

Conserving nature in the state of nature: the politics of INGO policy implementation

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Abstract. Prevailing analyses of INGO influence have focused on their advocacy role, claimed that they are motivated by values and assumed state monopoly over legitimate coercive power. As INGOs increasingly *implement* policy where state power is weak or non-existent, their commitment to their mission frequently causes action that violates their proper role. This article examines one case to probe how the INGOs community responds when the principles to which it is committed conflict and generates two findings. First, when principles conflict, they structure competing responses to a problem and who falls on which side reflects a kind of ‘bureaucratic politics’ of the transnational community. Second, principled actors have a hard time reasoning through trade-offs when values conflict. The same principled commitments that yield more success in advocacy roles may hinder success in policy implementation.

In 1997, Jessica Tuchman Mathews wrote about the ‘power shift’ from state to non-state actors.¹ While the notion that power has *shifted* is still controversial, non-state actors, including international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) exert significant influence on world politics. They act as advocacy networks or international pressure groups to affect state policy as well as business and individual behaviour²

* This research was supported by grants from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Smith Richardson Foundation, and the University Facilitating Fund of the George Washington University. The author thanks the staffs at World Wildlife Fund and the International Rhino Foundation for their forthright comments and cooperation and Ann Capling, Martha Finnemore, Virginia Hauffer, Timothy Herbst, Maria Rublee, Susan Sell, Philip Tetlock, and the editors and reviewers of RIS for useful comments on earlier drafts.

¹ Jessica Mathews, ‘Power Shift’, *Foreign Affairs*, 76 (January/February 1997). Analyses of non-state actors and their influence in world politics fit within a larger conversation about the emergence of ‘global civil society’. See Michael Walzer, ‘The Concept of Civil Society’, in Michael Walzer (ed.), *Toward a Global Civil Society* (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1995); Thomas Weiss and Jarat Chopra, ‘Sovereignty Under Siege: From Intervention to Humanitarian Space’, in Gene Lyons and Michael Mastanduno (eds.), *Beyond Westphalia: State Sovereignty and International Intervention* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1995); David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

² Ann Marie Clark, ‘Non-Governmental Organizations and their Influence on International Society’, *Journal of International Affairs*, 48 (1995), pp. 507–25; Margaret Keck and Katherine Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998); Ann Florini (ed.), *The Third Force: the Rise of Transnational Civil Society* (Washington, DC: Japan Center for International Exchange and Carnegie Endowment, 2000); Ronnie Lipschultz, ‘Reconstructing World Politics: the Emergence of Global Civil Society’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 21 (1992), pp. 389–420; M.J. Peterson, ‘Transnational Activity, International Society and World Politics’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 21:3 (1992), pp. 371–88; Paul Wapner, ‘Politics Beyond the State: Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics’, *World Politics*, 47 (1995), pp. 311–40; Peter Willetts, *The Conscience of the World: The Influence of Non-governmental Organization on the UN System* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1996). See also, John Boli and George M. Thomas, *Constructing World Culture: International Nongovernmental Organizations Since 1875* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

and increasingly also *implement* policy directly – often in partnership with governments and/or international organisations.³ Prevailing analyses of INGOs have focused on their role as advocates and claimed that because they are motivated by values, INGOs behave differently than other actors in world politics.⁴ Analysts also have assumed that even as non-state actors are changing the practice of sovereignty, they work within a system where the monopoly over legitimate coercive power lies with the state.⁵ In the following essay, I argue that when INGOs *implement* policy, the latter assumption is simply wrong and the former, while right, sometimes leads to less benign outcomes than generally expected. Though INGOs can be credited with many accomplishments in the world, dilemmas in policy implementation may threaten future accomplishments.

Since the end of the Cold War, INGOs have increasingly been asked to implement policy in something like a Hobbesian state of nature in places where state power is weak or non-existent (Somalia, Bosnia, Burundi, Liberia, Rwanda, Kosovo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, just to name a few).⁶ Indeed the growing role of INGOs in policy implementation is directly tied to the decreasing capacity of weak states and the decreasing willingness of strong states to intervene with public tools.⁷ In these situations states do not monopolise the use of force – legitimate or otherwise. INGO implementation is, in effect, governance by non-governments. Though INGOs have often been happy to participate in these implementation experiments as a way of enhancing their goals, doing so has increasingly raised tensions in the INGO community between what is required to accomplish their mission and what is required to abide by their proper, non-governmental role. Assuming that international values generally reinforce one another, the general literature on INGOs has not yet generated expectations about how principled actors might behave when the principles to which they are committed conflict with one another.

