforts of the Sartenejan fisherman. He provided the initial trigger that set planning into motion for a protected area located in the north of Ambergris Caye. Local stakeholders, this time from
San Pedro, subsequently brought about a modification in plans through their opposition to the suggestion of season-long restrictions on grouper fishing in a zone at Rocky Point. The issue appeared to generate concern for many fishermen, sports fishing guides and non-fishing members of the community, and was articulated at a consultation meeting (fishery5, bctour6). Alternative restrictions of shorter duration were then put forward by the planners.

The strongest impact on the plans arguably came from actors with landholding interests and land development concerns. The landowners' representative had an input into proposed amended regulations for development of their land, raising the proposed limit on hotel size for the plots. A broader land lobby, again via the official NACDC representative, were concerned to limit how much high ground in the north of the cay would be left available for future sale and development. "Some of us were saying, you know, just run it across the back, and then just dip in over here and just preserve the mangroves, swamps and all of that" (bcgen1). The pressure on planners appeared to result in a compromise position over the south-eastern boundary of the National Park, but they did not concede all and included some high-value forested land within the eventual park boundary.

For Caye Caulker, it was also local people who provided the impetus for the state to consider planning a protected area located at the island. The momentum came first from the efforts of the Siwa-ban Foundation to create a reserve at the southern end, and subsequently from the lobbying of politicians by other residents of the village. The founder of the conservation NGO later had an input into planning the extent and zoning scheme of the proposed protected area.

Again, actors with land concerns had a prominent impact. The land claim actions of the returning former landowner of North Point had an immediate impact on subsequent planning efforts. It caused planners to consider revising the boundary and extent of the terrestrial portion and delayed efforts to designate the marine portion of the protected area. The lobby of potential landowners may earlier have influenced debate within the Forest Department over the status of the terrestrial portion, and opposition over its areal extent from the 1994-96 Village Council caused some early delay in the preparation of plans.
For both protected area sites, there was a clear disparity between the level of impact on the land portions and the degree of local impact on the marine sections of the protected areas. To some extent it was related to differences in the power resources available to actors, including the national discourses surrounding tourism development and foreign investment. The magnitude of this difference is suggested in Figure 8.2, which contrasts the power of land development interests with that of Caye Caulker villagers. However, the disparities in impact on plans was also related to patterns of resource use and protected area regulations (see Box 8.7).

**Box 8.7 Resource use and regulations**

Marine resources utilized by fishermen and tour guides were, at least in theory, renewable and their usage capable of being managed without loss of biodiversity. Marine reserve regulations allowed for multiple usage. Fishermen could therefore compromise on their operations but still have access to the resources of a marine reserve. The pattern of resource usage for the land involved (or would have involved) clearance of forest vegetation for permanent land development, representing non-renewable depletion of biodiversity incompatible with the norms of conservation. The regulations for a national park outlawed land clearance. The ‘all-or-nothing’ character of the issue therefore served to sharpen actions over the terrestrial portion. Once a national park was declared potential landowners would be denied access to the resource they wished to utilize.

This section has set out the few instances where the interventions of non-planners in the power arenas of planning became demonstrably translated into planning outcomes. They are summarized in Table 8.2. The analysis shows that local stakeholders and other actors had little overall input into planning decisions. Key differences did, however, exist among stakeholder groups, with those able to access national-scale discourses and political networks tending to achieve greater influence. K. Brown (1998) found an equivalent pattern in her analysis of biodiversity management in Nepal, where local interest groups, with localized ‘scale of influence’, achieved little input into management policy formulation. The following section now integrates these findings with those of previous analytical sections to develop a typology of actors featuring in the case study.
Table 8.2 Actor inputs into plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BACALAR CHICO</th>
<th>main inputs identified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sartenejan fisherman</td>
<td>initiation of planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>landowners’ representative</td>
<td>land development restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACDC representative</td>
<td>extent of land portion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sports fishing guides</td>
<td>grouper fishing restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fishermen</td>
<td>grouper fishing restrictions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAYE CAULKER</th>
<th>main inputs identified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Siwa-ban Foundation</td>
<td>initiation of planning, spatial design of marine reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potential landowners</td>
<td>extent of land portion, status of land portion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTIA</td>
<td>initiation of planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>former landowner</td>
<td>extent of land portion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tour guides</td>
<td>initiation of planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.4 A Typology of Actors

Drawing together the findings from the foregoing discussions, it is possible to identify common strands in the involvement roles and power relations of certain actors from both case study sites. This section proposes a typology of different forms of actors, based in part on how they interacted with one another but particularly on their power relations with the state/INGO planners. Once again the focus here is on actors outside the planning teams – conceptualization of the roles of planners themselves forms the principal theme of Chapter 9. As a distillation of their essential roles in the planning process it should facilitate comparison of the findings on power relations with findings from other case studies within this field.
Table 8.3 provides a list of the seven common actor-types identified and discussed in the section and summarizes their characteristics. It notes their ‘resource concern’ (whether their key interest in negotiations related to the marine area or the terrestrial area), their relative ‘power rating’ (their relative mobilization of power in the power arena), their ‘response to plans’ (whether their key actions were in support of or opposition to proposed measures), and the ‘planners response’ (how planners broadly responded to their actions). The table should be viewed as a highly simplified abstraction of roles, bearing in mind the pitfalls of generalization through labelling. K. Brown (1998) produced a tabular characterization of the aims, resources and means of interest groups for her case study in Nepal’s Terai. As she notes, any such summary necessarily ignores cross-membership between groups and the internal conflicts within them.

Table 8.3 Generalized typology of actors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>actor type</th>
<th>resource concern</th>
<th>power rating</th>
<th>response to plans</th>
<th>planners' response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bridge-builders</td>
<td>marine</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>support</td>
<td>encouragement, enrolment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>passive supporters</td>
<td>marine</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>support</td>
<td>accomodation, targeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semi-excluded</td>
<td>marine</td>
<td>very low</td>
<td>qualified support</td>
<td>partial accomodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>excluded</td>
<td>marine</td>
<td>very low</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>no accomodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low-power opponents</td>
<td>marine</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>opposition</td>
<td>no accomodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high-power opponents</td>
<td>terrestrial</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>opposition</td>
<td>partial accomodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>constrainers</td>
<td>terrestrial</td>
<td>very high</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>forced compliance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bridge-builders

A small but significant group comprised those actors who effectively took on an intermediary role between the communities and the planners. They actively supported the conservation project and were generally positive about consultation efforts, but also indicated their concern to ensure benefits accrued to the communities and especially that poorer fishermen did not suffer through the creation of the protected areas. Such individuals included the Sartenejan fisherman whose ongoing support led him to be appointed on the Advisory Committee for Bacalar Chico (bcgen2), the two presidents of the local tour guides associations (bctour1, cctour1) and the 1992-94 Caye Caulker Village Council chair (ccgen4). They were perhaps the least motivated by private gain among the pro-active actors, and their support was strongly courted by planners.

The three organisations vying for a local management role at Caye Caulker might also be placed in the bridge-building category since they were pursuing or seeking an intermediary role, though their motivations were more complex. The Siwa-ban Foundation, the BTIA and the 1996-98 Village Council all expressed strong support for the protected area project and took steps to secure ongoing involvement. Uncertainties over representativeness and motives, however, led planners to favour the Village Council for a community-based role (forest2).

Passive Supporters

The tour guides as a whole could be broadly described as low-power, passive supporters. They were also courted by planners at both sites, and their overall support for the protected area projects was highly valued. Most were motivated by the prospect of increased tour traffic to the reef. At Caye Caulker tour guides appeared confident the zoning scheme would permit them continued access to the reef for snorkelling and diving and that the reserve’s designation would bring extra revenue (e.g. cctour1, cctour3, cctour7). One guide stated he would like to see an enlarged reef section turned into a reserve (cctour2), while another believed the government should create no-fishing ‘parks’ throughout the Belize Barrier Reef if they were serious about developing ecotourism (cctour6). However, beyond
statements of support, tour guides in general did not play an active role in planning and they exercised little demonstrable power in order to meet their objectives.

Semi-excluded

The role of commercial fishermen at both sites was subtly different from that of tour guides. Lobster fishermen and beachtrap fishermen tended to express more concerns about the marine reserves and were much less wholehearted in their support. Planners did to some extent accommodate their needs and designed zoning schemes that represented a compromise for both parties. But fishermen were largely excluded from the planning process rather than actively targeted by planners. Figure 8.2 indicates how readily local actors could apparently be denied consideration in government decisions in Belize: “we can speak our rights, but no one hears us” (Villagers 1997).

The paucity of knowledge over the plans shown by most commercial fishermen, their own complaints, and the fact that other stakeholders argued fishermen had been neglected in consultations, implied they were given little chance to voice their opinions. Only over specific restrictions for Rocky Point did they secure influence, and largely through the sharing of interests with tour guides. The NACDC representative for Bacalar Chico suggested that the fishermen of the area “felt that they had no power, that life had somehow chased them like they chased the Indians from the United States from their land and put them in reserves” (bcgen1).

Excluded

Some stakeholders were fully excluded. No consultation meetings were held with the Sartenejan sailboat fishermen who worked the waters off Caye Caulker. They mostly dived for conch along the reef, an activity viewed with little sympathy by many Caye Caulker villagers. One interviewee who was generally concerned about fishing restrictions stated “the diving, you know, could be something that could be stopped” (ccgen3). The Sartenejans also undertook some diving for lobster in the area, and, as even the head of their cooperative suggested, this raised some controversy for Caye Caulker people:
"So the Sarteneja fishermen that are going in there, mostly they are going into waters, diving in waters, that traditionally have been for family members from Caye Caulker" (ccfish1).

Their equivalent for Bacalar Chico were the Mexican fishermen crossing the border from Xcalak. In both cases those excluded were viewed with antipathy as 'outsiders' by the stakeholders who were consulted. Their activities were likely to be stringently controlled after creation of the protected areas - planning measures likely to win favour among other stakeholders and which the excluded fishermen had no power to oppose.

Low-power Opponents

Opposition to other fishing measures was, however, expressed by certain user groups at both sites. Some commercial spearfishers from Caye Caulker and sports fishing guides from San Pedro expressed opposition to measures that would affect them such as banning spearfishing on the reef and enforcement of catch-and-release. Several extended their complaints to a general discontentment with planning. One San Pedran sports fishing guide arguing that the marine reserve should only exist to the north of Rocky Point (bctour3). Another stated “I think the area of the reserve should be smaller. Its not good to have so much area restricted. People have to take tourists where they want to go” (bctour2). The spearfishers suggested limiting the Caye Caulker reserve to a few patch reefs or cuts in the barrier reef popular with snorkel tours (ccfish4, ccfish6).

However, these specialist fishermen formed minority user groups whose activities were criticized by some other stakeholders as well as by members of the planning teams. One planner for Caye Caulker claimed tour guides thought the presence of spearfishers would deter tourists from visiting the reef. “A lot of people were indicating that they wanted spearfishing out completely. Completely: that was even beyond the boundaries” (fishery8). Though these stakeholders were given some chance to express their opinions, it appeared relatively expedient for planners to sideline their minority concerns rather than propose compromises. Even the sports fishing guides who opposed restrictions for Rocky Point, and who may have contributed to the changing of proposals, did not gain the full relaxation of restrictions they wanted (see Box 9.2).
High-power Opponents

Opposition backed by greater power resources was typified by the land development lobbies for both sites - the various overt or covert actors who were pressing for tracts of developable land to be left out of the protected areas. They sometimes formed strategic alliances with other actors to bolster their oppositional power, and they had better channels of access to politicians and planners than other opponents. Their potential to influence ministerial decisions was reflected in planner's concerns over the land status for Caye Caulker. Planners expressed the need to compromise on land issues, partly to ensure smooth cooperation from these stakeholder groups (forest3). But compromise had its limits. The planners resisted the power of the land lobby and closed off negotiation in Caye Caulker when they perceived the demands were too high to be accommodated (see Chapter 9). Indeed, the planning team subsequently advanced a proposal that slightly increased rather than decreased the land portion.

Constrainers

The last category consists of those actors who placed severe constraints on the parameters of planning. This actor-type included the former landowner of North Point, whose actions brought an immediate impact on the planning process. It also encompassed people who owned established landholdings in the north of Ambergris Caye and the south of Caye Caulker. Ownership or a legal claim to ownership effectively gave these stakeholders greater influence than the planners in shaping the protected areas in the chosen locations, even though they had no direct involvement in planning (see Box 8.8). In the context of insufficient available finance for compulsory purchases, the planners hands were tied. The influence of these actors may have been passive in most cases, but it was also non-negotiable.

The detailed and original characterization of actor roles and power relations contained in this section and summarized in Table 8.3 has produced an abstracted set of actor-types with distinctive patterns in their mobilizations of power (denoted by their 'power ratings' and 'responses to plans') and in the resulting way planners responded to their actions and concerns. These abstractions help to distil the essential roles of different types of actor for
the purposes of theory-building in the following chapter. But the typology may also have a
general application in similar analyses of power relations in conservation. Its generic format
will enable the results of this analysis to be compared with future research findings
elsewhere, where stakeholders may have different forms of resource usage yet fulfil similar
roles in power arenas.

Box 8.8 Land ownership as a power resource

The fact that a strip of land running north to south through the protected area remained
outside Bacalar Chico National Park is testament to the power that can be exercised
through land ownership. Members of the planning team indicated that the private
beach strip undermined the integrity of the area for conservation management,
especially for turtle conservation. Yet inclusion of the land was never considered as
feasible because of the high compensation value landowners could command if the
plots were subject to compulsory purchase. By owning the land, such stakeholders
limited the spatial area that was to come under the park regime.

