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Management of Wildlife, Tourism and Local Communities in Zimbabwe

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Contents

PREFACE	2
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>I. CONTROL AND DISPOSSESSION</u>	<u>4</u>
SEIZING LAND	4
CREATING COMMERCIAL FARMS AND NATIONAL PARKS	5
<u>II. CONFLICT WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES</u>	<u>8</u>
THE LAW AND INSTITUTIONS	8
DEPRIVATION AND HARDSHIP FOR COMMUNITIES	10
THE CHALLENGE AFTER INDEPENDENCE	12
<u>III. THE HISTORY OF TOURISM IN ZIMBABWE</u>	<u>14</u>
THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM	14
AVOIDING THE PROBLEMS OF MASS TOURISM	17
LESSONS FROM THE ANNAPURNA EXPERIENCE ... AND OTHERS	21
DISTRIBUTING THE BENEFITS	25
<u>IV. RECONCILING PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE IN ZIMBABWE</u>	<u>26</u>
CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE AND PARKS	26
ORIGINS AND EARLY YEARS OF CAMPFIRE	28
EXPANSION AND DIVERSIFICATION OF CAMPFIRE PROJECTS	31
<u>V. CONCLUSIONS</u>	<u>34</u>
BIBLIOGRAPHY	38

Preface

Under its programme on Environment, Sustainable Development and Social Change, the Institute is currently focusing on the social dimensions of policies and initiatives for environmental protection. The purpose of the research is to analyse the implications for livelihood and conditions of life, especially of the low income groups, of a wide variety of projects to rehabilitate degraded resources and protect wild animals and plant species in national parks and reserves. This paper forms part of the work being undertaken within this research programme.

The paper looks at the relationships between people and parks in Zimbabwe and at the issue of land ownership in particular. The author argues that land dispossession and displacement of populations were central to Zimbabwe's colonial history, especially in the context of the establishment of commercial farms and protected areas. He describes how the establishment of many of the country's parks required forced removal of local communities and curtailment of their access to the resources within the area, and points out that this history continues to influence people's perceptions of wildlife, protected areas and tourism to this day. He examines what has happened to the people whose ancestors were evicted from their homelands not so long ago, and their livelihoods on the margins of park lands.

The paper attempts to explain the history and nature of this situation, as well as a recent endeavour at reconciliation between people and parks in Zimbabwe. The first section looks at the era of colonial dispossession and the early roots of antagonism, and the second section discusses the resources lost to and opportunity costs suffered by local communities when commercial farms were created. Section III discusses the growth of tourism in the country and the importance of wildlife to its international appeal. The experiences of other countries are included to highlight the kinds of problems associated with tourism growth that Zimbabwe has both encountered and managed to avoid.

As in other developing countries, the establishment of parks and reserves in Zimbabwe has brought local communities into conflict with park management. In addition to the alienation of their land, adjacent communities tend to suffer extensive crop damage from marauding animals. Revenue from tourism tends to flow into the central treasury and local people receive little compensation, if any, for destruction of their crops. Nor do they have access to park resources such as meat, grazing areas, wood or other products. The author points out that under these conditions, it is little wonder that poaching of wildlife and destruction of park fences have become increasingly common.

Realizing that this hostility towards protected areas could lead to their destruction, either through poaching of animals or growing popular pressure to have them converted to agriculture, the government of Zimbabwe — through its Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management — along with the University of Zimbabwe, the NGO Zimbabwe Trust and WWF, began a programme to return some of the benefits of wildlife, parks and tourism to local communities. Section IV of the paper discusses how the CAMPFIRE programme, which began in the mid-1980s, has attempted to build institutional and managerial capacity at the local level. The nature of CAMPFIRE projects has varied, but most of them have earned the bulk of their revenues from game hunting and safari operations. Several have also begun to explore the financial viability of other tourism-based activities such as photographic safaris, walking trails, canoe safaris and pony trekking.

The final section of the paper argues, however, that if traditional hostility towards park areas is to change into unqualified support, the CAMPFIRE initiative has still to make a significant step. Occasional access to benefits does not imply real ownership and management by communities of park lands. Until such proprietorship becomes reality, local communities will

not develop the full range of responsible practices that are necessary to ensure the survival of these areas as wildlife reserves, nor will the potential benefits of wildlife and tourism be clear to them. The government has not gone far enough to devolve responsibility beyond the district level, which for many communities is too remote and abstract. The author argues that authority over and ownership of park resources needs to be handed down to village level if CAMPFIRE's aim of turning former poachers into gamekeepers is to succeed.

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August 1994

Dharam Ghai
Director

Introduction¹

National parks in Zimbabwe constitute some 12.7 per cent of the total land area of the country. These parks are home to an exotic variety of wild animals in a relatively unspoiled natural habitat, and are the cornerstone of Zimbabwe's expanding tourist industry. It is an industry which now earns the country a significant share of its foreign exchange, following closely behind its rivals in agriculture and mining. Yet while the economy enjoys this revenue, and while the tourists enjoy the country's unique variety of wild animals, what of the communities that live on the edge of these parks? Do they benefit? Do they feature as an integral part of the "tourism, wildlife and parks" equation?

A brief look at one of the most popular tourist destinations in Africa highlights some of the main issues concerning the relationship between people and parks in Zimbabwe. Hwange National Park, covering some 1.5 million hectares of land in the southern part of the country, boasts large numbers of elephant, buffalo, giraffe, lion and cheetah. Its brochure to attract visitors is typical. "Come and enjoy an African wilderness untouched by human presence. Enjoy the provision of expert guides, modern air-conditioned vehicles and a luxury rest camp from which one can watch the wildlife from the comfort of one's own veranda".

Yet the price of maintaining this illusion is high — not so much in terms of the cost to the tourist as in the consequences for the communities living around this area from which they are excluded. Situated in a low rainfall area with infertile soils and inadequate resources, these communities are among the poorest in the country. Their thatched huts, unlike those in the park rest camps nearby, are not waterproofed against rain or air-conditioned against the heat of summer. The water from a few stagnant wells is very different from the imported refreshments enjoyed by the tourist. The revenues from tourism end up in pockets other than those of the people nearest the tourist destinations.

It is evident from talking to people from these villages that they not only feel largely excluded from the park's benefits, but that they are actively prejudiced by its existence. Many communities surrounding Hwange view the park not as a romantic wilderness, but as a region from where wild animals emerge to trample and destroy the few crops they have managed to grow. Protected areas have allowed wildlife populations to expand to a level where, in order to survive, animals must raid the fields of farmers on the edges of the park. What is worse is that the same animals which

¹ The author is grateful to Krishna Ghimire and an anonymous referee for their valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper and to Praveen Bhalla and Jenifer Freedman for editorial assistance.

are protected by law against killing by indigenous communities, even when they are destroying their livelihoods, are endlessly photographed, or in some cases hunted, by foreign visitors — for vast sums of money. Yet levels of compensation for crop damage, farmers are anxious to point out, are either minimal or non-existent.

Local resentment does not end here. The older villagers still recall a time when the land, now enclosed by park boundaries, was their's to use for agriculture, grazing their livestock, collection of firewood, etc. Even the wild animals were a resource that was available to them, and they managed to ensure that hunting did not reduce numbers to a level of possible extinction. But the colonial enterprise changed all that. It appropriated the best agricultural lands in Zimbabwe for a small élite of European farmers and evicted communities, like some of the ones around Hwange, from their traditional homes to make way for recreational reserves and safari hunting areas that only benefited the small European population in the country or foreign visitors. This story is repeated in many of the park areas of Zimbabwe as communities contemplate the lost resources and opportunities on the other side of the fences that exclude them. While tourism may have brought some jobs and even stimulated a craft industry around a few of the parks, it is that sense of alienation and dispossession that has remained uppermost in the minds of the people interviewed for this paper. For them, the best thing would be for the parks to disappear altogether, their animals destroyed and the foreign visitors transported to some other locations so that they could be left in peace.

This paper attempts to explain the history and nature of these problems, as well as a recent endeavour at some kind of reconciliation between people and parks in Zimbabwe. In order to understand the historical antecedents, the first section looks at the era of colonial dispossession and the early roots of antagonism. Land seizure lay at the centre of Zimbabwe's colonial history, and the second section thus discusses the resources lost to and opportunity costs suffered by local communities when commercial farms and national parks were created. The third section discusses the growth of tourism in the country and the importance of wildlife to its international appeal. Case studies are included from other countries to highlight the kinds of problems associated with tourism growth that Zimbabwe has both encountered and managed to avoid.

The history of land dispossession fuelled radical demands for change in the post-independence period. Political, economic and environmental constraints have prevented significant alterations to patterns of land ownership and access in contemporary Zimbabwe. Yet the picture for local communities in parks areas is not entirely bleak. Section IV describes how Zimbabwe has been attempting to reduce local hostility through a programme called CAMPFIRE, which aims to return benefits to the people most affected by wildlife and tourism. Nevertheless, occasional economic returns to neighbouring villages still leave the fundamental question of land ownership and management of indigenous resources unanswered. The final section discusses the need for devolution of further responsibilities for management, organization and ownership to local communities if CAMPFIRE is to achieve its objective of fully reconciling people and parks in contemporary Zimbabwe.

I. Control and Dispossession

Seizing Land

When the 196 men of the Pioneer Column crossed from South Africa into what was later to become Southern Rhodesia on 11 July 1890, they expected to find a fabulous land of wealth and riches. For several decades, travellers and prospectors had brought back stories of abundant gold to be found north of the Limpopo river in what was called the kingdom of the Mashonas. The English explorer, Frederick Selous, related that as far back as the fifteenth century, Arab traders along the coast of south-east Africa had spoken of extensive gold mining in the interior.

“The gold mines were being worked by the natives of the country, who used the gold as a medium of exchange to buy the goods brought to them by the Arabs, and for centuries before this time their ancestors had, in all probability, made use of gold whose value had been taught them by the ancient builders of the temple of Zimbabwe” (Selous, 1893:335).

The lure of the yellow metal, given impetus by the discovery of the gold fields around Johannesburg in the 1880s, turned the attention of entrepreneurs and prospectors further north in the hope that the vast fortunes realized in the Transvaal could be replicated in Zimbabwe.

The Pioneer Column was funded by Cecil John Rhodes, a wealthy British politician and businessman who had made his fortune in South Africa with the discovery of diamonds in the 1870s. On the pretext that colonial intervention was necessary in Mashonaland to protect the indigenous Shona people against the fierce and intrepid Ndebele, a branch of the Zulus who had entered their region several decades earlier, Rhodes negotiated with the British government for a royal charter for the British South Africa Company (BSAC) which he established in 1889. This charter gave him the right to occupy and exploit the land and mineral resources, including the gold deposits reputed to be in abundance throughout the area. With the promise of mining concessions and guarantees of land, the 196 volunteers he recruited penetrated to the heart of Mashonaland, and on 12 September 1890 raised the British flag at what was to be called Fort Salisbury, named after the prime minister of the time. The men of the Pioneer Column were soon joined by a wave of prospectors, administrators and adventurers from further south. By 1894, the European presence in Mashonaland had risen to over 5,000.

For the indigenous population, claims by these newcomers that they were there to protect them against the depredations of the Ndebele must have seemed a bitter mockery. Within a few years, the BSAC had constituted itself into a *de facto* government and established an administrative and legal infrastructure to run the country. Much of the financing for this was raised by the imposition of taxes on local people. Refusal to pay resulted in confiscation of their land, which was handed over in turn to the growing wave of settlers arriving in the country. Yet another aim of taxation was to create a ready supply of cheap male workers for the mines and European-owned commercial farms: peasants were increasingly forced to seek wage labour in order to pay hut, poll and dog taxes, and charges for dipping cattle; black farmers were forced to pay rents in white designated territories.

Six years after the invasion of their country, both the Shona and Ndebele rose in revolt, much to the surprise of the Europeans who had preferred to believe that both groups would never unite in opposition to them. Hostilities continued for over a year and it was only with the arrest and subsequent hanging of the leaders of the rebellion that the conflict finally ended. This war, however, which was popularly known as *Chimurenga*, was to inspire a later generation of Zimbabweans to fight for independence. From the arrival of Rhodes' Pioneer Column in 1890 to the establishment of democratic government in 1980, the reasons for conflict between the indigenous population and European settlers remained the same: the control of land and its wealth. Claimed one old man, born in 1902, “The whites did not take our country in a ceremonious way. They were feasting on our forefathers' blood. The only way we could get it back was through waging a war against them” (cited in Jensen, 1992:30).

Creating Commercial Farms and National Parks

Despite the establishment of numerous mines in the 1890s and early part of the twentieth century, the fabled gold and precious stones did not materialize to the extent hoped. When the directors of the BSAC toured the colony in 1907 they found that it was almost bankrupt. Yet what the country lacked in precious stones it made up for in vast tracts of rich, arable land found in many areas. Shortly after their visit, the BSAC adopted a policy to diversify away from mining and began to encourage the development of the European commercial farming sector.

To attract settler farmers, the state offered free agricultural training and a variety of services. In 1912, an agricultural bank was established to provide European farmers with loans for the purchase of farms, livestock and agricultural equipment, as well as to finance improvements in irrigation and fencing. Fertilizers, seeds and stocks were made available at subsidized prices. Roads and other facilities were constructed close to European settlements. These measures resulted in an 82 per cent increase in the number of European farmers between 1907 and 1911. By 1914 there were 2,040 Europeans occupying farms covering 183,400 acres, compared with the 20,000 acres worked a decade earlier (Schmidt, 1992:66).

During the first few decades of settler rule, peasants provided most of the produce for the local market — especially maize, livestock and vegetables to the mines and urban areas. In order to ensure that the increasing number of commercial farms were not undercut by cheaper peasant produce, the BSAC and subsequent governments in Rhodesia pursued a policy of discrimination against the indigenous population. Their first strategy was to appropriate the best agricultural land for the establishment of European farms. This policy was enshrined in law in 1920 with the adoption of the recommendations of the Native Reserves Commission. African farming areas were reduced, through forcible eviction of people, by one million acres of the most fertile, well-watered land closest to markets and communication routes. This land was then handed over to European settlers. The indigenous populations in these areas were removed to what were called African Reserves and later Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs). After independence these areas were renamed Communal Lands.

