

Environmental NGOs, Dispossession, and the State: The Ideology and Praxis of African Nature and Development

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Zimbabwe provides a significant context to examine the interplay of the new development rhetoric, the actions of powerful conservation organizations, donor policies, a relatively strong and stable government, and the empowerment of local communities. This interplay exists in diverse rural areas where the Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) is in various stages of experimentation and implementation. CAMPFIRE has been described as a philosophy of sustainable rural development that enables rural communities to manage, and benefit directly from indigenous wildlife. It is the best known of African efforts to permit African communities to re-assert their management of selected natural resources. The program has the official support of the Zimbabwean government. Nonetheless, there are many potential areas of serious conflict. Three case studies are utilized to explore how the challenges of repossession of critical environmental resources by marginalized communities in the changing context of state and NGO relationships where international tourism is a revenue generator for both the private sector and government.

KEY WORDS: sustainable rural development; Zimbabwe; CAMPFIRE.

INTRODUCTION

Earlier field workers on tsetse and trypanosomiasis shared the view of their fellow-countrymen, whether French or British, or Belgian, Portuguese or German, that they would succeed where the indigenous peoples had failed and that their successes would lead to spectacular improvements in the standard of living of the inhabitants of the African continent. This confidence was based not upon the results of experimentation but upon the solid conviction of their superiority, moral as well as technical, over Africans in general. It is a view that still persists. . . . (Ford, 1979, p. 269).

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When it became obvious, around 1970, that the pursuit of development actually intensified poverty, the notion of "equitable development" was invented so as to reconcile the irreconcilable: the creation of poverty with the eradication of poverty. In the same vein, the Brundtland Report incorporated concern for the environment into the concept of development by erecting "sustainable development" as the conceptual roof for both violating and healing the environment. (Sachs, 1992, p. 29).

. . . the cost of preserving the world's wildlife heritage should never fall on the shoulders of the world's poor. The rich North has an obligation to make sure that the world's gain is not their loss. We cannot save the animals without providing fully for the humans around them. We must learn to weep for the people as well as for the lemurs. (Harrison, 1992, p. 82).

Colonial land dispossession of Zimbabwe's African majority during the colonial period has been relatively well studied.² The focus, and rightly so, has been upon the rich agricultural lands of the central plateau where European colonists wrested control away from their African owners. At the time of independence in 1980 fully half of Zimbabwe's best lands were owned by a small-group of White Rhodesian large-scale farmers. Since then, there has been an ongoing debate about how to redress this major historical grievance without jeopardizing Zimbabwe's national economy along with multiple programs for African smallholders and resettlement schemes. Less attention has been given to the land that was alienated from Africans for National Parks and Safari Areas and processes of repossession by those communities. It is in this process of dispossession and repossession that this paper attempts to situate current efforts to rethink the relationships between humans and the environment in three communal areas of Zimbabwe. The discussion of these issues has often been indirect given the prevailing nature of political dialogue in Zimbabwe. In this paper then, I attempt to briefly examine the multiple connections between current debates about environment and development, the roles of nongovernmental organizations, and the reclaiming of lands and resources by three "communities" in contemporary Zimbabwe.

We now find a widespread consensus that socialism and communism have failed, and also that most past conventional development efforts have done likewise. It is, in many circles, the era of the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), particularly in sub-Saharan Africa due to the shrinking of civil society.³ There is widespread agreement that at the end of three development decades in Africa, even without the military conflicts (for example, Rwanda, Sudan, Liberia, Mozambique, Zaire, Burundi, Mauritania, Angola, etc.) the overall standard

²For example see Palmer (1977), Ranger (1985), Herbst (1990), Rukuni (1994), among many others.