At Caye Caulker, the owners of large plots on South Island effectively prevented the
first reserve scheme from going ahead, because of the high prices they would
command for sale of the land. The size of the proposed terrestrial portion for North
Island was also constrained by landowner considerations, but this time by potential
ownership. The Lots Committee intended to make all but the northern tip of the island
available for private sale, and planners hands were again effectively tied. The resulting
terrestrial portion of the protected area would be tiny in size compared with the marine
portion - arguably undermining the planner’s official rhetoric of protecting integrated
habitats.

8.5 Summary

Planning for the protected areas operated amid a complex interplay of social power between
actors at local and national scales, with further input via international-scale policies and
discourses. The power relations were produced and reproduced through the micro-political
arenas that constituted public involvement in planning. Power resources and tactics shaped
agents’ involvement and affected the course of planning. The structural and personal power
resources available to key actors in the arenas included social contacts, access to state
apparatus, authority and knowledge (including the ability to draw on wider discourses
associated with conservation, sustainable development and economic growth). The various power mechanisms and tactics strategically employed included persuasion, manipulation, compromise, exclusion, alliance-formation and enrolment.

Power resources and tactics also shaped the degree to which actors’ motives became translated into outcomes. In the case study, examples of concrete input by non-planners into the emergent plans were few, confined mostly to initiation of projects and details of spatial planning for the terrestrial portions. Drawing from the findings on the power resources, power tactics and power effects of actors, it was possible to devise an abstracted typology of actor-types common to both protected area sites that might aid comparison with other case studies.

Chapter 8 has taken the form of a conceptual exploration of power relations in protected area planning arenas, indicating how they helped shape not only planning outcomes but also the very process of community involvement. The key power relations in both respects proved to be those between planners and the public. Theorization on the process of interaction between planners and local stakeholders is now taken a stage further in Chapter 9, which synthesizes the findings on power and participation to yield a grounded concept of containment.
CHAPTER NINE

CONCEPTS OF CONTAINMENT:
THEORIZING ON PLANNER/COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The foregoing chapters make clear the centralized role played by the planning teams in the process of protected area design. Chapter 7 shows how the circumscribed nature of community involvement vested decision-making capacity with the planners. It was they who defined the parameters of formal participation and it was they who ultimately drew up the plans. Chapter 8 indicates how most local actors directed their efforts toward altering their power relations with planners in an attempt to influence planning indirectly, and suggests how planners too attempted to wield power. As in the policy-oriented research of Ghimire and Pimbert (1997) and Pimbert and Pretty (1997), the focus of attention has therefore been directed on to key planner-stakeholder relations, but an understanding of those relations draws from analysis of the full complexity of actor interactions that interlink with them.

Drawing on and expanding on the themes in the previous chapters, this chapter now sets out a conceptual characterization of the central role of the planning agencies. It argues that through their power relations with local stakeholders the planning teams were engaged in a fundamental and over-arching process of 'containment', or more precisely attempted containment, that shaped their approach to negotiations in the power arena (9.1). It then expands on the argument, reconceptualizing the strategic actions of planners and showing how most of the power tactics of planners can be interpreted in terms of attempted containment (9.2). But, just as social power inevitably generates resistance (see 2.4.1), so containment had its binary opposite: some of the actions of other actors had the effect of 'counter-containment' (9.3). In the final section, the notions of containment and counter-containment provide a framework through which to compare the overall planning experience at the different sites (9.4). The broader relevance of the concept of containment
to protected area planning beyond Belize is discussed in the concluding Chapter 10, and its ideas applied to studies by other authors.

9.1 Why ‘Containment’?

The idea that a process of containment was in operation for the case study sites arose during the course of fieldwork and was strengthened during the analysis stage. It was therefore grounded in the research (see 3.3.1). The term ‘containment’, however, has appeared in parallel contexts. Hildyard et al (1998, p32), for example, use similar phrasing when they talk of development agencies increasingly employing participatory exercises as “strategies for managing and containing dissent” over development projects. This section explains the reasoning behind the claim that containment was an integral process within protected area planning for the case study sites.

As Chapter 4 outlines, protected area planning in Belize, as in many developing countries, historically took the form of top-down managerialism driven largely by preservationist values. Global criticisms of such a conservation style (see 2.2.4) recently penetrated policy and practice in Belize, with the result that policy documents of the 1990s listed benefit for local communities as one of the considerations of conservation and government agencies and NGOs planning protected areas recognized a need to consult with the grassroots (see 4.4.3).

But the primary purpose of protected areas in Belize remained conservation of wildlife species, ecosystems and natural landscapes, not the provision of benefits to local people. This thesis contends that biodiversity protection was the essential function of the officially designated national parks and reserves, whatever their economic spin-offs might be. They were not designated as tourist parks or commercial fishery nurseries. Their fundamental and guiding purpose was protection and preservation. Analysis of official documents and interviews with planners made this clear. The National Protected Area Systems Plan for Belize states “the objectives of a National Park is protection and preservation of natural and scenic values of national significance” (Programme for Belize 1996, p30). And a protected area’s function is to protect such values “within the context of a defined area that is
maintained in (or returned to) a state dominated by natural processes” (Programme for Belize 1996, p61). According to one of the chief planning officials for marine reserves, “the network we are trying to establish is, first and foremost, going to protect biodiversity” (czmp3) (see 4.3.3).

The biodiversity-orientation was expressed still more strongly by the president of ITCF with respect to Bacalar Chico. He regarded tourism as a potential source of ecological degradation for the site, and its promotion as expedient rather than desirable: “It would be nice to have reserves without tourism but on the other hand it’s not feasible. Politically it’s not correct” (ingo6).

Tourism promotion may have been a stronger governmental motive for these projects, but the planning tool chosen for them - the protected area model - was explicitly created to protect biodiversity. As Sections 2.1 and 2.2 have explained, protected areas are founded on the principle of limiting human access to the natural resources contained within their boundaries. They arose out of preservationist discourses that sought to partition humanity from nature, and were largely exported from North to South (Pimbert & Pretty 1997). Despite modern discourses of biodiversity protection that recognize multiple ‘currencies’ for valuing biodiversity and allow for multiple use (Richard & O'Connor 1997), the spatialized components of protected area planning (delineated boundaries and zones) still reflect the basic principles of spatial separation (Ghimire & Pimbert 1997). The reserves planned in Belize existed to set legal controls on local people’s access to and usage of marine and terrestrial biodiversity. Under that system, impacts on local people, either positive or negative, were important, but essentially secondary considerations.

Once the prospective Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker protected areas entered the project pipeline, the central task of the planners was to make progress in preparing the sites for designation as nature reserves. That was the goal to which all considerations ultimately were geared. In order to do so the planners had to minimize the barriers toward achieving that primary aim. The barriers that might result from local communities included opposition to plans and the threat of non-cooperation with regulations. It was therefore important for planners to find ways to avoid or ameliorate economic hardships and to reduce opposition - in other words, to contain possible problems and possible dissent.
Involvement of local people in the planning process provided a means to register and monitor potentially divisive issues. Indeed, whether or not individual planners valued community involvement for social reasons, they had an imperative to facilitate some form of participation. They required acceptance from local people for the plans for practical reasons and to demonstrate local accountability for political and funding reasons. In the terms defined by White (1996, p7), they had interests in participation both for ‘sustainability’ and ‘legitimation’ of the project (see Table 2.8). Yet involvement, itself, constituted a potential threat to planning progress.

A fundamental incompatibility existed in the notion of full local participation in the planning of a biodiversity-oriented protected area. For both sites in Belize, almost all local stakeholders articulated their interests and concerns regarding the sites in terms of economic livelihood, not biodiversity conservation. Socio-economic perceptions governed their actions and reactions to plans, and, as Richard & O’Connor (1997) reveal, socio-economic goals do not necessarily match with those of conservation. An otherwise strong supporter of Caye Caulker plans indicated the parameters of support thus: “we don’t want it to affect the lobster fishermen or the divers - otherwise people wouldn’t go along with it, people expressed that” (cctour1). A striking mis-match in interests was revealed by the 1994-96 Village Council’s opposition to the relatively small land portion for Caye Caulker (ccgen2) and their suggestion that it should be confined to mangrove swamp rather than forested ground (ccgen3 forest3).

“Our concern was that Caye Caulker is limited when it comes to land, you cannot go north, south, east or west after that. This was a portion of land which government had acquired for residential purpose. Of course we do agree that there should be a reserve and there should be a portion of land set aside, but that 125 acres of land or so was a bit, we thought, too much” (ccgen3).

In planning terms, how could stakeholders concerned about access to resources be expected to make decisions compatible with those of a protected area being established to control human usage for the conservation of biodiversity? Active involvement in decision-making, giving local people greater leverage over plans, would likely have jeopardized the creation of a protected area fitting the national objectives and norms of conservation. Participation therefore had to be contained in practice. In White’s (1996) terms, ‘sustainability’ had to be compromised and participation limited to a weakly ‘representative’ form. The planners ended up attempting a balancing act: by giving people a ‘voice’ without ceding them...
decision-making power, consultations themselves might become tools of containment. Arnstein (1969) recognised long ago the deployment of tokenistic participation as a ploy to dissipate social protest.

Some of the language used by members of the planning teams was strongly indicative of an underlying approach akin to containment. It was the language of top-down control rather than facilitation of active participation in decisions by local people. References were made to “convincing” local people (forest) and to instances of local opposition as “problems” (fishery). One of the early planning documents prepared for Caye Caulker referred to possible planning ‘constraints’ as “resistance of the present Lots Committee and Village Council” and “resistance by some fishermen to fishing restrictions” as “possible constraints” on planning (August 1994, p5). The head of ITFC, the INGO co-responsible for planning Bacalar Chico, referred to consultation as a means through which “finally in San Pedro and Sarteneja and so forth the general acceptance was obtained” (ingo).

The significance of these phrases should become clear in Section 9.2, which expands on the claims above, discussing in depth the mechanisms through which planners acted in a mode of containment. But containment succeeded only in degrees. The ‘arena’ character of the planning process meant that power flowed in complicated directions and not always in favour of containment. The action of some actors reinforced containment, but that of others served to erode containment - a tendency discussed in Section 9.3.

### 9.2 Containment Actions

The research does not set out to prove that planners deliberately and systematically sought to constrain and contain the process of community involvement. Indeed, the only way such an intention could be revealed would be if they directly admitted so in interviews, which is surely an unlikely prospect. Whether containment was or was not a conscious intention, the contention here is that a combination of their administrative practices, their training and approach to conservation planning, and the pressure of responsibilities to higher government and/or donors effectively fixed planners into a containment mode. Box 9.1 reiterates how planning procedures in Belize remained wedded to national-scale discourses.
of top-down governance. As Section 9.1 has argued, conservation planning was also strongly associated with global-scale discourses of preservationism and managerialism (see 2.1.3). The expertise of individual planners tended to mesh with these discourses, and both Grindle and Thomas (1989) and Pimbert and Pretty (1997) emphasize how professional training and experience can conservatively predispose decision-makers toward stable values and methods. Hence the planners were subject to personal, bureaucratic and donor pressure to produce with efficiency plans that met the established norms of protected area planning.

Box 9.1 Planning culture in Belize

The contextual discussion in Chapter 4 raised a number of points from interview statements and secondary references that affirm the top-down character of planning in Belize. Government in Belize was seen as centralized, bureaucratically inflexible and reluctant to devolve decision-making roles (see 4.4.1 and 4.4.2). In government projects, internal bureaucratic performance was often the measure of success rather than tangible benefits on the ground (see 4.4.1). A planning culture responsible to local opinions had yet to evolve.

In the field of conservation, there was said to be inadequate resources, staffing and expertise in working with communities (see 4.2.3), and uncertainty in government agencies as to how to proceed with participation (see 4.4.3). Notably, planning staff for protected areas generally held posts in resource management: there were no social science specialists in evidence. An incapacity to foster practical participation (see 4.4.2) was matched by stated limits to the scope of potential participation: local interests would not likely override the ‘national interest’ in conservation (see 4.4.3). Together these points add weight to the argument that conservation planning in Belize was structurally predisposed toward containment rather than active participation.

Containment actions, as agency, can therefore be related to persistent structural influences that helped order power relations and tended to operate against an empowering form of community participation. This structural dimension of the containment theory is explored in a wider context in the concluding Chapter 10.

Table 9.1 indicates how initial objectives of protected area planning for the case study sites became translated into strategic actions tantamount to containment. As argued in Section 9.1, the participatory ethic of public involvement did not squarely meet the fundamental conservation-oriented goal of planning. The stated objective of involvement therefore
became translated in practice by planners. Their implicit strategic objective for community involvement was to steer the process so as to be able to demonstrate public acceptance of the plans and ensure local people cooperated with planning procedures. Three entwined strategies needed to be mobilized by planners in order to meet that objective: generating (or, alternatively, simulating) public support for plans; negating public opposition; and preventing local disruption to planning progress. The successful deployment of those strategies required specific actions geared to containment within the power arena of planning.

Table 9.1 The rationale of containment

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<th>planners' perspective</th>
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<td>planning goal</td>
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<td>strategic objective for public involvement</td>
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<td>strategic actions within power arena</td>
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<td>functional mode of interaction</td>
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The containment actions of the planners drew upon the power tactics already discussed in Chapter 8, including compromise, exclusion, enrolment, persuasion through the mobilization of discourses, and manipulation through the mis-representation of information. These tactics contributed to three identifiable (and inter-linked) actions: avoidance of conflict; blockage of dissent; and efforts to control knowledge processes and planning.
procedure. In their attempted containment, planners had to strike a delicate balancing act between creating a protected area worthy of the term and defusing or circumventing dissent that might disrupt planning. Sometimes power relations enabled community concerns to be safely blocked, but in other cases a preferred course of action was to accommodate users or avoid concerns ever arising. Success in both cases depended on effective control over the circulation of knowledge and the process of planning. The following subsections take a closer look at these containment actions.

