



Environment & Society Portal



The White Horse Press

Full citation: Hill, Kevin A. "Conflicts over Development and Environmental Values: The International Ivory Trade in Zimbabwe's Historical Context." *Environment and History* 1, no. 3, Zimbabwe special issue (October 1995): 335–49.
<http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/2859>.

Rights: All rights reserved. © The White Horse Press 1995. Except for the quotation of short passages for the purpose of criticism or review, no part of this article may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical or other means, including photocopying or recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission from the publishers. For further information please see <http://www.whpress.co.uk>.

Conflicts over Development and Environmental Values: the International Ivory Trade in Zimbabwe's Historical Context

KEVIN A. HILL

*Department of Political Science
Florida International University
Miami, Florida 33199, USA*

SUMMARY

The international debate over sustainable utilisation of animal species often reaches a fever pitch, especially when Northern and Southern governments and NGOs clash. This paper examines one such clash in its proper historical framework: the recent debate over the international ivory trade. The article outlines Zimbabwe's pro-ivory trade position, with special attention paid to Zimbabwe's attempts to transform a local culture which has been hostile to wildlife conservation. Specifically, the paper argues that the current majority government is trying to transform the formally racist Rhodesian preservationist policies into utilisationist policies so that local people can realise some material benefit from the conservation of the African elephant, even in face of fierce opposition from the Western world.

What are the implications of the current globalisation of environmental interest? If the 1990s will indeed be the International Decade of Environmental Awareness, who will be aware of what? If the plight of the African elephant captures the attention of the Western public and interest groups through episodes of *Wild Kingdom* and *National Geographic* specials, what orients those attitudes in the West? Northern public attitudes toward African, Asian, and Latin American national environments may well influence how these developing nations administer their national ecosystems. Indeed, one can posit that people from the developing nations, often the object of environmental tirades and sentiment in the West, orient their environmental attitudes (in as much as they exist) according to a very different set of values or priorities than do those living in the developed world. If so, then it is crucial to understand the historical reasons that a nation may have a certain environmental policy, and the cultural context of this history in the colonial and post-colonial eras.

By exploring the current and historical relationships between Zimbabwean rural people and the wildlife that surrounds them, one can hopefully gain insights into why Zimbabwe's effort to preserve the black rhino is failing, and, almost paradoxically, why the country's elephant population is actually growing. The case explored in this paper clearly indicates that the more rural people are allowed and encouraged to participate in the management of big game, and the more material benefits they accrue, the higher their stake will become in conserving those living resources.

THE COLONIAL LEGACY OF CONSERVATION IN ZIMBABWE

Beginning with the establishment of the settler colony by Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company in 1890, the African population of Zimbabwe endured land alienation unsurpassed in its scale anywhere on the African continent. Through legislation and taxation schemes, rural farmers were either forced into the growing mining economy of the colony or into marginal, fragile scrub and dustland farming areas. Indeed in 1991, over 100 years after the Pioneer Column established Salisbury, 40 per cent of Zimbabwe's arable land is still held by less than 1 per cent of the population, most of whom are descendants of the settlers. But taxation and Colour Bars were not the only schemes used by the various colonial regimes to take the best land for themselves; wildlife preservation schemes also led to land alienation, and created a hostility to wildlife conservation among local people that still must be battled today.

Not only were rural farmers moved off the best land; they were also prohibited from hunting wildlife on the meagre lands allocated to them (IUCN, 1988). In precolonial days (before 1890) wildlife probably survived because of low human population density, and because people utilised wildlife sustainably as a food resource (Taylor, 1992). The last of the Ndebele kings, Mzilikazi and Lobengula, attempted to limit European hunting in their territories. Lobengula explicitly banned the hunting of female elephants and the gathering of ostrich eggs, and tried to restrict white hunters to certain ranges, and charged trophy fees (Thomas, 1991).