³See for example the new works including Farrington and Bebbington (1993), Wellard and Copestake (1993), Princen and Finger (1994), and Carroll (1992).

of living for most people is lower than before. There is also the simultaneous conclusion that the African environment is under increasing threat.⁴

There appears to be an increasing international consensus that "development" efforts need to refocus on the poor. In Africa there has been a widespread debate about the actual role and power of the state and what it should be. Among many, "the state" is part of the problem rather than part of a solution. There has been an interesting conflation of actors, including the World Bank and populists, who support the state's downsizing. We simultaneously find an emphasis by these same actors upon the use of new methods for involving both the rural and urban poor in programs which include participatory development, the use of indigenous knowledge, democratization, grassroots development, sustainable agriculture, empowering the poor, empowering women, women-focused projects, small-scale enterprise, etc.⁵ Despite multiple attempts to avoid external funding, these new methods still entail donor financed and often donor conceptualized projects. External funding is neither inherently beneficial nor harmful but rather requires careful attention as to how it is given, along with more nuanced assessments of NGOs as organizational forms.⁶

Zimbabwe provides a significant context in which one can examine the interplay of the new development rhetoric, the actions of powerful conservation organizations, donors, a stable government, and the empowerment of local communities in managing their own natural resources part of which had been alienated during the colonial period. Zimbabwe also remains of interest because it links the past Marxist discourse with the new managerial and policy discourse. With time, the elements of revolution and socialism have faded in Zimbabwe, although not without strong debate. Still, the order of the day is an economic structural adjustment program

⁴There is not space here to fully elaborate the range of crises and the interconnections between environment and development. The catastrophic view is perhaps best expressed in Timberlake (1985), while a more nuanced view can be found in Adams (1990).

⁵Recommendations for these policies include the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (1989), the World Bank (1989), critics of the world bank [for example Taylor et al. (1992) among many others]. It is well to bear in mind that what the World Bank says and does are often quite different (George and Sabelli, 1994).

⁶Finger locates NGOs in third system theory. Its weakness, he argues, stems from its continued emphasis upon the nation-state as the arena for political activity. He attempts to advance the analysis by suggesting that environmental NGOs can be partly understood as expressing postmodern politics. That is, a politics resulting from the high fragmentation of actors and world views within a global ecological crisis (1994). Wellard and Copestake take a far more pragmatic view assessing how states and NGOs interact in the agricultural sector using case studies from Zimbabwe, The Gambia, Kenya, and Ghana. They find both a growing need and demand for agricultural technology development which cannot be met by the public sector. This, combined with unfavorable public sector resources and donor preferences for NGOs, is leading to the continued growth of NGOs (1993).

which seeks to privatize much of the economy while obtaining increased foreign investment. Zimbabwe's infrastructure, its relatively well-functioning civil service, and the apparent reconciliation between the combatants in the war of independence provides the backdrop for a reconsideration of the complex relationships between environment and development.

ZIMBABWE

This section presents an introduction to Zimbabwe and the historical context in which selected strategies for incorporating developmental and ecological concerns are located. The best known effort in Southern Africa, if not in all of Africa, to alter the colonial legacy of state control over the relationship between local communities and their environments is the Communal Areas Management Program for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE). CAMPFIRE has been described as "a philosophy of sustainable rural development that enables rural communities to manage, and benefit directly from indigenous wildlife. It is essentially an entrepreneurial approach to development, based on wildlife management, that uses market forces to achieve economic, ecological, and social sustainability" (Zimbabwe Trust et al., 1990, p. 3). According to Metcalfe, one of the major early figures in the initiation and spread of CAMPFIRE:

Campfire was designed to address both the potential and the weaknesses of communal ownership of natural resources. It drew on a vision that combines customary practice within a modern democratic framework. Its basic premise is that the natural resources base was declining, partly because of the failure of adequate systems for resource allocation (rights) and their protection (exclusion). Although Campfire is intended to conserve and manage wildlife, grazing and forestry, at this stage it is only concerned with wildlife, due to National Parks' active support for the policy and the contrasting lack of consensus among the other governmental agencies responsible for overall communal resource management. (1994, p. 188)