9.2.1 Avoidance and Blockage

'Avoidance' actions refer to planning decisions that reduced or circumvented possible adverse reactions from local stakeholders. Such actions typically involved a degree of compromise on the part of planners as they used the findings from surveys and consultation meetings to accommodate some existing usages of marine resources and some of the public demands for land. Strategically, such actions not only circumvented potential conflicts but also helped forge support and cooperation from key groups. In terms of the typology of actors outlined in Section 8.4, they tended to be used most in relation to the concerns of 'passive supporters' and the 'high-power opponents'. Planners recognised limitations to the likelihood of successfully imposing measures strongly opposed by high-power actors concerned with land resources or to numerically-large low-power groups concerned with marine resources. As one stakeholder put it:

“I think the scientists wanted to do more. But because of the pressure of the people, their hands were tied. They wouldn’t be able to do it because it would be chaos, it would be civil unrest or something like that.” (bcgen1).

In the resulting plans for Bacalar Chico the planners offered a compromise on the land boundary in negotiations with the politically influential cay development lobby, and the only strict no-take zones for marine users were in the northernmost section of the reef - an area seldom visited by tour guides and fishermen. No interviewees expressed concern over their closure. The one site where potential conflict over marine restrictions was a real threat was Rocky Point, and planners swiftly recognised the need to design compromise measures despite their stated concerns over the grouper population. As one sports fishing guide
suggested, “if they close that place probably they would have to take half of the village in gaol if they ever find those groupers spawning again” (*bctour6*).

Avoidance, however, had its limitations. As noted above, the balancing act of planners required production of credible plans for the protection of biodiversity. If accommodation overly threatened the integrity of conservation aims, and if power relations permitted, the planners could attempt a blockage action to negate opposition or potential opposition. At Caye Caulker, given the power of the land lobby and the potential concerns of the wider local community, planners acted to minimize opposition to the emerging plans by leaving almost all of North Island free for subdivision and sale. At 50-60ha, they were planning to conserve a terrestrial area minuscule by comparison with most of the world’s national parks. The 1994-96 Village Council nevertheless remained concerned that too much land was being set aside for conservation. But the planners were not prepared to compromise still further to placate opponents. They regarded a size below 50ha as ecologically deficient (*forest3*). They also perceived that the counter-proposals of the land lobby were weakly supported both locally and in national political circles, and at that stage ceased negotiation and simply proceeded with planning. Instead of allowing a stalemate to put the project on hold, the planners blocked off the channel of consultation.

‘Blockage’ entailed not just disregarding concerns where tactically feasible, but also the act of closing off or attempting to close off avenues through which issues and potential concerns could even be aired. It appeared to be used most easily and effectively in relation to the lowest-power actors - mostly the ‘semi-excluded’, the ‘excluded’ and the ‘low-power opponents’ - those who had the least power to resist and complain of their denial of a voice. Fishermen, as a whole, did not feel empowered to speak out and tended not to be targeted for consultations. The exclusion of the fishing co-operatives was particularly striking, their capacity for political lobbying blunted by blockage of information from government agencies. As the Northern Fishermen’s Co-operative manager explained:

> “We do not know enough about what the reserve’s about, how many of the fishermen are gonna be affected, whether it will have an effect on our operations. Once these things become clear, and it’s starting to hurt us, then obviously we would set up the necessary lobbying methods…. This interview that we’re doing right now is an eye-opener for me…. We’re also represented on the fisheries advisory board, but many times these things are happening and they’re not even presented at the board” (*ccfish1*).
The concerns of the stakeholders comprehensively excluded from consultations - the Sartenejans for Caye Caulker and the Mexicans for Bacalar Chico - were plainly subject to blockage. Had they been permitted a voice these fishermen would likely have raised objections to planned strict regulations for marine areas they utilized. In a sense blockage of their concerns enabled the avoidance of others, for, in order to meet protected area guidelines, planners had to include core conservation zones ('Preservation' and 'Conservation 1' Zones) somewhere within the marine reserves.

Blockage and avoidance also proceeded hand in hand in the case of spearfishing at Caye Caulker, an activity over which local stakeholders held diverging opinions. One of the planners indicated that Caye Caulker’s relatively powerful and large tourism lobby would not accept continuing spearfishing near snorkel tour sites along the reef (fishery8). Dissent from the small number of commercial spearfishers was easy for the planners to block, and the emerging restrictions avoided conflict with the tourism lobby by heavily restricting the activity. Spearfishing was also implicated as a major cause of reef fish decline, and its prevention could be justified with reference to biodiversity arguments. It was one form of ‘multiple use’ that was not accommodated and that was not negotiable.

Box 9.2 Continuing opposition over Rocky Point

The claim of unanimous support for the revised restrictions at Rocky Point (fishery3) appeared ill-founded. Three interviewees involved in sports fishing tourism remained highly critical. One argued that there was no need to halt all fishing during peak spawning, just the taking of grouper (bctour3). Another reiterated that Rocky Point is a prime sports fishing site, and that it is precisely the spawning peak when people want to go there to fish:

"That’s the time people go fish there. I’m saying, if there is no grouper there why do it? Would you go and hunt where there is no game?.... When the grouper spawn is when they are there. That’s when we fish them" (bctour2).

A third sports fishing guide was also opposed to the measure, and asserted that the rationale for the proposed restriction was flawed in the first place:

"The bunch of groupers is still there, they never finish. Some years its a good crop and some years its a bad crop, and when you call a bad crop you go there and the school of groupers are there by the thousand but they just don’t bite.... You can never finish the fish if you are fishing just with a hook and line" (bctour6).
A more subtle form of blockage was in evidence in the case of San Pedran sports fishing guides. Having being seen to compromise over restrictions at Rocky Point and having defused most opposition, the planners then mis-represented public support for the 10-day closure proposal as unanimous. They closed off further discussion at that stage, despite the continuing opposition of sports fishing guides (see Box 9.2).

9.2.2 Control over Knowledge and Procedure

The planning teams were not, however, working their strategies on a blank canvas. Local communities were not merely the passive objects of avoidance and blockage actions. Stakeholders, too, possessed agency, including the capacity to recognise and react to containment actions (see 9.3). Success in their strategies of generating support, negating opposition and preventing disruption therefore required planners to exert a degree of control over the planning process, not just over involvement procedures but also over the production and circulation of knowledge.

Control over knowledge processes was crucial. By regulating the supply of information, and by promoting ideas and representations of the protected area sites, the emerging plans and the planning process itself, the planners could hope to guide local opinions and steer the course of planning. Control over the 'public transcript' has already been noted as a key dimension of social power within political ecology (see 2.4.2), as a means through which actors “seek to regulate the discursive representations of environmental change” (Bryant & Bailey 1997, p191).

The tactical mobilization and manipulation of ideas and discourses has been amply illustrated within Section 8.2. In their public promotion of Bacalar Chico, for example, planners drew heavily on local representations of Mexican fishermen as environmental ‘villains’ meshing with a national discourse relating to Belizean territorial sovereignty. The focus on curbing Mexican fishing enhanced support in the communities. However, it is noteworthy that the chair of Caribena Fishermen’s Cooperative in San Pedro saw the key overfishing problem not in these terms but as the use of gill-nets on beachtraps set by Belizeans (bcfish8).
Across both sites, planners also placed emphasis in their consultations on the potential of the protected areas to generate ecotourism. Again this tapped both local-scale aspirations and wider, national discourses promoting Belize’s economic future as a tourism destination. It may be that the planners were not just trying to build support by invoking the promise of tourism, but were in effect discursively manoeuvring stakeholders into acquiescence through the type of ‘social contract’ implicit in ICDPs (see 2.2.4): “if we do X for you, you will stop destroying this habitat” (Richard & O’Connor 1997, p413). West and Brechin (1991), Colchester (1997), and Ghimire and Pimbert (1997) have already pointed out some of the pitfalls and broken promises typical of ecotourism promotion worldwide (see Box 2.4).

In Subsection 8.2.4 it was noted that local actors showed the capacity to selectively invoke or ‘cherry-pick’ discourses to further their interests. The trait was even more marked in the strategies of planners, who repeatedly made selective use of different discourses, tuning their arguments to particular audiences. In effect, they could articulate the protected area project in different guises. To fishermen, they conveyed its function as sustaining fisheries and regulating the depredations of ‘outsiders’. To those engaged in tourism its role was to enhance the economy through conservation of visitor attractions. For an external audience of national and international conservation professionals, including donors and the World Heritage Site committee, its purpose was to augment the system protecting biodiversity within Belize. The mixed messages promulgated by planning staff were traceable to confused justifications for the projects at the local level. For example, while one Bacalar Chico stakeholder supported the need to protect a rich but sensitive area from over-exploitation (bctour1), another supported its location precisely because he regarded it as remote, little exploited and therefore readily preservable for visitors (bctour5).

The inconsistent way in which different conservation ‘imperatives’ could be applied is in part testament to the ambiguity inherent in the combined global discourses of conservation (see 2.1.4). Though the basic approach of planners remained managerialist/preservationist, the market-oriented and people-oriented discursive strands to the conservation debate helped them cast their arguments in terms of economic values and sustainability of resource use. Though the people-oriented strand certainly created a requirement for planners to consult local stakeholders, somewhat perversely it also provided a discursive resource that
could be deployed (consciously or sub-consciously) to aid containment. It provided an opportunity both to articulate positive local benefits of protected area status and to channel public reaction in favour of plans.

Control over official public involvement procedures was feasible because it was the planners who staged the surveys and consultations. They determined the timing and arrangements of meetings, set the agendas and carried out reporting. Planners were therefore in a position to court involvement of actors perceived as supportive and to exclude where feasible those expected to raise persistent opposition. Indeed, there appeared to be a tendency among planners to view those local people who expressed overall compliance with proposals as legitimate participants, and to downplay the legitimacy of the opinions of those who were opposed. Parallel tendencies in conservation projects have been described by Taylor and Johansson (1996) in Tanzania and Richard and O’Connor (1997) in Madagascar. The parameters of what constituted ‘participation’ were implicit: discussion over the design of a protected area was acceptable; questioning of the existence of a protected area was not.

As argued earlier, to retain sufficient control over the outcome of planning, planners had to impose limits on the involvement of non-planners. Control required participation to be reactive and consultative, rather than pro-active and executive. Yet there were dangers that containment of participation itself would too-conspicuously run counter to planning or funding policy of government and donors. In order to avoid such a danger, planners conveyed the impression that the process had been more open to participation: they created a semblance of positive participation. Taylor and Johansson (1996, p39) noted similar actions at work in relation to Tanzania’s Ngorongoro Conservation Area:

“Those in power don’t want to recognize conflicts with the ‘target groups’ because such conflicts look bad in the eyes of the donors. The gut reaction is to monopolize the information flow and negate any information that doesn’t fit with a success-story model”.

As noted in Subsection 5.4.3, one of the planners for Bacalar Chico suggested that it was easy to construct the image that planning was driven by grassroots input (fishery), even though there were few demonstrable contributions from local stakeholders at either the consultation meetings or the Advisory Committee meetings. Planners could demonstrate
that consultations had been staged, but their reports gave little insight into the quality of participation. Statements such as “boundaries for the parks and the zones encompassed are set on the basis of discussion with local communities” (Vousden 1995) are left open to interpretation. Contrary to the comments of the tour guides president at Caye Caulker (cctourl), the researcher’s interpretation is that local actors played little or no role in defining the boundaries, and that their input into zoning decisions was primarily informational. Indeed, the confidence in the consultation process expressed by some key local actors, the ‘bridge-builders’ (see 8.4), is to some extent testament to their successful enrolment by planners.

The attempted control of community involvement had one last, crucial element. It included action by planners designed not just to control interactions between themselves and stakeholders, but also intervention designed to affect interactions within the community. The purpose of such intervention was once again to smoothen the process of community involvement and prevent delays in planning progress. The most obvious example was the stated preference of planning staff for setting up liaison and possible co-management relations with the Caye Caulker Village Council rather than formalizing the role of the Siwa-ban Foundation or the local BTIA (forest2). One official claimed:

“After speaking with a lot of people out there, you know, a lot of people know me out there, I think they are most satisfied with the village council actually playing the major role in it. They are satisfied.” (fishery2).

The researcher found little interest in or knowledge of the management issue among ordinary local stakeholders. Instead, it appeared that, by supporting the Council in its attempts to secure a role, the planners were hoping to circumvent the potentially obstructive problems of factionalism arising between the other two organisations. The same official complained of these tensions and went on to reveal “if you don’t be firm and give it good guidance then I think it could really become a mess, you know” (fishery2).

The detailed argument in this section echoes the critical analyses of protected area conservation by authors such as Pimbert and Pretty (1997) and Schroeder (1999). It suggests that long-established discourses of conservation, rooted in the conceptual division of nature and culture, combined with an institutional inertia to restrict the agencies’ approach to community involvement in protected area planning at the case study sites.
Planners made concessions toward, but could not embrace the ideals of, a people-oriented conservation.

What is new in the argument here is the recognition that planners consequently became engaged in an overarching process of attempted containment, via their power relations with other actors in the arena of planning. The section then sets out the key components of that process, namely ‘avoidance’ and ‘blockage’ actions and the ‘control’ of knowledge and procedure, exercised by means of the power tactics described in Chapter 8. These concepts of containment advance theorization on the actions of planners. But the actions of planners do not necessarily achieve intended outcomes. The next section considers the existence of a counterpoint to containment.

9.3 Counter-containment

The concept of ‘counter-containment’ refers not to opposition as such, but to actions by non-planners that had the effect of undermining the containment actions of the planners. Though it included persistent opposition to elements of the plans, the defining feature of counter-containment was the disruption or potential disruption of planning progress. ‘Planning progress’ refers to the successful preparation of protected area plans that could be shown as meeting the initial objectives of the project (or as falling within the initial parameters set for the project).

The potential for counter-containment was as much a feature of the protected area planning process as was containment. Its structural roots lay in the same disjuncture between the goals of biodiversity conservation and the priorities of local resource users. Its existence is a logical consequence of planners’ ‘need’ for containment, and it reflects the notions of power that emphasize the ubiquity of resistance (Giroux 1986, Clegg 1989, Crush 1995). As Giddens (1985, p11) puts it:

“No matter how great the scope or intensity of control superordinates possess, since their power presumes the active compliance of others, those others can bring to bear strategies of their own, and apply specific types of sanctions”.