Tribal Trust Lands were situated on arid, impoverished soils. Tsetse fly was prevalent, causing sleeping sickness in humans and a disease called *nagana* in cattle, which decimated African farmers' herds. Hunting of wild game was prohibited, depriving local communities of a traditional source of food during times of hardship. In 1923, wild animals were categorized as "royal game" belonging to the state. The indigenous people thus effectively suffered a double expropriation, denied both the better land suitable for agriculture and the wildlife which could survive in the marginal areas to which they had been removed.

Evictions were carried out without any warnings to or consultation with the people who had occupied these areas for centuries. As one peasant farmer recalls the removal of his family from a fertile area in northern Zimbabwe,

"We were made to move from our area by a European who had bought the land. 'Do you know an area called Marirangwe?' he asked us. We knew the area, and then he said, 'Now is the time for thrashing. That's what you must do and then you must leave this area and go to Marirangwe. This land is now mine.' Then he took some cloth and hoisted it as a flag.

We told the elders of our clan that they would have to go to Hartley [the administrative centre] and report that a mad European had come to our area. When they came to Hartley, they were told that it was Mr. Hallas and that they should hurry up, take all their things with them, or else our property would be burnt" (cited in Jensen, 1992:79).

Land appropriation continued over subsequent decades as the state pursued a policy of attracting European settlers to the colony. Southern Rhodesia became a magnet for poor, unskilled and semi-skilled whites from Britain whose aspirations to wealth and status were realized at the expense of the indigenous population. The average annual income of Africans in Rhodesia in 1976, for example, stood at the equivalent of US\$ 150 whereas that of the Europeans approached US\$ 8,000.² By that time, when the number of immigrants began to decline in the wake of civil conflict, over 260,000 Europeans (some 3 per cent of the population) were resident in the country out of a total population of 8 million.

² US\$ 1 = 7 Zimbabwe dollars. For other comparative details, see UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), 1980, p. xiii.

The establishment of commercial farms also continued unabated. A series of laws throughout the colonial era systematically undermined the productivity of African farmers, enforcing their removal from white farming areas, their prohibition from entering certain markets and their exclusion from subsidies and infrastructure offered to the white commercial farming sector. By the time of independence in 1980, some 5,000 commercial farms existed in Zimbabwe, in units covering areas of 2,000 to over 100,000 acres. They occupied over 43 per cent of the total land area of the country and accounted for most of its agricultural revenue through exports of tobacco, tea, coffee, sugar and cotton.

Already by the 1930s, the Tribal Trust Lands were unable to support the number of Africans that had been relocated to them. Most of these reserves were situated in Natural Regions III to V, those parts of the country with low rainfall, poor soils and unsuitable for extensive crop production or large numbers of livestock. The more fertile Regions I and II had become the exclusive domain of European farmers.³ Yet despite their poor agricultural potential and inability to support large concentrations of people, the Communal Lands in the 1970s had a population density of approximately 28 people per square kilometre compared with only 9 people per square kilometre in commercial farming areas (Whitsun Foundation, 1983:26). It was estimated that by the time of independence, the population of these reserves, which numbered some seven million, had exceeded the carrying capacity of the areas by approximately two million people (Jordan, 1979:134).

Population pressure, soil erosion, periodic drought and geographical distance from markets created a situation where people in the Tribal Trust Lands could no longer resist the pressure to sell their labour to the highest bidder and join the steady number of migrant workers that sustained the mines and commercial farms of Zimbabwe. While a mere fraction of indigenous men were employed in wage labour in the early part of the century, over 50 per cent had moved into this sector by the 1930s, a figure which increased in subsequent decades.

The predominant motive for forced evictions during the colonial era was for the purpose of creating European-owned commercial farms, but large tracts of land were also seized for the establishment of parks and recreational areas. Recreation for many of the early European settlers consisted of trophy hunting of the wildlife that was abundant throughout the country. This fuelled demands for “protected” areas as well as prohibitions on local communities against hunting of game, even for subsistence needs. J.H. Peterson, in his history of wildlife utilization in Zimbabwe, wrote, “With the establishment of a colonial government, all wildlife became the property of the state. Since the state was in the hands of white settlers, this effectively meant that legal utilization of wildlife was exclusively the property of whites” (Peterson, 1991:3).

Although most of the land set aside for national parks and other protected areas was found in Natural Regions IV and V, which were unsuitable for intensive agriculture, their establishment

³ Rhodesia was classified into five main Natural Regions, depending on agricultural potential, as follows:

Natural Region I: Specialized and diversified farming region with a rainfall of over 1,000 mm a year. This area is particularly suitable for forestry, fruit and intensive livestock production.

Natural Region II: Intensive farming region. Slightly lower rainfalls of 750-1,000 mm makes this region suitable for intensive crop and/or livestock production.

Natural Region III: Semi-intensive farming region. This zone has 650-800 mm of rain per year which comes in infrequent heavy falls. There are fairly severe mid-season dry spells making this region marginal as far as maize, tobacco and cotton are concerned.

Natural Region IV: Semi-extensive farming region. Rainfall in this region drops to 450-650 mm per year. Thus the land is mainly suitable for livestock production.

Natural Region V: Extensive farming region. The low erratic rainfall in this area means that this land is only suitable for extensive cattle and game ranching. (See P. Roussos, 1988.)

did involve the eviction of indigenous people. The Shangaan, for example, originally inhabited the immense lands of what is now the Gonarezhou National Park in Zimbabwe, the Kruger Park in South Africa, and adjacent areas of Mozambique. Shangaan communities were displaced from these areas as recently as the 1960s for the creation of parks to protect the wildlife that was rapidly vanishing from the white commercial farms and the more densely inhabited communal lands of these countries. The Shangaan, mainly the women, traditionally practised some agriculture, but the primary subsistence of the community was from hunting and large-scale fish drives on the region's major rivers. These options were closed when the park was established, and the Shangaan were forcibly resettled on the edges of the park where intensive agriculture was inappropriate.

Writing about the evictions that created Zimbabwe's national parks and recreational areas, Peterson stated,

"The Government established National Parks and Safari areas in some of the better wildlife areas in the low veld, at times taking these lands from the local residents who were further crowded into communal lands. This action was justified in terms of conservation. Often adjacent to the National Parks where wildlife was preserved were state-owned safari areas, where white hunters, both local and tourists, could hunt trophy animals for recreation. Such sport hunting was increasingly restricted to these safari areas as the wildlife in commercial farms was eliminated. But since the people in communal lands were also occupying areas adjacent to where government had developed national parks and government-controlled hunting areas the people in turn were subjected to raids on their crops and livestock by wild animals. Thus there was a perception that the animals were stealing from the people, or as one communal land resident told a National Parks Officer, 'Your animals are eating our crops'" (Peterson, 1991:6).

II. Conflict with Indigenous Communities

The national parks of Zimbabwe form the backbone of its tourist industry. Visitors come to the country predominantly to hunt or photograph wild animals, especially large mammals such as elephant, buffalo and rhinoceros, in some of their last sizeable habitats on the continent. The perceptions and attitudes of local communities towards tourism are, therefore, inseparable from the history of how these parks were formed. This section explores the nature of the national parks régime, the resulting lost opportunities for local communities and the consequent conflicts between the state and people that have characterized many of the years prior to and following independence.

The Law and Institutions

Game laws, which effectively prohibited hunting by indigenous communities, were administered in Zimbabwe by the Director of Agriculture until 1923. Efforts were aimed at protecting large game species (many of which had been killed by European settlers) through regulation of hunting rights and the establishment of services and areas for this activity. The first government officers to be employed full-time on the protection and control of wild animals were appointed in the Forestry Department as far back as 1928. With the establishment of the Game and Fish Preservation Act of 1929, this department acquired full responsibility for game and fish conservation, which it retained until 1950 (Pittman, 1992:16-21). In 1950, a Department of National Parks was created under the Minister of Internal Affairs. Its main objective was "the protection and preservation of wild animal life and vegetation". During this time a number of national parks were created, including Hwange, which has remained one of the largest in the country. Between 1953 and 1963, "nature conservation" was administered under two separate acts by two separate agencies — the Department of National Parks and the Department of Wildlife Conservation. The former was concerned mainly with public enjoyment and recreation. Most of the 14 reserve areas proclaimed during the 1950s now form the basis of the country's recreational parks and botanical gardens. The larger areas, which provided the basis for today's major parks and safari areas, were administered by the Department of Wildlife Conservation in the form of

game reserves, non-hunting reserves, and controlled hunting areas. The situation was partly rationalized in 1964 by the merging of these two agencies into a single Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management. It became responsible for 14 national parks, 8 game reserves and 5 controlled hunting areas.

This situation continued until the passage of the 1975 Parks and Wildlife Act, which was to form the legal basis for present-day parks management in Zimbabwe. A Zimbabwean conservationist, Dick Pittman, noted that there was a distinct dualism and hypocrisy in the early legislation and the creation of parks and wildlife policy.

“There was a lack of preservationism in some respects, notably in its acceptance of the need for wildlife elimination programmes in connection with tsetse control or overstocking on public and private lands, and its acceptance of sport safari hunting. On the other hand, the ‘Royal Game’ concept inherent in all legislation until 1975, rendered it effectively impossible for indigenous peoples, confined mainly to the then ‘Native Reserves’ to hunt or kill wildlife of any kind” (Pittman, 1992:18).

In 1975, a new structure was created to administer national parks. The legislation that brought this about abandoned the concept of “royal game” in conformity with a perception that unless wildlife became a resource of benefit to indigenous people, the conflict between the two would continue and the costs of policing and control to curb poaching and the destruction of fences would rise. Nevertheless, this legislation was not implemented among communities bordering such areas until the late 1980s. One author writing of this period claimed that these national parks and safari areas contributed greatly to the European and American romantic image of Africa as a wilderness of wild animals to be visited by white hunters and tourists. The compression of the African people onto an ever more restricted land base, to provide commercial farms for white settlers and wildlife preserves for white recreation, was conveniently forgotten and ignored (Peterson, 1991:7).

At independence, therefore, the Parks and Wildlife Estate⁴ comprised a large area of the country to which local communities were hostile. From 1975 until the present, the Parks and Wildlife Estate has effectively comprised the following administrative structures and covered the geographical areas described below (Child et al., 1989:55-58). The Parks and Wildlife Estate is managed by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management, which is under the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. The Estate covers some five million hectares, or 12.7 per cent of Zimbabwe’s total land surface, and is divided into six categories of protected area: botanical reserves, botanical gardens, national parks, game sanctuaries, safari areas and recreational parks.

National Parks: There are 11 national parks in Zimbabwe which cover approximately 2.7 million hectares or 6.8 per cent of the country. These areas enjoy the highest protective legal status of any land in Zimbabwe. Land may not be leased within a national park. Mineral prospecting and mining are very strictly controlled and permitted only when this is clearly in the national interest. The consumptive use of natural resources is limited to providing seed stocks in the interest of conservation for recolonizing areas where a species is locally extinct, strictly controlled angling in some parks, and the collection of firewood for domestic use within a park. Tourist accommodation is provided but visitor activities which might disturb the habitat and wildlife, such as unrestricted walking and trekking, are strictly controlled.

Botanical Reserves, Botanical Gardens and Sanctuaries: These are separate categories of protected areas which also enjoy very high legal protection. Botanical reserves and some sanctuaries are in effect mini-national parks for the protection of individual species of animals, plants, or biotic communities, and have similar objectives to those of national parks, but within

⁴ “Parks and Wildlife Estate” or “Estate” is used to refer to the totality of all protected areas of all kinds in Zimbabwe that are administered by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management.

the limits imposed by their smaller size. Some sanctuaries are managed for educational or other special purposes.

Safari Areas: These have replaced and extended the scope of the old Controlled Hunting Area concept, in recognition of the fact that protected areas lend themselves to a range of activities besides recreational hunting. Policy varies from area to area, but generally they are managed with similar aims to those of national parks except that there is more freedom of action. Recreational hunting and even the culling of wild populations may be permitted. In some safari areas, recreational hunting is likely to remain the predominant use, at least for the foreseeable future, while in others non-hunting safaris, hiking, photography, etc., may increase. While land is seldom leased in a safari area, hunting and other facilities may be offered on short-term concessions of up to five years. Some safari areas are destined for eventual elevation to national park status.

Recreational Parks: These are mainly associated with large impoundments, particularly near major urban centres. Here, natural features and the rural atmosphere are maintained and protected so that these areas contribute to the preservation of biological diversity. However, a wider range of outdoor activities may be allowed than is possible in the truly wild areas. Most recreational parks attract heavy visitor usage in the form of picnicking, camping and trekking.

Deprivation and Hardship for Communities

When F.C. Selous explored the land of the Mashonas prior to European colonisation in the 1890s, he found a land replete with wild animals, in contrast to South Africa whose population of large mammals had been decimated by sport hunting and agricultural clearance by immigrant settlers. The indigenous Shona and Ndebele managed these resources in a more sustainable fashion, killing only those animals that were necessary for their own needs when the agricultural season had been a poor one. Wildlife was accessible to most communities and hunting was an integral part of local tradition. Reflecting on the pre-colonial era, one old man recalled:

“It was a simple life. At that time we could go hunting anywhere we liked. No one claimed possession of wild game. Not everyone could hunt the elephant. Only special people could hunt and inflict injuries on them. When we returned home we would celebrate. Elephant meat is good meat. It is a mixture of all game and has big chunks of every type. Everyone was invited to come and take out the meat he wanted to carry home. When an elephant had been killed the word went round” (cited in Jensen, 1992:36).