In this article, I import arguments from bureaucratic politics and political psychology to explain how members of the conservation community responded when their

³ Florini, *The Third Force*, p. 213. For a critical evaluation of this trend among development INGOs, see Mark Edwards, 'International Development NGOs: Agents of Foreign Aid or Vehicles for International Co-Operation?' *Discourse: A Journal of Policy Studies*, 2 (Summer 1998), pp. 1–12. Others have examined the role of domestic NGOs funded by international donors, see Carrie A. Meyer, 'Environmental NGOs in Ecuador: An Economic Analysis of Institutional Change', *The Journal of Developing Areas*, 27 (January 1993), pp. 191–210.

⁴ Ann Marie Clark, *Diplomacy of Conscience: Amnesty International and Changing Human Rights Norms* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*; Paul Kevin Wapner, *Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics* (Buffalo, NY: SUNY Press, 1995).

⁵ Wapner, 'Politics Beyond the State', p. 337; Florini, *The Third Force*.

⁶ For two recent (and different) perspectives on conservation in these settings, see Steven V. Price, *War and Tropical Forests: Conservation in Areas of Armed Conflict* (New York: Food Products Press, 2003); Nancy Lee Peluso and Michael Watts (eds.), *Violent Environments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁷ See Anthony Bebbington and Roger Ridell, 'The Direct Funding of Southern NGOs by Donors: New Agendas, Old Problems', *Journal of International Development*, 7 (1995), pp. 879–93; Stev Charnovitz, 'Two Centuries of Participation: NGOs and International Governance', *Michigan Journal of International Law*, 18 (Winter 1997), pp. 183–286; Michael Edwards and David Hulme (eds.), *Beyond the Magic Bullet: NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post-Cold War World* (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1996); Eve Sandberg (ed.), *The Changing Politics of Non-Governmental Organizations and African States* (Westport: Praeger, 1994). For the distinction between strong and weak states, see Joel Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

commitment to conservation – to save the last of the world’s Northern White Rhinos in Garamba National Park, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) – required a law enforcement plan that violated their commitment to a neutral, non-governmental role. The debate about what to do in Garamba was linked by the actors involved to a larger argument about the appropriate model for conservation, each side of which articulates a different association between the conservation mission, the proper INGO role, and the relationship between conservation and other international values like development and human rights. Which actors fell on which side of this debate reflected the ‘bureaucratic politics’ of the transnational conservation community.

This debate, however, was over two policy choices that were equally ineffective for generating security for the rhinos. Furthermore, neither side made a reasoned assessment to either decide that protecting these rhinos was not as important as other goals or pursue a more effective course of action. The literature in political psychology helps make sense of this outcome. The very nature of actors organised around causes, principled ideas and norms that makes them more effective *advocates* than rational actors also limits their capacity to make pragmatic value trade-offs when that is required for policy *implementation*.⁸ The bureaucratic competition within the community exacerbated the organisational reluctance to make pragmatic policy trade-offs in this case by causing each side to worry about their reputation if their opponents were successful in casting their trade-off reasoning as illegitimate. Though each side of the debate preserved what they saw to be their principled commitments, doing so reduced the chance that conservation dollars would reap long-term benefits for protecting the last of the world’s northern white rhinos in Garamba National Park.

INGOs in world politics

Prominent analyses of INGO behaviour focus on the value motivation of these actors to explain their power and their behaviour. Keck and Sikkink argue that advocacy networks wield moral authority based on the centrality of ‘principled ideas or values in motivating their formation’.⁹ The principled commitment to (and willingness to sacrifice for) their mission is put forth as an important component of INGO success in influencing behaviour.¹⁰

⁸ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, pp. 8–10, describe the unique character of advocacy networks. Phillip Tetlock, ‘Coping with Trade-offs: Psychological Constraints and Political Implications’, in *Elements of Reason: Cognition, Choice, and the Bounds of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 242–6 summarises the received wisdom from psychological theory on the obstacles to trade-off reasoning.