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In an environmental context, Bryant and Bailey (1997) argue that state agencies' quest for public legitimacy provides a route of resistance for non-state actors. The fact that planners sought consensus and support from stakeholders, and sought to demonstrate their involvement in planning, opened up windows not just for discussion and negotiation, but also for resistance. It opened up opportunities for conflict, dissent and disruption (see Table 9.1).

Community involvement activities provided even low-power stakeholders with an opportunity to disrupt plans, although in the cases of Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker their counter-containment role was minimal. For Bacalar Chico a small number of local people connected with sports fishing expressed overall disapproval with plans they saw as imposed from above and contrary to their interests, but failed to enrol a sufficient body of other stakeholders into their opposition. It may have been the case that the compromise tactic by planners over Rocky Point defused their potential for continuing effective dissent.

The capacity for counter-containment appeared greater for those 'high-power opponents' concerned with the repercussions of the protected areas for land ownership and development. With their sharpened motivation (see 8.3) and greater power resources (see 8.2.2) they had a greater potential to stall planning progress. They could mobilize powerful discourses to strengthen their political position, for the planners by no means held a monopoly over the realm of ideas (see 2.4.2). One of the most potent was connected with the national government's drive for external investment (see 4.1). In a country where, allegedly, major land sales targeting foreigners could pass unscathed through the authorities despite strong community concern (see 4.3.2) and political-economic priorities tended to override environmental considerations (see 4.2.1), complaints over the land portions could certainly hold political sway in key quarters of government. One San Pedran real estate manager invoked the threat of a withdrawal of external investment should development restrictions be increased adjacent to Bacalar Chico:

"It's a little bit radical, it's a little bit extremist..... Say, you're looking at about 100 American investors that would have a problem with the stability of our country, with the development aspect, right. So it would definitely have a negative impact" (bcgen5).
Some of the high-power opponents could also utilize a liaison role to mis-represent the views of general stakeholders. The 1994-96 Caye Caulker Village Council, for example, claimed that their opposition to the terrestrial acreage was posited on behalf of ordinary villagers, yet there was little evidence of concern among villagers over the land portion (see Box 9.3). One local key player argued that potential landowners’ lobbying actions had effectively been part of an ongoing attempt to stall progress in designating the terrestrial portion rather than achieve a compromise (meeting4).

The essence of any deliberate counter-containment actions is therefore to force changes against the will of planners or to delay and even prevent the declaration of a reserve. Like all actions within a power arena, the fact of their exercise does not necessarily imply success. But counter-containment was not limited to intentional acts. Importantly, forced changes and delays could also be the incidental outcome of other actions. Two planning officials, for example, implicated the issue of factionalism on Caye Caulker as a cause of delay in preparation of the reserve’s management plan (fishery2, forest2).

Box 9.3 Opinions on the proposed terrestrial portion at Caye Caulker

Despite the claims of the 1994-96 Village Council chair, few other interviewees in Caye Caulker expressed opposition over the extent of land included in the protected area proposals. Muted concerns were expressed by just two of the ‘ordinary’ villagers (ie not key players). One said that the land portion was not needed because the reef did not need the (ecological) support of mangroves (cctour3). Another felt it would be wrong for the protected area to take up too much potential space for village people, but was worried that foreigners would offer higher prices and make it unavailable anyway (ccres1).

A planning official believed the land portion was not of much concern to fishermen (fishery8). Other officials claimed that, though village people might be interested in seeking their fair share of any lots put up for sale, most would also be content to see it reserved, taking the attitude “if it’s not available, fine; but if it is available, I want to have some” (meeting4). One tour guide actually stated he would like to see the land portion increased at least double in size, and be available for nature tours (cctour2). Another supported a terrestrial reserve on the island because it might help prevent over-development:

“You know, maybe having that part of the island as a reserve also maybe it gets less people to build up more businesses, more huge resorts etcetera” (cctour4).
But the most striking example of counter-containment of all was the incidental action of the former landowner at Caye Caulker. His claim to the land was, ostensibly at least, an issue between himself and other sectors of government, rather than a response to the protected area plans. However, it immediately forced a rethink of the terrestrial extent of the protected area by planners, stalled progress in planning for both components, and directly caused the Siwa-ban Foundation’s application for GEF funding to be postponed. The NGO founder was referring to the whole project when she said “seems we’re going to be on the back-burner again” (ccgen1). As a response, some planners regretfully suggested they might have to designate the marine reserve separately (czmp3, fishery4), and another feared long delay over the land portion might even result in its omission through political pressure (forest3) (see Box 9.4 in Subsection 9.4.1).

This section has indicated how some of the actions of non-planners in the power arenas can be conceptualized in terms of counter-containment, the binary opposite of containment. The concept of counter-containment again extends theorization on power relations, in the context of community involvement in protected area planning. It can encompass mechanisms of resistance (Crush 1995, Bryant 1997), including passive resistance (Scott 1985), but it does not necessarily result from opposition. Its definition is action that serves to undermine containment, whether or not that effect is intentional. The concept therefore supports the contention that the generation of incidental or unintended consequences still constitutes the exercise of power (Lukes 1986). In the final section the concepts of containment and counter-containment are now combined in a theoretical re-assessment of planning experience at the case study sites.

9.4 The Efficacy of Containment: the Sites Compared

Throughout the case study chapters key similarities have emerged in the planning experience of the two protected area sites. But the analysis has also revealed clear differences between events regarding Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker. Those differences can be articulated in terms of the analytical framework of containment. This thesis contends that attempted containment of stakeholder involvement was a feature common to both sites, and that differences in their planning progress can be explained in part by comparing the
efficacy with which containment was practised. In so doing, it draws on the context-
dependence of local stakeholders’ motives and power resources, and reinforces the notion
that the contingencies of ‘place’ have a crucial bearing on the planning process (see 1.2).

Comparison of the overall progress at each site must first take into account wider factors
relating to the projects. Figure 9.1 locates planning within its wider context, drawing on
previous discussions to indicate that global, national, and local contexts all impinge on
events and relations within the power arenas of stakeholder involvement.

Figure 9.1 Contextual influences on planning
Containment actions are conceptualized here as taking place at the local scale in the interactions between planners and local stakeholders. But the influence of wider contexts means that the efficacy of containment is also related to factors external to planner-stakeholder interactions: factors operating at the national and global scales. In comparing planning events for the two sites it is therefore necessary to look first at external factors influencing planning (9.4.1). They are referred to here as ‘preconditions’ because, as the second subsection goes on to show, they help shape the potential for containment actions to succeed. The findings on preconditions are integrated with local factors to discuss how and why the balance of containment and counter-containment differed for the two sites (9.4.2).

9.4.1 Preconditions of Planning

For Bacalar Chico, the preconditions of planning were comparatively strong. The project secured substantial finance through the EU, and concerted political and administrative impetus from government circles. The external resources provided by the INGOs, especially ITCF, proved crucial in securing the financial package for the project. The incoming external funding commitment, in turn, set up outgoing channels of responsibility. The ITCF had to approve “the basic way of how expenditure is done” (ingo6), and report back to the EU. The Bacalar Chico project therefore had extra pressure laid upon it not only to demonstrate planning performance, but also to bring the project to fruition within the external funding window.

From within the country too, the planning impetus was strong. The proposed reserve was included in the government’s application for World Heritage Site status, an application that, as already noted, proved a spur to the establishment of several protected areas (see 4.3.3). It was also promoted as the Belizean component of a potential transboundary reserve (see 5.1). Political and bureaucratic commitment to the project was considerable, providing the ministerial support seen as key to planning progress (see Box 4.4). All in all, the project had powerful momentum from the top down.

Caye Caulker had far less external finance and apparently weaker governmental support. Given the economic marginalization of Belize and retrenchment in the public sector (see
4.1), the country continued to place emphasis on external support for conservation (see 4.2.3). The resources of the GEF-funded CZMP substantially aided planning (see 4.3.2), but Caye Caulker did not attract the INGO involvement comparable with that of Bacalar Chico that might have helped secure external funds dedicated to the project. Funding for the site was difficult to justify on the basis of high biodiversity richness, the attribute most likely to attract conservation-oriented INGOs. Insufficient finance for the protected area project was seen by several villagers as a stumbling block (e.g. cctour3, cctour6, ccgen6).

Moreover, the creation of a protected area at the site did not appear to figure so highly in national biodiversity priorities, and a marine reserve accessible to tourists already existed just 6km away (as one villager complained “we already have Hol Chan” (ccres6)). Under conditions in which political and economic motives, including the push for investment, precluded guaranteed cross-governmental support for protected areas (see 4.2.3), at times, cracks appeared in the unity of purpose between different arms of government. Political impediments to coordination between departments has already been discussed in relation to coastal zone planning (see 4.3.2). For Caye Caulker, governmental disunity was suggested in the difference in opinions within the Forest Department over the status of the land portion (see Box 9.4). It was also implied in the failure of the Lands Department to warn the Forest Department of the North Point land claim, even though they were housed in the same Ministry. The head of the latter’s Conservation Division reportedly did not even hear the issue had been taken to his Minister until his meeting with villagers a week later (ccgen6), and was said to be ‘flabbergasted’ (ccgen1). Altogether, the planning momentum for the Caye Caulker project showed faltering signs from the top down.

Many local stakeholders expressed cynicism over government handling of the project at Caye Caulker, and, owing to delays, more scepticism over the momentum for designation. For some, the early attention of planners to social assessment had served to raise expectations that were thwarted by later delays and lack of communication. Several blamed the delay on political and administrative factors (e.g. ccgen6, ccgen8, ccres1). One tour guide complained “you know they talk about it but they don’t really act, and we want someone to act” (cctour4).
Box 9.4 Caye Caulker: governmental disunity

From the outset, the prospective status of the terrestrial portion for Caye Caulker was never fully clarified. Initially planners discussed the possibility of making the area a forest reserve, but the Forest Officer most involved in planning recommended to his department that the area be declared a national park (meeting4), on the grounds that it would confer a higher level of protection (forest3). A forest reserve can be more readily de-reserved in future, should the elected Minister choose to do so (ccgen6).

At the start of fieldwork debate over the status of the area appeared to have resurfaced in the Forest Department (ccgen1, forest2). Both the officer noted above and the leading figure in the Siwa-ban Foundation claimed there was pressure from certain people on government to make it a forest reserve (ccgenl, meeting4). At the close of field research the head of the Forest Department firmly stated that Caye Caulker would have a forest reserve (forest1). However, his subordinate in the specialist Conservation Division continued to take a different view:

“I still need to put a position paper on that because I think it should be a national park rather than a forest reserve really.... In view of our site visits, in view of what’s developed, and in view of what the people want also.” (forest2).

At a meeting between planners and the Siwa-ban Foundation in January 1997, the Forest Officer added his concern that a national park should be declared during the current political administration. Under the previous government plans for developing private lots up to the northern tip of the island had been devised and he feared they might be re-advocated if that government were re-elected (meeting4). He was therefore worried at the delay caused when the ownership issue over North Point suddenly emerged.

9.4.2 Containment of Community Involvement

The differences in contextual factors between the two sites combined with local-scale actions in the power arenas to create different outcomes in terms of containment of community involvement.

For Bacalar Chico, the strong pre-conditions for planning progress were matched by a tendency for the project to generate relatively little counter-containment activity. Comments from stakeholders overall suggested their support for a reserve was conditional on plans
having no perceived negative effect on individual livelihoods. In the absence of negative
effects, support would be expressed. The chosen location of the reserve away from heavily
visited fishing and tourism areas made it relatively uncontroversial in this respect. There
was also minimal existing settlement close to the site, few local stakeholders expressed any
substantial concerns about the terrestrial portion and most of the public land included was
of low development potential. An American-born resident of San Pedro said:

"Who the heck wants to go back there.... Unless somebody puts in a lot of
money that land is probably gonna sit like that for ever, because if you want
to use it you'd have to destroy some wetlands to even get to it" (bctour3).

Individual concerns existed over fishing access and restrictions on land use, differences of
opinion existed over fish stocks, and interviews with local stakeholders revealed dismay
over a perceived inadequacy of consultations and lack of knowledge of the plans. Yet these
issues and others that might have arisen were, in this case, effectively contained by the
avoidance, blockage and control actions described in Section 9.2. In pursuing these actions,
planners drew on the preconditional planning base built from adequate finance and
governmental commitment. As well as providing resources for planning, it provided power
resources for containment. Containment helped the reserve to be declared within a time
span of four years from initiation of the project. From the point of view of planners, the
project proceeded smoothly and swiftly to designation within its funding schedule, and any
impediments were effectively circumvented.

By contrast, the weaker pre-conditions for containment at Caye Caulker were matched by
more prominent instances of counter-containment. The proximity of the protected area to
the village helped to stir more local interest and active support, but also provoked more
concern and controversy. The proposed marine reserve was not only heavily visited by
fishermen and tour guides, but the terrestrial portion was on land apparently coveted for
development by certain people from the island and from the mainland. The planning
process there became embroiled in disputes over the land portion, and was even affected by
rivalries between groups within the community.

Controversy and debate over the land portion were identified as major hold-ups both in the
early stages and after the late emergence of the ownership issue (e.g. August 1994, ccgen1,
ccgen3, cctour1). The planners selection of a small portion of newly-acquired crown land at
North Point appeared to be an avoidance action, but opposition still arose at an early stage and brought about delay followed by the subsequent containment action of blockage. As the then Village Council chair put it, the negotiations “broke down right there” (ccgen3). Later delays surrounded the organization of consultation meetings and completion of the management plan. Little progress on either took place during the fieldwork period. Further delaying issues arose over future local management responsibilities and, ultimately, the former landowner’s claim to North Point, which also threatened an enforced downgrading of the plans in conservation terms.

