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Community-based Tourism Around National Parks in Senegal: The Implications of Colonial Legacies in Current Management Policies

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Abstract

In Sub-Saharan Africa, resource managers often promote community-based tourism (CBT) around national parks as a win-win strategy for local sustainable development and conserving biodiversity. In Senegal, however, the social, economic, and environmental impacts of CBT remain elusive. Important aspects of the former French colonial policies are still reflected in the ways national parks in Senegal are managed. Such policy framework is inconsistent with participatory management approaches and overall goals of tourism development. This paper examines how this inconsistency impedes the contributions of CBT to local communities, focusing on: 1) the absence of communal land tenure policies; 2) the inequitable allocation of hunting concession rights; and 3) the military culture in the administration of national parks. The paper discusses how these issues reduce the channels through which locals can benefit from tourism, the collaborative space between community members and park administrators, and ultimately, precludes the sustainability of CBT projects in Senegal.

KEYWORDS
Community-based tourism; national parks; Senegal; colonial policies

Introduction

National parks in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA hereafter) are regarded as vehicles for sustainable development because of their contribution to tourism revenues and their role in preserving nature and wildlife (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Spenceley & Goodwin, 2007). Yet their establishment has also stirred significant controversies dating back to their beginnings in the colonial era. In many cases up until the early 1990s, local communities were evicted from their lands and could not benefit from protected resources (Adams & McShane, 1996). In cases where communities are dispossessed without compensation, they often find themselves disempowered and further impoverished (Agrawal & Redford, 2009). Moreover, decades of experience show that exclusionary and repressive policies frequently spur conflicts between local people and park officials (West, Igoe, & Brockington, 2006).

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In the 1980s, broad concerns over issues of poverty and vulnerability around national parks, coupled with the recognition that exclusionary approaches are counterproductive, led resource managers to integrate the needs of local communities into the management of protected areas (Brandon & Wells, 1992). Community-based tourism (CBT hereafter), whereby communities can perceive socio-economic benefits from national parks through tourism development, became a popular strategy to address these issues (Turner, 2006). Governments throughout SSA have been collaborating with international non-governmental organizations (NGO hereafter) to implement CBT projects around national parks as a mechanism to channel tourism benefits to local communities and provide them with incentives to conserve resources in these parks (Kiss, 2004; Mbaiwa & Stronza, 2010).

The CBT model is predicated on the participation and empowerment of local communities in the management of park resources (Okazaki, 2008; Russell, 2000). Over the past three decades, many governments took steps to move away from the centralized system inherited from the former colonial administrations and implement participatory management policies for national parks. As a result, a wave of decentralization reforms swept across SSA throughout the 1990s. In some Southern African countries (e.g. Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, Botswana), governments restored land and resource rights to communities to provide them with incentives to manage resources and benefit from tourism (Child, 1996; Mbaiwa, 2004; Novelli & Gebhardt, 2007).

Over the years, the significant amount of research out of Southern and Eastern Africa is an indicator that CBT has proliferated in that region (c.f.; Fabricius, Koch, Turner, & Magome, 2013; Kibicho, 2008; Manyara & Jones, 2007; Mayaka, Croy, & Cox, 2018; Mbaiwa & Stronza, 2010; Sebele, 2010; Spenceley, 2008; Williams, Thorne, Sumba, Muruthi, & Gregory-Michelman, 2018). However, other regions such as West Africa have received far less attention on this subject. In those countries, CBT has been evolving at a slower pace and its social, economic, and environmental impacts remain elusive.

The outcomes of CBT can be explained through the interactions of different structural factors including policies, organizational and institutional arrangements, quality of tourism products, and access to resources in each country (Ashley, 2000; Kibicho, 2008; Lapeyre, 2010; Manyara & Jones, 2007; Novelli & Gebhardt, 2007; Sebele, 2010; Spenceley, 2008; Turner, 2006). In Senegal specifically, policies of national parks related to land tenure, concession rights, and management structure hold bearing on CBT projects. These policies are still rooted in the former French colonial administration, which limited the capacity of local communities to benefit from tourism and supressed their rights to participate in the decision-making process (Blundo, 2014; Ece, 2012; Ségalini, 2012). Such framework is incompatible with participatory management approaches and overall goals of tourism development around national parks in Senegal (Diouf, 2010). To our knowledge, very few studies have demonstrated the colonial legacies in the present-day park and protected area management policies and their outcomes on CBT. Thus, this paper adds to the literature by examining elements of the French colonial system that have persisted in the administration of national parks in Senegal and how this persistence affects CBT initiatives.