⁹ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, p. 1. See also Katherine Sikkink, ‘Human Rights, Principled Issue-Networks, and Sovereignty in Latin America’, *International Organization*, 47 (Summer 1993), pp. 411–22.

¹⁰ This conception is not without critics. Some contest prevailing conceptions of global civil society, suggesting that they imply a particular conception of virtue that requires us to think of the self as a liberal self that eclipses notions of civic virtue, facilitates the liberal, capitalist order, and otherwise limits global conceptions of humanity. See Stephen Hopgood, ‘Reading the Small Print in Global Civil Society: the Inexorable Hegemony of the Liberal Self’, *Millennium*, 29 (2000), pp. 1–25; David Campbell, ‘Why Fight: Humanitarianism, Principles, and Post-structuralism’, *Millennium*, 27 (1998), pp. 497–521.

The commitment of these actors is not only to their mission but also to their proper role; non-governmental actors work as experts, informers, and even professionals, but not as governments.¹¹ Though they may try to influence political processes, they see their proper role (self-defined) as requiring them to pursue these goals in a particular way – by being politically neutral with respect to party or regime and working with whomever is in power to achieve their goals.¹² This has manifested itself differently in different issue communities and within different organisations, but the idea that the NGO role is different, more neutral, and less political is common among them all.¹³ As acceptance of this role has intensified, some activists see themselves as part of an emerging ‘NGO community’ that accepts and is committed to a larger array of international values (conservation, protection of refugees, human rights, women’s rights, conflict resolution, and so on).¹⁴

Some analysts have claimed that understanding the international values that motivate principled actors can give analysts more purchase on their behaviour.¹⁵ Others have suggested that we look at the behaviour of INGOs as particular kinds of actors for whom values matter more – either because they are individually motivated to pursue values more than others or because the success of their mission depends on adherence to these values.¹⁶ The logic behind looking at value-motivated actors differently has a long tradition in sociology. Weber, for instance, distinguishes between associative relationships based on free market exchange or self-interested commitment to a long-run course of action from associations of individuals motivated by an adherence to a set of common absolute values.¹⁷ This logic also finds support among analysts in political psychology who suggest that the rational reasoning central to decision-making in science and economics, which puts a premium on flexibility and functionality, may be prominent and accepted in ‘secular’ trade-offs (between money, services, promotions) but less likely to come into play and more likely to be frowned upon when decision-makers feel that they are protecting ‘sacred’ values (such as honour, justice, life).¹⁸

¹¹ Even though INGOs work toward what many would identify as political goals, they often cast their work as non-political. See Anne Thompson Feraru, ‘Transnational Political Interests and the Global Environment’, *International Organization*, 28 (Winter 1974), p. 51. Some have argued that the authority of INGOs depends on this stance. See Boli and Thomas, *Constructing World Culture*, p. 37; Florini, *The Third Force*, p. 214.

¹² This is part of what Boli and Thomas identify as the rational voluntaristic authority by which INGOs operate. See John Boli and George M. Thomas, ‘INGOs and the Organization of World Culture’, in Boli and Thomas, *Constructing World Culture*, p. 37.

¹³ See Boli and Thomson, *Constructing World Culture*; Lipschutz, ‘Reconstructing World Politics’. For one discussion of this issue among members of the relief community, see Tony Vaux, Chris Seiple, Greg Nakano and Koenrad Van Brabant, *Humanitarian Action and Private Security Companies* (London: International Alert, March 2002).

¹⁴ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, p. 10.

¹⁵ Boli and Thomas, *Constructing World Culture*.

¹⁶ Martha Finnemore, *National Interest in International Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*; Florini, *The Third Force*.

¹⁷ Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, ed. Talcott Parsons (New York: Free Press, 1964 [1947]), p. 136.