So, compared with Bacalar Chico, the Caye Caulker project was beset with impediments and both deliberate and incidental counter-containment actions. Its weaker preconditions were epitomized by the demonstrable differences in opinion aired at the institutional level. Power strategies were prominent at the local level. It was not only the planning agencies that tried to persuade, manipulate, enrol and control: local actors in turn actively deployed power tactics and some even tried to enrol the planners. And, finally, plans were disrupted by the threat of litigation from a former landowner – a threat against which planners appeared to have neither the financial resources nor the political clout to battle. Public involvement in planning was not effectively contained by the planning team, the planning process did not proceed smoothly and declaration of the protected area was repeatedly delayed.

This section suggests that concepts of containment and counter-containment are useful as analytical tools not just to elucidate actors’ roles and interventions but to examine the whole pattern of community involvement in the power arena of planning. The concepts provide a framework for comparing planning ‘progress’ between different sites. The framework combines analysis of containment and counter-containment actions with analysis of wider contextual factors that influence the power resources available to planners and thereby shape their potential to contain effectively. The containment framework therefore incorporates the attention to different geographical scales stressed in work by political ecologists (Bryant & Bailey 1997, Brown, K. 1998). Figure 9.2 summarizes in diagramatic form how different factors helped determine the balance of containment versus counter-containment in the case study sites.
Lest the foregoing should imply that the planning of Bacalar Chico represented greater ‘progress’ in terms of achieving conservation goals, it is important to stress one final analytical point. Successful containment does not ensure ultimate project success. The practical as well as ethical role of open and broad-based community participation has been amply emphasized in Chapter 2, and containment is ultimately no substitute for that. Public concern over the participation process surrounding both sites was by no means negligible: many people had expectations raised that were not fulfilled. Bacalar Chico may have proceeded swiftly to designation, but the pressures to do so meant that the final consultation stages were over-ridden. The finalized boundaries of the reserve were officially declared without the ‘approval’ of the communities. Just as the enthusiastic promotion of the tourism potential of protected areas by planners could fall foul if tourism were to enter a decline, so the circumscription of participation and the mis-representation of the process risked fomenting future dissent during the project’s implementation phase. These and other, wider implications of containment are explored further in Chapter 10.
9.5 Summary

Given that official participation activities for the case study sites were limited to consultation, the chapter proposes that the actions of the planning teams within the power arena of public involvement in planning were essentially geared not toward active participation but toward 'containment'. Containment equates to the management of the planning process so as to minimize social conflict, dissent and overall disruption to the primary goal of producing and completing protected area plans fundamentally oriented toward biodiversity protection. The bureaucratic, political and discursive contexts of planning, as well as the procedural approach toward consultation, helped to fix planners into a containment mode in their interactions with local communities.

Drawing on the power tactics discussed in Chapter 8, the planners' basket of containment actions could be categorized into avoidance, blockage and controlling actions. Controlling actions were aimed toward control both of procedures and of the 'public transcript' surrounding plans and the planning process. But containment actions were not irresistible. Actions by other actors, both deliberate and incidental, had the effect of undermining conservation goals and/or prolonging planning. They are described as 'counter-containment'. Differences in planning progress for the two sites can be articulated in terms of the containment concepts. The effectiveness of containment, from the containers point of view, depended both on the impetus for site designation at the national/international level and the generation of counter-containment forces at the local level. The implications of the concept of containment for protected areas in general are discussed in the concluding chapter of this thesis, Chapter 10.
CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

The final chapter draws together the findings from the case study and the discussions from the introductory chapters to explore the implications of the thesis work for theory, practice and research. The first section (10.1) summarizes and concludes the research, relating it to the objectives and rationale of the study. The second section (10.2) then broadens the discussion, integrating the analytical findings with recent literature to explore how notions of 'containment' might apply to protected area projects beyond Belize. The final section (10.3) reviews the thesis research itself in terms of the overall aims and its strengths and shortcomings, and points toward future areas for research.

10.1 Research Summary

As introduced in Chapter 1, the case study sets out to examine community involvement in the planning of statutory protected areas designed for biodiversity conservation within the coastal zone of Belize. Through qualitative methodology and political-ecological thick description, the research inductively analyses forms of public participation in planning for two sites and dissects the power relations and mechanisms in operation between the diverse actors involved. The study takes an actor-oriented (but not structure-blind) research perspective and draws from a political ecology approach that “pinpoints the necessity for a critical approach to participation where the social and economic dynamics of differential power, knowledge and influence are explicitly addressed.” (Brown, K 1998, p86).

The planning processes for the two protected area sites – Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker – are mapped out in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively. The accounts discuss how the protected area projects were initiated and moved forward, how decisions were made on their spatial design (location, boundaries and zonation), and how stakeholders perceived plans and their involvement within planning. Drawing on those accounts, and on the national-scale contextual findings presented in Chapter 4, the analysis of public involvement in planning
is then successively deepened through Chapters 7, 8 and 9. In broad terms, the analysis progresses from critical assessment of involvement processes (evaluation), through the application and elaboration of concepts of social power (application of theory), to the development of new concepts regarding the power relations between planners and other actors (theory-building).

Chapter 7 reveals a similar pattern of community involvement in planning for both study sites. Official channels of involvement equated to ‘participation by consultation’, in which citizens may provide information and express opinions on proposals but do not take an active role in decision-making (Wells & Brandon 1992, Pimbert & Pretty 1997). Even within such parameters, the consultation fora staged by the planning teams proved ineffective in engaging and giving voice to a broad cross-section of stakeholders, and local actors provided little direct input into plans. Despite widespread overall support for the creation of a protected area, specific concerns relating to resource use within the sites remained evident, as did discontentment with the consultation process itself. There was even evidence of exclusion of certain user groups from participation in the pattern of interaction between planners and the communities. This operated in tandem with the selective inclusion of certain actors noted by authors such as Desai (1996) and Goodwin (1998).

However, other channels of involvement existed alongside the official channels. Some local stakeholders undertook independent actions of the type identified in actor-oriented studies of development projects (Arce et al 1994), including informal liaison with planners and political lobbying. These actions too arguably constituted forms of ‘participation’ in planning. The local actors whose participation was most prominent in both informal and formal modes of involvement are described in the study as key players. Their actions underlined the inappropriateness of viewing communities as homogenous entities composed of members with common perspectives and capacities to act (Leach et al 1997, Sharpe 1998). Private interests and perceptions of planning, set in the context of socio-cultural constraints on grassroots participation, further shaped the differential actions of stakeholders.

Planning for the two sites therefore was not at all as populist in approach as the official rhetoric of participation might suggest. But at the same time neither did it fit a top-down
model of imposed fortress conservation (Blaikie & Jeanrenaud 1997). The emerging plans were manifestly shaped by socio-economic factors (gauged in part through consultations), some key players achieved an indirect influence on plans and the progress of planning was also subject to their influence. A decidedly more complex process was at work.

As Chapter 8 reveals, the social process of planning can be understood in terms of social power. An intricate web of shifting power relations threaded between the diverse actors at different geographical scales. These all fed into the micro-political arenas that constituted public involvement in planning. Outcomes of power, in this analysis, cannot simply be read off from the characteristics of actors, but, as Hindess (1989, p41-42) notes, have to be related to whole "arenas of struggle" between actors that take account of:

"the constitution of agents and other forces; the conditions of formation of objectives and of the mobilization of agents around them; means of action and possible strategies; limitations on the kinds of outcome that are possible; and so on."

A detailed analysis of actions in terms of power strategies shows the underlying subtleties of negotiation and manoeuvre that were in operation within the power arenas (see Arce & Long 1992). Key local players, for example, often sought to legitimize their actions through representation claims on behalf of other stakeholders. The planners, in turn, sought to justify the protected area projects by stressing their benefits for local development and resource sustainability, thereby helping trigger contrasting stakeholder perspectives but also providing routes for resistance to conservation measures (Bryant & Bailey 1997).

As the analysis of power strategies reveals, when actors articulated their interests they drew on a range of power resources and employed conscious or tacit tactics to alter their power relations in the arena and hence attempt to influence the course of planning. As for Schmink and Wood (1992), resources included knowledge and discursive resources, in this case relating not just to environmental and economic issues but also to issues of identity and territoriality. The range of tactics identified by the researcher combines several of those described by writers on power such as Lukes (1974) and Law (1991), among them persuasion, manipulation, compromise and enrolment. The analysis of power strategies developed in the thesis particularly reveals how both planners and non-planners selectively and manipulatively mobilized influential discourses.
Power resources and tactics therefore shaped through complex means the degree to which actors' motives became translated into outcomes. As it turned out, given the centralized character of planning in the case study, examples of direct input by non-planners into the emergent plans were few, confined mostly to initiation of projects and details of spatial planning for the terrestrial portions. But, combining the findings on power resources, tactics and both direct and indirect effects, it was possible to devise a categorisation of actor-types common to both protected area sites that might aid comparison with other case studies. This typology concentrates on interactions with the planning teams, since the latter's decision-making role made them the ultimate target of other actors' deployment of power.

The thesis builds on the findings on power in taking a still closer look at this central role of the planners. Chapter 9 proposes that the actions of the planning teams within the power arena of public involvement were essentially geared toward 'containment'. It argues that the planning teams endeavoured to manage public involvement so as to minimize social conflict, dissent and overall disruption to a primary goal of producing and completing protected area plans fundamentally oriented toward biodiversity protection. The bureaucratic, political and discursive background to planning channelled the actions of planners into such a containment mode. The containment actions of planners could be categorised into themes of avoidance of conflict, blockage of dissent and control over both knowledge and procedure, actions exercised via the power tactics discussed in Chapter 8.

As Section 10.2 discusses in depth, containment, in effect, resulted from the extension of a managerialist approach to protected area conservation into a rhetorical environment of people-oriented conservation. The work of Pimbert and Pretty (1997) suggests such persistence of a managerialist approach remains common. But, building on the arena concept of power, Chapter 9 goes on to stress that the containment actions of planners were by no means irresistible. The existence of containment logically implies some opposing force, and the thesis describes actions that serve to undermine the primary planning goal as counter-containment. The actions of some non-planners, both deliberate and incidental, had the effect of undermining conservation objectives and/or prolonging planning and thereby constituted counter-containment. They included not just actions of resistance (Scott 1985, Crush 1995) but also incidental mobilizations of power (Lukes 1986) that impacted on planning.
The concepts of containment and counter-containment developed in the chapter show how the exercise of power by individual actors articulated with broader social processes. Taken together, the concepts can be combined in an analytical framework with which to re-examine the patterns of community involvement in planning for each site. Differences in planning progress for Bacalar Chico and Caye Caulker can be articulated in terms of a balance of containment/counter-containment, weighted both by local issues and events and by broader-scale factors shaping the planning impetus for each site. Given the argument pursued in the next section, the framework also has potential as a means of analysing and comparing experiences in other case studies.

The analytical chapters set out to explore the mechanisms of power at work in the spatial planning of the protected area sites. In so doing they reveal an interplay of complex and often subtle power relations between actors at different geographical scales, highlighting especially the inter-linkage between power, knowledge construction and discourse increasingly stressed by political ecologists (Brown K. 1998, Sundberg 1998). They also show how the specificities of place - physical location, the distribution of natural resources and local social, economic and political contexts - can impact on the power arena of planning. This emphasizes the importance of place sensitivity in social research on conservation. And, ultimately, they demonstrate the interactive link between agency and structure, not only "examining how individual choices were shaped by larger frames of meaning and action" (Long 1992b, p21) but at the same time uncovering the micro-foundations of the macro-framework (see 1.3). By examining the micro-political processes in planning, the case study reveals how agency, under the tension caused by divergent conservation discourses, might or might not reproduce a process of containment as a structural phenomenon.

10.2 Beyond the Case Study

As noted briefly in Subsection 3.1.1 there are always difficulties inherent in transferring findings from the particular to the general. The explicit attention to detail and local context in case studies renders generalization still more challenging (Baxter & Eyles 1999a), especially when, as in this case, the study itself has revealed how the processes under investigation vary in character from place to place. However, it can also be argued that
careful attention to detail provides the empirical raw material on which to build well-informed understanding of more general processes (Murdoch & Marsden 1995).

Baxter and Eyles (1999a, p315) define transferability as “the degree to which findings fit within contexts outside that of the study”. In discussing rigour in qualitative research, they suggest that case study researchers seldom make explicit claims about transferability, although such claims may be implicit within discussions (Baxter & Eyles 1997, Baxter & Eyles 1999b). It seems that the key to generalization from case studies is the thoughtful selection of those themes that have ‘transferable potential’ and that mesh with concepts identified within existing literature. Keeping in mind the concern of Bailey et al (1999) that qualitative researchers beware overstating the applicability of their conclusions, this section notes key linkages between contemporary literature and the concepts of containment resulting from the case study. It revisits the persistent impediments to participation in protected area conservation (10.2.1) and the current discursive context to conservation (10.2.2), and goes on to consider the evidence for and implications of processes of containment (10.2.3).

10.2.1 Impediments to Participation

Section 2.5 has already noted that recent reviews of biodiversity conservation projects continue to point to gaps between participatory policy and participatory practice. This has occurred despite a mainstreaming of ‘participation’ into international policy statements since the early 1990s, such as “the participation of key stakeholders in the selection, design and implementation of biodiversity projects is crucial” (World Bank 1994, p2), and:

“National systems of protected areas should be governed by an explicit policy that:..... ensures the effective participation of local communities in the design, management and operation of protected areas” (IUCN/UNEP/WWF 1991, p36-37).