Thus, while the revenues from Zimbabwe's wildlife, national parks, and tourist activities previously flowed to the central government there has been a willingness by government based upon the committed work of Zimbabwean ecologists, social scientists, and local leaders to alter this direction.⁷ This was in part due to the recognition by a knowledgeable and committed group of ecologists and social

⁷The basis of CAMPFIRE rests in the capacity of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management to give Appropriate Authority to District Councils. This ability is based upon the Parks and Wildlife Act of 1975 and amended since then. In 1992, DNPWLM states: "Appropriate Authority in effect grants District Councils the same rights as commercial farmers enjoy on private land. Councils are empowered to enter into contracts with private organizations for the exploitation of their wildlife, receive all payments directly and carry out their own problem animal control. Equally well the onus is on them to carry out their own law enforcement and protect the resource" (p. 5). The DNPWLM still controls the setting and approval of annual hunting quotas and the monitoring of Councils with Appropriate Authority.

scientists that past practices of allowing only wealthy tourists or residents to kill animals both was immoral and would lead to the discrediting of conservation efforts. They have worked for many years to alter the relationship of parks to people while seeking mechanisms to empower local communities. Zimbabwe is also a battleground for those who believe in consumptive utilization of wildlife and those who are preservationists. There has been tremendous pressure by environmental groups to ban the consumptive utilization of elephants. Zimbabwe, both because of its policies of consumption utilization and the importance of hunting tourism has opposed this ban. In the case of elephant utilization, Zimbabwe has temporarily lost the battle because of a disagreement as to whether the illegal trade in ivory and elephant products would be best stopped through a total or a selective ban. Ironically, this international ban on ivory has meant the loss of revenue to many communities in Zimbabwe, which suffers — although this is debated in the elephant literature — an overpopulation of these mammals.⁸ In general, most African governments, including Zimbabwe, because of their dependence on external aid, are vulnerable to policies made on the basis of external donors' funding priorities. The ethic of "preservation" is not one that has found a happy home in Zimbabwe to date. Some of the key environmental issues involved in efforts to "save" African wildlife have been extremely well explained by Raymond Bonner (1993). Central to his argument is how the campaign "to save the African elephant" ignored the real damage that elephants do to fields, crops, and people without addressing the issue of how to share the cost of preserving the continent's wildlife heritage. He caustically observes that to the three Cs — Christianity, commerce, and civilization — a fourth was added: conservation (1993, p. 64). Conservation can, in his view, be just as Eurocentric as any other set of policies unless set within the social, economic, and political contexts of Africa.

Zimbabwe, like many other Eastern and Southern African nations, has a significant portion of its land set aside for parks and hunting areas (known as Safari Areas). This land comprises over 12% of the land area but falls primarily in lowland and semi-arid environments. Land in Zimbabwe is divided into the following categories: (1) large-scale commercial farm land, (2) resettlement areas, (3) communal lands, (4) national parks and safari areas, (5) forest lands, and (6) urban land (see Table I). Much attention has been given to the inequitable colonial- and settler-created divisions of land in Zimbabwe. This legacy continues to dominate much of contemporary political life. There appears to be no end to the debates and proposed solutions to this problem. This legacy includes two tenurial systems: communal lands are

⁸There is an important and growing literature on elephants and wildlife policy. See for example, Barbier et al. (1990), Iain and Oria Douglas-Hamilton (1992), John Peck (1993), and Prinsen (1994), among others.

Table I. Land Distribution and Tenure in Zimbabwe

Land-use category	Proprietary system	Area (km ²)	Percent of total area
Communal land	Communal	163,500	41.8
Resettlement land	State	26,400	6.7
Commercial farming land	Private	142,500	36.4
National Parks estate	State	47,000	12.1
State forest land	State	9,200	2.4
Urban and state land	State and private	2,200	0.6

subject to “customary tenure” and ultimately belong to the state, while commercial lands are private property. What to do about this land is hotly debated because of high population densities, land degradation, and poverty in many communal lands, while the commercial lands produce the major export and food crops.⁹

While much emphasis has been placed on agriculture in communal areas, CAMPFIRE addresses alternative land uses for communal areas in the more marginal lands. It also addresses how the park and safari areas can be used to benefit those populations which in one way or another affect, or are affected by them. These are sites of conflict between local, regional, national, and international interests. They are also the spatial location of past and current injustices, which are reflected in debates about the relative importance of people and animals. Finally, they are the sites of contemporary experimentation to alter the relationships between local communities and wildlife, the environment, and the governmental structures that rule them.