¹⁸ James Goldgeier and Philip Tetlock, ‘Psychology and International Relations Theory’, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 4 (2001), pp. 67–92; Philip Tetlock, Ori V. Kristel, S. Beth Elson, Melanie Green, and Jennifer S. Lerner, ‘The Psychology of the Unthinkable: Taboo Trade-Offs, Forbidden Base Rates, and Heretical Counterfactuals’, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78 (2000): pp. 853–70.

Most analyses of INGO behaviour focus on their advocacy role and assume (often implicitly) that the values upon which they are organised fit together easily in a coherent scheme. An INGO's activities on behalf of its mission reinforce its reputation as a skilled and reliable practitioner, and are consistent with both the persuasive tactics dictated by its attention to neutrality issues and its selfless action in the international community.¹⁹

When INGOs implement policy, however, they frequently face 'tragic choices' – or situations where different members of the family of international values to which they are committed conflict.²⁰ This point is pertinent in many aspects of the policy implementation process, but particularly pressing with regard to security concerns.²¹ Implementing policy requires a physical presence and implies a requirement for security, but the very fact that INGOs (and not states) are implementing policy suggests some weakness, inability, or unwillingness of states to fulfil their role. When INGO staff or goals come under threat in such situations, remaining true to its mission may require actions that conflict with its appropriate role or the principled terms under which INGOs are supposed to operate in the world as 'apolitical' non-governments.²² Taking steps with respect to security in particular may also threaten to compromise other principled commitments to non-violence, support for human rights, and other 'global goods'.

Recent analyses have questioned the usefulness of examining value-motivated actors differently. Cooley and Ron argue that principled motivations do not translate easily into outcomes. To achieve their goals, INGOs need access to resources – often dispersed by donor states – and their competition for these can lead them to dysfunctional outcomes that sometimes undermine their principles.²³ Sell and Prakash argue that however lofty INGO motivations are, they also concerned with material objectives – for their constituencies or their personal benefit – and thus should not be studied as a different category.²⁴ The examination of the Garamba case suggests that, while material and instrumental motivations do mingle with principles in INGO decision-making, the INGO commitment to and organisation around principles *does* yield a different process. Rather than leading to effective implementation, though, the very 'principledness' of INGOs may lead these actors to have a harder time reasoning through problems that require a resolution of value conflicts.

¹⁹ Prevailing analyses of INGOs have cast the fact that these actors are committed to principles as a force for good. Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*; Florini, *The Third Force*. Others argue that the principles motivating INGOs reflect – and reinforce – current power structures. Hopgood, 'Reading the Small Print in Global Civil Society'; Campbell, 'Why Fight?'

²⁰ Goldgeier and Tetlock, 'Psychology and International Relations Theory'; Tetlock et al., 'The Psychology of the Unthinkable'.

²¹ For instance, the participation of INGOs in substitution for government agencies in Liberia have provided stop-gap services but simultaneously further undermined the strength of the state. Jamison Suter, 'Restarting Conservation in Post-War Liberia', presentation for *War and Tropical Forests: New Perspectives on Conservation in Areas of Armed Conflict* (New Haven, CT: Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, 31 March–1 April 2000).

²² Thompson Feraru, 'Transnational Political Interests and the Global Environment'; Boli and Thomas, *Constructing World Culture*, p. 37; Florini, *The Third Force*, p. 214.

²³ Alexander Cooley and James Ron, 'The NGO Scramble', *International Security*, 27 (Summer 2002).

²⁴ Susan K. Sell and Aseem Prakash, 'Using Ideas Strategically: The Contest Between Business and NGO Networks in Intellectual Property Rights', *International Studies Quarterly*, forthcoming.

Consistent with a ‘bureaucratic politics’ view of the transnational community, the worldview, experience, and material pressures of their diverse positions led various members of the conservation community involved in Garamba to endorse a different hierarchy of values and thus competing responses to the crisis.²⁵ Particularly, actors on the ground were more likely to elevate the status of the mission, while those in the home office were more attuned to the cost of defying their role. Also, organisations that are bigger and more integrated in the INGO community were more committed to the proper role of an INGO, while those that are smaller and more concentrated on a single mission were more likely to elevate the status of that mission. The conservation community’s response to the security concerns in Garamba reflected and reinforced a larger debate within that community between ‘developmental’ and ‘protectionist’ approaches to achieving conservation goals.²⁶ In this larger debate, different sides place different emphasis on the mission of conservation and how it relates to other values such as development and the proper role of INGOs.