Suddenly, with the advent of white settler colonialism, the Rhodesians became the gamekeepers, and the Africans the poachers. Whereas the local people had once hunted game both for food and ritual, what had once been a practice of everyday life now became illegal. They were even barred from killing elephants and other dangerous animals which threatened their crops. Thus, rural farmers had to suffer the consequences of living with wildlife while reaping no benefits from them, and having no say in their management. In this atmosphere of conflict and obvious lack of concern by the authorities for creating truly meaningful grass roots participation in conservation programs, rural farmers would rather be rid of wildlife than tolerate its presence; consequently, the

conservation message had little meaning to these people (IUCN, 1988). Indeed, evidence of this attitude persists today. In a baseline sociological study of Chapoto Ward in northeastern Zimbabwe, researchers found that 84.8% of respondents said wildlife had no value to their households whatever.

CHANGING LEGAL INSTITUTIONS FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION: 1890-1975

The royal game principle was adopted by the colonial government of Rhodesia. This simply meant that wildlife on any form of land with any form of tenure was state property (Taylor, 1992). Game was administered by the department of Agriculture until 1923. Then the Forestry department appointed the colony's first full-time game warden in 1928. The Game and Fish Preservation Act of 1929 gave the Forestry Department the full responsibility for game management, which they held until 1950. That act also established several contemporary parks, including the Hwange Game Reserve and Victoria Falls National Park. A key act for the contemporary environmental policy regime was the Natural Resources Act of 1941. Under its provisions, white commercial farmers were given the right to police and administer their own lands for resource degradation, under the auspices of the Intensive Conservation Area (ICA). These ICAs, which still exist today, are one of the several forms of local government which were basically privatised by the country's 4000 commercial farmers. With self-policing powers,¹ these ICAs not only served to conserve environmental resources in the commercial areas, but also gave the farmers even more structural power to run their own affairs.

The crucial Native Land Husbandry Act of 1950 was in letter supposed to extend the philosophy of ICAs to the Native Reserves.² Instead, the Act became a vehicle of oppression, giving the Natural Resources Board (NRB) unappealable police powers to evict from their lands anyone found in violation of conservation laws. Since these areas were of poorer quality than white commercial areas, they were much more susceptible to environmental degradation. Consequently, many peasants were moved off their land under the auspices of this act (Ranger, 1985). Largely due to the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1950, conservation has not shed completely its unpopular associations with coercion and restriction (Katerere et al., 1991). Not surprisingly, in 1950 the Department of National Parks was established under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which in British colonial terminology means 'the police'.

The Parks and Wildlife Act of 1975 marked a change in government policy toward ownership of wildlife resources. Still the basis of Zimbabwe's wildlife conservation regime, it officially recognised that wildlife was the property of those who lived on the land with it. In theory, it transfers ownership of wildlife living in the communal areas of Zimbabwe to the rural farmers living there.

Owing to the nature of land tenure, the owners of large commercial ranches have seen more material benefits from this legislation than have the rural farmers. Nevertheless, the 1975 Act does offer a potential watershed transition for human-wildlife relations in the communal areas. The Parks Act marked a reversal of the royal game principle, which had been operating in the communal areas since 1898 (Taylor, 1992). In both the commercial and the communal areas, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management (DNP) can place restrictions on the use (hunting or ranching) of threatened or endangered species, but generally the DNP restricts itself to giving technical advice to commercial farmers and to encouraging the development of wildlife management in agriculturally marginal communal areas.

Since the attitudes of rural farmers toward wildlife conservation were formed in the context of colonialist schemes to alienate the rural farmers from the land, these negative attitudes must be seen within the context of a political culture of resistance to colonialism. Indeed, the nationalist movement, led by ZANU and ZAPU, openly campaigned among the rural farmers to resist the implementation of wildlife conservation policies. Thus, those who were to become the leaders of Zimbabwe in 1980 played a part in enhancing the culture of resistance to wildlife conservation, as part of the overall anti-colonialist struggle. How effectively the post-independence government transforms the values and norms of resistance to conservation into support for conservation will depend very much on how conservation attitudes and motivations are affected by current environmental policies.

THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD: 1980-1981

According to Shadrack Gutto, former lecturer in law at the University of Zimbabwe: 'conservation is a religion through which a wealthy elite worship nature' (*Zimbabwe Wildlife*, 1989, 22). In the Zimbabwean context, the word 'whites' could safely be substituted for 'a wealthy elite.' The history of wildlife conservation does carry elements of racism, particularly the early land conservation laws. This legislation left an anti-conservationist legacy among local people, to which Dr. Callistus Ndlovu, MP, referred in Parliament in 1981:

let me say that during the struggle for independence, and in fact as far back as the 1950s, there was a great deal of resistance from the African population to any conservation programme. This was not because the African majority was opposed to conservation as a principle, or as a means of preserving the natural resources of this country. It was in part their political resistance. I say this, because at a certain point in time, those of us who were involved in the struggle for independence did encourage people not to cooperate with certain programmes for conservation, and thus might have created an impression not only among our own supporters but also among those

who are charged with this responsibility that we are not interested in conservation. (Parliament, 1981, 943)

In independent Zimbabwe, these attitudes still affect the policy environment in which any conservation programme must operate. Immediately after independence in 1980, a wave of elephant poaching swept the communal lands and national parks. According to one game warden, as much as 90% of this poaching was not for ivory, but because the preservation of wildlife, especially those in the national parks, was associated with white rule (Timberlake, 1985).

This suspicion of conservation on racial grounds has carried over into the governmental attitude toward NGOs and to some conservation legislation. One example of the latter is the debate over the Natural Resources Amendment Bill in 1981. Part of this bill sought to curtail the authority of the Natural Resources Board, an advisory board to the Department of National Parks traditionally dominated by whites. Previously, the NRB had the authority to block large public works projects if they were deemed by the Board to be harmful to the environment, under the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1950. In an act of mistrust, the amendment took this power out of the hands of the NRB, because, the Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism said, '[such power] could be obstructionist to development in areas neglected by previous governments' (Parliament, 1981, 1564). Further, the nature of relations between Government and Zimbabwean conservation groups is tainted by the dichotomous racial makeup of the two parties. This was noted in a December 1987 editorial by veteran conservationist Dick Pittman, who said:

let's be quite blunt; we only have to look at the ethnic composition of most voluntary [conservation] organisations to recognise that we may be in danger of becoming irrelevant. (Pittman, 1987, 5)

Indeed, of the ten members of the Zimbabwe National Conservation Trust coordinating committee who represent conservation NGOs, as late as 1989, all ten were white.

Clearly, then, whites retain a more obvious interest in conservation issues than do black elites and, by association, the millions of black rural farmers. This situation, and the historical reasons for it, certainly serve to constrain successful implementation of any conservation scheme, and inhibits the establishment popular participation in conservation and human-wildlife relations.

THE CONTEMPORARY LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

The previously mentioned Parks and Wildlife Act of 1975 serves as the basis of contemporary Zimbabwean wildlife policy. As of 1993, wildlife generated US\$60 million in tourism for the Zimbabwean economy (Taylor, 1992). Al-

though not an insubstantial figure, this amounts to less than three percent of Zimbabwe's GDP. Thus, wildlife policies which depend only on tourism and parks are probably not economically tenable. Recognising this fact, the Zimbabwe National Conservation Strategy of 1987 states:

wildlife and protected areas are accepted as renewable resources that can and should be used correctly on a sustainable basis for the benefits of both the people and the resources. These benefits may take aesthetic forms such as scientific, cultural, and recreational values, or they may take material forms such as enhanced productivity from land. (Government of Zimbabwe, 1987, 4)

The Wild Life Estate – National Parks, Safari Areas, Recreational Areas, and Botanical Reserves – covers 12.7 percent of Zimbabwe's land area. In addition, DNP is given oversight status for those commercial farms and ranches which have wildlife populations, and the wildlife in communal areas. Thus, the potential jurisdiction of the DNP is quite large, and this part of government is potentially a very powerful entity. The Parks themselves allow absolutely no consumptive use, and are based on the preservationist motivation so pervasive amongst environmentalists in the North. The Safari Areas cover almost as much acreage as do the National Parks, and are usually contiguous with parks. They allow camping, hiking, fishing, game viewing, and of course licenses hunting of plains game and big game – elephants, lion, buffalo, and leopard.

In its 'Policy for Wildlife', the government of Zimbabwe recognises that economic returns are an important part of conservation when mixed with the imperatives of economic development (Government of Zimbabwe, 1987). And with a three per cent population growth rate and severe overcrowding of many existing communal areas, there are likely to be calls for the return of some National Parks and Safari Areas to agriculture. Even the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), the parent ministry for the Department of National Parks, recognises this fact, but presently supports a policy of not opening any parks to agricultural development (Government of Zimbabwe, 1987). Further, with the dwindling of financial resources for the DNP, the complete protection (and even the effective protection of some important areas) may have to be reexamined in the future, given the political imperatives of massive land hunger, and the practicalities of dwindling government expenditure. If government is the only source of income for wildlife conservation, then this situation can only become worse.