The subsequent establishment of national parks throughout the colonial era brought several adverse consequences for the indigenous population, creating a legacy of hostility which has continued to the present day. The first resource taken away from the local people was the land, which in many areas was fenced off and declared prohibited territory to the people who had lived on it or were settled around it. It was not only from Gonarezhou, in south-east Zimbabwe, that communities like the Shangaan were forcibly evicted. The declaration of a non-hunting reserve at Mana Pools along the Zambezi River in the 1960s resulted in the removal of one community onto the more inhospitable and less agriculturally rich escarpment away from the river (Interview, G. Child, July 1993). Tonga villagers further south were also moved when the Chizarira National Park was created around the same time. Recreational areas, such as those established around Lake Kyle, Lake McIlwhaine and other dam sites near urban centres also resulted in eviction of African peasant farmers.

Evicted communities or those neighbouring national park land were not compensated for their loss of access by the provision of a viable agricultural alternative. Tonga villagers in Nyaminyami district, north-west Zimbabwe, which borders the Matusadona game park, still remember with nostalgia the resources they enjoyed in their original homelands along the Zambezi river. One farmer in the district confirmed that their former home was much better than the one to which they were relocated in the 1960s. There was enough for everyone. They caught and sold fish. The

soils were richer and yielded several harvests per year. But in Nyaminyami they found nothing. Their crops could barely survive the dry, harsh soils. Their animals died since grazing was poor and access to pasturage in nearby park land was restricted. They were told when they were resettled that they could not enter the park for hunting or for fuel. If their animals strayed into it they would be shot or confiscated. A Tonga farmer claimed, "When we saw the rich visitors paying money to hunt the elephant and buffalo that we ourselves could not touch while our children were hungry we wondered whether animals were more important than people to the government of the country".

Access to wildlife was not the only resource lost to indigenous communities in those areas. Fuelwood collection was also prohibited, resulting in the further depletion of trees in the densely overcrowded and increasingly barren native reserves. Communities could no longer collect honey from state land, despite the minimal interference of this activity with the environment. Traditional healers were also restricted from entering forest areas to gather the herbs they used for medicinal purposes.⁵

The creation of national parks was reinforced by the establishment of punitive laws against those infringing the above regulations. Cattle caught grazing in national park areas were confiscated. Hunting or being caught in the numerous police raids on villages bordering parks resulted in heavy fines or prison sentences for heads of households. This increased the poverty of families which had prompted them to infringe such regulations in the first place. It is little wonder that under these circumstances local people came to view parks, the animals within them and the increasing number of tourists with hostility. In an interview with the author in July 1993, the chairperson of the CAMPFIRE Association, founded in the late 1980s to promote the rights of indigenous communities in wildlife utilization (discussed below), pointed out that local people manifested their hostility in acts of destruction. Fences were routinely damaged around park areas. Fires were started within the park lands. Poaching increased to a level where the state had to invest more and more revenues in policing activities. This further increased the antagonism of local communities who came to see parks officers as no different from the army and police that the colonial government had to increasingly rely on to defend its interests.

The establishment of national parks had one further consequence which seemed to increase the perception among local communities that wild animals were not only a resource they could no longer benefit from but which also had adverse consequences for their own welfare. Protection of wildlife within the parks increased animal populations. For example, it was estimated that the number of elephants increased from around 10,000 in the early 1900s to well over 50,000 by the late 1970s (Peterson, 1991:6). Yet, as conservationists have themselves pointed out (Pittman, 1992:5), such numbers exceeded the carrying capacity of the land covered by the Estate. The result was the frequent migration of animals such as elephant, buffalo and hippopotamus out of parks and into the surrounding communal areas in search of food.

⁵ Opposition to traditional healers was manifested not only by depriving them of access to forest resources. Traditional medicine was treated with scorn by the colonial authorities. The activities of *n'angas*, derisively labelled as witch doctors by early settlers, were one of the first things to be prohibited by the colonial government in the late 1890s through the Suppression of Witchcraft Act. This was not because of an enlightened altruism towards the indigenous population, since alternative medical services for the majority were rarely provided. "It was more to do with the realization that our traditional healers and spirit mediums were the custodians of culture and tradition and a possible source of opposition to colonial rule" (Interview, president of ZINATHA). (ZINATHA is an institution founded in 1981 to promote and register the estimated 30,000 traditional healers operating in the country.) Yet the role of traditional medicine continued to flourish within communities in Zimbabwe. Surveys carried out in the pre-independence period by Gelfand and in the 1980s by Chavinduka indicated that between 60 and 70 per cent of deliveries in Zimbabwe were attended by traditional birth attendants. A majority of patients in rural areas continued to visit traditional healers even if they had access to hospitals and clinics for treatment.

Widespread destruction of crops by wildlife ensued, and was estimated in Nyaminyami district in the early 1980s to be some 50 per cent of possible yields. Farmers were routinely killed defending their fields against problem animals, a feature that has continued until the present day. One farmer said that he spent most of his time during the months of April, May, June and July sleeping in his fields to protect his harvest from marauding elephants and buffalos (Interview, farmer in Mola district, Nyaminyami, 1990). At the same time, the prohibition on hunting of wild game meant that local people were not allowed to kill the animals that raided their villages. Farmers were imprisoned or fined when they did, even when proof was readily available that this was an act of self-defence.

National parks officers were the only authorities empowered to shoot problem animals, yet their response was routinely slow and by the time a team arrived the damage to crops had usually been done. This further increased the perception among local people that parks officers were essentially hostile to their interests and that animals were indeed more important to the state than the welfare of its people. Given this history, it is perfectly understandable that in a survey in 1980 of African farmers in Gokwe district, which borders several national parks in western Zimbabwe, communities indicated their opposition to wild animals and the foreign visitors who came to see them.

“African farmers reasonably asked, why not shoot all the elephants and other wildlife. All benefits from wildlife go to foreign visitors, or to a central treasury or to a district council. The benefits do not come to the village much less to the households suffering losses. Yet elephants are seen in the fields every night. Granaries are robbed and people killed. Local farmers are not only protecting their families when they encourage in more immigrants, bring in more cattle, clear more land for fields, and request people to shoot any elephants which come into their area” (Peterson, 1991:52).

The Challenge after Independence

Independence in 1980, which was largely brought about through popular support for land redistribution, was also accompanied by heightened expectations among local communities in parks areas that their own access to the resources of these areas would be enhanced and that land would be available for their use. Agricultural options in Natural Regions IV and V had been increased in the years leading up to independence through several tsetse fly eradication campaigns. These opened up areas, which had previously been restricted to wildlife use due to the threat of trichinosis (sleeping sickness), for cattle ranching. The popular demand was for eradication of wildlife, the withdrawal of restrictions on entry to parks and the conversion of these areas for agriculture and cattle.

The post-independence government, however, found itself in something of a dilemma. Despite popular pressure for large-scale land reform, there were several factors that forced it to maintain the status quo in relation to park land management. The first was the realization that if Zimbabwe was to build up its tourist potential, it had to maintain vast areas of natural habitat in which large mammals could exist without competition from humans. Despite a fall in tourist revenues during the war years (1974-1979), sufficient evidence was available that Zimbabwe had a unique niche to offer in the tourist market, centred around its attractiveness as a sport hunting venue and as a country which retained a large wildlife population in its native environment. With foreign exchange shortages a major impediment to economic growth, the new government felt unable to sacrifice this interest in favour of popular pressure for land reform.

The second consideration, increasingly highlighted in the years after 1980 as evidence accumulated, was that agricultural expansion in Natural Regions IV and V of the country was severely limited by environmental factors. Areas freed from tsetse fly and opened up for agriculture were experiencing large-scale soil erosion, destruction of trees, siltation of rivers and

declining crop yields as migrant farmers struggled to scrape a living from the poor soils. Several surveys in the mid- to late 1980s also began to show that in terms of economic returns, wildlife — through its attendant tourism and controlled hunting — was a more attractive option than settled agriculture. One study, based on potential revenues per kilogram of biomass, suggested that, whereas extensive cattle ranching would generate about US\$ 4 per hectare, wildlife management involving tourism and sport hunting could potentially generate US\$ 12 per hectare.⁶

The final consideration that influenced government policy was a desire to avoid possible political turmoil that could result from large-scale redistribution of land in favour of peasant farmers. The terms of the Lancaster House Agreement in 1980, which paved the way for independence, set limits on the capacity of the new government to honour its previous pledge to the people, namely that commercial farm land would be expropriated by the state and redistributed to the overcrowded inhabitants of the communal areas. The terms of the Agreement stipulated that land could only be acquired by the government on a willing buyer-willing seller basis and at market prices, which it could ill afford. The substantial international and internal lobby raised by commercial farmers to defend the existing terms of land ownership ensured that this policy was enforced and indeed extended beyond the decade of the Lancaster House period. Quite simply, therefore, the government did not make the sweeping changes to land ownership patterns either in commercial farming areas or national parks that communities had expected. The result was a further escalation in hostility which continued throughout the first decade of independence.

The Shangaan communities around Gonarezhou park in southern Zimbabwe illustrate this trend. According to one report, there was a general perception that the ownership of wildlife had “changed hands” as a result of independence. This led to an increase in illegal hunting, arrests of villagers and growing tension between the authorities and the people of the district. When villagers asked why the land could not be returned, government officials informed them that the government needed foreign exchange brought in by the tourists who came to see the wildlife. This response, however, became an added incentive to poach the animals in the park, since people reasoned that if there were no animals there would be no tourists. Without tourists there would be no need for a park and the government might return the land to the people. In one raid in 1982, 81 arrests were made and ivory, skins, fish and traps were recovered from many of the village houses (Zimbabwe Trust, 1990:18-20).

In many of the areas surrounding national parks, in-migration of farmers from other areas of the country was also actively encouraged by the local population. In this way, they hoped to force the government to provide better services to the people and protect them from what were seen as the government’s wild animals. In Gokwe district, which borders several national parks, local demands centred on eradication of wildlife, tsetse fly eradication programmes and increased agricultural promotion, all of which would have had negative consequences for tourism development. A survey in 1988 established the priorities of one group of villagers:

“The people in Simchemba ward see development of their area coming from increased agriculture and cattle and mining, not from utilization of wildlife. They welcome increased in-migration as forcing the government to provide more schools, and clinics, and making possible more development. They believe more people will force the government to erect fences around the national parks and safari areas to keep wild animals out of communal lands” (Peterson, 1991:50).

The system which excluded communities from a substantial share of park benefits was also effectively maintained following independence. Throughout the 1980s, therefore, hostility

⁶ In a detailed study of part of the south-eastern lowveld of Zimbabwe, Child determined that while game ranching *per se* is only marginally more productive than cattle ranching and is handicapped by a variety of technical and commercial constraints, wildlife utilization associated with different forms of tourism may be anything from twice to four times as profitable (see G. Child, 1988).

towards wildlife and tourism continued. Poaching became more widespread. In order to control this threat, the state was forced to recruit more parks officers and increase its expenditure on protective measures. At the same time, heavy prison sentences and fines imposed on poachers fuelled local resentments. By the late 1980s, it was increasingly realized that unless a system was created which returned revenues from these areas more effectively to communities, Zimbabwe's national parks and its tourism industry would probably collapse under popular pressure for change.

Lessons could be learned from other parts of Africa. At an international congress on eco-tourism in 1991, it was pointed out that:

“It is not surprising that many local people, displaced from their ancestral areas and their traditional hunting rights, did not view these developments favourably. When these areas were given over primarily to photographic tourism these resentments were compounded. Local people saw these areas established for the apparent main aim of providing somewhere for foreign wealthy tourists to photograph wild animals with none or very little of monetary benefits from those operations flowing into local economies. They certainly did not appreciate any foreign exchange benefits. In short, poor local people were divorced from their own resources and further impoverished as a result of ‘conservation’. These preservationist tactics have not worked anywhere in Africa” (Lawson and Hunter, 1991:1).

III. The History of Tourism in Zimbabwe

The major attraction of Zimbabwe for foreign tourists, apart from the Victoria Falls, is the country's abundant wildlife, both for game viewing and hunting. Hwange National Park, for example, contains 35 species of large mammals including considerable herds of elephant, buffalo, sable, giraffe, wildebeest and zebra. Black rhino, impala, eland, warthog, lion, leopard, cheetah and a variety of other animals, as well as over 400 different species of birds, also contribute to make this one of the most sought-after parks on the continent.

Tourism based upon a wilderness experience differs from other forms of tourism in the amount of space it requires, especially where sizeable populations of large mammals are involved. Setting aside national parks exclusively for wildlife implies forgoing benefits from other activities. While Zimbabwe has managed to avoid some of the problems associated with large-scale tourism growth in other countries — such as social stratification and conflict, competition between tourist resorts and local communities for scarce resources such as water and electricity, escalating property prices, foreign control of the industry and repatriation of profits out of the country, etc. — conflicting land-use options constitute the central dilemma for tourism development in the country and set limits to its potential expansion.

The Development of Tourism

Until the end of the Second World War, the Zimbabwean tourist industry grew very slowly and development was largely in the hands of individual local entrepreneurs. Small, rather primitive hotels catered for the local white community and a limited number of South Africans. Even at Victoria Falls, a prime attraction for many visitors, the Victoria Falls Motel remained the only accommodation apart from a rest camp with huts.

The 1950s saw the improvement of facilities in areas of wildlife attraction and tourism potential, but these hotels were still largely the result of individual enterprise. It was not until the 1960s that tourism began to be considered as a substantial source of revenue, coinciding with a worldwide increase in tourism and the growth of relatively cheap package tours. Increased affluence and leisure time in developed countries and the rapid increase in air passenger services meant that Africa (and Zimbabwe) benefited from a gradually increasing number of Western European and North American visitors as well as a rising tide of South Africans. Lake Kariba was built, creating

a new tourist venue, and hotels were developed on the lakeshore and in other tourist areas. Local companies also became involved in the hotel industry and small hotel chains were established.