Some of the challenges of and impediments to participation were emphasized in the GEF’s own review of its project portfolio (GEF 1998b) (see Box 10.1). The report makes repeated reference to the time and resources required to foster effective involvement of stakeholders at the local level, and notes that many projects had underestimated the commitment required.
Box 10.1 GEF projects and participation

The 1998 Project Performance Report of the Global Environment Facility (GEF 1998b) stresses the importance of social considerations in biodiversity projects and the need for active engagement of communities in all stages of projects. However, it also emphasizes that:

"Engaging a wide range of stakeholders takes considerably more time than originally expected, and often requires those involved in carrying out project activities to develop new skills and approaches. In addition, the requirements (including reporting) of donors and the needs of local communities often contrast.... The needs of local communities must drive projects: otherwise, the sense of ownership vital to long-term success will be lost." (GEF 1998b, p10).

The majority of projects had proved more effective in engaging non-local agencies in consultations than community organisations, including the Belize coastal zone management project, for which "greater efforts were needed to involve people living in coastal areas in planning efforts" (GEF 1998b, p23). Across biodiversity projects in general, the review especially recommended that greater efforts should be expended to involve stakeholders in the design stages. It claimed there was also ongoing effort in projects "to shift from consultation (passive participation) to active involvement (active participation)" (GEF 1998b, p60). However, a recent commentary by Young (1999) suggests GEF staff’s capacity to follow through time-consuming participatory policies on the ground is hampered by the need to meet multiple demands, including the Implementing Agencies’ traditional requirements for cost-effectiveness.

But the problems appear to run deeper than logistics. At the start of the 1990s, West and Brechin (1991, p396) argued:

"True participation must involve a give and take and a sharing of decision-making power. This theme, too, is sincerely advocated by many of our authors but is rare in actual practice on the ground".

Several years later, the message from Ghimire and Pimbert (1997, p23) is similar:

"It is rare for conservation professionals to relinquish control over key decisions on protected area design, management and evaluation. Participation is still largely seen as a means to achieve externally desirable conservation goals".

At root, there seems to be a fundamental mismatch at work between the notion of participation and the conventional protected area model, as Section 9.1 already points out with respect to Belize. Little (1994, p347) suggests that "while achieving meaningful local participation in rural development activities is difficult, the challenges are even greater in
conservation programs”. This is because the goals of a conservation founded on the principle of spatial separation are distinct from development objectives. Protected areas typically have maintenance of biological diversity as a primary objective and this priority may well be contested by local people in conditions often of poverty and pressing short-term needs (Mitchell & Barborak 1991, Sanjayan et al 1997). Wells and Brandon (1992, p47) argue “there is always likely to be a conflict of interest between rural people’s ability to earn a living and the management of nearby protected areas”. One major issue for conservation agencies is therefore assessing how far the participation process can be allowed to shape project outcomes. There is considerable potential for conflict between participatory efforts and the pressures from conservation policy and funding agencies.

“On the one hand, then you may have an ethical basis for a consultation process, yet on the other, you may have external constraints on how much of the information, opinion, insights, needs and desires of local people can be incorporated into a project” (Furze et al 1996, p103).

The result, according to Ghimire and Pimbert (1997, p23), is that “many conservation professionals place clear limits on the form and degree of participation that they tolerate in protected area management”. They tend not to extend a participatory role to ‘non-experts’ when setting overall conservation priorities (Goodwin 1998) and most external agencies involved in protected area initiatives still enter the planning process equipped with a scientific conservation agenda (Blaikie & Jeanrenaud 1997). Richard and O’Connor (1997, p415) argue that, despite participatory rhetoric, conservationists are essentially “advocates, not democrats, lobbying to educate, convert and persuade governments and local communities alike”.

The suggestion flowing from these arguments is that many conservation agencies are structurally pre-disposed to limiting participation in protected area projects. This is a direct result of the legacy of preservationist and managerialist discourses of conservation that have long dominated practice, and which may themselves be traced to a deep-rooted conceptual division between nature and society in Western thought (see 2.1). Pimbert and Pretty (1997) talk of the continuing domination of a ‘blueprint approach’ in conservation, stemming from a combination of preservationism and positivist conservation science.
10.2.2 Old Confronts New

Hulme and Murphree (1999) discuss how recent conservation experience in Africa has witnessed an intermingling of preservationist and people-oriented discourses rather than a supplantation of the former by the latter. "It is not a simple case of 'out with the old and in with the new' as ideas about narrative and counter-narrative in African environmental policy suggest" (Hulme & Murphree 1999, p283). Several other authors refer to an underlying persistence of preservationist attitudes and attendant ideas of spatial exclosure among practitioners (Colchester 1997, Brown D 1998, Schroeder 1999). According to K Brown (1998, p77) this fortress conservation approach "has guided conservation policy often in the past and continues to underscore the conservation discourse, despite the rising tide of rhetoric to the contrary". One quote from the case study illustrates the persistence of a fortress conservation mentality. The head of the conservation INGO engaged in planning for Bacalar Chico reluctantly admitted the need for sensitivity in closing off parts of the marine reserve to local use:

"The ideal of course is a national park and they shoot everybody to the Moon and you have the ideal situation. Of course this is not reality, so you have to live within acceptable compromises" (ingo6).

Conservation agencies also remain imbued with attitudes of managerialism that have flowed from scientific rationalist approaches to the management of biodiversity combined with traditions of top-down governance. Such attitudes tend to reinforce the forms of 'bureaucratic participation' identified by Lyons et al (1999). In parallel with the work of Chambers (1998), Pimbert and Pretty (1997) class the main actors in the blueprint approach (see 10.2.1) as 'normal professionals' working in state and non-governmental agencies, and typically trained in conservation science or scientific resource management. "The thinking, values, methods and behaviour dominant in their profession or discipline tend to be stable and conservative" (Pimbert & Pretty 1997, p302). Their training and interests are seldom aligned toward socio-political issues (Mitchell 1997) and they tend to emphasize professional control and scientific solutions as opposed to the devolution of power to civil society (Pimbert & Pretty 1997, Warburton 1998).

The work of conservation professionals is also oriented toward meeting career-oriented and bureaucratic objectives relating to spending budgets and the completion of projects on time (Taylor & Johansson 1996, Pimbert & Pretty 1997). And participation, as Box 10.1 shows,
is widely regarded as a time-consuming exercise. Sharpe (1998, p26) suggests that planning for conservation in developing countries is typically confined to short-termism by the project cycles of donor agencies, and that therefore “conservation projects offer one of the more extreme versions of the tension between vision, action and understanding which is contained in all ‘sustainable development’ programmes”.

The argument pursued here is that where there are lingering discourses of preservationism and particularly professionalist managerialism, they will lead almost inevitably to a social process of containment in protected area projects that involve local communities. And they turn participatory fora into exercises in management: to deflect the impact of competing priorities as well as circumvent potential delays. Containment results not from the intermingling of old and new discourses, but from the reaction of the old when confronted by the new.

10.2.3 Containment and its Implications

The idea of containment has its parallels in literature from the wider context of community participation in developmental and environmental programmes. The discussions of Hildyard et al (1998) with respect to forest management converge strongly with this theme. They explicitly refer to development agencies as sometimes strategically using participation itself as a means for controlling, managing and “containing” dissent:

“Far from being a transformative process in which local people are able to exert control over decision-making, participation becomes a well-honed tool for engineering consent to projects and programmes whose framework has already been determined in advance. Participation becomes a means for top-down planning to be imposed from the bottom-up” (Hildyard et al 1998, p32).

Other authors refer to cases where participatory fora act as rhetorical exercises and to the discursive management of public consultations (Brohman 1996, Peterson 1997). White (1996) notes how agencies can define what constitutes legitimate participation and that conflict should be expected in a process that cedes people a genuine voice. A reported absence of conflict should therefore raise suspicions of suppression:

“The bland front presented by many discussions of participation in development should itself suggest questions. What interests does this ‘non-politics’ serve, and what interests may it be suppressing?” (White 1996, p15).
In conservation, the ideas of containment find clearest expression in reviews of ICDPs and other cases where rural development initiatives have been incorporated as part of protected area projects. Schroeder (1999) claims that these typically have been highly circumscribed, have seldom involved agencies ceding effective control over resources to communities, and have been instituted with the aim of neutralizing opposition through distributing economic benefits. Again they reveal pre-set agendas and raise constraints on what is considered legitimate participation (Richard & O’Connor 1997). Ghimire and Pimbert (1997, p34) also question the values and parameters that typify such initiatives: “most of them have been initiated with the simple intention of reducing organized opposition to the establishment and expansion of protected areas”. West and Brechin (1991, p396) point to a similar role public participation can take within general protected area planning and management: “even when park administrators and planners really do listen to local concerns, it is often to let them blow off steam in the hopes of deflating conflict”.

The containment actions involved in neutralizing opposition and deflecting delay in participatory projects generally hinge on control of knowledge processes as well as procedure. It constitutes an example of what Bryant (1997) refers to as control of the public transcript. West and Brechin (1991), for example, found that protected area planners and administrators tended to use participation as a means to educate local people and build support for plans. “This confuses public relations with true participation; mistakes communication to, for communication with” (italics in original) (West & Brechin 1991, p395). Yet control enabled agencies to create a semblance or illusion of active local participation presented both to legitimize projects in bureaucratic and donor circles and to defuse local tensions. As Arnstein (1969, p219) noted, such “window-dressing” can simultaneously give stakeholders a sense that they have participated and give agencies evidence that “they have gone through the required motions” of involving people. Hildyard et al (1998, p32) suggest:

“Often it turns out that local people become a ghostly presence within the planning process – visible, heard even, but ultimately only there because their involvement lends credibility and legitimacy to decisions that have already been made.”

This mis-representation of highly managed forms of participation has been evident both in the wider context of participation (e.g. Quarles van Ufford 1993, Cline-Cole 1997,

Yet, as Chapter 9 has stressed for the case study, containment is not an irresistible force in planning. Attention also has to be given to the destabilising capacities of those stakeholders subject to attempted containment – to the possibility of counter-containment. Several of the authors cited above point out that local people are seldom 'powerless' in the face of agency control over involvement (White 1996, Peterson 1997, Hildyard et al 1998). Indeed actions to contain opposition presume the existence of grassroots resistance to containment within the planning power arena. Moreover, involvement of communities, however stage-managed it might be, remains susceptible to intra-community tensions and factionalism that can undermine the smooth operation of participatory exercises. Jones (1999) has shown that conflicts between group interests created problems and delays in the fostering of community-based conservation schemes in Namibia. Such issues could be just as destabilising to more top-down initiatives. As Goodwin (1998, p495) notes:

"Local responses to participatory initiatives are not simply dominated by the deployment of professional expertise, but form part of a much more complex pattern of social relationships, both external and internal".

The suggestion flowing from the thesis research is that the concept of containment therefore has a more general applicability beyond the Belizean context, wherever protected area projects are planned by state agencies or NGOs adhering to the values, attitudes, procedures, outputs and measures of success inherent in the 'normal professionalism' of biodiversity conservation. The assertion is that externally-driven protected area planning geared to biodiversity 'managerialism' will become a process of containment, no matter how much public consultation is incorporated.

This is because such planning starts with a model based on denial of access to resources, and fundamental problems arise when notions about community participation are inserted by practitioners into such projects. Those notions have derived principally from experience in community development projects. But the protected area concept has evolved to protect biodiversity from people, not to enhance people's social and material environment.

When the objective of designating a reserve for biodiversity remains primary, and community benefit is secondary, a policy commitment to community participation in
planning becomes conceptually problematic. The policy effectively becomes one of containment not participation (though that is not always a conscious intention). Containment, in the sense described, might be enlightened or manipulative. Enlightened approaches might genuinely seek to redress local people's concerns within acceptable limits, while manipulative approaches might, for example, see planners aligning with certain interest groups to block the power of others. But whether planners are forced to, consent to, or desire to involve local communities (and consider their economic and social needs), their role will ultimately be to contain (to minimize, circumvent, block or accommodate) possible disruptions local people might cause to the planning process.

However, it is crucial to note that containment does not always succeed. Individual local actors and constellations of interests can often, under appropriate circumstances and via strategic use of power, challenge and resist. Containment is then breached, and planning progress is delayed. In extreme cases, counter-containment could render the protected area approach unworkable.

The structural character of containment has implications that go beyond academic theory. It implies that empowering forms of participation that give communities a genuine hand in decision-making are unlikely to be fostered in protected area projects initiated externally and with an orientation to biodiversity protection. In such cases, and despite rhetorical assurances, the agenda for the project has already been set, community involvement is effectively limited to consultation and the overarching process at work when social issues are addressed is containment, not participation.

At best, planners of such a protected area project can 'consult' local stakeholders with a view to minimizing its social impact. Two alternative suggestions flow from this argument. The first is that, instead of confusing terms and interpretations, of referring to participation rhetorically and, perhaps ultimately, provocatively, protected area planners should aim to be explicit and honest about the scope and goal of community involvement. There could be an improvement in the definition of policy and policy-based objectives for participation, ensuring that clear messages are relayed on the achievable outcomes and expectations of consultation, and clear guidelines are laid out regarding the responsibilities of planners.
The second suggestion is that, if genuine community participation and empowerment are concrete objectives of a conservation project, then the outcome may have to be a form of conservation that moves radically apart from the conventional spatialized restrictions of the protected area model. For participation genuinely to be fostered, a reversal of approach is required, one that starts not with spatial exclosure but with a presumption of continued human access and the exploration of means to conserve biodiversity within such parameters. The containment concept in this sense reinforces the arguments of Pimbert and Pretty (1997) who advocate a fundamental realignment in protected area conservation if it is to become truly people-oriented and, they argue, sustainable. “Sustainable and effective protected-area management calls for reversals from the ‘normal’ towards greater diversity, democracy and decentralization” (Pimbert & Pretty 1997, p324). The call for a more community-based, devolved approach to protected areas is echoed by a number of authors (e.g. Colchester 1997, Ghimire & Pimbert 1997, Hulme & Murphree 1999, Jones 1999, Schroeder 1999). The thesis findings suggest that attention to power relations and how they both reflect and generate social processes such as containment can contribute to the search for genuine forms of devolution in conservation practice that are themselves democratic at the intra-community level.