The practical policy-oriented task, then, is for government to find alternative means of financing preservationist policies, or to opt for policies that involve the sustainable utilisation of species. Further, given the political culture of hostility to conservation, the successful environmental policy will seek to redress and reverse this opposition to wildlife conservation prevalent in the black population of Zimbabwe. This kind of policy, which Zimbabwe's Parks Act and National

Conservation Strategy openly embrace, also has political ramifications. Since wildlife conservation takes place in parks, safari areas, communal areas, and on commercial farms, government must engage a broad spectrum of organised interests with very different motivations and organisational capacities. Before examining Zimbabwe's controversial ivory trade policies, one must come to grips with the explicitly political problems facing any wildlife conservation policy regime in Zimbabwe.

At least three major political problems confront successful sustainable development. First, the differences of access by social groups to the benefits and costs of natural resources will influence the ways those groups perceive the benefits of a given wildlife policy, regardless of its technical and economic merit in the aggregate. Second, the historical polarisation of attitudes toward wildlife between people with a preservationist perspective and those with a socio-economic approach will hinder the successful implementation of Zimbabwe's wildlife policies. In a related vein, the polarisation of attitudes between those 'comfortably concerned with ecosystems and sustainability' (Katerere et al., 1991, 67), and those concerned with their own safety and survival vis-à-vis wildlife will cause obvious problems for the design and implementation of sustainable utilisation policies. Third, the tendency by international agencies and regulatory bodies to impose environmental conditionality on developing nations without a full comprehension of and commitment to the developmental implications of these conditions, will affect Zimbabwe's policies when they interact with the international community.

FORMS OF INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PERSUASION AND REGULATION

Surely there are many ways for nations and groups of nations to attempt to regulate cross-national or cross regional environmental problems. John Dryzek's book *Rational Ecology* (1987) is a rich elaboration of the 'social mechanisms' used in the international arena in attempts to regulate ecological integrity. According to Dryzek, the world has nine major types of social choice mechanisms, existing at various levels: the market, administered systems, law, moral persuasion, polyarchy, bargaining, armed conflict, radical decentralisation, and practical reason. The latter two of these are Dryzek's own constructs, but they are elaborated and modelled in a somewhat disappointing manner. Nevertheless, common sense tells us that mechanisms one, two, and three are ubiquitous. The first two mechanisms, the market and systems of administration, are almost always present in any attempt at national or international regulation. While ubiquitous, the market is at its weakest when confronted with rationally regulating common property resources, as discussed above. Further, when theorising

about ecological politics and policy, moral persuasion through campaigns mounted by environmental groups has taken on importance, particularly in recent years. When combined with the international components of mechanisms six and seven (bargaining and armed conflict), one can discern an important theoretical interaction between moral persuasion and international bargaining and conflict over ecological problems of transnational scope. This interaction becomes especially politically important when one nation or group of nations perceives its environmental policy interests are in jeopardy. This is precisely the concern expressed by the southern African nations after the 1989 and 1992 ivory bans were imposed against their strenuous objections that such bans were not only unnecessary for their herds, but may actually be injurious to their own countries' ecological integrity, and totally ignore the historical context of wildlife conservation in the region.

THE INTERNATIONAL IVORY TRADE: CLASHING VALUES AND HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

The markets for ivory are mainly in the Far East. The Japanese use ivory to make *hankos*, which are personal seals often used in place of signatures (Bradstock, 1990). Hong Kong, China, and Taiwan also have had extensive ivory carving industries for several centuries. There has also traditionally been consumer demand for ivory in Europe and North America as well, although consumers usually purchased their ivory indirectly, through the carving industries of East Asia.

Most observers agree the population of African elephants has been halved in the past 15 years (Barbier, 1991). What is not commonly appreciated, however, is that the decline of the elephant has not been consistent across the continent. In fact, while Kenya and Tanzania have seen their elephant populations decimated by poaching, the southern African nations of Zimbabwe, Namibia, Botswana, and South Africa have seen their herds grow over that period. Zimbabwe and Botswana claim their elephant herd growth is actually too high, and that if left unchecked, the elephant will destroy its own environment and physically threaten the people living close to them.