The nature of tourism in Zimbabwe changed in the 1970s. After the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) by Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front in 1965, rejecting Britain's plans for a transition to majority rule, there was an initial drop in foreign visitors apart from South Africans. (The importance of South Africa to tourism in Zimbabwe only began to decline in relative terms in the 1980s when visitors from Europe and the United States began to outnumber South Africans in visitor statistics.) Despite sanctions by the international community against Rhodesia for its opposition to black majority rule, the number of foreign visitors picked up again. In addition, with Mozambican independence in the early 1970s, local tourists lost their access to the traditional cheap holiday resort of Beira, on the Indian Ocean coast. Currency restrictions also affected the customary holidays in South Africa for local residents, causing an increasing number of Rhodesian whites to spend their holidays in their own country. By 1972, tourism, both domestic and foreign, had reached its highest recorded levels (see table 1).

Table 1:	
Tourist Arrivals to Zimbabwe Prior to Independence	
Year	Visitor Arrivals
1969	250,000
1970	270,000
1971	300,000
1972	339,000
1973	250,000
1974	240,000
1975	250,000
1976	150,000
1977	110,000
1978	100,000
1979	70,000
1980	225,000

Source: Central Statistics Office, 1988

Zimbabwe's first international hotel group, the Southern Sun Group, was created during this period. Hotels were acquired from individuals or small companies, and new hotels were built. However, as the war increased in intensity in the mid- to late 1970s, foreign tourism decreased rapidly and even the South African market dropped away. With a vast expanse of territory to cover, the Rhodesian security forces were unable to control large parts of the country, including national park areas. The killing of several tourists and the shooting down of a civilian airplane in 1978 caused tourist numbers to plunge to a low of some 70,000 (largely comprised of visitors to the Victoria Falls). Many recreational areas near urban centres were also closed for security reasons and the number of local visitors dropped significantly. Several hotels closed down and others struggled along, barely covering their costs, or even running at a loss.

Tourism numbers picked up again at independence in 1980, but it was only after the mid-1980s that they exceeded the high of the early 1970s. Again, political instability seems to have accounted for the hesitant rise in numbers during those years. The conflict in the south of the country between the Ndebele and the majority Shona from the early 1980s to 1987 severely undermined the attractiveness of holidaying in the national parks, most of which were situated in that region. Six tourists were abducted and murdered in 1982 by forces hostile to the new government. Others were fired upon in Matopos National Park, south of Bulawayo, resulting in its closure for several months in 1984. The Unity Accord between rival political parties in 1988 dramatically improved the security situation in Matabeleland, paving the way for a significant rise in numbers of tourists to the country after that time (see table 2).

Table 2:	
Tourist Arrivals to Zimbabwe Post-Independence	
Year	Visitor Arrivals
1981	320,000
1982	300,000
1983	240,000
1984	200,000
1985	320,000
1986	340,000
1987	400,000
1988	375,000
1989	466,161
1990	582,602
1991	636,675
1992	658,000

Source: Zimbabwe Tourist Development Corporation, 1993

Throughout the 1980s, the type of tourist visiting Zimbabwe's parks and wildlife areas also changed. The vast majority of visitors prior to that time were local people and South Africans, many of whom had relatives or friends in the country. Partly as a result of this, tourism was not a high-spending industry in Zimbabwe. Many residents did not demand large expensive hotels and did not bring in significant amounts of foreign exchange. The predominance of local/regional tourism declined after independence for several reasons. The first was the large-scale exodus of whites from the country. Fearing that black majority rule would seriously undermine the rights and privileges they had so far enjoyed, many left for South Africa, Australia and Britain. In the end, their fears were not justified. Seizure of land, confiscation of private property, rigid socialism, reprisals for war atrocities, etc. never occurred. But the Rhodesia Front government's propaganda effort had forecast that these would occur under black majority rule, leading some 150,000 whites, half of the European population, to leave the country during the first two years after independence (Herbst, 1990:223).

The same fears about black majority government also affected the number of white South African visitors. Many were discouraged from visiting Zimbabwe by Rhodesian exiles whose own feelings about the country were predominantly hostile. At the same time, political relations between South Africa and Zimbabwe worsened after 1980 as a result of the latter's opposition to apartheid. The increasing marginalization of South Africa on the continent and its policy of regional destabilization through a mixture of economic and military measures made South Africans reluctant to visit other neighbouring states.

These core groups, which had formed the backbone of the tourist industry in the 1970s, were not replaced by their black counterparts after independence. Research into user characteristics in the major resort areas in the mid- to late 1980s indicated that the proportion of black Zimbabweans actually visiting these areas never comprised more than 3 per cent of the total number of visitors. This was not only due to financial constraints. The increasing number of African middle class families with disposable incomes did not spend their money on visiting national parks or utilizing the country's tourist resorts. According to one researcher, their reluctance was largely a question of perception. "It was felt that the recreational areas were developed by White Rhodesians for White Rhodesians and do not necessarily offer what the majority of Zimbabweans want when on holiday (Heath, 1986:30).

Relative political stability in Zimbabwe throughout the latter part of the 1980s and the early 1990s, and the increasing attractiveness of the wilderness experience in the international tourism

market, has prompted a rapid expansion in the number of foreign visitors to the country. The number of tourists rose from 375,000 in 1988 to some 658,000 in 1992, and is expected to increase by an average of 8 per cent a year until the end of the decade. This reflects the increasing international dimension in tourist development in Zimbabwe. Figures from 1990 onwards show that foreigners now comprise the majority of overnight visitors to the park areas (Central Statistics Office, July 1993). Tourists have come mainly from the United Kingdom, continental Europe (predominantly Germany) and North America.

The expansion in the number of high-spending foreign visitors has now boosted tourism to the third largest foreign exchange earner in the country, after agriculture and mining. In 1990 the entire value of tourism to the economy was estimated to be in the region of US\$ 70 million, excluding fares for the national carrier, Air Zimbabwe. Numerous hotels have been built or renovated to meet the growing demand. Between 1987 and 1990 the number of beds available in hotels throughout Zimbabwe almost doubled. There are currently over 50 registered tour operators organizing safaris in national park areas. The number of permits for canoeing tours along parts of the Zambezi river rose from less than a hundred in 1985 to 750 some five years later. Employment generated from tourism is currently estimated at some 36,000, although this figure does not include informal sector craft production. Major employment areas are hunting and trophy guides; restaurant and hotel personnel; transport services, including air carriers; public administration; amusement and recreational services, and staff for museums and botanical gardens. From 1990 to 1991 tourism in Zimbabwe registered a 20 per cent increase in direct employment, compared to a 0.5 per cent growth in the agricultural sector. Zimbabwe's game parks have gained such popularity, both locally and abroad, that bookings for many of the accommodation facilities in these areas now have to be made six months in advance.

Avoiding the Problems of Mass Tourism

Like several other southern African destinations, Zimbabwe is relatively inaccessible to many potential visitors. Air fares to the country from Europe and North America are among the most expensive to the African continent, with few opportunities for significantly cheaper package deals. This is unlike the situation for North African resorts, for example, where access to the European market by both air and land is inexpensive and easy. At the same time, Zimbabwe's attractiveness to the potential tourist depends on a very specific and somewhat exclusive taste. Ninety-five per cent of Zimbabwe's tourist industry, claimed a recent consultancy report (Price Waterhouse and Environmental Resources, Ltd., 1992:4), is "nature based", catering in particular to those with an interest in viewing the continent's large mammals in a relatively undisturbed environment. Nor does the country offer any other significant range of experiences that tourists might be looking for, such as historical tours, leisure activities, or the sun, sand and sea found at other destinations. As one tour operator in Harare said,

"Large tourist numbers would destroy the unique experience that Zimbabwe has to offer. Too many people scare off animals. One reason why safari hunters and wildlife enthusiasts have moved from Kenya to Zimbabwe is to rediscover the wilderness experience and enjoy a habitat which has not become overutilized" (Interview, Mr. Maruwato, July 1993).

Partly in order to guard that niche in the market, Zimbabwe has opted for a policy of what is called "low-volume, high-quality tourism". While this sets definite limits to the amount of revenue that can be realized, it has protected Zimbabwe from many of the adverse consequences of mass tourism found elsewhere. "Visitors to the country spend very little time in the towns or among local communities", claimed a member of the Zimbabwe Tourist Development Authority.

"With the exception of Victoria Falls and, to a lesser extent, Kariba, we do not have the kind of large resorts or tourist enclaves found elsewhere, which might irritate or disrupt local people and introduce an alien element into their environment. Social

disruption, such as prostitution, gambling and drug abuse often associated with tourism, have largely been avoided” (Interview, Mr. Chidzidzi, July 1993).

The relatively unobtrusive nature of tourism in Zimbabwe has also meant that conflicts between visitors and local communities in terms of dress, behaviour and social practices have not materialized to anything like the extent witnessed in several North African destinations. The large, glitzy hotels of Morocco and the vast tourist complexes along the Tunisian coast offer a constant reminder to local people of the wide disparities in wealth between visitors and themselves. At the same time, the perceived lack of respect shown by some tourists towards indigenous codes of dress and behaviour has been a further irritant to Muslim communities which sometimes see tourism as an insidious means of undermining their traditions in the eyes of their youngsters, who begin to imitate such behaviour. Residents of Tamanrasset in southern Algeria, interviewed by the author in the mid-1980s, indicated the behaviour of tourists (smoking, drinking alcohol) and their dress (shorts, uncovered arms and legs) were an affront to local social codes. Furthermore, they resented the increasing commercialization of their own culture — in the form of their music and dance, in particular, being taken out of context and turned into an exhibition by tourist authorities who did not provide sufficient background information to visitors to promote their understanding of such practices.⁷

These were not the only problems chronicled by the people of that community. In effect, very few local people seemed to have benefited from the development of Tamanrasset as a major tourist destination in the Algerian Sahara in the 1970s and 1980s. In the course of an interview with the author, one resident said,

“Only a few people have prospered with the opening up of tourism in our area. Most of these come from outside the community, the businessmen, entrepreneurs, merchants from the north who have the money to build hotels, tourist agencies and souvenir shops. Even the staff who run the hotels, the guides who ferry tourists around the area are not locals since the owners of the new establishments favour their own people over the original inhabitants” (cited in Mc Ivor, 1986:25-26).

At the same time, the electricity, running water and roads that were introduced into the community as a result of tourism were noticeably lacking in the outlying areas of Tamanrasset which housed the majority of its original residents. The centre of town, “our tourist show-piece”, as one person called it, and the hotels, cafes and shops that surrounded it formed a small private enclave of development, all the more disturbing because of the poverty adjoining it. Many townspeople also suffered because of the rise in prices which came from increased demand and the presence of new, richer customers. “With the rush to build new hotels and shops the price of a plot of land has increased tenfold. None of us can afford to build a decent house even if we managed to buy sufficient ground since building materials, which we have to import from the north, have also risen in price”, said another resident (cited in McIvor, 1986:25-26).

In the market-place, staple foods like flour, sugar, milk-powder and tea were also more expensive. At times of food shortage, quite frequent due to the distance of Tamanrasset from the north of the country and the difficulty of transporting goods across the desert, it was the hotels that were always supplied first since they had the money to procure any remaining stocks. As a consequence of these factors, the majority of people who had little or no access to the spin-offs from tourism seemed materially worse off than before its arrival.

A further source of irritation was the increasing wage differentials between those involved in the traditional activities of the area, like agriculture and herding, and those fortunate enough to profit from tourism. Residents complained that this had introduced a further note of discord into a once homogenous and close-knit community. The traditional hospitality of the Sahara, complained

⁷ For a fuller discussion see C. McIvor, 1986.

some, was changing to something more selfish and commercial. Incidents of theft and robbery were on the increase, resulting in an expansion of the police force throughout the region. “We have witnessed a change throughout the South”, concluded one resident, “but it is not a change for the better” (cited in McIvor, 1986: 25-26).

In several of these destinations, knowledge of and interest by tourists in the history and culture of the country is almost non-existent. In a study conducted in Tunisia in the 1970s, it was shown that tourists remained an average of 22 out of every 24 hours in the hotel complex: 4 hours on the hotel beach, 3 hours at the pool, and 15 in the actual hotel (Smaoui, 1975). The surrounding community was visited an average of only 2 hours per day and 65 per cent of the respondents did not visit it at all. To the question of what prior knowledge they had of their destination before arrival, most tourists expressed their complete ignorance and disinterest.

“[Visitors] listed as the country’s attractions its natural resources such as sun, vegetation and landscape. The sea and the beach were cited by 89 per cent of the respondents. In contrast, Tunisia’s civilisation, history, people, present society, development problems, and the like were cited in all by only 11 per cent of the tourists surveyed” (Smaoui, 1975:300).

The low number of tourists in Zimbabwe has allowed the country to bypass the issue of competition for scarce resources. Hotels and other tourist facilities do not deprive local communities of water, electricity and other municipal facilities. The Victoria Falls resort, the principal tourist complex in the country, is not situated in an area of high population density which might result in such competition. Since the local community is now largely dependent on tourist revenue for its welfare, including the provision of a new hospital and several schools which were partly funded by revenues raised from the hotels, residents are not marginalized to the extent that has been witnessed elsewhere. Once again, the example of Tunisia is instructive. Smaoui cites the competition for water, for example, in the Sousse coastal area, one of the principal tourist resorts in the country.

“The difficulty of ensuring an adequate water supply for Sousse’s resort areas and ensuing conflicts with other consumers cause social repercussions that are in some cases highly significant. While the average per capita consumption in Sousse is approximately 60 litres a day the average consumption per tourist is 300 litres a day. When local inhabitants see hotel owners watering their magnificent gardens or filling up their swimming pools while water continues to be cut off sporadically in other parts of the city tensions are bound to rise” (Smaoui, 1975:296)

A solid and diverse agricultural base, a reasonably developed manufacturing industry (textiles, furniture, construction materials, pottery, crafts, etc.), as well as local managerial and administrative capacity have also allowed Zimbabwe to establish considerable linkages between tourism and other aspects of the economy. A November 1992 consultancy report estimated that, on average, 81 per cent of the direct investment costs associated with tourism were met by local capacity and only 19 per cent from foreign exchange (see table 3).