Both sides of this debate, though, misunderstood the requirements for effective security in Garamba – in part because they did not have expertise in security issues, but in part because the pragmatic thinking associated with security expertise fit uncomfortably with their principled identity. Furthermore, the debate appeared to short-circuit, rather than encourage reasoning about this issue. Worries that hard choices would be cast by opponents as evidence of ‘taboo trade-offs’ (or choices that give primacy to secular over sacred values) led organisations on both sides of the debate to be reluctant to even reason through, let alone make, such choices. The possibility that a commitment to principles causes INGOs to be less likely to reason their way through the trade-offs entailed for successful policy implementation suggests that principled commitments may have both positive and negative effects.²⁷

Garamba: the making of an emergency

Garamba National Park occupies about 4,920km in the northeast of the DRC on the border with the Sudan. Among its many environmental treasures, the park holds

²⁵ See James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, *Organizations* (New York: John Wiley, 1958); Graham Allison, *The Essence of Decision* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1971) Model III. For an application to international organisations, see William Ascher, ‘New Development Approaches and the Adaptability of International Agencies: The Case of the World Bank’, *International Organization*, 37 (Summer 1983), pp. 415–39. This was the case despite competition and similar material incentives.

²⁶ For the developmental side, see Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, ch. 4. For the protectionist side, see Randall Kramer, Carol van Schaik and Julie Johnson, *Last Stand: Protection Areas and the Defense of Tropical Biodiversity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Katrina Brandon, Kent H. Redford, and Steven E. Sanderson, *Parks in Peril: People, Politics, and Protected Areas* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1998); John Terborgh, *Requiem for Nature* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1999). For a critique of the protectionist challenge, see Steven R. Brechin, Peter R. Wilshusen, Chrystal L. Fortwangler, and Patrick C. West, ‘Beyond the Square Wheel: Toward a More Comprehensive Understanding of Biodiversity Conservation as a Social and Political Process’, *Society and Natural Resources*, forthcoming.

²⁷ While trade-off reasoning is not intrinsically meritorious from a moral perspective, failure to consider a range of options can lead actors to dysfunctional decisions. Tetlock, ‘Coping with Trade-offs’, p. 248.

the last population of the northern race of white rhinoceros in the wild.²⁸ In the mid-1980s a survey by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) of the animals at Garamba estimated that only 15 northern white rhinos remained.²⁹ In response, Garamba National Park was placed on the World Heritage Site Danger List and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) joined with other international groups (Frankfurt Zoological Society or FZS and UNESCO under IUCN) to support a project undertaken by the DRC (then Zaire) authorities, the Institut Zairois pour le Conservation de la Nature (IZCN), to rehabilitate the park.

Designed as a holistic attempt to integrate wildlife and human uses of the natural resources Garamba offers, the project combined the provision of essential services (health care, water and food supplies) and education to the local community with efforts to improve anti-poaching (including reconnaissance flights, airstrips, roads, river crossings, and observation posts). It provided new vehicles, HF (high frequency) and walkie-talkie radios, computers, guard uniforms, patrol rations, and solar energy equipment in the anticipation that these would ensure effective patrols, and offered bonuses (salary support) to staff.³⁰

These measures seemed to have some success and the park was removed from the danger list in 1992. However, the 1991 capture of a nearby town by the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) caused refugees to begin spilling into the areas surrounding the park. By 1993, 50,000 Sudanese refugees had settled on one of the three reserves that surround the park and poaching for food and 'bushmeat' to sell in the local markets increased. Also, members (or former members) of the SPLA, armed with automatic weapons, hand grenades and other military equipment, began a systematic poaching scheme within the park, pushing further south into the heart of the park over time. The park guards in Garamba were no match for the numbers of refugees and military capacity of the guerilla fighters. More elephants and buffalo fell to poachers and the number of armed contacts between park guards and poachers grew.³¹ Between 1993 and 1995 there were 121 shoot-outs between park staff and poachers. Three guards were injured, one was killed, and the project aircraft was shot at. Also between 1991 and 1996 park guards recovered more than 900 weapons as well as refugee registration, Sudanese identity cards, and Sudanese currency.³²