Indeed, poaching in eastern and central Africa has been the elephant's major menace.³ Elephant and rhino poachers in Africa are often armed with AK-47 rifles, chain saws, and even rocket propelled grenades (Booth, 1989). Before Dr. Richard Leakey⁴ took over the helm of the Kenya Wildlife Service in 1989, (when he convinced the government to burn \$3 million in ivory), corruption was rife in the Kenyan government, with wildlife employees allegedly involved in poaching activities. To compensate, Kenya called for a total worldwide ban on ivory. Through lectures, television programmes, and press interviews, Dr.

Leakey became a high profile spokesperson for the worldwide ivory ban in 1989.

Thus, this dramatic policy shift away from government sanctioned (or at least government condoned) poaching to a complete ban on ivory occurred over a very short period (Morell, 1990). Further, Kenya instituted a shoot-on-sight policy for dealing with poachers. Zimbabwe has been doing this for over five years (Booth, 1989). In January 1989, after having seen its herds poached from 300,000 in 1979 to 100,000 ten years later, Tanzania began to crack down on illegal ivory trading by arresting the Indonesian ambassador, who was caught trying to smuggle 184 tusks out of Dar es Salaam.

The international regime which oversees the trade in species products is the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which has over 100 members. CITES member nations usually convene every two to three years to consider proposals by members, and to review the level of international protection given to various plant and animal species. CITES offers three levels of protection for a species. Appendix One listing includes species threatened with extinction, and prohibits all trade in their products. The elephant has been listed here since 1989. Appendix Two is for 'threatened' species, and international trade in their products is only allowed with carefully monitored export permits from the producer countries. The elephant was on Appendix Two from 1974 to 1989. Appendix Three includes species locally endangered, and the listing of a species here constitutes a request for help from the host country to save the particular plant or animal. All parties to CITES may take reservations to listings in these areas, effectively opting themselves out of regulation.

CONFLICTING APPROACHES TO SAVING THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT

After a chilly April 1989 meeting of African wildlife officials on the elephant, CITES Deputy Secretary-General Jacques Berney neatly phrased this distinction:

on the one side you have those who believe in conservation, which implies utilisation of wildlife as an economic resource [the southern African nations]; on the other you have those who believe purely in protection, and their pressure on public opinion in the West is enormous... [Kenya and Tanzania]. You have people who would still want to ban the ivory trade tomorrow even if there were three million elephants in Africa instead of 650,000. (Morrison, 1989, 94)

Of course those who adopted a preservationist stance on the elephant were in favour of a complete ban on ivory trading, in order to shut down the demand for elephant products, and thus hopefully save the species. After the 1989 CITES worldwide ban on the ivory trade was imposed (as discussed below), the east

African nations, along with nearly all the Northern nations, opposed any reopening of the ivory trade, even a partial one which would allow those countries who managed their herds efficiently to sell their elephant products. Even after the total ivory ban of 1989, the CITES Secretariat still acknowledged that Botswana and Zimbabwe had highly successful wildlife utilisation schemes, which had resulted in rising elephant populations over a period of fifteen years.

The argument that developing nations should be able to profit from their own natural resources was one supported in principle by the World Wildlife Fund at the 1992 CITES meeting, but they continued to voice concern about the free rider problems associated with attempting to police a partial ivory trade. Also, when they speak of sustainable utilisation of big game mammals such as elephants, Western conservationists usually refer to some form of high-priced eco-tourism, in which Northerners pay large fees to African governments for the privilege of viewing the animals in relatively pristine environments (Moffett, 1992).