This exploratory case study draws from past research and reports to assess and discuss how this incompatibility impedes the contribution of CBT in the sustainable development
of communities impacted by national parks. It provides an overview of elements of the colonial administration that have endured and erode the CBT principles of equity and empowerment. We focus on three key issues. The first issue concerns the absence of communal land tenure policy around national parks. The second issue focuses on the exclusive allocations of wildlife hunting concession rights to private investors and not local communities. The third issue addresses the military culture in the administration of national parks that perpetuates an authoritarian regime and contradicts the CBT principles of empowerment and cooperation. We place each point within its historical context to draw parallels with the former French colonial administration. We discuss how these issues reduce the channels through which locals can benefit from tourism, restrict the collaborative space between community members and park administrators, and ultimately, preclude the sustainability of CBT projects. Although focused on Senegal, important lessons can be drawn for other countries such as Benin, Guinea Bissau, Mali, and Niger, where critical elements of a colonial model of resource governance have also endured.

To reach our objectives, we first discuss the CBT model and its applications and outcomes in SSA. We then provide an illustration of CBT in Senegal using the example of Djoudj National Park. This is followed by discussions on land tenure policy, wildlife hunting concession rights, and an enduring military culture in the national parks of Senegal.

**Community-based tourism in Sub-Saharan Africa**

CBT in SSA is often studied in relation to national parks and natural resource management. However, the concept precedes the reforms around national parks. In the 1970s, concerns over the impacts of unregulated tourism development on local communities gave rise to important scholarly critiques ranging from social, economic, and environmental perspectives (c.f. Bryden, 1973; Cohen, 1972; Doxey, 1975; Turner & Ash, 1975). It has only been in the last two decades that governments in SSA implemented policies and planning mechanisms for sustainable and context-specific tourism development (Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2013; Mbaiwa, 2004). Organizations then started to embrace alternative forms of tourism, drawing from the principles and practice of sustainable development (Butler, 1991; Weaver & Lawton, 1999). Among these, the CBT model became a popular mechanism to counter the negative impacts of mass tourism while promoting sustainable development in local communities (Ashley, 2000; Russell, 2000).

Unregulated tourism development in SSA was not the only impetus for CBT projects. There was also a growing recognition among researchers and practitioners that achieving and sustaining positive conservation outcomes could not happen without first addressing development issues in communities around protected areas (Brandon & Wells, 1992; McShane & Wells, 2012). Furthermore, the notion that receiving a greater share of tourism benefits would provide communities with the incentive to protect resources in national parks further advanced the rationale for CBT (Kiss, 2004). As such, CBT in SSA has been regarded as a win-win strategy for promoting development in communities and preserving resources in national parks.

According to Russell (2000):

For tourism to be accurately described as community-based, it must fulfil three criteria: it should have the support and participation of local people; as much of its economic benefit
as possible should go to the people living at or near the destination; and the act of tourism must protect local people’s cultural identity and natural environment. (p.1)

To ensure that the CBT criteria are met and that local communities can participate in managing resources as well as receive a greater share of tourism benefits, governments in SSA implemented participatory policy reforms in national parks (Child, 1996; Fabricius et al., 2013; Nelson & Agrawal, 2008), which we describe in the following section.

**National parks reforms**

The proliferation of CBT projects in SSA was propelled by broader institutional reforms around parks and protected areas. These reforms swept through the African continent, decentralizing management authority from federal to community level institutions. This shift was essential to support participatory approaches and promote community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) programmes around conservation areas (Child, 1996; Nelson & Agrawal, 2008). CBNRM initiatives are designed to alleviate poverty, promote conservation, and empower communities to manage and derive equitable benefits from resources (Moswete & Thapa, 2018). Tourism became an important vehicle to reach these goals, and thus CBT projects were subsumed in the CBNRM agenda (Mbaiwa & Stronza, 2010). Despite the variations across countries, a cornerstone of successful CBT programmes is the right of communities to manage, control, and benefit from tourism resources on their land (Taylor, 2009).

CBNRM programmes, including CBT, were predicated on reforms in resource management institutions. One such reform was the Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) in Zimbabwe, which started in 1989. Through the CAMPFIRE programme, Rural District Councils, on behalf of communities on communal lands, are granted the authority to market their wildlife hunting quotas and tourism opportunities themselves (Child, 1996; Frost & Bond, 2008). The programme allows communities to lease their land and tourism concessions to private tour operators. Because of CAMPFIRE, over half of the tourism revenues from conservation areas have been channelled to local communities (Taylor, 2009). Similar reforms to support CBT in protected areas also took place in countries such as Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa (Fabricius et al., 2013; Mbaiwa & Stronza, 2010; Novelli & Gebhardt, 2007). In South Africa, for example, ownership of land in and around national parks was restored to some communities. Lands that were restored are now co-managed between the park administrators and the communities and can only be used for ecotourism activities (Ramutsindela, 2003). In Namibia, several communities were also the beneficiaries of newly defined communal land policy. This policy granted them tenure rights to include all renewable natural resources on the land, including wildlife and tourist attractions (Roe, 2001).