Table 3		
Percentage of Direct Investment Costs Associated with Tourism		
	Met by Local Capacity	Met by Foreign Exchange
Accommodation	71%	28% (agents’ commission)
Food and Beverages	91%	8% (glassware)
Administration	76%	24% (power and credit card commission)
Marketing	60%	40% (external auditing/promotion)
Repairs	60%	40% (repairs to electrical equipment)

Salaries	100%	0%
Total (Average)	81%	19%

Source: Price Waterhouse and Environmental Resources, Ltd., 1992

Once again, these statistics compare favourably with other tourist destinations. A study conducted in 1987, for example, estimated that of the money generated by tourism in the Pacific islands only 25-30 per cent stayed on the islands. The other 70-75 per cent of revenues leaked out of the country. Writing of the need to establish local control of tourism and linkages within the indigenous economy, one author warned,

“Imports balloon, catering for dollar-bearing tourists and locals who like to copy their tastes. The things that tourists need are often imported. Even a large growth in activity can partially be offset by tourist dollars leaking out as debts are serviced and profits repatriated. In the soiled paradise of Tahiti, for example, where tourist numbers are dropping, nearly every tourist amenity, even the sarong worn by dancing girls, is imported” (O’Grady, 1990:9).

The existence of a hotel training school in Bulawayo, southern Zimbabwe, which offers courses in hotel management, catering and administration, has also meant that the industry has not had to import skills from outside the country, which in other places has caused a drain on revenues. Nor does Zimbabwe suffer from the kind of ownership patterns found elsewhere where hotels and tourist establishments are in foreign hands. ZIMSUN (with 14 hotels), CRESTA and Sheraton (of which the government controls the major share) are locally controlled companies, providing the bulk of residential and entertainment facilities for foreign visitors to the country. Senior management of these establishments is local, another factor which allows Zimbabwe to avoid problems such as those found in some of the busiest and most prosperous resort areas of New Caledonia, Fiji and Hawaii. In these places, outsiders usually occupy upper level positions while lower paid jobs such as those of waiters and waitresses, shop-clerks, labourers and maids are given to locals (O’Grady, 1990).

In Zimbabwe, guides in the national parks, safari operators and trackers for the lucrative hunting industry are local people, many of whom have come through the national parks establishment and training facility. Employment is generated by tourism in many other sectors as well, as noted above, and this trend is expected to continue. Nevertheless, tourism is a seasonal industry in Zimbabwe, peaking from July to September, the prime game viewing season in Zimbabwean parks and the summer holiday period in the northern hemisphere. A decline in visitor numbers during the early part of the year does lead to shedding of jobs. Obviously, fluctuations in the tourist market can have adverse consequences for local labour, as was witnessed in the 1992 season when the publicity concerning Zimbabwe’s drought led to a decline in visitor arrivals from outside the country and a consequent loss of jobs. Zimbabwe, like many other destinations, was also affected by the Gulf War crisis and witnessed a significant downswing in international tourist arrivals during this period.

Two additional areas where tourism has promoted economic activity in Zimbabwe need to be examined before considering some of the problems associated with the industry. The first is the issue of craft production. Zimbabwe now occupies a significant position in the international art market, predominantly through the activities of its stone sculptors who have won considerable acclaim. Several artists have exhibited their work in prestigious galleries in London, Paris, Bonn, Rome and New York, and their works command significant prices among collectors. In the wake of that reputation and marketing initiatives by tourist promoters, a host of imitators and crafts people throughout the country have begun producing numerous stone sculptures to cater for a substantial demand from visitors to the country. One gallery in Harare, for example, has a current annual turnover of some US\$ 960,000.

Some of the established artists are ambivalent to this growth. Some claim that the production of stone sculptures has become so commercialized that it has led to a distortion of local art forms, the repetitive production of similar material, and a loss of young talent which has become oriented towards the tourist market. Others claim that, while stone sculpture has become something of an industry dictated by tourist expectations, the sale of such work has allowed some producers the space and time to experiment with other forms and develop their artistic abilities. According to a sculptor in a co-operative gallery in Harare interviewed by the author in July 1993,

“Most of what of what we sell is factory art. Our visitors want statues of animals, or African heads in verdite, or the abstract designs that have somehow become popular through marketing and advertising. Yet without the money for these we would not be able to produce other pieces which allow us to express our real abilities. The tourist market brings us our bread and butter without which we would not be able to survive as artists to produce anything else”.

Perhaps the main concern is that a market dominated by foreign demand is rapidly depriving Zimbabwe of a significant artistic heritage. The National Art Gallery of Zimbabwe and local collectors do not have the financial resources to compete with the lucrative offers made by foreign dealers. The result is a loss of the major artistic works of the stone sculpture movement.

Secondly, the growth of tourism has also led to a diversification of economic activities on some of Zimbabwe's commercial farms. The authorities are realizing that revenues from large parks, especially those in low rainfall areas, and tourism can exceed returns from traditional livestock raising and other agricultural activities. Centred around wildlife, park areas can also provide a more attractive environmental option in areas where fragile soils and low rains create an environment unsuitable for the activities that had previously been established there. Recreational hunting, photographic and walking safaris, pony trekking and birdwatching have therefore been developed on private land in response to a growing demand for these activities.

To promote this type of development on private property, a Wildlife Producers Association was formed in 1986 and now has some 500 members, most of whom are actively involved in promoting the utilization of wildlife on their farms. Some 50 per cent of these farmers are also involved in tourism of one sort or another. In 1990, some 80 farmers formed the Wildlife Producers Cooperative which, under the name “Safari Farms”, is actively involved in “marketing tourism on the ranch” and also has its own travel agency. As periodic drought and environmental damage continue to inflict hardships on Zimbabwe's agricultural production, the wildlife option aimed at attracting tourists seems an increasingly attractive proposition for many farmers. According to a World Bank report, while game ranching *per se* is only marginally more productive than cattle ranching and is handicapped by a variety of technical and commercial constraints, wildlife utilization associated with different forms of tourism may be anything from twice to four times as profitable (Child, 1988)

Lessons from the Annapurna Experience ... and Others

Despite the government's stated intention to maintain low-volume, high-quality tourism in Zimbabwe, no limits on the number of visitors have been set either at national or resort/park level. Some observers are concerned that the recent growth in tourism of some 8 per cent per annum in Zimbabwe, and the expectation that this will continue for the rest of the decade, will undermine long-term considerations in the interests of short-term benefits, as has happened elsewhere (see McIvor, 1994). There are enough examples from elsewhere to illustrate how maximization of tourist numbers has taken place at the cost of both environmental and cultural sustainability. The Annapurna region of Nepal provides an instructive example, and may allow relatively new tourist destinations like Zimbabwe to avoid a similar temptation.

Ever since mountaineering and trekking became a popular Western pastime in the 1970s and 1980s, the Annapurna range has been a focus for many of the estimated 200,000 annual visitors that Nepal receives, most of whom come from Europe, Canada and Japan. One-third of these visitors are estimated to trek into the area each year, outnumbering the local population by a ratio of two-to-one (Annapurna Conservation Area Project, 1993). What they have left behind in a fragile environment, which can barely sustain its own local inhabitants, is a world increasingly blighted by their presence. In an interview with the author in January 1994, a conservationist with the Annapurna Conservation Area Project pointed out that:

“70,000 visitors a year may not seem a lot of people compared with the number of tourists to other places. But for an environment like the Annapurnas, with its delicate ecological balance between human presence and natural resources, it is rapidly becoming 70,000 visitors too many”.

The negative environmental impact is obvious to any sensitive visitor to the area. The poor, native villages scattered along the main valley to the mountains have now been complemented by numerous guest houses and lodges, which continue to be built every year. These are almost entirely constructed of wood from the surrounding forests, and the need to feed and heat thousands of visitors has led to further encroachments on scarce resources.

The resulting soil erosion is evidenced in the large swathes of terrain that have literally been washed away by the heavy monsoon rains. The statistics make disturbing reading: 96 per cent of Nepal's energy comes from the forests. Current figures show that these are disappearing at the rate of 3 per cent every year. One hectare of cleared forest loses 30-75 tons of top-soil annually. In Nepal as a whole, approximately 400,000 hectares are cleared each year, resulting in devastating landslides and floods as water sweeps off the unprotected mountains. The lodges in one small village along the major Annapurna trekking route consume one hectare of virgin rhododendron forest each tourist season to service the needs of their foreign visitors.

The strain on local systems of waste management and disposal has also proved overwhelming. Litter lies in scattered piles on the outskirts of villages or strewn along the banks of rivers. Trekkers and mountaineers bring many non-biodegradable items into the valley such as beer cans, tins and wrappers. It has been calculated that if the number of plastic bottles imported into the area each year were placed end to end they would reach the peak of the highest mountain in the Annapurnas.

Such rubbish is also evidence that much of what the visitor consumes comes from outside the region, depriving the local inhabitants of a significant source of potential income. One survey found that less than 7 per cent of the money spent by the average trekker per day contributed to the economies of local villages. The rest flowed out of the valley to suppliers and manufacturers in the capital city as well as to tour operators in the visitors' home countries. In an interview with the author carried out in January 1994 in the Annapurna region of Nepal, a villager confirmed that many of the lodges and guest houses were owned by people from outside the area. “We are aware that tourism brings wealth into our country but the fact is that very few of us here receive any of its benefits”.

Environmental damage is not the only negative impact on the Annapurna region. While much less visible, the cultural consequences for the local population of thousands of Western tourists, many of whom have little knowledge of or interest in local customs and tradition, has proved extreme. For the inhabitants of the area, the Annapurna mountains have always been a source of religious inspiration and veneration. Several of the large peaks were regarded as holy sites and a set of prohibitions against their ascent and the cutting down of trees were in force for hundreds of years. An old villager in Ghandrung, a badly affected village close to the Annapurna sanctuary, felt that much of the mystery in their lives had been damaged by the irreverent attitudes of trekkers as well

as the frequency with which the high peaks were scaled. A place of worship, he claimed, should be respected rather than trampled over by curious onlookers (Interview, January 1994).

Older members of the community also complained of the impact of trekkers on the attitudes of their children. A wish to emulate visitors' behaviour had affected many of the region's youth who were employed by tourists as porters. Dress codes were changing. The ubiquitous T-shirt and jeans had replaced the traditional and more practical homespun local garments. Western music, open consumption of alcohol and inappropriate sexual behaviour were evidence of the undermining of traditions. The dissatisfaction of young men with the life of the valley had led to mass migration out of the area to towns and cities in other parts of Nepal. One villager claimed that it did not matter that most of the youths would be unable to find work or would end up in the slums of Kathmandu. They had come to feel that rural life was primitive and that the agricultural activities of their fathers were now beneath them. "They want to be like the rich foreigners who come here every year" (Interview, January 1994). The villager also pointed out that an increasing number of local villages were now populated almost entirely by women and older people. For the first time in their remembered history, people had resorted to begging from visitors rather than extending to them the hospitality that was a part of their mountain tradition. "This was encouraged by well-meaning tourists but for most of us it is evidence of a social decline. In the past we were self-sufficient. We helped each other in times of need" (Interview, January 1994).

The scale of these problems has prompted some attempts to reduce the negative impact of so many visitors to the area. A trekking fee levied by the central government on every visitor is now returned to the area to sponsor tree conservation programmes as well as to boost local economies. Trekkers are given leaflets prior to entering into the Annapurna sanctuary (declared in 1986) which ask them to respect local traditions and observe good environmental practice such as the proper disposal of waste and the use of kerosene for fuel. Most conservationists agree that unless the number of visitors is substantially reduced, the Annapurnas could be irreversibly damaged within the next few years. Yet most of them do not believe such a ceiling will be established. With tourism the main foreign currency earner in the Nepalese economy, there is strong pressure to maximize financial profits through increased numbers of visitors. Nepal is a poor country, agreed a forestry worker who would like to see a maximum tourist carrying capacity established for remote areas. Since poverty is the main problem faced by the government, any decrease in foreign income would be greeted with social dissatisfaction. "Rather than seeing a reduction in the number of trekkers to these mountains", he concluded, "we are likely to see an increase. For the Annapurnas it seems there will be no respite" (Interview, January 1994).

According to some conservationists, the tourist carrying capacity for some of the fragile park ecosystems in Zimbabwe has already been exceeded. Studies have shown soil compaction caused by trampling and vehicles in several parks, which has led to increased water run off, erosion and changes in vegetation. Excessive trampling of vegetation by walking, photographic and hunting safaris may affect plant diversity and lead to the loss of several species, cautioned one geographer (Heath, 1989:39). As in several of the Kenyan national parks, observable changes have also been noted in animal behaviour. Loss of ground cover, changes in water quality and increased noise have disrupted mating and feeding habits. Some animals have begun to rely upon food supplements acquired through campsite raids. This is already evident among the honey-badger, hyena and elephant populations at the Mana Pools National Park in northern Zimbabwe. Whether due to increased familiarity with humans or irritation due to their presence, attacks by crocodiles, hippopotami and buffalo along the Zambezi river have also been witnessed in recent years. In several cases, this has led to the shooting of animals which have become too persistent. One bull elephant in Mana Pools recently had to be shot due to its habit of overturning cars in search of oranges (Interview, park officers, April 1993).

In a 1992 study carried out on the Matusadona shores of Lake Kariba, where houseboat tourism is popular, researchers noted several adverse consequences from the increasing numbers of visitors

(Rogers, 1992). While the study pointed out that pollution, disruption of animals, etc. had not reached the levels found in other countries, the findings were worrying enough for the researchers to advocate the government's intervention to control the unchecked growth of tourism in this area. From 100 boats some five years ago, over 2,000 were registered on the lake at the time of the study, most of which were licensed for tourist purposes. A particularly popular area was the Sanyati basin which forms the eastern boundary of Matusadona Game Park where the Sanyati River enters the lake. Some 1,579 vessels, predominantly houseboats, were registered for these waters at the time of the research, a figure which exceeded by several hundred the number the area could sustain without damaging the environment and destroying its particular wilderness appeal. Yet, according to the report, there were no plans to fix an upper limit in order to protect the environment.