In the DRC, as in many portions of Africa, the end of the Cold War exacerbated long-standing problems states had in establishing security.³³ Civil unrest became a

²⁸ People have recorded 138 species of mammals and 286 species of birds in the Garamba ecosystem. Garamba National Park was established in 1938. Its unique beauty and wildlife concentrations led it to be designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1980. 'Garamba National Park', <http://www.panda.org/resources/factsheet/general/temp/garamba.htm>. 'The Fight for Survival', http://www.panda.org/resources/publications/species/african_rhino/box_2.htm.

²⁹ The IUCN is an umbrella organisation with states, government agencies and NGOs as members created after World War II. It frequently serves as a clearing house for international projects such as the project in Garamba. See 'A History of WWF: the Sixties', [wysiwyg://62/http://panda.org/wwf/history/history_602.htm](http://www.panda.org/wwf/history/history_602.htm). See also See Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, p. 122.

³⁰ 'Garamba National Park', <http://www.panda.org/resources/factsheet/general/temp/garamba.htm>.

³¹ Moyiga Nduru, 'Environment: Poachers Return to Zaire's Garamba Park', Inter-Press Service, 8 April 1996. Interview with Kes Hillman-Smith, 26 February 2000.

³² Nduru, 'Environment'.

³³ As Christopher Clapham has argued, broad agreement on 'the idea of the state' and who should run it has been hard to maintain in many post-independence African states; Christopher Clapham, 'African Security Systems', in *The Privatization of Security in Africa* (Johannesburg: SAIIA Press, 1999).

much more common occurrence on the African continent in the first years of the post-Cold War as the strategic interest (from both the West and the East) in Africa evaporated. The supply of foreign and military aid dried up, leaving governments even more cash-starved than they had been during the Cold War. Other events in the 1990s, such as drought and famine, intensified governance problems, resulting in a stream of revolutions, civil insurrections, ethnic strife, and failed states.³⁴

Conservation in Garamba reflected these realities and the pressing situation soon brought more conservation organisations on board. In 1994 the International Rhino Foundation or IRF joined with the WWF.³⁵ The IRF coordinated an effort to purchase vehicles for patrol and in 1995 they began to supply salaries for the park's guards.³⁶ Then, in early 1996 two rhinos were killed. A male 'Bawesi', and a pregnant female 'Juliet', were shot in February 1996 and found with their horns hacked off.³⁷ The park was again placed on the World Heritage Site Danger List and the WWF went on a campaign to make the international community realise what was at stake in Garamba.³⁸ 'It is time for the international community to look at the impact of the civil war in Sudan and on this unique ecosystem. If not, by the time the refugees return to their homeland, Zaire will have lost one of the jewels of its natural heritage.'³⁹

Later in 1996 the internal strife that had been brewing for some time broke into full-scale civil war.⁴⁰ First (the late) President Mobuto's troops and foreign mercenaries and then (the late) Kabila's troops (the ADFL) arrived. Members of the transnational community had to flee the park for their safety. Many of the guards' weapons were taken and the project's equipment and supplies were looted. Without arms and equipment the guards gave up patrolling, and the poaching pressure from the north (and from the refugees) increased. Some local park staff did their best to ameliorate the situation and were able to persuade troops to accompany park staff on some patrols.⁴¹ Still, stocks of equipment and supplies were down and many staff left (or were fired for looting) and their replacements had little experience. When transnational representatives returned to the park in June 1997, they found the staff unarmed, and a brigade of Kabila's troops situated outside the park. The troops were not interested in park security and, as the central government failed to consolidate, the troops were frequently unpaid and had insufficient rations. Armed and unpaid soldiers created increasing tension in the park and surrounding areas.

'We are absolutely dismayed by the current situation', claimed Elizabeth Kemf, Species Information Officer at WWF International in July.⁴² 'There are practically

³⁴ The World Bank estimates that *per capita* Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declined by more than 40 per cent between 1965 and 1997 in the DRC.