Beside restoring justice and promoting development, resource managers in South Africa also saw secure communal land tenure as creating a stable investment environment for potential investors (Ramutsindela, 2003), as uncertainty of land tenure can deter private investment (Ashley & Jones, 2001). For example, Cousins and Kepe (2004) note that in an attempt to set up a community-private sector partnership for an ecotourism project in the Mkambati Reserve in South Africa, the failure to clearly define and legally support communal land rights led to years of unresolved land disputes, thereby stalling private investment. Contrastingly, there are cases such as the Manyeletu Game Reserve where, despite
unsecure land tenure, private investors have taken a chance to partner with communities. However, when that is the case, investors usually price for the high risks associated with such investments, thereby decreasing the benefits flow to communities (Mahony & Van Zyl, 2002). Thus, communal land tenure policy supports the interests of landowners against private investors to ensure that communities can maximize tourism benefits (Scheyvens & Russell, 2012).

**Social and economic outcomes**

The social and economic impacts of CBT in SSA have been the subject of many research studies. The economic benefits through the creation of employment and micro-enterprise and the sourcing of local goods and services have been the most discernible positive outcomes (Lapeyre, 2010; Sebele, 2010). In some cases, the revenues generated from CBT projects have also been reinvested in community development programmes. For example, in rural communities in Botswana, social services like water supply systems, transportation, and scholarships have been funded with CBT revenues (Mbaiwa & Stronza, 2010). In other instances, communities can earn substantial income from concession fees that they receive by sub-leasing their land to private partners in the tourism sector (Spenceley, 2008).

Research has also suggested that successful CBT projects can lead to genuine empowerment of local people. Scheyvens (1999) argues that different forms of empowerment (e.g. economic, psychological, social, political) can be achieved if local communities have some measure of control over tourism ventures and if the benefits are shared equitably. Garnett, Sayer, and Du Toit (2007) suggest that empowerment is critical to achieving both long-term buy-in and sustained impacts of diverse projects. Empowering communities by improving their capacity to manage tourism resources can not only increase the success of CBT but also serves as a self-development learning opportunity itself (Okazaki, 2008). For communities around protected areas, Stronza (2007) observes that CBT nurtures the type of social empowerment necessary to achieve conservation goals.

Despite the reported success of CBT, researchers have also critiqued its shortcomings. There is empirical evidence that CBT has at best only modestly delivered on its economic promises. For example, Akyeampong (2011) found that in communities around Kakum National Park in Ghana, tourism had fallen short of residents’ expectations. Even though the general perception of tourism was overall positive, most residents felt that the socio-economic gains were only modest. Similarly, in their study of four rural communities in Kenya, Manyara and Jones (2007) noted that while locals regarded CBT as a way to diversify their livelihoods and contribute to their community wellbeing, they contested whether the current projects have had significant impact on reducing poverty. Drawing from two CBT projects in Namibia, Saarinen (2010) observed that in some cases, locals are not able to participate in and therefore benefit from tourism because they lack awareness about the project and its potential impacts.

Researchers have postulated different factors underlying these shortcomings. Dodds, Ali, and Galaski (2018) found that the lack of managerial capacity of local communities has been cited as a major obstacle to their meaningful participation. Policy focusing on improving a community’s skills has been strongly recommended to increase locals’ participation and ensure that they benefit from CBT (Aslam & Bin Awang, 2017). Additionally, the
equitable distribution of benefits among community members is a critical measure of success in CBT (Scheyvens, 1999). Another issue concerns the sustainability of CBT projects due to limited external funding (Manyara & Jones, 2007). Various international organizations have played a key role in the development of CBT initiatives in developing countries, but very few have clearly defined exit strategies in which local communities can assume true ownership. Thus, the question of whether these projects can sustain themselves after funding ends informs their success or failure (Manyara & Jones, 2007).

Nonetheless, one of the most salient reported factors concerns the form and level of community participation in the tourism project. Locals’ participation in tourism programmes is often confronted with structural and cultural barriers. Structural limitations from the local (e.g. assets, gender, livelihood strategies) to the policy environment (e.g. tenure, regulations) and commercial context (market segments) all influence the economic participation by local communities in tourism (Ashley, Boyd, & Goodwin, 2000; Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2016; Ngoasong & Kimbu, 2016, 2018). Scheyvens and Russell (2012) argue that the presence/absence of communal land tenure policy influences the participation of community members in tourism. Thus, lacking a legal legislative framework to secure communal land tenure can hinder the equitable participation of communities and the distribution of tourism benefits (Scheyvens & Russell, 2012). In this paper, we add a relative unexplored aspect of CBT by examining the influence of a former colonial system in present-day national park management policies and how this influence inhibits CBT’s contribution to local communities’ project participation and broader sustainable development.