On the other hand, those conservationists and nations which attempt to practice sustainable utilisation of wildlife view the situation very differently indeed. Zimbabwe and other southern African nations have been highly disturbed by the tendency of Western conservationists to rely on the force of law and the implementation of sanctions to protect the environment. Zimbabwe's philosophy of sustainable utilisation does not rest on enforcement of punitive law or moral persuasion, but on the fact that people who live near wildlife must be given an economic stake in its management (Parrish, 1989). As a result of a safari hunt by one wealthy American businessman, nearly \$20,000 was raised for the Dande, Zimbabwe communal land, the area in which the safari took place. Most of the \$20,000 trophy fee paid by the hunter built two new school buildings and a health clinic. In 1989, Dande made over \$250,000 on carefully supervised elephant hunts; there is no poaching in this area, since local people have a firm economic stake in sustained management of the local elephant population (Morrison, 1989). Zimbabwe's sustainable utilisation philosophy, at least as it pertained to the African elephant, was keeping a comparatively large amount of money in the nation, and thus adding much value to raw ivory. This pre-ban situation accords well with state policy preferences, which seek to keep as much revenue as possible from ivory in country.

THE 1989 AND 1992 CITES MEETINGS: MORAL AND ECONOMIC CONFRONTATIONS

At the October 1989 CITES meeting in Switzerland, a complete worldwide ban on the ivory trade was passed overwhelmingly, the protestations of the southern African nations that they had sustainable programs of elephant culling notwithstanding. Thirty-two percent of all African nations voted against the ivory trade

ban, while 35 percent of Range states opposed the international ban on ivory. Of the eight range states voting against the ban, five were in southern Africa. The proposal by southern African nations to make an exception to the ban for them was shelved, with further discussion put off until the 1992 meeting of CITES in Kyoto, Japan. In the aftermath of the 1989 meeting, and in the run-up to the Kyoto conference, a war of words between southern Africa on the one hand, and east Africa and Northern environmentalists on the other, escalated to proportions rarely seen at scientific or diplomatic conferences. Recalling Dryzek's distinctions between different forms of social control, these verbal (and increasingly monetary) wars between people with different philosophies toward wildlife conservation are fascinating indicators not only of the importance that environmental protection has taken on in the global debate, but also of the conflict between using moralistic, economic, and regulatory mechanisms to bring about a mutually desired international policy outcome. After its proposal to market ivory from carefully managed herds was rejected at the 1989 CITES meeting, Zimbabwe was painted by some conservationists in the Northern press as an uncaring conspirator with elephant poachers (Parrish, 1989). Greenpeace further condemned Zimbabwean culling operations, and accused the country of vastly over-counting its elephant population (Contreras, 1991). For its part, Zimbabwe joined in the verbal escalation. The semi-official *Herald* newspaper in Harare denounced 'well-fed and prosperous Europeans and North Americans, wearing leather shoes and tucking into high-priced meat dishes, telling African peasants that basically they are only on earth as picturesque extras in a huge zoo' (Morrison, 1989, 93).

Backing their government, several Zimbabwean conservation interest groups announced their continued support for elephant culling operations before the 1992 CITES meeting in Kyoto, Japan. The Zimbabwe National Conservation Trust, an umbrella group of Zimbabwe wildlife conservationist professionals and wildlife enthusiasts, backed resumption of ivory trade based on Zimbabwe's philosophy of sustainably utilising the elephant, and ploughing the proceeds back into rural areas and anti-poaching activities ('Conservation Trust Backs', 1991). The wars of words, however, resurfaced in the months preceding the Kyoto meeting to reconsider the ivory trade ban. The Environmental Investigation Agency and the International Wildlife Coalition, on the eve of the 1992 CITES meeting, claimed that Zimbabwe's Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management was demoralised, inefficient, and weakened by corruption. Further, Zimbabwean military personnel were supposedly involved in a massive ivory smuggling scheme through South Africa, and that top government officials in both countries were cooperatively engaged in an official cover-up of the matter (Orenstein, 1992). It is revealing of the moral/economic side of this whole debate how skilfully Zimbabwe is vilified by being lumped officially with South Africa, a country with whom it still has no diplomatic relations, and whom

South Africa accused at the time of still harbouring ANC guerrillas. The UK Elephant Group, an umbrella organisation of British conservation groups, urged the British Overseas Development Agency to withdraw its funding for the post of Botswana's Director of Wildlife, as punishment for that country having joined Zimbabwe's crusade for a limited resumption of the southern African ivory trade, based on sustainable utilisation of the species ('Botswana Wildlife Job', 1991).