10.3 Reviewing the Research

The final section of the thesis provides a brief review of the research, summarizing the potential and original contributions to theory, research and practice, noting the principal issues encountered in research, and suggesting areas for future research.

Contributions

The research programme sets out to contribute to debate both in a theoretical and an applied sense. It takes a distinctive approach to the topic of community participation in conservation action, analysing in detail the social processes and mechanisms of power in operation during the planning of two protected areas selected for case study. It demonstrates the methodological value of a thick description approach in political ecology research and demonstrates the important role geographers can play in their attention to place and scale. In highlighting the complexity of interactions in the planning arena,
exploring strategic deployments of power tactics, analysing the roles of key players at the local level and highlighting the importance of informal channels of involvement, it shows how sociological concepts of power can be usefully extended into the conservation debate associated with people-oriented discourse. It also identifies an underlying pattern to power relations within the planning arenas, in which the interaction of structure and agency shaped a dynamic process shifting along a continuum of containment/counter-containment. In doing so, and in emphasizing the roles of knowledge and discourse within power relations, the thesis can contribute to the emerging body of work in political ecology, as well as extend the application of actor-oriented sociology into environmental themes within human geography.

At the same time, the case study and the wider discussion in Section 10.2 can help to inform the application of concepts of participation into conservation policy and practice. It focuses attention on the significance of participation in the crucial planning phase of projects, when spatial decisions are made that shape the projects' socio-economic impacts. It reinforces the growing recognition that fostering participation is a complex and challenging task, especially within protected area projects in which local socio-economic priorities often may not dovetail with those of conservation agencies. It highlights that public involvement inevitably entails the mobilization of social power, and the likelihood of tension both between local and non-local actors and between local stakeholders. Participation is a complex social process: it cannot simply be inserted into top-down planning as if it were a technical exercise. Indeed the research implications fundamentally question the logic behind policies of participation in externally-driven projects oriented toward a primary objective of protecting biodiversity and employing spatial access restrictions.

Research Issues

Overall, the study progressed smoothly and the researcher was granted excellent access to data that facilitated in-depth analysis. Any piece of research, of course, has its pitfalls and shortcomings, and in this work the methodology was to some extent constrained by circumstance. As Section 3.4 and Box 3.1 explain, the data-gathering phase was affected by a combination of logistics and the flow of events during the fieldwork in Belize. Ideally, the thesis would have drawn from more than one case study area, would have incorporated
more sites and would have entailed more direct observation of planning events. However, the intensive focus on the sites and processes that could feasibly be studied generated what the researcher regards as a rigorous and densely-textured account of planning for the two sites. That was valuable in itself but it further yielded grounded concepts that successfully resonate with the findings of other authors working on related topics, so confirming the potential for generalizing from the case study.

**Future Research**

The work on extending concepts of social power into the critical analysis of protected area conservation is still at an early stage. Indeed, further attention to how social power and knowledge becomes manifest in interactions relating to environmental resources in general has been urged recently by several writers within political ecology (e.g. Peet & Watts 1996, Bryant & Bailey 1997, K Brown 1998). The thesis research has underlined the complexity and subtlety of these processes, in this case with regard to stakeholder involvement in statutory protected areas planned in top-down fashion. It would be useful to extend the analysis of planning to other case study sites as well as to studies of the post-planning phases: to community involvement in the implementation and management of the protected areas.

A similar research approach could also be applied to involvement processes in cases of more active participation in protected area planning or to cases of community-based conservation. In such studies attention may become focussed still more strongly on interactions and power relations between local stakeholders, but a critical analysis of the continuing role of external agencies would also prove instrumental. The thesis research has pointed toward fundamental impediments to participation in conventional protected area projects. Would more radical models of conservation avoid such hurdles or throw up new tensions shaped by social power instead?

As Hulme and Murphree (1999, p283) note “theoretically, there is much work ahead to think through how to describe and understand models of conservation” that will meet the demands of the new discourses. Further research into the themes highlighted in this thesis should help equip theory to meet those challenges.
APPENDICES

&

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Appendix I  Primary Data Sources for Case Study

The following tables provide details of primary data sources, indicating the codename for each source (as it is referenced in the thesis) and a record of the data gathering approach(es) employed (whether interview, meeting, observation or field notes).

Table Ia  Preparatory interviews and meetings

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Table Ib  Fieldwork interviews and meetings: general (continued overleaf)

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Table Ie  Fieldwork observations and field notes

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Appendix II  Example Question Schedules & Interview Transcripts

Example question guides and extracts of transcripts are provided here from three interviews, one general in scope, the next two relating to the specific protected areas. To preserve anonymity, references to names are not included.

Example IIa  Interview with CZMP officer (czmp3)

The following broad questions loosely guided the interview:

Coastal zone management
- what is the role of protected areas within integrated coastal planning in Belize
- what progress been achieved in ICZM and protected areas - what impediments

Community participation
- in what ways do planners foster community participation in planning
- what is the scope of participation/what elements of planning does it apply to
- have you encountered any problems in community involvement in planning

Specific sites
- how was each project initiated, and how were boundaries and zones decided on
- what was the influence of socio-economic factors/local viewpoints on the plans

General conservation
- how do you rate public support for conservation in Belize
- do you feel conservation is high enough on the political agenda

The following is an excerpt from the interview transcript:

* What progress do you feel has been made in terms of coastal zone management generally, and in terms of the set-up of protected areas, and what problems have you encountered.

Well, I think that the impetus came really because of starting on a protected areas system, and then we decided we need to step back and look at the thing from a much broader perspective, which we've done. Putting together a coastal zone plan is a huge task and its not something you can do just like that. They say that many countries will take 20-30 years to get it up and running, because you've got to start from the real basic in terms of the building the capacity to do it, to train all the people. Its a completely different approach from most governments - most governments are very much taking a sectoral approach, and this is really integrating things. Its changing attitudes and the whole planning, planning always takes a long time and its very much a planning exercise. But given that, I think Belize has really made great strides in a short time because we really only started seriously on this since 1990 I would say.


Well, in 89 we had a workshop to look at this idea of ICZM, and it was agreed that we should go down that route and we started up the unit in early 1990 as a result of the recommendations of that workshop. We've only been going now for six years, and we've reached the stage where we've got good integration, I think, for the most part, between a lot of the agencies involved. We've got strengthened a lot technically by this project. We're reaching the stage now that we almost have legislation in place - its all drafted and everything. I think we've had good support from the government for the most part, that's been the political role there. The next step now is to complete
Having done this status of the coastal zone report we've done a lot for the base for that plan. And then it's a matter of implementation. So if you've got the legislation and the plan and we go ahead and implement, I think we'll be well on the way in the next four or five years.

* Presumably, implementation has in effect already started.

It has. We've started a lot before the formalities have been complete. I mean, with the technical committee that we have working very well in a sort of informal way, we've started.

* What's the principle behind the technical committee.

We agreed on that very early on in late 1990 because we thought there was so much going on and everyone sort of doing their own little thing without thinking of what effects that would have anything else that this was a way of bringing together the heads of those agencies so that they could talk, and really a means of communicating and looking at projects jointly. So if you're looking at a project to clear mangroves or to dredge, you have the input of all the other agencies who'll be affected by such a thing and then the decisions were made in a more rational way with inputs from everybody. It was really to bring people together to talk so that they weren't operating in their own little boxes.

* Do they have a fixed membership, the committee

Yes

* Can you have an ex officio.

We get people in from time to time, on special issues

* Is it primarily ministers

It's primarily government agencies, but it also has NGO representation, the university and the private sector. So its a good cross-section of organisations invited.

* How often does it meet

Every month.

* Moving on to the issue of community participation, in planning in general, in the work of putting together a coastal zone management programme, what ways have you fostered community participation in that or why has it not taken place.

It is that aspect that I feel really needs to be strengthened, but it takes a lot of time. In the case of our planning for marine protected areas we've done reasonably well. In the planning for any protected area the norm is that we form an advisory committee that we work closely with, and that committee has representation from all the amenity groups within the community. In fact, we've even written up a sort of standard composition for our advisory committees - who should sit on it - just as a rule of thumb really, when we're appointing them and what their terms of reference are and that sort of thing. So, for instance in the planning for Bacalar Chico we have a advisory committee and for Hol Chan we have. For Glover's Reef we didn't really because there wasn't really a community as such, but we did a lot of discussions with the main user groups - the landowners, sport fishermen, fishermen and so forth on a sort of individual grouping rather than have an advisory committee. Cay Caulker doesn't have an advisory committee either, it was just something that was kept being delayed, but they have had a lot of community participation all the same - we had one person dedicated to that project for about, hmm, must be getting on for almost three years now, and so she was meeting regularly with the main groups - the tour guide association, the fishermen individually via the co-op, the village council, educational programmes one of their talks in schools, the water taxi association, the tourist industry association, all the little groups - so there's been a lot of community participation from Cay Caulker from that point of view....
Example IIb Interview with sports fishing guide\textit{(bctour6)}

The following questions loosely guided the interview:

**Personal details**
- where are you from/which village or town
- what language do you speak at home
- how do you make your living

**Protected area plans**
- where do you work (go) in the Bacalar Chico area [introduce mapping tool]
- do you think the reserve is needed/is a good idea
- have you seen or heard of the plans
- will the creation of the reserve/zones affect you and your work in any way
- what do you think of where it is/the area chosen
- what do you think of the zones/restrictions

**Participation**
- do you think they've paid attention to the needs of the community/people who earn a living there
- have you been asked by the planners about how you use the area
- have you been to any public meetings – did you say anything
- do you feel people had the chance to have their say/ make a difference
- who do you think influenced plans

The following is an excerpt of the interview transcript:

* The plans for the reserve, have you seen any of the plans they have, where they're gonna set the boundary for the reserve and the different areas where they say some things are allowed and some things aren't. Have you seen those plans

Yeah I have seen them, I have seen those plans.

* Do you think they will affect you, your work, your livelihood in any way, good or bad

Ah, not really. Not really. There is only one thing I don't like about these plans that they make and this reserve that they make. One thing I don't like about it is that they don't ask the opinion of the people what they are going to do. First they do it, and then they come and ask you your opinion. Why do they do that?

* What do you mean, first they do what, they come up with their plan

This reserve area, they made a reserve first, then they came to us and asked us our opinion about the reserve. And we said we don't like this, we don't like this, we don't like this, and they say we cannot do anything because its already approved. If they would do, for instance, when they were doing this, first they should have came to the people of the island and asked their opinion what they think about it. Not do it and then come and ask you your opinion. Why do they do that?

* Really?

Yeah, I mean, hey, I agree with this, I mean I don't see anything wrong, but then why they do it and then come and ask you your opinion. Come and ask me before and then Ill give you my opinion. I am not against it, because all of this that they have here doesn't bother me at all.

* So the plans they've given don't bother you at all, its just the fact that basically they went ahead and made these decisions...
They went ahead and made these decisions, and then another thing that they do, they found some people from Costa Rica, from the Caribbean islands, they brought people from all over to give lectures about this places around here. These people they don't even know the area and they're giving lectures about it, I mean, son of a bull.

* Where were these lectures then, were they given to people like you

Uh huh, yeah. I mean these people they had never been here, they don't even know the area and they want to give lectures to the people who have born and lived all their lives through here. They're trying to tell you what to do in your own area.

* So how did people react to that

They just laughed [he laughs].

* Were they saying things to you that were just wrong because they didn't really know. Were they saying things that were inaccurate or was it just that they told you what you already knew

Yeah, they're trying to tell you what you know, and they're trying to teach you what you know in your area. They don't come and ask you, they come and tell you what you have to do in your area, like demanding what you have to do in your area, and they don't even know the area. They take a map like this and they look, this is lagoon, this is lagoon, this is lagoon, this is lagoon, this is lagoon, [and] all of this is solid land. That's what they think. [But] All of this is all mud. There is a few solid pieces, but very few solid pieces. All of this when you are walking in there, you are sinking in there most of the time. Its all savannah, and mangroves and white mangroves and all kinds of stuff.

* So when they were planning it, I've been told by them that they did a questionnaire, somebody came around and asked people questions I guess with a clipboard and so on. Were you approached

Yeah, I was approached several times. I was approached several times by several people.

* By people who were planning the reserve though

Yeah, by people that were planning the reserve.

* So obviously you were aware and went to these meetings. There were two in SP, one in 95 and one in 96, is that right, and did you go to both of those

Yeah I went on both of those.

* If we deal with 95 first, which I think was a kind of preliminary one wasn't it

It was a preliminary one on the 95, that's when they came and presented it to us, and told us that the reserve had already been approved and had already been made, and then they came to us for opinions, what do we think about it. I mean what can I think about something that is already done. Even if I think and I give my opinion, it still doesn't work because they have already did it.

* But the reserve didn't come into law till this summer, actually. It was this summer when the Minister signed the papers

Yes, the Minister signed the papers just about two or three months ago. [But] From before that they had already got the approval.

* So there was no choice to say whether you wanted the reserve

No, there was no choice. They just came and then maybe then they just took it over, and that's it. The people that did it, they just went to government and they made arrangements with government who was in power - I don't remember who was in power at that time - but they made arrangements with government and then took it over and government gave the power to take it. And when they
came with the people from here they had already had it done already. I don't know why they came, they just took us as foolish.

* Don't you think people had any influence on things, had any chance to have their say

No.

* Really?

[shakes head]. We here from the island we didn't have a chance to say anything.