**Methodological approach**

An exploratory research method was applied to develop this paper. Streb (2010) explains that an exploratory case study investigates distinct phenomena characterized by the lack of detailed preliminary research. Therefore, exploratory case studies are not bound to specific research methods. We analysed past studies, policy documents, and government and technical reports relevant to the concepts discussed to inform our arguments. Furthermore, we used relevant personal communication and observations from the first author’s periodic visits to Djoudj National Park (2014–2015) to support our analysis.

Exploratory case studies seek to address “what” questions with the goal of developing pertinent hypotheses and further inquiry (Yin, 2017). In our case study of Senegal, we ask two main questions: (i) What parallels exist between present-day management policies of national parks in Senegal and those of the previous French colonial administration? (ii) What barriers do they pose in the CBT contribution to the sustainable development of communities around national parks? To illustrate our findings in context, we first detail an example of CBT in Senegal focusing on the country’s most important park economically (tourism revenues) and socially (its surrounding communities). We then follow this example with broader findings to these research questions.

**Djoudj National Park**

Established in 1971, the objective of Djoudj National Park (Djoudj hereafter) is to preserve 16,000 hectares of the Senegal River Delta and to protect its rich fauna and flora, especially the migratory and sedentary bird pollution (See Figure 1). Djoudj is often
described as one of the largest ornithological sites in the world (Direction des Park Nationaux [DPN], 2017). The park was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981 for its significant global conservation value. Like most national parks in Africa, local communities were evicted and relocated to the boundaries of the protected area, leading to decades of conflicts over resources (Fall, Hori, Kan, & Diop, 2003; Ndiaye, 2001).

Djoudj remains the most visited park in Senegal, averaging 8,321 annual visitors from 2005 to 2016 (See Figure 2). Its average annual revenues in park entry sales from 2000 to 2010 were estimated at FCFA 29,171,600 (~USD 58,343) (DPN, 2017). However, the number of tourist arrivals at Djoudj decreased by 76% from 2013 to 2016. This significant drop in park visitation is part of a larger overall decline in international tourism to the country, linked to the Ebola epidemic crisis in West Africa and the increased perceived insecurity from terrorist activities in the Sahelian Region (DPN, 2017). Nonetheless, with tourism activities slowly picking up again, Djoudj continues to present enormous potential in terms of tourism development.

**Integrated management plan**

In 1994, the country’s first integrated park management plan was implemented at Djoudj in partnership between the Department of National Parks (DPN hereafter) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN hereafter) and in collaboration with

![Figure 1. Map of Djoudj National Park and the surrounding communities. Source: DPN, 2017. Legend: Village périphérique: Surrounding villages, Poste de garde: Patrol station, Digue: Dam, Limite PNOD: Limits of Djoudj National Park, Zone tampon: Buffer zone.](image)
local communities. The plan included a new institutional arrangement at the local level and a CBT project as a key economic activity in their development programme for the surrounding communities.

The institutional reform included the creation of an advisory board comprised of village chiefs and an association of 35 “ecoguards” from the surrounding communities. The advisory board represents the interests of community members in the park management decision-making process. The ecoguards are volunteers who serve as liaisons between park officials and community members and undertake events to raise awareness about the importance of the park and its resources (DPN, 2010, 2017; IUCN, 1994). This change was critical in moving away from top-down management practices and creating a space where all communities surrounding Djoudj could have a voice in and benefit from conserving resources.

**Communities around Djoudj National Park**

Today, there are seven communities totalling 7,094 residents around the park’s 30 km radius (DPN, 2017). The three principal ethnic groups represented are the Wolofs, Morish, and Fulani. Except for the Fulani herders, most households are engaged in a mixed livelihood practice of fishing and farming. In the western region of the Senegal River Delta where Djoudj is located, close to 25,000 households depend on fishing as their primary source of income, complemented by seasonal farming activities (UEMOA, 2013). Farming, especially rice cultivation, is an equally important livelihood activity in the region and counts as the primary source of income for many households. Since 1981, each community around Djoudj received communal land for rice cultivation, now used by 86% of farmers around the park (Diedhiou, 2016). Fishing and farming livelihoods are increasingly precarious due to regional social and environmental transformations placing significant pressure on Djoudj’s resources (DPN, 2017).