Zimbabwe has 10 national parks and 16 safari areas, 11 of which are in the Zambezi Valley, along with 23 forest reserves of which six are in the valley. These areas are subject to multiple restrictions. In the case of safari areas, private companies have rights to concessions which in turn are sold to hunters. These areas were virtually all created during the colonial years¹⁰ and are supported by strong local groups of hunters and/or

⁹A Land Tenure Commission has just delivered its preliminary report to the President of Zimbabwe. Its brief was to study feasible alternatives for the tenurial systems and to make recommendations as to what changes, if any, should be made in the current system.

¹⁰Two parks were created along the shores of Lake Kariba. The land was taken in the 1950s from resident populations who not only lost their best agricultural lands due to the creation of the lake but then were denied access to these newly created parks. The dispossession of the Tonga has been documented by Colson (1971) and Scudder (1962, 1985), and Scudder and Colson (1994), but primarily from the Zambian side.

conservationists. This legacy provides the historical backdrop for the large environmental NGO presence in Zimbabwe and the "global" concern for the fate of Zimbabwe's wildlife and environment.¹¹

Those government ministries and departments charged with the protection and preservation of the environment have, historically, assumed policing roles toward those who had been dispossessed of their lands in the formation of the parks or those who seek to utilize the parks' resources. These roles are now being challenged and alternative relationships are being proposed.¹² At the same time, tourism has grown as an important source of Zimbabwe's foreign exchange earnings. Thus despite the troublesome colonial heritage of the national park and safari areas, they occupy a central place in the overall economic development of Zimbabwe.

RECENT RESEARCH RESULTS

In this section, I present recent research results on efforts to increase local communities' benefits from the appropriation of nature. Institutionally, CAMPFIRE was launched by a combination of government agencies, NGOs, and the university. There have been multiple studies carried out under the auspices of the Center for Applied Social Sciences (CASS) at the University of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Trust, the World Wildlife Fund Multispecies Animal Production Systems Project, and by the ecologists of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management.¹³ This work has been taking place in the wider context of a war against rhino poachers and the loss of Zimbabwe's black rhino population, debates about the culling of elephants and the ban on elephant products trade, and government policies to open up the Zambezi Valley for development. These studies focus on: (1) how difficult it is to translate the concept of participation from a principle into practice, (2) how to make NGOs accountable to the communities they are serving, (3) how to shift government agencies away from a centralized and bureaucratic managerial style, and (4) how to establish a different relationship between researchers and the researched.

¹¹Part of the larger story of the creation of East and Southern Africa's national parks has been well told in Raymond Bonner's book *At the Hand of Man*. The place of game and wildlife in the British Empire has been admirably summarized by Mackenzie (1988).

¹²There was a major World Bank funded study to reorganize the Ministry. I do not have access to either the study nor its recommendations which are still under dispute within the Ministry.

¹³There have been other major sponsors of research. The EEC funded a major land-use study of the entire Zambezi Valley in Zimbabwe to examine how to plan land-use after the eradication of the tsetse fly. They have also funded land-use studies in Kanyati, Gatshe Gatshe and Omay communal lands. WWF has conducted a series of studies to compare wildlife and livestock utilization of lands in low rainfall areas under the multispecies project.



Fig. 1.

The three recent studies I discussed were carried out in areas where a major portion of land and the resource base had been removed in the creation of national parks or safari areas: Omay Communal Land in Kariba District, Chapoto/Kanyemba Ward in Guruve District, and Kaerezi Resettlement Area adjacent to Nyanga National Park (Fig. 1).¹⁴ These studies are supplemented by my own visits to these areas and my studies in the eastern Zambezi Valley.