Switzerland was the only country outside of southern Africa to openly support the Zimbabwean-Botswanan argument that favoured a controlled trade in southern African ivory as an effective means of elephant conservation. The head of the Swiss delegation said 'many delegations took positions dictated by their home politics more than by scientific considerations' (Zingg, 1992, 3). He also used the term eco-colonialism to refer to the character of the whole debate on the southern African proposal, and how the North was ignoring southern Africa's history of wildlife conservation (Zingg, 1992). Similar comments were made by conservation professionals from other countries. The 1992 CITES meeting, normally made up of conservation and wildlife management professionals from mid level government bureaucracies, was in 1992 attended by an extraordinary number of government ministers who sat at the conference tables in front of their wildlife managers.

In the aftermath of the 1992 Kyoto meeting, in what was apparently a reaction to the events of the meeting, at which the southern African nations were rebuffed in their attempt to reopen a controlled trade in elephant products, new rules adopted by the body call for formal consultations with affected states before CITES trade bans can go into effect. The southern African nations, particularly Zimbabwe, had complained of 'eco-colonialism', in that they saw outsiders telling them how to utilise their natural resources. Further, the theory of sustainable utilisation of species was positively acknowledged by many present, which may be an indication that CITES is questioning the wisdom of total trade bans as a means of protecting species ('Four Southern African Nations', 1992). Undaunted, Namibia, Malawi, Botswana, and Zimbabwe announced they would make preparations to set up a southern African ivory trade, but did not outright commit themselves to an immediate resumption of the elephant products trade.

Further, Zimbabwe announced in July 1992 that, due to serious drought and the imperilled living conditions of both humans and wildlife, 2000 elephant in southeastern Zimbabwe would be shot, and the meat distributed free of charge among those in need of drought relief. Even in the face of serious human suffering, Western governments and conservation organisations have refused to provide funds for this culling operation. Instead, they have committed \$1900 per elephant to tranquillise and relocate 1000 of these elephants to local private ranch lands, to set up new 'eco-tourism' industries ('U.S. to Help Zimbabwe', 1992).

THE CONSEQUENCES OF IGNORING ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This paper has addressed the same question in different ways – how and why are international environmental agreements reached and implemented? First, the essay has had a broader interest in theory-building: international environmental policies are increasingly the results of an interaction of moral, regulatory, and economic attempts at large scale transnational persuasion. This has been an attempt to move forward important pioneering work by Oran Young and John Dryzek, by critically examining the interaction between these forms of policy persuasion, and by extending international environmental policy analysis to include the possibility of acrimonious conflict over ecological concerns. As environmental consciousness (however defined) moves people for various reasons in various parts of the world to form strong opinions about the global environment, and as economic development issues in the South potentially clash with this consciousness, such a theoretical rubric is needed by analysts concerned with global ecological policymaking. When combined with the traditional concerns of nation-states over sovereignty, this mix of variously-defined morality and economic development has a truly explosive potential, especially when a large percentage of the outside world ignores the constraints that 100 years of racist environmental policy has imposed on Zimbabwe's current attempts to change its citizens' attitudes toward elephant preservation. Further, future research should address any emerging North-South conflicts over the environment.

Second, this study has sought to put the specific question of elephant conservation into a framework which addresses the conflicts outlined above. Clearly, important ecological issues such as the survival of Earth's largest land mammal are not solely scientific, but are clouded by both moral concerns over the species' right to survive, and by the economic and safety concerns of those who must live near these potentially destructive creatures. As the above case study has shown, neither scientific nor economic arguments over how to best protect the species can remain untouched by appeals to morality and attempts by international interest groups to elevate elephant survival to this new level. Clearly, interest group politics is at work in this debate over how to best save the African elephant, and the question of the animal's survival is surely a larger issue. Indeed, the 1989-1992 (and continuing) debate over the international ivory trade is likely a harbinger of other international environmental debates, some of which will undoubtedly be more acrimonious than this one. The study of international ecological politics surely must seriously address this interaction of historical context, moral persuasion, administrative regulation, and economic development further, particularly when elements North and South take opposing sides, and the autonomy and power of developing states is influenced by foreign interest groups, no matter how well meaning.

NOTES

¹ Actually, the Department of National Parks and the Natural Resources Board both have the legal mandate to stop the unsustainable use of environmental resources in ICAs, but usually keep hands-off.