Example IIc Interview with tour guide (& President, Caye Caulker TGA) (cctourI)

The following questions loosely guided the interview:

Personal details
- where are you from/which village or town
- what language do you speak at home
- how do you make your living

Tour Guides Association/Community
- has the association been involved so far in setting up the protected area
- what do tour guides in general feel about the marine reserve - and the land part
- what do villagers in general think about the protected area

Protected area plans
- where do you work (go) in the Caye Caulker area [introduce mapping tool]
- do you think the reserve is needed/is a good idea
- have you seen or heard of the plans
- will the creation of the reserve/zones affect you and your work in any way
- what do you think of where it is/the area chosen
- what do you think of the zones/restrictions

Participation
- do you think they've paid attention to the needs of the community/people who earn a living there
- have you been asked by the planners about how you use the area
- have you been to any public meetings – did you say anything
- do you feel people had the chance to have their say/ make a difference
- do you think there has been delay in setting up the reserve (- why)

The following is an excerpt of the interview transcript:

* Could you show me on the map the areas that you use for fishing and touring

Snorkelling tourism. [Indicates on map] This is what you call the Coral Gardens. This is the channel right here, South Caye Caulker Channel. We have a bunch of corals growing, er, from the channel here going right down. Mostly everybody use this area, right, because of the channel right - everybody comes and snorkel right here off the channel - its pretty good, it drops right off. And also we have right next door to this an area right here that we call, you know, where we have the stingray and sharks. Most of the guides go right there with their tourists. And also this area we have...couple of areas...we have some nice corals you know. And then in this channel right here, where we call the swash, and over here we have some mooring buoys.

* Those are all snorkelling areas, what about fishing
Right here's good snorkelling grounds. Fishing mostly everybody does the fishing, you have some corals inside here and mostly everybody goes here, fishing on this side. Fishing, diving. And conch, this is the grass area, and dive for conchs right here. So that is the reason we need this marine reserve to protect the conch area. Because right now you have divers from the northern districts they come in their sailboats, anchor here, and in little canoes go right on top of the reef. They take a lot of conch, and in doing that destroy the reef, stand on the corals, right on top of the reef.

* To get the conch and lobster do they have to actually break the coral apart
Not for the conch. Lobster yes, because the lobsters hide under the coral.

* So the only way to get them out..
You have like a hook stick to hook them out, a stick with a hook on it and you just hook them out. That's the way we mostly use for lobster, hook them out.

* So where would you like to see the reserve, rather than where it is. Do you think its in the right place...
Uh huh, uh huh. [he nods].

* And with a reserve there's usually more restrictions - some places you cant go at all, some places you can't take anything, some places they'll allow sports fishing but not commercial fishing
It will be zoned off, you know. This will be the most restricted area, right on the reef - no fishing. Because in doing that, restricting this area, you're also protecting the reef. The marine reserve will come from this channel, right here, and go like this. And then it will have to change because of this [indicates North Point]. Its confusing right now. Because I think first in this area, for the 125 acres, this was one mile out and it came right down. And now it will have to change and I don't know how they'll do it because of the land.

* I've heard that he doesn't mind the marine reserve being around it...
Yeah.

* But whether that's the case...So do you think the reef is the most important part to protect
Yeah.

* But presumably you still want access to take tour groups there
Uh huh.

* But, what, no fishing. Presumably there's still got to be some places where you can fish
Yeah, you could fish. That's what I say it'll be zoned off. Zoning yeah. I don't know how they will set it up, but this will be the most restricted area, right on the reef [he indicates all the way down], for fishing. You could do fishing in other areas you know [further inshore], sports fishing you know. And it wouldn't affect the lobster fishermen who are setting their traps right here, it wont affect them. Because if it would affect lobster fishermen - I have some traps right here - and I would be against it. But its not affecting the lobster fishermen, they will still set their traps. You have people setting traps all around here [the mainland side and the reef side off North Point].

* So if they were to say you couldn't do that, you would be against that restriction
Yeah.

* Obviously you've been quite closely involved in various ways so you've already presumably had a chance to make your opinions known
About the reserve?

* Yeah, not just about the reserve, but about things like that, the things that you'd like to see

I'd like to see it become a reality, especially for the future generation. Kids, you know, they'll grow up and some of them are gonna be tour guides too. And some of them are gonna go to high school and get jobs in Belize, [but] some of them are gonna come right back - it's in their blood, they're gonna come back. In the past you had some guys who went to high school and then come right back and do fishing, and I believe some of these will do the same thing. It's a dream, it's a dream for everybody.
### Appendix III  Data Processing Categories and Topics

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| INGOs | 
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| tour bias | 
| self-interest etc | 

| enforcement | 
|---|---|
| finance | 

| PLANS | 
|---|---|
| marine (boundary) | marine |
| zoning | zoning |
| land (boundary) | land |
| input | limits to consultation |

| CONTEXT | 
|---|---|
| fishing | population |
| tourism | race |
| tour guiding | transition |
| land development | fishing |
| envtl problems | land development |
| conservation | conservation |
| motivation | mooring buoys |
| politics | motivation |
|  | VC power |
Appendix IV  Protected Area Acts

Extract from National Parks System Act 1981

PART II
National Parks, Nature Reserves, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Natural Monuments

3.—(1) The Minister may by Order published in the Gazette declare that any specified area of Crown land shall for the purposes of this Act be—

(a) a national park,
(b) a nature reserve,
(c) a wildlife sanctuary,
(d) a natural monument.

(2) The Minister may by Order published in the Gazette declare that from a specified date—

(a) the limits of any national park, nature reserve, wildlife sanctuary or natural monument shall be altered or varied,
(b) any national park, nature reserve, wildlife sanctuary or natural monument or part thereof shall cease to be a national park, nature reserve wild life sanctuary or natural monument.

4. Save as hereinafter provided—

(a) no person shall be entitled to enter any national park except for the purpose of observing the fauna and flora therein and for the purpose of education, recreation and scientific research;

(b) no person shall be entitled to enter any nature reserve or in any way disturb the fauna and flora therein;

(c) no animal shall be hunted, killed or taken and no plant shall be damaged collected or destroyed in a national park or nature reserve;

(d) no person shall hunt, shoot, kill or take any wild animal or take or destroy any egg of any bird or reptile or any nest of any bird, in any wildlife sanctuary;

(e) no person shall disturb the natural features of a natural monument, but may use the unit for interpretation, education, appreciation and research.

continued overleaf
5.—(1) No person shall enter or remain within any national park except under the authority and in accordance with the conditions of a permit issued by the prescribed officer on payment of the prescribed fee.

(2) A permit under subsection (1) shall be issued only for the purpose of enabling the permit holder to study or observe the fauna and flora in a national park.

(3) No person shall enter or remain within any nature reserve, wildlife sanctuary or natural monument except under the authority and in accordance with the conditions of a permit issued by the prescribed officer on payment of the prescribed fee.

(4) If no fee is prescribed for the issue of a permit under subsection (1) or (3), such permit shall be issued free of charge.

6. No person shall, within any national park, nature reserve, wildlife sanctuary or natural monument, as provided under section 7, or with the written authorization of the Administrator—

(a) permanently or temporarily reside in or build any structure of whatever nature whether as a shelter or otherwise;

(b) damage, destroy or remove from its place therein any species of flora;

(c) hunt any species of wildlife;

(d) remove any antiquity, cave formation, coral or other object of cultural or natural value;

(e) quarry, dig or construct roads or trails;

(f) deface or destroy any natural or cultural features or any signs and facilities provided for public use and enjoyment;

(g) introduce organic or chemical pollutants into any water;

(h) clear land for cultivation.

(i) graze domestic livestock:

(j) carry firearms spears, traps or other means for hunting or fishing;

(k) introduce exotic species of flora or fauna;

(l) catch fish by any means whatsoever;

(m) do any other act which may be prohibited by any Order made by the Minister from time to time.

Source: GOB (1981, p47-49)
Extract from Fisheries (Amendment) Act 1983

7. The principal Enactment is amended by insertion immediately after section 9 thereof of the following as section 9A:—

"Marine reserve. 9A—(1) The Minister may, where he considers that the extraordinary measures are necessary, by order published in the Gazette, declare any area within the fishing limits of Belize and as appropriate any adjacent surrounding land, to be a marine reserve:

(a) to afford special protection to the aquatic flora and fauna of such areas and to protect and preserve the natural breeding grounds and habitats of aquatic life;
(b) to allow for the natural regeneration of aquatic life in areas where such life has been depleted;
(c) to promote scientific study and research in respect of such areas or;
(d) to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of such areas.

(2) The Minister, may, where he considers that there is no need for any area to be so reserved revoke the order declaring that area a marine reserve.

(3) No person shall, in a marine reserve:—

(a) engage in fishing
(b) damage, destroy or remove any species of flora or fauna from its place;
(c) engage in any scientific study or research;
(d) damage, destroy or disturb the natural beauty of such area;
(e) do any other act which may be prohibited by any order made by the Minister from time to time.

without a licence issue by the Fisheries Administrator.

(4) The contravention of the provisions of this section shall constitute an offence, and the offender shall on summary conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars ($1,000.00) or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months or to both such fine and imprisonment."

Source: GOB (1983, p2-3)
Appendix V  CZMP Standardized Zoning Scheme

PROVISIONAL ZONING SCHEME FOR MARINE AND COASTAL PROTECTED AREAS

1. PRESERVATION ZONE

Objectives: To provide areas within the protected area that are preserved in an entirely natural state; to protect areas of particularly fragile habitat or with threatened or rare species

Equivalent to the 'Wilderness Zone' as previously defined for marine reserves, this is essentially a 'no-entry/no-take' zone, and is closed to visitors except under special permission. In some protected areas, it may be necessary to allow passage of boats; in such cases, boat movements should be strictly regulated and monitored and the introduction of speed limits should be considered. If land is included, there will need to be strict regulations and restrictions on leasing and development.

Suggested regulations:

i. No entry
ii. No commercial, subsistence, recreational or sportfishing
iii. No collecting of flora, fauna or inorganic material
iv. No damage, destruction or disturbance of the natural habitat
v. No anchoring of boats
vi. No passage of motorised boats except in cases of emergency, and with specific permission
vii. No recreational diving, snorkelling or other water activity
viii. No research except under special permission from the Fisheries Administrator, following very careful assessment of the activities proposed.

2. CONSERVATION 1 ZONE (NO EXTRACTION)

Objectives: To provide an undisturbed area for recruitment of species to adjacent areas; to provide an area free from all fishing and collecting that will allow research and education; to provide a baseline to monitor the ecological health of unprotected areas; to provide a representative sample of certain habitats within the protected area; to enhance the value of the area for recreational diving.

This zone is similar to the Conservation Zone previously defined for Marine Reserves, with the exception that it expressly prohibits extraction and is thus a 'no-take' zone (as in Zone A at Hol Chan MR, and the entire Half Moon Caye NM); sportfishing on a catch-and-release basis is also prohibited on the basis that this can be difficult to monitor. Recreation, research, educational activities, boat passage etc. are permitted under appropriate regulations.

i. No commercial, subsistence, recreational or sport fishing
ii. No collecting of flora, fauna and inorganic material
iii. No damage, destruction or disturbance of the natural habitat
iv. Non-extractive recreational activities (e.g. diving and snorkelling) are permitted. Divers must be certified, or else accompanied by a recognised instructor, and must register with the reserve manager; dive boats must obtain relevant permits for operating in the reserve and must fly the 'divers down' flag during all dives; dive guides must explain the rules of the reserve to divers before dives.
v. Boats must use designated moorings where these are provided.
vi. If anchoring, damage to coral reef formations is prohibited.

Source: CZMP (1996a, p7-9) continued overleaf
3. CONSERVATION 2 ZONE (CONTROLLED EXTRACTION)

Objectives: To provide an area free from commercial fishing and collection and/or to prevent fishery stocks from being fished at vulnerable stages in their life cycles, thus helping stocks to recuperate and providing a buffer for the Preservation and Conservation 1 Zones.

This zone allows for limited extraction, particularly by those who traditionally use the area, or on a seasonal basis.

i. No fishing except for one or more of the following: (a) subsistence fishing under special licence (which may set certain conditions) by permanent residents of the area dependent on the location for this activity, provided that spearfishing is not used; and (b) sportfishing on a catch-and-release basis; (c) commercial, recreational, and sport fishing during the open season in areas designated for seasonal closure. It is recommended that all gear types except tended artificial bait and baited lines (3 hooks or less) and cast nets, should be prohibited.

ii. No collecting of flora and fauna except as defined in (i)

iii. No damage, destruction or disturbance of the natural habitat.

iv. Non-extractive recreational activities (e.g. diving and snorkelling) are permitted. Divers must be certified, or else accompanied by a recognised instructor, and must register with the reserve manager; dive boats must obtain relevant permits for operating in the reserve and must fly the 'divers down' flag during all dives; dive guides must explain the rules of the reserve to divers before dives.

v. Boats must use designated moorings where these are provided.

vi. If anchoring, damage to coral reef formations is prohibited.

4. GENERAL USE ZONE

Objective: To provide opportunities for established uses and activities (e.g. fishing for conch, lobster and finfish; recreational activities etc) to be continued in a sustainable manner under a stringent monitoring scheme.

This zone usually comprises all the remaining parts of the protected area once other zones (including SMAs - see below) have been defined.

i. Commercial, subsistence, recreational and sportfishing are permitted under special licence which must be obtained in addition to the standard Fisheries Department licence, specific regulations relating to gear and access may be gazetted. It is recommended that trawling, gill nets for fish, nets for lobster, fish and lobster traps, and untended baited lines should be prohibited.

ii. No collecting of flora and fauna other than as defined in (i).

iii. No damage, destruction or disturbance of the natural habitat.

iv. Non-extractive recreational activities (e.g. diving and snorkelling) are permitted.

v. Boats must use designated moorings where these are provided.

vi. If anchoring, damage to coral reef formations is prohibited.

vii. Regulations may be passed enforcing particular access routes.

5. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA

Objectives: To provide areas for specific purposes not covered by other zones.

Special Management Areas (SMAs) will apply mainly to terrestrial areas, although marine SMAs are feasible (see draft management plans for South Water Caye and Sapodilla Cayes proposed marine reserves). SMAs may be established for:

- Education/interpretation
- Research/monitoring
- Administration
- Fishing Camps
- Other activities that need particular management

Conditions and regulations will be specific to each SMA.
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