¹⁴There are six land use categories within the parks and wildlife estate: national parks, botanical reserves, botanical gardens, wild life sanctuaries, safari areas, and recreational parks. In terms of overall land use, national parks and safari areas are the two most important categories. All categories together comprise about 14% of the total land area of Zimbabwe.

Nyaminyami District

Nyaminyami has been used to demonstrate how wildlife utilization should work according to Raymond Bonner (1993). On the other hand, James Murombedzi, a CASS researcher, uses the same area to suggest that the creation of a local NGO funded by national and external donors serves as a new layer of bureaucracy between the communal land residents (predominantly Tonga, displaced by the Kariba Dam) and their rights to manage their own resource base rather than as an effective vehicle for articulating community interests.¹⁵ Murombedzi worked in Omay Communal Land, one of the three areas making up Nyaminyami District. (The other two communal lands, much less rich in wildlife, are Kanyati and Gatshe Gatshe.) Omay effectively surrounds the inland (as opposed to Lake Kariba) boundaries of Matusadonha National Park. It is an area rich in wildlife and has a long shoreline on Lake Kariba which is not in fact Omay's land, but National Park's. Unlike other Council areas, where the District Council itself has undertaken the management of wildlife utilization, a special management entry, Nyaminyami Wildlife Management Trust (NWMT), was established to supervise wildlife and related activities.

Wildlife revenues are relatively high in Nyaminyami (a gross revenue \$458,400 Zim for 1991 and an anticipated revenue of \$1,858,725 Zim for 1993) which gave the District Council incentive to apply for Appropriate Authority status. (The exchange rate in 1991 was \$2.4 Zim to \$1 U.S. and approximately \$4 Zim to \$1 U.S. in 1993.) The Nyaminyami Wildlife Management Trust was set up not to involve local people in decision making but to qualify for the funds generated by wildlife. These funds were from hunting carried out in safari areas on Omay's communal lands by commercial safari operations. The trust was set up as an arm of the District Council and charged with the sustainable management of its wildlife resources. Membership of the trust includes all councilors from the district's 13 wards, the chiefs from Omay's four chieftaincies, and the senior executive officer of the District Council, the District Administrator. The representatives of the NGOs operating in the District (i.e., World Wide Fund for Nature, Zimbabwe Trust, Save the Children Fund (U.K.), Centre for Applied Social Sciences University of Zimbabwe), and representatives of the commercial interests in the district (i.e., the hotel and holiday interests plus the kapenta fisheries — the kapenta are a small sardine-like

¹⁵Murombedzi's analysis is supported by Simon Metcalfe who described District Council's choice not to permit open direct community participation in the trust but only permit representation by District Council. Metcalfe notes "The communities themselves are not actively participating in the planning and management process and appear alienated from both the trust and the wildlife on which they depend for their existence" (1994, p. 176).

species fished through highly capitalized fishing vessels) were originally given membership but since 1992 have only observer status. It was assumed by some NGOs that Ward Councilors in fact really represent local populations. There is much accumulating evidence that often they do not. The relationship between rural district councils and their populations is an arena of spirited debate between those who want local communities at the village or village development committee level to benefit from wildlife management programs and those who argue for the district at large.

The District created an organization for NWMT including a general manager, a wildlife manger, an assistant wildlife manager, kapenta manger, and institutions officer, along with area managers and game guards. In practice, this has meant that recurrent expenditures for operations of the trust have taken most of wildlife revenues.¹⁶ These details are of significance because CAMP-FIRE is premised on community initiatives, rewarding those that put the greatest inputs into wildlife management and those with the best quality of management. Murombedzi rightly concludes that because of investment in both personnel and capital equipment, the NWMT has very high recurrent costs which substantially decrease the wildlife and tourist revenues.