Pollution of water by sewage was also recorded, with an unacceptably high level of faecal coliforms. Since these levels were found in relatively close proximity to some local fishing communities on the other side of the Sanyati river, there was some worry about possible contamination of drinking water. Also of concern was the use of chemicals to deodorize sewage before it left the vessels. Bleach not only kills bacteria but other microscopic forms of life which may be essential for the food chain. Pollution of the water by petrol derivatives from boat engines was also evident. Three large oil slicks had been observed within the previous two years. The researchers also noted that litter was regularly found along the shore. "Not only was the water becoming polluted but the shores of Matusadona were becoming dumping grounds for refuse from houseboats" (Rogers, 1992:6).

The impact on the behaviour of animals along the Matusadona shores also caused concern. Parks staff had observed the displacement of hippos from rivers and inlets, increasingly aggressive behaviour of crocodiles, the disappearance of bird species from their nests as a result of disturbance by boaters and the disappearance of herds of elephant from their former habitat near the lake. The report stated,

"According to interviews with the staff of Fothergill, Spurwing and Sanyati, the numbers of boats, the behaviour of the staff and guests on the boats and the noise they generate all serve to disrupt the feeding and drinking behaviour of elephant herds and possibly black rhinoceros. It is possible with the increase in the number of boats using the same inlets and rivers as are preferred by hippopotami, that such disturbance will, if not now, in future affect the annual increase or reproductive success of the species" (Rogers, 1992:15).

A further consequence of excessive numbers and unregulated behaviour is the impact on the aesthetic appeal of such areas. Several parks staff and conservationists interviewed for the study felt that the high numbers of boats and visitors along the Matusadona shores were undermining the wilderness appeal of the area. The survey found, for example, that in one location 188 boats were moored overnight despite a recommendation by national parks that the maximum number should be confined to 55 boats at any one time. Such stipulations, however, are inadequately enforced. This may reflect the government's unwillingness to antagonize private tour operators, which could limit the revenues realized from such activities.

Yet the short-term economic gains in increased revenue from large numbers of tourists need to be considered in relation to the possible damage to an environment whose very appeal is its unspoiled quality where animals, birds and flora can be observed in a relatively undisturbed habitat. Tourists can be demanding in terms of realizing their expectations, especially if they are promised a particular experience by tour promoters and holiday brochures. Parks staff in Mana Pools, for example, have heard increasing complaints from international visitors that the large numbers of people they found there conflicted with their prior expectations of visiting a relatively unspoiled and remote area. Similar complaints were heard by the present author on a visit to Victoria Falls in 1992.

Ecological damage is often difficult to reverse. This is evident in Victoria Falls, whose unique rain forest, watered by the spray from the Zambezi river, is said by some botanists to be in a state of almost irreparable damage due to excessive trampling of vegetation by the thousands of visitors who frequent the area (McIvor, 1994). Yet as tourism becomes bigger and bigger business, and as the government is pressured to issue more licences for more operators, safari companies, canoe enthusiasts, etc., the lure of quick money for an economy desperate for foreign currency is a temptation that is difficult to resist. Perhaps some of the negative consequences of unregulated wildlife tourism in Eastern Africa can provide an instructive warning.

“Though East African states have a policy for the conservation of wildlife through the establishment of national parks and reserves, tourism still has disastrous effects. The lure of reward from wealthy foreign visitors often induces tour guides to harass the animals in the parks. In the Kenyan Abozoli National Park a lion was demeaned and humiliated by hordes of tourists who wanted to photograph it. On another occasion, a cheetah, a shy creature, nearly starved to death because tourists never gave it peace to hunt. Speeding vehicles, driving off roads and night driving have contributed to wildlife mortality and alteration of wildlife habitats. Unregulated sewage and garbage disposal around lodges and campsites also creates problems as it attracts animals and disturbs traditional feeding patterns” (O’Grady, 1990:35).

Distributing the Benefits

Despite the potential offered by Zimbabwe’s wildlife and parks to realize significant amounts of foreign exchange through tourism, financial control of the industry seems to be haphazard, with the major financial benefits returning to private operators rather than the state which bears the brunt of the costs. A 1992 study conducted in the Zambezi Valley Complex, which features six safari areas and one national park, concluded that total gross income from tourism in the area was in the region of US\$ 4.2 million per year (Coulson and Bowler, 1992:40). Yet the Department of National Parks only received some US\$ 500,000 of that amount. Canoe operators, private hunting safaris, crocodile ranchers, hotel owners and commercial game viewing companies realized the bulk of the profits, despite the fact that the cost of protecting the animals and environment, which guaranteed their business, was borne by the state.

Furthermore, of the US\$ 500,000 realized by the Department, 75 per cent had to be returned to the various stations along the Zambezi in order to pay salaries and recurrent costs. But patrol and anti-poaching activities were seriously underfunded, which effectively meant that the department was unable to provide effective protection of the wildlife under its care. This has in part resulted in the virtual extinction of rhinoceros in the area, which has been poached by armed gangs from the Zambian side of the river who receive lucrative rewards for the horns of these animals. Most of the demand for these horns comes from Yemen and the Far East. In the former they are prized for use as ornamental handles for daggers while in the latter they are valued as an important ingredient in oriental medicine. Poor salaries to game wardens, retrenchment of parks staff due to shrinking budgets, and old and obsolete equipment have meant that the government has lost this war to the poachers, claimed the director of the Zambezi Society, a local conservation group. In an interview with Zimbabwean radio in August 1993, he pointed out that elephants were also being targeted in the Zambezi valley as poachers sought other animals for hunting as an alternative to the disappearing rhinoceros. Despite this increased poaching, however, the government allocation to the national parks budget has declined in real terms over the past few years.

“Perhaps one reason why the State is so reluctant to increase the vote to the Department to ensure adequate protection of the resource base that is at the heart of tourism in the country is that they have not yet worked out adequate structures to receive revenues from this resource. The Zambezi Valley Tourism study reveals just

how much money is being yielded through wildlife areas and how little returns to the Government purse” (Interview, D. Pittman, July 1993).

Low budgetary allocation to the Department of National Parks has had other adverse consequences. Facilities for visitors to the parks are often run-down and officials acknowledge that in this area they are losing a competitive edge to other destinations on the continent. While animals may be more abundant and less harassed than elsewhere, national parks facilities are way behind those found in Kenya, for example, observed a warden at Mana Pools, who had received complaints from international visitors about the lack of accommodation and poor toilet and waste disposal facilities. The 1992 Zambezi Valley report cautioned:

“The low levels of government funding result in inefficiency and a deteriorating product. The lack of infrastructural development, often a result of low level funding, must, at some point, constrain growth. The fact there is no relationship between levels of funding and actual earnings creates little incentive for efficiency or optimization of earnings. It also implies a lack of recognition and must lead to a decline in morale” (Coulson and Bowler, 1992:40).

At the same time, with most of the revenues flowing to private operators, the government has been unable to realize the kind of income that would allow it to allocate substantial funds for improvements for local communities in order to convince them of the benefits of having large areas reserved for wildlife. Provision of schools, clinics, roads and electricity still lag behind the rest of the country in communities surrounding parks, for whom tourism continues to be peripheral to their welfare and, in many cases, an inconvenience. Tourism, therefore, needs to be rehabilitated in the national consciousness if it is to enjoy popular support. Indigenous people still perceive it as a luxury for the rich white Zimbabwean and the international visitor, a perception reinforced by the inaccessibility of the parks’ resources for the majority of local people. As the number of international visitors increases (e.g. from 16 per cent in 1981 to 57 per cent of tourists to Mana Pools in 1991), there is a danger that this discrepancy could prompt a further escalation of demands for alternative forms of land use in such large areas set aside for wild animals. The real challenge for Zimbabwean tourism is to resolve that conflict. This was summarized by a contributor to a 1990 conference on tourism in Southern Africa.

“The most vital question of wildlife tourism, both for game viewing and for safari hunting, is the increasing competition with other forms of land use, especially agriculture and livestock. The classical way of protecting a wildlife area, which has been to expel the rural population out of it and afterwards to ban all other forms of land utilization including firewood collection, can neither be justified nor defended in this way any more. The participation of the rural population in wildlife resource management, and the return of some kind of benefit from protected areas needs urgent attention” (Beutzler, 1990:10).

IV. Reconciling People and Wildlife in Zimbabwe

Changing Relationships between People and Parks

Wildlife, especially large species such as elephant, hippopotamus and buffalo, have always posed some threat to people. Some destroy crops and trample property. Others attack farmers forced to defend their fields against them. Before the advent of colonialism in Zimbabwe, however, these disadvantages were compensated by the meat, skins, tusks, etc. that wildlife could provide to local populations. As a source of potential benefits, therefore, wild animals were considered an integral part of communities’ support systems which encouraged the development of rules of conservation and management. For example, traditional prohibitions existed against the killing of pregnant female animals. Sanctuaries were created where all hunting was forbidden. These

marambatemwa, as they were called in Shona culture, were venerated as holy sites and upheld by the sanction of the community against anyone infringing sanctuary regulations.⁸

As seen in sections I and II, colonial policies and legislation destroyed such traditional relationships between wildlife and its human neighbours. By declaring such animals state property, the colonial government denied indigenous communities the benefits they traditionally obtained from wildlife. Antagonism between local people and wildlife was exacerbated by the displacement of indigenous populations to areas that could barely sustain them. The alienation of Zimbabwe's rural populations from the resources they had once enjoyed was to fuel the liberation war that brought independence. Given the nature of the previous 90 years, it is little wonder that there was intense pressure in 1980 for access to land and for the destruction of the wildlife that competed for this valuable resource.

The antagonism that had developed between people and parks was not a phenomenon that occurred only around the time of independence. During the 1960s, some researchers had realized that the survival of wildlife outside heavily protected areas was dependent on the goodwill of rural communities and that these would be unwilling to conserve something that brought them more problems than benefits. As a result, a modest return of resources, mainly generated from sport hunting, was given to local communities primarily in the form of meat for distribution during times of drought and food shortages. Nevertheless, these benefits were intermittent and involved no participation of local people in the management or distribution of the wildlife resource. The predominant relationship between animals and local people continued to be one of conflict.

During the mid-1970s, a pilot project was developed in the Sebungwe region, south of Lake Kariba, under a programme launched by the Department of National Parks, which it called CAMPFIRE (Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources). For the first time in the official documentation of the Rhodesian state, the phrase "community access" appeared in policies related to wildlife management. The plan claimed that if communities developed appropriate institutions for decision-making and control, distribution of benefits could be decentralized and targeted towards the people most affected by wild animals. An experiment, called Operation Windfall, was carried out in the Sebungwe area. Some revenue and meat generated by the culling of elephants were returned to local people. The results were mixed. According to an evaluation:

"There was an immediate decrease in illegal hunting in the area, and signs of a change in attitudes toward wildlife on the part of local people. But communities in the area were denied participation in decision making and management, and were unable to exert influence over the distribution of the proceeds. Operation Windfall was not sustained, and its effects soon waned" (Zimbabwe Trust, 1990:6).

Also in the 1970s, the ground was set for establishing a legal framework for community access to wildlife resources that offered post-independence Zimbabwe a possible means of reconciling the conflict between people and parks. In 1975, the Parks and Wildlife Act relinquished the notion that wildlife was the exclusive property of the state and permitted landowners to make use of such animals as an economic resource, within the constraints of sound conservation practice. Under the Act, private landowners could apply for "appropriate authority" status to manage wildlife. As farmers realized that the combined benefits of meat production and recreational value could exceed the revenues from cattle or agriculture, especially in the large southern ranches prone to sustained drought, increasing areas of commercial farmland were converted into wildlife reserves.

The effects of the Act were felt much more slowly in communal lands where the state was, and still is, regarded as the landholder. This did not mean that rural communities were unable to

⁸ For a fuller discussion see C. McIvor, 1993.

benefit from wildlife in any way. Hunting concessions in communal lands with populations of wild animals were sometimes sold to commercial operators by the central government and during the late 1970s it was expected that some of these revenues would be returned to those communities on whose land the hunts were to be conducted. But these revenues invariably passed through the central treasury, which then returned a grant to the district councils the following year for such developments as roads, schools and clinics. In practice, therefore, only a fraction of the money realized from wildlife utilization in these areas was returned to local communities. In conducting research on the subject, Murphree found that, in general, less than a quarter of the revenues realized by the state from wildlife-related activities in communal areas were returned to local communities (Murphree, 1991:9).

A more serious flaw was that neither district councils nor community members had any say in the distribution or management of these resources. Grants from the government were therefore seen as a hand-out from the central treasury which had no connection with the wild animals that continued to ravage the fields or farms of the local people. Indeed, communities believed that the revenue returned to them was compensation in response to their strong arguments about the inconveniences of wildlife, rather than a benefit resulting from the presence of wildlife. It did not, therefore, reduce prevailing antagonism. Nevertheless, the 1975 Act did have the consequence of introducing for the first time into legal terminology the concept of economic benefit to the people most affected by wildlife, an idea which was to form the central component of the CAMPFIRE programmes of Zimbabwe in the post-independence period.

Origins and Early Years of CAMPFIRE

Surveys in several parts of Zimbabwe during the 1980s began to show that the most sustainable form of land use in many areas with marginal soils and low rainfall was to exploit the population of wild animals upon them. A study done on Buffalo Ranch in south-eastern Zimbabwe showed a drastic decline in productivity of conventional cattle ranching, especially during drought years. A wildlife section on the ranch showed little advantage when it was used solely for production of meat and other products. However, when recreational values of wildlife were properly marketed, through safari hunting and photographic tourism, the section generated returns three times as high as those for cattle. Such findings were of little consequence to local communities who saw such revenues disappear into the coffers of the central treasury and for whom wildlife continued to pose a menace.