² The term 'Native Reserves' was used to designate the land legally reserved for blacks until the 1970s. Then the name became 'Tribal Trust Lands' (TTLs). Since independence in 1980, the accepted name is 'Communal Areas'. Still, these are the same lands with different names, and the fact that they are qualitatively inferior to white commercial farming land is neither a fact influenced by name changes, nor is it an accident of history..

³ Unlike the case with almost all other threatened species, which are at risk because of habitat loss, the elephant and the black rhino are directly threatened by poaching. Further, as mentioned above, the concentrations of elephants in southern Africa are actually a threat to themselves, since the elephant, owing to its size and eating habits, will destroy a finite environment if populations grow unchecked. This is precisely what happened in Kenya's Amboseli National Park in the early 1970s, when, instead of prosecuting controlled culls of elephants, parks officials and ecologists let the herds grow unchecked. The result was that savanna land was turned into near desert, and thousands of elephants starved.

⁴ A paleontologist by training, and the son of the famous archaeological team of Louis and Mary Leakey.

REFERENCES

- Barbier, E. (1991). Ivory: The Case Against the Ban. *New Scientist*, 128 (November 17, 1991), 52.
- Booth, W. (1989). African is Becoming an Elephant Graveyard. *Science*, 243 (February 10, 1989), 732.
- Botswana Wildlife Job Sparks Controversy. (1991). *Financial Gazette* (December 19, 1991), 12.
- Bradstock, A. (1990). Elephant Saviors in Ivory Towers. *Geographical Magazine*, 62 (December 1990), 14.
- Conservation Trust Backs Exemption from Ivory Ban (1991). *Financial Gazette* (October 17, 1991), 3.
- Contreras, J. (1991). The Killing Fields. *Newsweek*, 118 (November 18, 1991), 86.
- Dryzek, J. (1987). *Rational Ecology: Environment and Political Economy*. New York: Blackwell.
- Four Southern African Nations to Urge Lifting of Ivory Trade Ban (1992). *International Press Service* [Newswire] (February 18, 1992).
- Government of Zimbabwe (1987). *Annual Economic Review of Zimbabwe, 1986*. Harare: Government Printer.
- IUCN – International Union for the Conservation of Nature (1988). *The Nature of Zimbabwe: A Guide to Conservation and Development*. Coleshill, UK: Albany House.
- Katerere, Y., Gore, C., & Moyo, S. (1991). *The Case for Sustainable Development in Zimbabwe*. Harare: ENDA-Zimbabwe.

- Moffett, G. D. (1992). African Elephants to Remain Protected by International Treaty. *Christian Science Monitor* (March 13, 1992) 13.
- Morell, V. (1990). Running for Their Lives. *International Wildlife*, 20 (May-June 1990), 4.
- Morrison, J. (1989). Zimbabwe Says Rural Poor Will Suffer if Ivory Trade is Banned. *Reuters* [Newswire] (October 10, 1989).
- Orenstein, R. (1992). Africa's Elephants Could Soon Be Under the Gun Again. *Christian Science Monitor* (February 10, 1992), 12.
- Parliament (1989). *Debates of the House of Assembly*. Harare: Government Printer.
- Parrish, M. (1989). Making it Pay to Conserve. *Los Angeles Times* [Newswire] (October 28, 1989).
- Pittman, R. (1987). Nothing to Lose. *Zimbabwe Wildlife* (December 1987), 21.
- Ranger, T. (1985). *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War in Zimbabwe*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Taylor, S. (1992). *Wildlife: Relic of the Past or Resource of the Future?* Harare: The Zimbabwe Trust.
- Thomas, S. (1991). *The Legacy of Dualism and Decisionmaking: The Prospects for Local Institutional Development in CAMPFIRE*. Harare: Centre for Applied Social Sciences, University of Zimbabwe.
- Timberlake, L. (1985). *Africa in Crisis: The Causes, the Cures of Environmental Bankruptcy*. London: International Institute for Environment and Development.
- U.S. to Help Zimbabwe Move Elephants Harmed by Drought (1992). *Reuters* [Newswire] (July 31, 1992).
- Zimbabwe Wildlife* (1989). Zimbabwe Wild News. (June 1989), 20-21.
- Zingg, E. (1992). Conservation Wins at CITES, Perhaps for the Wrong Reasons. *Agence France Presse* [Newswire] (March 13, 1992).