The funds available to NWMT and thus to the District Council and the local population come from safari hunting. Murombedzi states that:

Safari hunting remains the principal form of wildlife utilization and the main source of wildlife revenue in the absence of any form of local utilization is the major contradiction that will inhibit any form of institutional development in the Campfire programme. Safari hunting is a predominantly elite and white occupation that resulted directly from the exploitation of Africa's wildlife by the early hunters and adventurers. (1992, 20)

The connections to the colonial past is not one that current active NGOs like to make, but it is one that Murombedzi suggests should not be ignored. In addition, as Murombedzi also notes, the main beneficiaries of wildlife in Omay Communal Land continue to be the safari companies and operators. The NWMT has benefitted, but not nearly to the extent the private sector has. Murombedzi concludes that to date:

. . . local institutions in Nyaminyami (except the Nyaminyami District Council as a constituted body) do not play a significant role in resource exploitation. This is a major constraint to institutional development. The need for development of local capacity to take over from existing utilizer is indicated. (1992, 57)

¹⁶The revenues actually returned to the wards have dropped from \$198,000 in 1989 (62% of gross revenues) to \$97,000 in 1990 (25% of gross) to \$46,000 in 1991 (11% of gross). The high figures for 1989 and 1990 actually represent the contributions that ZimTrust had made to NWMT. Since 1991 NWMT have had to meet their own recurrent expenditures.

Although, more recently, the NWMT and the District Council insist that most employees be local residents, the European Community will fund a land-use planning exercise for Omay Communal Land which may lead basically to a village consolidation and villagization program which itself may lead to further alienation of land from the Tonga.¹⁷

Kanyemba (Chapoto Ward)¹⁸

Kanyemba raises the more general issue of what kinds of communities can and do engage in CAMPFIRE. Despite knowledge of CAMPFIRE and CAMPFIRE activities at the time of inquiry residents chose to move very slowly in adopting these activities. Kanyemba is the most distant part of Gurove District and is the last remnant of the former Chikunda state in the eastern Zambezi Valley (Isaacman, 1975). The Chikunda appear to be a relatively new ethnic group formed from the descendants of slaves and soldiers from the Portuguese colonial enterprise in Mozambique. Despite their origins, they had to be militarily defeated by the Portuguese, against whom they fought for several years at the end of the nineteenth century. They reside in the Zambezi Valley in Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, they lost most of their lands through the creation of the Dande Safari Area, Mana Pools National Park, and the Chewore Safari Area along with others adjacent to the Zambezi River. This is an area of abundant wildlife.

Efforts to initiate CAMPFIRE activities in Kanyemba have not taken hold. The Ward, which is relatively isolated from District headquarters, is divided between two peoples: the Vadema and the Chikunda.¹⁹ The strong division that exists both within the Chikunda (centering on a conflict over the legitimacy of the current chief) and between them and the Vadema prevent the formation of a cohesive community. The Vadema, who suffered most from the loss of their homes and resource base to the creation of the Chewore Safari Area, are blamed if any snares or poaching activities take place. This despite the fact that all valley populations, including the Korekore and Chikunda, have long hunting traditions. However, the Vadema are the smallest in number, the weakest in political and economic influence, and the subject of multiple prejudices.

¹⁷For a discussion, see Derman and Murombedzi (1994).

¹⁸Many wards, which comprise districts, keep dual names; the names assigned by government and those by which they are known by their residents. In this instance, Kanyemba refers to the nineteenth-century military leader and adventurer as well as to the name of the current chief.

¹⁹The Vadema who are a Shona speaking people are often said to be former foragers. Their history remains unclear although subject to much speculation. Hasler (1993) provides a detailed account of colonial myth-making about their past. In contemporary Zimbabwe, they are a small minority, often scapegoats precisely because of their powerlessness.