A clause in the 1975 Act, however, provided the legal framework for trying to resolve this conflict. Although “appropriate authority” status had only been granted to private landowners, the Act did make provision for a similar devolution of responsibility to communities through their local councils if it could be proven that they had the institutional and management capacity to utilize and conserve wildlife for the benefit of their people. Under the umbrella of the Department of National Parks, which was increasingly convinced that the survival of the parks depended on local involvement and support, an alliance was formed between the University of Zimbabwe’s Centre for Applied Social Sciences (CASS), Zimbabwe Trust (a non-governmental organization) and a branch of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), to begin a programme. The main focus of the alliance was to assist the development of rural communities by aiding their district councils to achieve the required level of management capacity of wildlife which would enable the government to confer appropriate authority status upon them. Four years after the alliance was formed, the district council of Nyaminyami was granted this status, paving the way for a similar devolution of authority to other councils in areas of wildlife concentration.

Nyaminyami provided an ideal setting for the implementation of the first significant CAMPFIRE programme. Situated in the remote north-western region of the country, it covers some 363,000 hectares of land. It surrounds the Matusadona National Park on three sides and includes a large part of the Lake Kariba shores. The climate is hot and harsh, with low and often erratic rainfall of 400-800 millimetres per year. Soils are generally poor and most of the area falls within Natural

Region V, unsuitable for any agricultural activity apart from extended grazing. The population in the mid-1980s was estimated to be in the region of 35,000.

The bulk of the population resident in this area had been resettled from the Zambezi Valley in the 1950s after the construction of Lake Kariba and the subsequent flooding of their homes. Forced to move to the inhospitable region of Nyaminyami, their resentment is still coloured by the memory of the relatively fertile area they left behind. At the same time, the once closely knit and homogenous Tonga community of the valley was broken up and its people dispersed on the Zambian and Zimbabwean sides of the lake. A Tonga farmer who cultivated a small plot of land near Siakobvu, the administrative centre of Nyaminyami, observed, "Here there is nothing for us. The drought and poor soils of this area have prevented us from harvesting a reasonable crop for several years. Along the lake, however, we planted several times a year. We had abundant fish. Our children were healthy". He pointed out that employment opportunities on Lake Kariba in the *kapenta*⁹ fishing industry had been swallowed up by outsiders. "We do not even have electricity from the dam they constructed which flooded our lands" (Interview, 1991).¹⁰

Because of the general lack of development in Nyaminyami, there was an exceptionally high rate of malnutrition and protein deficiency among both children and adults in the early 1980s, and the population relied on food aid programmes for several years (Zimbabwe Trust, 1990). Local resentment was further fuelled by the widespread destruction by wild animals of the meagre crops that farmers were able to produce. The nearby Matusadona Park hosted large herds of elephant and buffalo. Under the protection of the parks officers and through the strict prohibition on killing these animals, wildlife populations had increased to a level which the park itself could not sustain. The result was the migration of animals in search of food and their continuous raiding of farmers' fields. In the mid-1980s, for example, an average of four farmers were killed each year in Nyaminyami as a result of wildlife attacks. Men, women and children spent long periods protecting crops during the harvesting season or avoiding problem animals around their homesteads. School attendance rates were said to be among the worst in the country, as children were kept back in the fields to scare away the wild animals.

Ironically, this wildlife came to be seen as offering the people of the district their principal chance of escaping the poverty that afflicted them. Prior to 1988, Nyaminyami had realized some revenues from wildlife through the sale of licences to hunters and safari operators among whom the district was extremely popular. But since the local council lacked appropriate authority to manage the resources, all revenues were returned to the central treasury. By the time this money had passed through the administrative machinery of the centralized bureaucracy, only a small percentage of what had been put in was returned to the area for infrastructural developments such as roads, schools and clinics. A survey in 1988 estimated that during the previous five years less than 50 per cent of revenues realised from wildlife-based activities came back to the area. At the same time, noted a member of the district council in an interview in 1990, people did not link the grants returned by the central government to the utilization of animals in the area.

"The connection was too remote. People thought that the central authority was only dispensing money it already had available from other sources. For them the animals continued to be a menace. They raided their fields and destroyed their crops. They received no compensation. And finally they had no say whatsoever in deciding what should be done with any money that might be realized from activities such as hunting and tourism" (Interview, district council officer, Siakobvu, 1990).

These factors, as well as the increasing proof from the private sector of the economic potential from proper wildlife management, prompted the Nyaminyami district council to solicit support to achieve more direct control of its wildlife resources. In 1985, a steering committee was

⁹ *Kapenta* is a small, sardine-like fish.

¹⁰ For a fuller discussion, see C. McIvor, 1989.

established to examine the possibility of acquiring such responsibility under the 1975 Parks and Wildlife Act. This committee consisted of 12 representatives, including six councillors and representatives from non-governmental organizations and the Department of National Parks. Its aim was to set up a trust that could develop the institutional capacity for wildlife management, a prerequisite for the granting of appropriate authority status by the central government.

Much of the early debate of the committee focused on the composition of the trust and its representative structures. Was it designed to boost the economic income of the district council or was it to become a genuine grassroots project with more popular participation? In many of the areas under its authority, the district council was almost as remote as the central government in the minds of the people. Some observers felt that if the district council had full rights over allocation of resources, people's perceptions that they controlled the resources, that they belonged to them, would be lost. Without this sense of proprietorship, they argued, wildlife and its related activities — hunting and tourism — would continue to be perceived as an imposition, something which the communities would have no stake in defending. After three years of discussion, training and research, Nyaminyami made its bid for recognition by the government that it was competent to manage its own wildlife resources. A consultancy report described the conclusion to the years of planning and discussion that had taken place:

“The Nyaminyami Wildlife Management Trust was formally inaugurated in 1987, and continued to develop its management plans. Although the eventual distribution of income was still not finally determined, the council had accepted the principle that benefits should return to the participating wards. Nyaminyami's application for appropriate authority status was endorsed by the Department of National Parks and accepted by the Minister of Natural Resources in November, 1988” (Zimbabwe Trust, 1990:14).

During the first year of operations in 1989, most of the Trust's income was generated by sport hunting in the Omay communal lands, a favoured location among hunters, and through the sale of trophy rights to safari operators. The Department of National Parks set quotas limiting the number of animals that could be hunted, so as not to jeopardize their populations. With limited resources at its disposal, the Trust requested safari operators to provide their own resources and facilities.

The distribution of benefits took different forms. Some 160 families, for example, were compensated in 1989 for the destruction of their fields by wild animals. More than 30,000 kilograms of meat were distributed at cheaper than commercial prices for consumption by local communities. Fencing was erected in several areas to protect fields against marauding herds of elephant and buffalo. The first year's surplus stood at approximately US\$ 37,150 which, after the deduction of administrative costs for the district council, left a total of US\$ 27,715 for distribution to local communities. (This figure does not take account of the initial capital investment in the project by Zimbabwe Trust and other NGOs.)

The Trust opted to divide the income equally between the 12 wards within the council area. This gave rise to some criticism that income had not been sufficiently channelled to communities which bore the highest social and other costs of wildlife in their areas. Further concern was raised about the lack of perception by communities that revenues returned to them were directly related to the animals with which they had been in conflict for many years. Informal conversations with individuals in Nyaminyami in 1989 suggested that many people did not understand the workings of the wildlife programme nor had they come to believe that the wildlife “belonged” to them (Peterson, 1991:35). As with Operation Windfall of 1975 (described above), members of the community still believed that revenues returned to them were due to government handouts in response to their complaints. The link between community cost and benefit, input and outcome, was neither direct nor clear.

A further criticism concerning local participation was also levelled at the continuing dependence on outsiders (NGO workers, safari and hunting operators, government officials) for much of the running and organization of the scheme. Safari operators, for example, imported all necessary resources and much of their personnel without transference of skills to local community members. Project planners, such as the Department of National Parks and NGOs, were dependant on their own staff for all the management, administrative, and ecological inputs to the project. A study of the scheme in 1990 found that “There is little or no transfer of skills to the rural communities under present arrangements and the short-term nature of the contracts provides little incentive for the safari operator to invest in permanent facilities” (Zimbabwe Trust, 1990:15).

Yet both of these issues are symptomatic of a more fundamental problem that the Nyaminyami project did not adequately tackle: the issue of community ownership. Did the people of Nyaminyami, and in particular those families who were most affected by the presence of animals in their area, come to see this wildlife as their own resource to be managed, utilized and protected in order to sustain the benefits it might bring? The fact that district council officers, national parks staff and NGO personnel were still trying to educate people about the value of wildlife in this area was, according to Peterson, a demonstration that it was still not perceived as having direct value for them (Peterson, 1991:129). One of the reasons seems to be that authority had not yet genuinely descended to the community level.

Most of the African farmers studied by Peterson claimed that the district council was “almost as remote and incomprehensible as central government” (Peterson, 1991:35). For the scattered communities of Nyaminyami, the district council was an institution to which they might occasionally be asked to vote a representative when elections arose, but with which they had little contact thereafter. Farmers in Mola, for example, interviewed by the present author in 1991, had little knowledge of the workings of local government in the Nyaminyami area. They indicated that, for them, the unit of community identity and authority was to be found at the village level where chiefs and headmen, social gatherings of elders and peer pressure were more real than the occasional visits they might receive from district council officers. This distance between the communities which bear the direct costs of wildlife and the structure which manages, organizes and disburses benefits has, therefore, meant that the community has not perceived wildlife as its own property, with all the attendant responsibilities of good proprietorship that this would bring. The temptation to poach animals, to cut down trees in park areas, to allow cattle to graze on park land might have been reduced through disbursement of revenues from the council, as was indicated by parks staff in 1991, but it could never be wholly eradicated unless the community gained genuine ownership. The major flaw in a project like that of Nyaminyami, according to Professor Murphree (one of the initial pioneers of CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe), was that:

“The Act [of 1975] delegates proprietorship and the responsibility which goes with it to district councils. But they are not the producers, or on the ground, managers of wildlife; these are producer communities within council areas which differ from one another in resource endowment, quality of management and production. Thus we do not yet have the formal combination of production, management, authority and benefit necessary for an effective communally-based regime of resource management. Under such conditions, councils have a tendency to retain authority, management and benefit, relegating to producer communities the function of production. There are several reasons for this, including the bureaucratic impulse to retain authority, the necessity for councils to raise revenues and the fact that councils do not trust local communities to make the right decisions” (Murphree, 1991:9).

Expansion and Diversification of CAMPFIRE Projects

By 1992, 12 district councils had acquired the status of appropriate authorities and some 40,000 square kilometres — almost equal to the land set aside in the formally protected Parks and Wildlife Estate — was under wildlife management in communal lands. Several more councils

have applied for appropriate authority status, assisted in planning, research and development by the CAMPFIRE Association of District Councils. Formed in the early 1990s, this association of affiliated producer communities is now taking over many of the advisory functions previously carried out by the Department of National Parks and collaborating NGOs.¹¹

The nature of CAMPFIRE projects has varied. In the district of Guruve, for example, the council has employed its own professional hunter to market and operate safaris in the main wildlife project area. This contrasts with Nyaminyami which has relied on private companies to undertake safari operations. There have been some problems with marketing since the external contacts developed by established tour operators and their considerable experience has been difficult to compete with. But in the belief that local skills need to be tapped and utilized, including hunting according to traditional laws which demand certain practices such as consulting spirit mediums prior to any activity, the council is ensuring a maximum level of local support. It is also gaining direct experience that it believes will be reflected in the future viability of its own operations.

But Guruve has also taken a further step by distributing benefits in proportion to community costs. Unlike Nyaminyami, where revenues from safari hunting were distributed equally among 12 wards despite the fact that some of these were much more affected by wildlife than others, Guruve district council established a method of distribution based on the quota of animals taken in each area. On this basis, Kanyurira ward received the largest share of the revenues, some US\$ 6,715 in 1990. This money was not only allocated to a fund for the construction of a village clinic and the purchase of school furniture but was also divided to allow payment of almost US\$ 30 to each household. The impact of this dividend, according to observers, was profound (Murphree, 1991:10). It allowed the community to make a much more solid connection between wildlife and benefits than if the revenue had been invested by an external agency in a welfare project over which they might have had no say or control. According to Murphree, it is the establishment of this sense of ownership that explains the change in attitudes witnessed in Kanyurira. A survey in 1988 showed a negative attitude to wildlife and a positive attitude to in-migration of other agricultural settlers. The local people had no school or clinic. They felt that if there were more people, the district council would more quickly provide these facilities and improve other infrastructure such as roads. But by 1990, attitudes were changing.

“The importance of good management for maintaining the resource was also heightened in local perceptions. Poaching by community members was virtually eliminated during 1990. The snaring of an animal was no longer tolerated as individual and entrepreneurial defiance of state regulation. It was now theft from the community and from one’s neighbours since it would reduce the amount of household dividends. The importance of preserving habitat became clearer; in 1990, for the first time in many years, destructive late dry-season bush fires did not occur. At the same time the community had become increasingly aggressive in its claims for full proprietorship. When it had developed its land use plan the community had charged its councillor and wildlife committee chairman with the task of taking their plan to the council for approval with these words: ‘Tell them that these are our animals and these are our plans. We will not accept any changes imposed by others’” (Murphree, 1991:11).

Most of the CAMPFIRE projects have earned the bulk of their revenues from game hunting and safari operations. Nevertheless, several councils have begun to explore the financial viability of

¹¹ The functions of the CAMPFIRE Association include the following: (a) research and documentation of natural resources in communal areas; (b) marketing of natural resources, particularly wildlife (this is done in an advisory capacity to district councils); (c) institution-building and training of rural communities, so that they make informed decisions on project evaluation; (d) lobbying for district councils and their rural constituencies during negotiations with various government departments on natural resource conservation and utilization; and (e) information dissemination among the districts involved in the CAMPFIRE Association (see T. Maveneke, 1993).

other tourism-based activities such as photographic safaris, walking trails, canoe safaris and pony-trekking. In March 1993, for example, the Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe Zvataida District Council constructed a rest camp along a stretch of the Mazoe river. The camp is composed of four lodges, a kitchen, a reception and a caretaker's room. The grass thatched chalets were constructed using local materials and expertise. Activities of interest to tourists include fishing, bird watching, game viewing and walks. There are also bushmen paintings and sights of scenic interest for the potential visitors. Revenue from the project is aimed at benefiting the local communities surrounding the site. There are plans to build a clinic as well as a grinding mill to serve the communities which, at present, seek these facilities about 30 kilometres away.