Starting in the 1980s, the construction of two dams has had irreversible ecological impacts on the Senegal River (e.g. invasive aquatic plants, salinization of freshwater), leading to the degradation of fisheries and fishing livelihoods and causing an increase in illegal fishing activities in the park (DPN, 2017; Fall et al., 2003; Ndiaye, 2001).

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**Figure 2.** Djoudj National Park tourist visitation numbers 2005–2016. Source: Adapted by author from DPN, 2017.
Furthermore, rain-fed rice cultivation has become an increasingly risky endeavour, partly due to lower precipitation rates and the substantial debt accrued from agricultural bank loans (Borrini-Feyerabend & Hamerlynck, 2011; Communauté Rurale de Diama, 2010). As fishing and farming livelihoods are threatened by these changes, developing viable and sustainable alternative economic activities for local communities is critical. Tourism activities in and around Djoudj present opportunities for local communities to gain alternative income directly or indirectly.

Community-based tourism at Djoudj National Park

In Senegal, the beginnings of CBT can be traced to the early 1970s when *Agence Française de Développement* provided funding for community tourism initiatives in the culturally and biodiversity-rich region of Casamance (Zeppel, 2006). Concerns over the social and economic impacts of national parks, coupled with the counter productivity of exclusionary approaches, led resource managers to implement CBT projects around national parks. In 1994, Djoudj became the first park in Senegal to realize benefits from this change.

Like other Senegalese national parks, tourism existed at Djoudj well before the 1990s, such as wildlife hunting, bird watching, and guided boat tours on the river. At that time, the government and the private sectors controlled all of these activities. A full-service privately-owned hotel was built shortly after the park was created to accommodate tourists and conference organizers (DPN, 2017). Private tour operators from the region’s capital, Saint Louis, arranged all park visits and provided their own tour guides to accompany the tourists. Locals occupied mostly menial positions such as housekeepers and hunting guides, and were sometimes paid in kind (e.g. bush meat) (Ece, 2008).

The CBT project was implemented as part of the first integrated management plan in 1994. The goal was to improve local livelihoods by redirecting tourism benefits to the seven communities and bettering relations between locals and park officials (IUCN, 1994). It provided a tourist lodge (18 beds) located on the river banks of the community of Diadieme III, three touring canoes, an artisanal boutique, an eco-museum, and a Moorish tent to serve traditional refreshments to tourists. These facilities are managed by members of the community with appropriate skills (e.g. literacy, basic accounting). The village chiefs in the advisory board oversee the CBT project in collaboration with park officials. Employment opportunities include tour guides, shopkeepers, housekeepers, and cooks. In addition to providing income from employment, the revenues from the CBT project (mostly from the lodge), were to be deposited in a community bank and reinvested to improve and maintain social services such as water pumps, the local school, and health centre (IUCN, 1994). In 2007, revenues from the lodge amounted to FCFA 6,174,000 (~USD 11,225). However, the lodge experienced a 65% drop in revenues due to the decline in park visitation from 2013 to 2015 (DPN, 2017).

Djoudj is often touted by practitioners as a conservation and development success story and model of participatory approach to be emulated in other parks in Senegal (Ndiaye, 2001; Zeppel, 2006), but locals have a different view of this project. They believe that it has had very little impact on their livelihoods (Sene-Harper, Matarrita-Cascante, & Larson, in press). The revenues generated from the CBT project over the past few years have been minimal and community members reported that no money from the lodge has been deposited in the community bank after the first two years. Thus, its goal of poverty alleviation in
the communities has not been met (Sèye & Sene-Harper, 2014). Moreover, meetings between the advisory board and park officials declined. A village chief reported in 2013 that their last meeting was close to two years ago, explaining the difficulty of finding transportation to the meeting place, yet park officials have not put effort toward helping with that. Other village chiefs and park officials corroborated this information. Therefore, the advisory board has not been active in the decision-making process about park management since 2011 (Sèye & Sene-Harper, 2014). Furthermore, park-community relations remain highly contentious, to the point where confrontations between park officials and communities in 2010 resulted in the death of two fishermen (Ségalini, 2012).

The shortcomings of the CBT project in Djoudj can be attributed to the decline in tourist activities in the last decade. However, the continued conflicts between park officials and locals, coupled with the lack of participation of communities in the decision-making process, suggest that while the discourses of participatory policies exist on paper, they are yet to manifest at the local level. In this paper, we argue that part of the reason for this failure rests in the legal framework and organizational structure of national parks. Some of these aspects continue from colonial policies inconsistent with the current social and political context of tourism development and conservation approaches.