Since there is no single group which can speak for the Ward as a whole, almost all CAMPFIRE initiatives fall prey to internal community disagreements. This case signals first (as did Nyaminyami) the importance of the NGO and government actors in presenting and supporting CAMPFIRE ideas. Second, it underlines the importance of “community” support and agreement for CAMPFIRE. Third, it illustrates the difficulty of more marginal communities in having District Councils share information and proceeds from wildlife with the community. The question of how far NGOs and government should proceed to implement CAMPFIRE is a thorny one in this context.²⁰

One of the critical weaknesses of CAMPFIRE, as even its proponents recognize, has been its total reliance and focus upon wildlife. As Metcalfe comments;

It is inconceivable that a community which establishes a CPR [Common Property Regime] for wildlife, would not use the same body to coordinate water, forage and fuelwood management. Such a vision sees the household and arable lands moving toward a private property regime, while the natural resource base moves towards common property management. (1993, p. 52)

Metcalfe’s vision is that communities once having established common property regimes for wildlife will develop them for their other natural resources. The nature of other resources are quite different from wildlife. In addition the legal and social context for including other resources are also different. Whether they will be allowed to do so, or want to do so, remains to be tested.

Kaarezi

Nyanga National Park and its surrounding communities have been the subject of a study by Donald Moore. In this instance, the researcher attempted to initiate CAMPFIRE activities without wildlife. As was noted above, the intent of many CAMPFIRE advocates has been to extend it to a much broader range of natural resources than wildlife. Moore has engaged those promoting CAMPFIRE elsewhere to look carefully at developmental alternatives for those dispossessed of their land but without wildlife resources, with the major exception of introduced trout. Nyanga National Park is located in the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe not in the

²⁰This issue becomes central because it is not yet apparent that even where communities are benefitting directly and substantially from wildlife that they want elephants, buffalo, and other animals eating their fields and threatening their villages. In other parts of the Zambezi Valley, a major development and villagization project based upon cotton production threatens wildlife strategies. Who gets to choose becomes a more important issue than ever before. For a more detailed exploration of these issues see Derman (1993).

Zambezi Valley, the location of Nyaminyami and Kanyemba. The eastern highlands are home to Shona communities known collectively as Manyika. The creation of an independent Manyika identity is documented in Ranger (1991) and Moore (1993).

Despite their being part of a Shona majority, the Manyika share the element of dispossession common to the Tonga, Chikunda, and Vadema experience. Moore's research describes the formation of the park and then its extension in 1986 and how the surrounding populations responded and view the park. Unlike the two previous cases, NGOs are not involved yet, although there are EC and World Bank proposals on the table to bring them in.²¹

Because of the park's creation, the grasslands formerly utilized for cattle grazing have been closed to the people, trees can no longer be cut, and hunting cannot be carried out by local residents. The rivers however, are fished by nonresident trout fly fishermen. Women feared that any extension of the park would lead to the loss of a valuable cash crop known as *tsenza* (*coleus esculentus*), which needs to be grown alone because the women believe it poisons the soil. Moore explores the competing visions of "what constitutes legitimate proprietorship of land and in differing historical claims to environmental resources within Nyanga" (1992, p. 2). To further complicate matters the government allocated land for resettlement believing that their intervention would ameliorate the larger historical grievances. The Manyika communities on one side of the river took up the government offer, and residents on the other did not and have vehemently protested. This again places community dynamics and politics at the forefront of efforts to shape resource programs. How these communities along one Zimbabwe's most scenic rivers utilize this critical resource park will be a significant indicator of how communities repossess their resources.

RESTORING COMMUNITIES' RIGHTS

The efforts to restore communities' rights to their natural resources are ambitious undertakings and not without important detractors including many critical actors in the Zimbabwean context. Some international conservation and local conservation NGOs, and major actors in the Zimbabwean government question these initiatives. Local control,

²¹Nyanga Park, like much of the Eastern Highlands was planted in exotic pines. There are now efforts to preserve rare birds, reintroduce indigenous tree species, and preserve the environment while reconsidering the relationships between surrounding populations and the park. Due to Nyanga's popularity with both foreign and domestic tourists, this will not be easy.

participation, and management of natural resources by producer communities remain highly controversial in the centralized Zimbabwean state. Tourism and hunting continue to grow as important business opportunities for the private sector and sources of foreign exchange for the government. Government is reluctant to jeopardize this important sector through political and social experimentation. In addition, Government has not been comfortable with the political implications of such local control.