The most developed CAMPFIRE project centred directly on tourist activities is at Mavuradona Wilderness Area in the far north of the country. Established by the Mzarabani district council, the 450-square kilometre area is located in a scenic part of the Zambezi escarpment. It is bounded in the south by commercial farmland and in the north by an area of the low-lying Zambezi Valley that was, until relatively recently, sparsely populated. The eviction of farm workers from nearby estates following mechanization and other financial pressures has, however, led to the establishment of communities in this area. Many of these farm workers are of migrant descent and consequently have no traditional land-use rights in other parts of the country. Their search for land in the Mavuradona area prompted the local council to look at several land use options in order to choose the one that would be most appropriate to preserve its unique scenic attraction and yet realize financial benefits for these people that might reduce their demands for agricultural land.

Unlike other areas, however, the mountainous nature of the terrain and its lack of surface water made it unsuited to dense wildlife populations. Over-hunting in the past had also led to the virtual disappearance of large mammals that used to pass through the region, such as elephant and buffalo. Unlike Nyaminyami or Guruve, therefore, revenue from safari hunting was not possible. Feasibility studies carried out by the Department of National Parks in 1988 indicated that non-consumptive use of the area was financially viable. Their suggestions included horse-trails, backpacking and hiking, rock climbing, camping and bird watching. An area manager was employed in 1989 and, with financing from a local NGO, the council began the construction of a campsite with basic cooking and sanitation facilities.

According to projections by the Department of National Parks in conjunction with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) (Zimbabwe Trust, 1990:22), Mavuradona is capable of achieving financial viability over a five-year development period. However, several factors affect this prediction. The first is the marketability of the area in the competitive tourist industry. Mavuradona, unlike other regions which offer the prospect of large populations of elephant, giraffe, hippopotamus, buffalo, etc., claims instead a more specialized niche in the market. Its ability to effectively sell what it has to offer to both local and international tourists is, therefore, crucial. Yet advertising can be an expensive undertaking and takes considerable time to attract attention. Furthermore, the international tourist market often demands a high level of accommodation and other facilities. Although the basic provisions at Mavuradona have appealed to a more "adventurous" clientele, financial returns in terms of accommodation and entry fees have been small. In order to maximize revenues in this area, Mavuradona has received assistance from the WWF to construct more fully-equipped and comfortable lodges that can generate much higher returns than the basic facilities now on offer.

But perhaps the most crucial issue that faces Mavuradona and other areas like it wishing to exploit their tourist potential is the impatience of the communities that surround them. Whereas fairly rapid and sizeable returns can be realized through the lucrative hunting market, tourism takes a longer time to develop. Given the pressure from agricultural settlers to open up the area, the slow pace of this development has been an issue. Several incursions by the local community into the wilderness area have already occurred. Fuelwood collection is common. Some agricultural

activities have been started on the edge of the area. Animals have been poached. Complaints to the district council from local communities that financial benefits have not adequately filtered through to them are also increasing. This has necessitated council attempts to improve public relations by informing local communities about the potential that can be realized if the project is allowed the space and time to develop. As the district council was given appropriate authority status in 1990, some reprieve from popular pressure may occur after the sale of a limited number of elephants, which had subsequently entered the area, to sport hunters. A report on the project concluded,

“In spite of the early problems, the integrity of the area has by and large been respected by local communities in anticipation of future benefits. Whether this will continue depends, almost entirely, on the success in the near future of Mavuradona and the Mzarabani District Council in competing in the tourist market, and in creating an institutional structure that ensures genuine community participation and the equitable distribution of benefits” (Zimbabwe Trust, 1990:22).

V. Conclusions

Independence brought with it demands for change in land distribution patterns, particularly in commercial farm areas. But, as we have seen in section II, political considerations, such as the terms of the Lancaster House Agreement which guaranteed the sanctity of private property, prevented a large-scale redistribution of land. Economic constraints, especially the high cost of commercial farm land, also meant that the government was limited in the amount of acreage it could purchase, as well as in the support it could give to relocated peasant farmers.

Even where resettlement did take place, an effective handover to the community was avoided. Resettled land remained state property — held in tenure by peasant farmers but without genuine ownership. The result has been that, as with the communal lands from where most of these resettled farmers have come, evidence of environmental abuse, soil erosion, cutting down of trees and over-utilization of natural resources has been witnessed. Because proprietorship has not been transferred to peasant communities, “the tragedy of the commons” has continued — state land is regarded as an open access resource to be exploited for personal gain rather than cared for and protected because of a perceived long-term interest in its development.

Zimbabwe’s programme on land redistribution since 1980, therefore, seems to replicate the fundamental mistrust towards peasant potential that characterized the period before independence, when local communities were regarded as inherently incapable of looking after and managing their environment. The degradation of communal lands has been cited as proof of this contention. Yet, as Murphree has pointed out, communities were never given a chance to adequately manage the lands to which they were relocated during the colonial era. The conditions for a genuine communal property rights régime were denied. They had no powers to refuse the in-migration of evicted peasants from other areas of the country nor did they have user rights such as access to wildlife and, in some cases, water. Land-use policy, both before and after independence, has assumed two options: privatization in the hands of a select few commercial farmers or nationalization, with effective ownership and management in the hands of the state.

“Both private and state natural resource management régimes have their strengths and may be appropriate for given resources in given contexts. But both have their weaknesses, particularly if they are underfunded, large-scale and managerially distanced from the resources in question. In such circumstances the state, or the private owner, purports to be the manager but *de facto* use and management are in the hands of others — the people living with the resources concerned. Not only is this local management resource marginalized, it is also antagonized. Bromley and Cernea comment, ‘Unfortunately most state property regimes are examples of the state’s reach exceeding its grasp. Many states have taken on far more resource management authority than they can be expected to carry out effectively. More

critically, it sets the government against the peasant when, in fact, successful resource management requires the opposite” (Murphree, 1991:4).

To achieve effective community ownership of land and its resources, however, requires more than decentralizing administration or promoting community participation or increasing economic benefits arising from resources. No matter how well-intentioned these moves might be, they will still fail to establish in the minds of local people that there is a direct relationship between their own activities and the benefits that resources might bring them. Revenues obtained from a distant authority continue to be seen as hand-outs, dependent on factors other than the activities of the people who receive them. That connection will only be made if ownership is genuine, that is, giving communities the right to use a resource and the right to benefit from that exploitation in any way they choose. But just as post-independence Zimbabwe has hesitated in conferring this type of responsibility to resettled peasant communities on commercial farm land, its policy of reconciling people and parks has also run into similar difficulties. The state has failed to relinquish its authority to the people most affected by wildlife.

This is evidenced in the issue of “producer communities”. The CAMPFIRE model has largely focused on the district council as the base unit of decentralization yet, as we have seen in the previous section, for people in remote areas of the country these can be as abstract and remote as the central government. Decisions made by such an institution, including the allocation of benefits, do nothing to encourage the sense of responsibility and involvement of local people. This is further exaggerated if the division of the spoils does not reflect the division of actual costs within a district, an area which can cover many different types of wards and villages. Without the linkage between costs incurred and benefits returned, villagers, like those in parts of Nyaminyami, will remain confused as to the workings of the programme. As Peterson’s research has indicated, they will have no idea whether the revenues they receive are due to their complaints about wildlife and tourists or whether they are a result of their presence. For this reason, some CAMPFIRE promoters are pressing for a further decentralization of appropriate authority to ward or village level. “The greatest potential for genuine CAMPFIRE programmes exists where the communities are smaller, more isolated and remote” (Peterson, 1991:93).

At the same time, CAMPFIRE programmes also need to involve communities much more in their planning, organization and management stages. More than financial benefits must be distributed. Yet this involves promoting a model of development which sits uneasily with government bureaucracies where project blueprints are often established with only token consideration of local circumstances and where structures of decision-making are hierarchial and authoritarian. No matter how successful a project might be in financial terms, if there is little genuine participation in project design and management, there is little learning as a result. Without the chance of making mistakes there is limited potential for local communities to cultivate the abilities necessary to control their future. Referring to this major challenge of the CAMPFIRE programme, one of its sponsors concluded:

“If individuals or communities simply remain bystanders, they will always remain disadvantaged and dependent on hand-outs. The communities must be able to articulate their own needs and take full responsibility for all aspects of wildlife management. They must be involved in the decision making, management techniques and transfer of information to the village level” (Zimbabwe Trust, 1990:24).

While CAMPFIRE has run into its own internal difficulties, there have also been other obstacles to its effectiveness. One of these is the hostility of some international organizations and conservation lobbyists towards its linking of wildlife conservation with wildlife utilization. Economic arguments are often anathema to conservationists who insist on protected wilderness areas with minimum human interference where only non-consumptive uses are permitted. Yet one of the major sources of revenue for communities involved with the CAMPFIRE programme is the lucrative safari hunting business. In particular, the international ban on the sale of ivory because

of the demise of the African elephant on other parts of the continent has deprived Zimbabwe of a potential source of revenue from a resource which is now stocked in its warehouses.

Arguments about shooting elephant and other animal species arouse strong emotional reactions among some conservationists in the West, claimed one Zimbabwean official who attended the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora) conference in Japan in 1972, where Southern African states campaigned unsuccessfully for a relaxation of the embargo on sales.

“...[W]e are convinced that unless species such as elephant can return economic benefits to communities who are often disadvantaged by their presence, the resulting conflict will lead to a worse situation where poaching will increase and more animals will be lost” (Interview, Mr. Maveneke, July 1993).

Zimbabwe has promoted the idea of a clearing house for all sales to minimize the possibility of a market arising for illegal ivory. A CAMPFIRE official has commented that the current expense incurred by the state for protecting its national parks from poaching, often carried out by foreign nationals, could not be maintained at a time of growing economic demands from many sections of the population. The sale of ivory would help defray some of these costs and would also allow the return of some direct benefits to the communities from which elephants had been taken. As to relying on non-consumptive uses of wildlife resources solely through such types of tourism as photographic safaris, hiking trails, camping, etc., Mr. Maveneke claimed that it would take a long time to develop the necessary infrastructure, as the Mavuradona example has shown. “Until a stage is reached where non-consumptive tourism can provide communities with sufficient compensation for lost land and the protection of their crops from wild animals we will have to rely on controlled consumptive use for some time” (Interview, July 1993).

Another problem concerns the actual protection of the wildlife resource. Even with community support for wildlife, there is every reason to believe that in Zimbabwe poaching will continue since many of the poachers that have either been apprehended or shot by parks staff come from outside the country. Currently, the centralized mechanism for accessing funds from tourism and hunting in wildlife areas performs poorly. As we have seen in section III, only a relatively small percentage (estimated at about 10 per cent of the Zambezi Valley Complex) of the revenues from tourism ends up in the coffers of the Department of National Parks, despite the fact that it bears most of the cost of policing the parks as well as providing facilities such as rest camps, sanitation facilities and washrooms for visitors’ use. Meanwhile, profits flow to private tour operators and safari concerns, some of whom pay less than a fraction of one per cent of their gross annual turnover in lease fees. The Zambezi Valley report concluded,

“Tourism in Zimbabwe is largely based on the country’s wild areas and large mammal populations, and centres on the Parks and Wildlife Estate. It is often argued that these conservation areas are a source of valuable foreign exchange for the country but in the absence of figures demonstrating this, these areas will always be considered a liability, rather than an asset to the country” (Coulson and Bowler, 1992:39).

In order to ensure that the Ministry of Environment and Tourism in general, and the Department of Parks and Wildlife in particular, have sufficient funds to maintain wildlife protection mechanisms, a redistribution of profits away from private operators is essential. This is not to advocate unprofitability for such concerns. But it should be remembered that they are dependent both on parks officers to protect the wildlife that brings them tourists, and on communities for their willingness to bear the costs of the presence of wildlife and other foregone opportunities. This also means that if partnerships are established — via CAMPFIRE projects — between communities and tour operators, whether for hunting or other types of tourism, sufficient guarantees need to be established to ensure that local people are adequately and fairly

compensated. This will require guidelines and regulations to ensure equitable distribution of benefits among both parties.

Low levels of visitor usage among the indigenous black population of Zimbabwe have also left the national parks without a solid base of popular support. Talks on conservation and wildlife issues and animal rights campaigns continue to be patronized almost exclusively by a richer European clientele. As we have seen, part of the reason for low levels of indigenous interest has to do with local perceptions of how protected areas originated in the first place. Also, the entrance fees are relatively high for the majority of the population who do not even own vehicles for access to some of the resorts that cannot easily be reached by public transport. An effort to rehabilitate parks in national public opinion is required through positive promotion in schools, clubs and other organizations of local people for whom sponsored access should be encouraged. Unless the younger generation of Zimbabweans is exposed to the aesthetic value of such areas and the country's wildlife, as well as given evidence of their potential tangible economic returns to local communities, the legacy of antagonism to parks will continue to fuel demands for their conversion to other types of economic activity.

In conclusion, the management of wildlife, tourism and local community benefits offers Zimbabwe an opportunity to partly resolve a century-old conflict caused by the displacement of rural people by the colonial powers and their loss of resources that once benefited them. While CAMPFIRE is a step in the right direction, it does not go far enough towards realizing its aim. What prevents it is a final act of faith in these communities: the extension of ownership to the people who have had to live with the adverse consequences of the presence of wildlife for many years. One observer believes that projects which have devolved most authority to village level show enough evidence of success as to indicate the future direction in which to move.

“The evidence is that communities can become effective institutions for sustainable resource management but only if they are granted genuine proprietorship — the right to use resources, determine the distribution of such benefits and determine rules of access. Any policy which excludes these components will frustrate the goal of making communities effective institutions for resource management” (Murphree, 1991:14).

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