**Colonial legacies and implications for community-based tourism**

**Land tenure policy**

As noted earlier, in many SSA countries, CBT initiatives around protected areas have been predicated on the restitution of land rights to local communities (Ashley et al., 2000; Child, 1996). Land restitutions had been conceived as a way to reverse colonial policies tending to dispossess locals and promote development in marginalized communities (Ramutsindela, 2003). In such cases, communal land policies in protected areas are drafted to provide tenure rights to communities for renewable natural resources, including wildlife and tourist attractions, conditional upon sustainable use (Roe, 2001). Senegal has had several land reforms after its independence (Konte, Sonne, & Fedderke, 2017), including the decentralization law of 1996 that transferred power to rural communities and resulted in the creation of several community nature reserves co-managed between the DPN and local communities (DPN, 2009). However, reforms to restore land to local communities around national parks have been very slow. Indeed, land allocation around national parks in Senegal still mirrors colonial policy pushing for economic productivity and placing local communities at a stark disadvantage over the state and private sector.

During the colonial period in Senegal, laws applied to protected areas gave priority to commercial private interests by reflecting the same principles of exclusivity and “productive use” that characterized colonial land policy (Ribot, 2001). Land deemed ownerless or vacant was appropriated by the colonial state, reallocated for the purpose of “productive use,” and subsequently privatized. Unlike British settlers in Eastern and Southern Africa who created “native reserves” where customary ownership rights were officially recognized (Mamdani, 1996 quoted in Ece, 2008), the French colonial state did not recognize customary ownership rights and thus communal lands were considered vacant or ownerless. State-official property rights were imposed on such lands for private investment (Caverivière & Debene, 1988).
Today, communities still do not have secure land tenure in and around national parks; the principles of “productive use” and private investment continue to guide land allocations. In Niokolo-Koba National Park, region-specific land reforms in the 1980s allowed evicted communities to file land claims for agriculture production on the northern side of the park. However, most of these land claims have been denied based on exclusionary discourses of productive use (Ece, 2008; Ribot, 2001). This lack of secure land tenure impedes the contribution of CBT to local communities, mainly because communal ownership of land and tourism resources strengthens communities’ bargaining power in tourism planning and management on their lands (Ashley & Jones, 2001).

In Senegal, communities participating in CBT projects face fierce competition from private (many times unlicensed) tour operators. In addition to tour operators, privately owned hotels operating around national parks also compete directly with CBT projects. Communities around Djoudj reported that this issue has caused them to lose a significant share of tourism revenues (Sèye & Sene-Harper, 2014). For example, packages offered by tour operators out of Saint Louis include daily visits to the park but rarely propose a night stay at the lodge. They also use their own guide services rather than recommending tour guides from the communities. Private tour operators have significantly greater access to European tourist markets than local CBT managers (Ndaye, 2012). Without the right resources and capacity, lodge managers at Djoudj have mostly relied on an Italian NGO with a mission to promote responsible tourism to access the European tourist market. In 2013, the lodge recorded a revenue of FCFA 2,147,000 (~ USD 3,903). A relatively small amount given that the park recorded a revenue of FCFA 30,531,000 (~ USD 55,454) in entry permit sales during the same year, thereby indicating greater revenue potential for the lodge (DPN, 2017). Yet without a communal land tenure policy, the communities at Djoudj are not in a legal position to choose and negotiate with tour operators working on their land and neither are tour operators legally bound to negotiate with them.

Communities at Djoudj expressed desire to collaborate and enter partnerships with private tour operators to ensure a more equitable distribution of the tourism share, a point also reported in the latest management plan (DPN, 2017). Community-private sector partnerships are common in CBT projects in SSA to increase community access to marketing resources and thus level the playing field (Manyara & Jones, 2007; Okazaki, 2008; Roe, 2001). However, the absence of a communal land policy undermines the prospects of community-private sector partnerships where local communities can extract greater socio-economic obligations from private investors. A communal land policy would provide the legal framework and support for communities at Djoudj and other national parks in Senegal to enter the tourism industry as private investor partners rather than solely workers. Private investors would find themselves having to deal directly with communities, a situation that has proven to place the latter at a greater advantage (Mahony & Van Zyl, 2002; Roe, 2001).

The absence of a communal land tenure policy also threatens the sustainability of a CBT project. Land in and around national parks is considered national domain (Diouf, 2010). The principle of “productive use” allows for reallocation of land under public domain to ensure territorial development aligned with national and local economic goals (Konte et al., 2017). As noted earlier, communities around Niokolo-Koba were denied land tenure based on the “productive use” principle during a time when the government was pushing for intensive agricultural production in the region. Today, communities
around Djoudj are facing a similar fate. Since the early 2000s, national development plans for economic growth and food security have pushed large-scale irrigated agricultural development projects into the Senegal River Delta. As policies were implemented to attract private investment, the demand for privately owned farm land surged, causing a government facilitated land grab of idle and "underutilized" parcels (Koopman, 2012). Over the last 20 years, an encroachment of 22.6% has been recorded in the park’s buffer zone, an area reserved for local communities’ sustainable utilization of resources (DPN, 2017).