Successful CAMPFIRE efforts require what Murphree (1994) terms "coalescive" communities: ones which can speak in one voice to others. Often however, even these coalescive communities are not comprehensive of the full range of community members, for example and, for the moment, most importantly, women. The political and social conflicts that will be produced by efforts to give communities greater control over their natural resources have, as yet, not been well analyzed. Moreover, it is unclear how much time will be allowed for experimentation, especially if external assistance in promoting other conservation initiatives is in the offing.²²

The recent work by three Zimbabweans, Metcalfe (1992), Murombedzi (1993), and Murphree (1994, p. 423), delineates the problems posed by external assistance, the opportunities created by this assistance, and proposed guidelines for how to negotiate this terrain. These authors suggest that the internationally-based environmental NGOs are thought to lack accountability to both the state and the communities in which they work. All too often, the international NGOs agendas and their earmarked money create rigid projects and reporting procedures which leave local NGOs struggling to meet these reporting demands. In short, the agendas for international NGOs respond to a set of imperatives that are typically far removed from those of local governance and determination of natural resource use by local communities. Donors and international NGOs have different constituencies than national NGOs and local organizations and these are rarely acknowledged as affecting assistance priorities by the international actors.

²²In Southeastern Zimbabwe there was a large proposal by an international NGO to substitute itself for CAMPFIRE on the basis that CAMPFIRE was not sufficiently responsive to democratic concerns. The NGO proposed the formation of new Wildlife-Livestock Management Units. The NGO suggested that it liaise only with government with no discussion of how it would be accountable to the local communities and without any evidence as to why and how these WLMU would be more effective. The project was not accepted by the government but it required much time and effort on the part of resident intellectuals to point out its many failings. Even so, a major donor regarded the non-acceptance of this project as bad faith on the part of CAMPFIRE and its allies, and viewed it simply as a "turf" battle.

Murphree has summarized the conflict as follows:

They [donors and NGOs] therefore seek to introduce long-term conservation directions into societies governed by short-term need fulfillment and development imperatives. This contrast between long-term conservation perspectives and short-term political imperatives is not of course simply a first world/third world contrast; it is an internal political conflict within the societies of the first world themselves. (1994, p. 423)

CONCLUSIONS

I have described part of an institutional effort to respond to human environmental crises through the CAMPFIRE program and the mixed experience both of CAMPFIRE and the responses to these efforts. The complex interactions between environmental NGOs, the state and local populations are far from being resolved. I have used three case studies to assess if and how Zimbabweans who were dispossessed of their lands during the colonial period are engaged in repossessing them. Zimbabwe continues to have significance for other African countries because the government retains significant social, political, and economic policies which address poverty, land inequities, and environmental degradation. In addition, Zimbabwe has a relatively large group of intellectuals (both institutionally and non-institutionally based) who are capable of setting an agenda independent of the international NGOs and donors. These intellectuals, who themselves take different stances on the significant issues, are under great pressure to conform either to the central government's agenda, or to that of different groupings of NGOs and donors.

There are multiple possibilities for conflict and cooperation between Zimbabwean efforts to repossess, or change the terms of the utilization of wildlife, national parks, safari areas and forestry reserves, and international NGOs and some donors. These efforts depend upon the political space to increase civil society — that is organized groups outside of both government and the party — and increase its power to manage natural resources. How much power should be transferred, what forms the repossession will take, and what roles NGOs and others will have will be contested.

In examining the interplay of environment, human rights, governance, and development there are no models to be borrowed from the industrialized nations. Rather, the models developed in nations like Zimbabwe will have to stem from empowering dispossessed communities and social experimentation. It is unclear whether national proprietorship and local ownership will be high on the agenda of international organizations and western donors if the directions are not ones that they approve or if the current emphasis upon sustainable development fades.

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