The community tourist lodge at the park provides a scenic view of the river to visitors but threats of appropriation are imminent. The lodge is located on the banks of the river and is surrounded by kilometre-long horticultural parcels strategically located for easy access to water for crop irrigation. Thus, the lack of communal land tenure policy for communities participating in CBT not only restricts their ability to negotiate tourism development in their interest, but also, amid ongoing land transformations, threatens the viability of the project.

**Wildlife hunting policy**

During the colonial period in Senegal, communities were denied customary use rights to resources and wildlife hunting within park boundaries. Private investors and entrepreneurs, conversely, were granted concession rights in parks and nature reserves for tourism and hunting operations, which had become a profitable business. As a result, villagers could benefit only when hired as hunting guides (Ece, 2008). In the early 1970s, shortly after the country’s independence, the government reintroduced a similar policy to encourage private investors to develop wildlife viewing and sport hunting through temporary concession rights. The objectives of the policy included the eradication of communal hunting and promotion of private management of wildlife resources. Djoudj and other areas in the Senegal River Delta were the first designated hunting reserves targeted by this policy. By 1993, 31 concessions in designated hunting reserves were leased to private investors, covering 3.2 million ha or about 16% of the national territory. Hunting concession rights are leased by the state; no attempt has been made to decentralize this aspect of wildlife management to local communities (DPN, 2017; IUNC, 2006).

In many Southern African countries, hunting is an important source of revenue for communities participating in CBT programmes. In those cases, communities receive an income stream by leasing their hunting quotas to private operators (Child, 1996; Frost & Bond, 2008; Mbaiwa, 2004; Mbaiwa & Stronza, 2010). Today, private hunting operators, typically owned by expatriates, continue to have exclusive concession rights for hunting activities (DPN, 2002, 2010, 2017). For instance, hunting grounds at Djoudj are managed by the Association de Chasse et de Tir du Sénégal, a private operator owned and managed by a Lebanese entrepreneur (DPN, 2017).

Obtaining the recent revenues from sport hunting in Senegal is challenging, but a study by IUCN provides insight into its economic significance (IUCN, 2006). According to this study, sport hunting firms in the Tambacounda and Saint Louis regions, where Niokolo-Koba and Djoudj are located, registered 692 hunters during the 1999–2000 season, implying a total revenue of around FCFA 450,000,000 (~USD 818,180). Operating costs (e.g. transportation, marketing) were estimated at just 3% of total revenues, suggesting a
value added to the economy of about FCFA 436,000,000 (≈ USD 792,727) (IUCN, 2006). In 2009, the director of the Department of Water, Forests, and Hunting reported that revenues from the sale of hunting permits alone in the 2008–2009 season totalled FCFA 186,000,000 (≈ USD 338,180) (Pana, 2009). This represents an important revenue stream that is not accessible to communities at Djoudj or other parks, and locals have asked to be granted the rights to manage hunting areas (Sèye & Sene-Harper, 2014). Therefore, the continuity of a colonial policy in Senegal that excludes communities and continues to give private investors sole concession rights to wildlife hunting significantly reduces the channels through which CBT projects can help generate revenues.

**Military culture**

Most CBT initiatives around national parks aim to monitor and control negative impacts to protected resources as a conservation strategy. When that is the case, it requires that the government empower local decision-making and managing of the tourism project, as they are the closest to the resources and can aid in protection if given the authority (Dodds et al., 2018; Moswete & Thapa, 2018). Thus, CBT projects must be supported by participatory management policies to ensure that locals are empowered to manage resources and park officials are working with them as collaborators. Djoudj’s first management plan embraced this more participatory approach, highlighting the need for such collaboration:

The status of ‘park police must effectively give way to those of ‘park educator’ and ‘park actor’ who would play a leading role in: (i) the rehabilitation of its buffer zone and the development of its periphery, (ii) Leading external interventions through a partnership with empowered local people; and (iii) Concessionary and sustainable use of natural resources. (IUCN, 1994, p. 23)

However, participatory management policies are slow to manifest tangibly, a shortcoming that has been attributed to the military culture that perpetuates the authoritarian regime characterizing Senegal’s national parks administration (Blundo, 2014; Ségalini, 2012). This military culture is the most enduring legacy of the colonial administration of national parks. Prior to the country’s independence, parks and nature reserves were managed by the Forestry Service, an agency embedded in the centralized structure of the colonial state (Service des Eaux et Forest) (Ségalini, 2012). The Forest Service had a strong military culture inherited from the Nancy School of Forestry in France, an institution that valued agents’ predispositions to submit to agency-specific rules over agents’ technical competence (Blundo, 2014). In 1969, the Direction of National Parks was created and assumed authority of parks and nature reserves from the Forestry Service (DPN, 2002). Although the administration changed, the military culture remained. The DPN personnel and park agents officially obtained paramilitary status in 1979, thereby entering a military ranking system. The military culture instilled in park officials and reinforced by their legal paramilitary status continues to be strongly felt in the administration of national parks. This culture persists despite reforms in park management to promote participatory approaches. Ségalini (2012) and Blundo (2014) observe that the military culture is often in conflict with participatory policies. Ségalini (2012) notes:

But on the ground, this new conservation model struggles to impose itself and supplant the military culture that continues to find supporting the professional development and supervision of park officials. (p. 101)
This issue can be illustrated in the relations between local tour guides known as the “ecoguides” and park officials. Ecoguides play an important role in carrying out the mission of the CBT by providing guiding services to tourists while working hand-in-hand with park officials (DPN, 2010; IUCN, 1994). However, ecoguides end up assimilating with park officials, thereby putting themselves in a position of subordination to park wardens. Internalizing this perceived subordination, ecoguides often ask permission from park officials to carry out different functions, thereby losing control over their own task. It is also very common that ecoguides perform menial tasks for park officials (e.g. cleaning, washing clothes, running errands), which takes time away from providing guiding services (Ségalini, 2012).

In addition to eroding the sense of empowerment in local communities, this military culture continues to shape collaborative relations between locals and park officials. With participatory policies, park officials have a responsibility to support communities in the CBT projects (DPN, 2002, 2017). Highly ranked officials, who tend to hold leadership positions in national parks, often benefit from capacity building trainings alongside community leaders. For example, in 2013, park directors and community leaders were convened by the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure to attend a 3-day seminar on issues related to CBT projects around Senegal (Ministère du Tourisme et des Loisirs, 2013). However, the collaborative space between park officials and locals has yet to make strides toward actualization, with the goal of eventually supplanting the militarized culture. Patrolling and apprehending locals continues to be regarded as the main function of park officials (Sene-Harper et al., in press). It has been reported that CBT project partners (e.g. NGOs) perceive that park officials continue to exert their authority on local communities instead of treating them as collaborators and noting a need for organizational culture change:

An evolution of the legislation in force is essential for the mission of education to replace the mission of authority. DPN officers are already working closely with the population. This very positive trend should focus more on the participatory approach and the strategic (and even contractual) partnership at the decentralized level. Local authorities and groups should be privileged partners. (DPN, 2002, p. 33)

Conclusions

Using case study methodology, we identified parallels between present-day management polices of national parks in Senegal and those of the former French colonial administration. We described what barriers they pose to the contribution of CBT in promoting sustainable development in communities around national parks. The three key issues that we identified are the absence of communal land tenure policy for communities, their limited concession rights, and the military culture within park administration. The interactions between these factors and the project are not always direct but still erode the principles of equity and local empowerment upon which the CBT model is founded. We found that these issues weaken communities’ capacity to negotiate tourism planning and development, reduce the channels through which they can benefit from tourism, and co-opt the collaborative space between locals and park officials.

As the country’s second largest GDP contributor (behind fisheries), Senegal’s tourism sector has been at the heart of national social and economic development plans since
the 1970s, attracting significant private investments and leading to major financial reforms (Sene-Harper, *forthcoming*). However, this has mostly been cantered on beach resorts. There is keen interest in diversifying Senegal’s tourism product to focus on ecotourism and CBT (Diombera, 2012; Ministère du Tourisme et des Loisirs, 2013). During his July 2016 address to the ministerial cabinet meeting, the Senegalese president, Mr. Macky Sall, firmly reiterated his goals to reinvigorate and diversify the tourism sector as a catalyst for sustainable development at the national and local levels. Since then, various economic policies have been put in place to incentivize private investment in the sector to renovate outdated infrastructure, improve human capital, and attract more tourists. Significantly less emphasis has been placed on the institutional and legal structure that envelops tourism initiatives at the community level, particularly those around national parks. It is necessary to have appropriate policies and planning to ensure both the integration of all actors at all levels in the development process and the equitable distribution of tourism costs and benefits (Adu-Ampong, 2017; Kimbu & Ngoasong, 2013). In the case of CBT around national parks in Senegal, a more radical departure from the former colonial model must be envisioned, allowing the state to move beyond participatory discourses and embrace co-management policies with the appropriate legal framework. This will likely extend the benefits of tourism to local communities so that they are in turn truly empowered to protect the resources in national parks.

**Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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