³⁵ The IRF is an American based INGO with a mission to conserve all five species of rhino. See <http://www.rhinos-irf.org>

³⁶ <http://www.rhinos-irf.org/programs/garamba.html>. Interview with Dr. Tom Foose, International Rhino Foundation, 24 January 2001.

³⁷ Nduru, 'Environment'.

³⁸ Sam Kiley, 'Sudanese poachers threaten the last of the white rhinos', *The Times*, 15 February 1996.

³⁹ Nduru, 'Environment'.

⁴⁰ The civil war began in the autumn of 1996. For details on its outbreak see William Thom, 'Congo-Zaire's 1996-97 Civil War in the Context of Evolving Patterns of Military Conflict in Africa in the Era of Independence', *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 19 (Fall 1999).

⁴¹ Interview in Nairobi, Kenya with Mr. Mafuko, Chief Park Warden, Garamba National Park, 24 February 2000. See also letter from Kes Hillman Smith, 'Zaire's Rhinos', *The Times*, 13 May 1997.

⁴² 'New Congo in Great Need of help to Save Endangered Species', 25 July 1997, [wysiwyg://18/http://www.panda.org/news/press/news_140.htm](http://www.panda.org/news/press/news_140.htm).

no resources in place with which to fight back at the present; about 90 per cent of the park's equipment was either looted or destroyed during the civil-war'. Sudanese guerillas took advantage of the situation.⁴³ An aerial monitoring project survey in July 1997 found 49 recently occupied poacher camps along the Garamba River. One rhino, 29 elephants, 24 buffaloes and over 16 hippos were found dead.⁴⁴

Mercenaries to save the rhinos: a tragic choice?

With the state (or *states* – both Sudan and the DRC) in turmoil, no international action on the horizon and the extinction of a species on the line, the expatriate staff working for the WWF in the park proposed hiring (and solicited proposals from) private security companies – or mercenaries – to patrol the park and train the guards. They argued that being involved in anti-poaching necessitates doing whatever it takes to rid areas of poaching – including severe responses to severe situations, such as Garamba. When the government is not functioning effectively and inaction will lead to uncorrectable disasters, INGOs must do all they can to prevent the worst from happening. If an INGO did not do all it could to save the rhinos, it would sacrifice its commitment to conservation, which would be wrong and would undermine its moral authority as an organisation working to save the environment.

Others in the Eastern Africa Office and in the US Office of the WWF worried about the proper role of an INGO. They argued that some kinds of action such as hiring private personnel to patrol with weapons – even in pursuit of anti-poaching – is proper only for governments to take. INGOs should remain true to their roles as nongovernmental actors. If an INGO were to hire a private security firm, it may be seen as endorsing the firm and its actions. They also worried about the potential ramifications if something went wrong – for their relationship to the local population as well as their international reputation. Once an INGO stepped into this security role, these people argued, it overstepped the bounds of its legitimacy. These people saw adherence to the norms bounding nongovernmental authority as the key to the moral authority of conservation INGOs.

The appearance of a clash between the commitment to conservation and the proper role for an INGO in this instance led some to argue that the conservation community was faced with an impossible – or 'tragic' choice?⁴⁵ While hiring mercenaries was appalling, and violated both an intrinsic anti-militarism many felt and the explicit purpose of a non-governmental organisation to act within its mandate to advocate conservation but not to replace the government, the thought that the organisation would preside over the extinction of a species – and explicit violation of its mission – was equally unspeakable.

⁴³ Refugees were also a problem for wildlife in general but did not target the rhinos and elephants.

Interview in Nairobi, Kenya with Kes Hilman-Smith 26 February 2000.

⁴⁴ WWF Press Release, 'New Congo in Great Need of Help to Save Endangered Species', 25 July 1997, [wysiwyg://18/http://www.panda.org/news/press/news_140.htm](http://www.panda.org/news/press/news_140.htm).

⁴⁵ Interviews with WWF-US and WWF-EAO staff.

Competing visions of conservation as the crisis developed

Conservation in Garamba, though, had already demonstrated the tension between what have come to be seen as two competing visions for conservation: developmental and protectionist. These competing frameworks were reflected in a range of stresses between different actors even before the crisis.

The WWF's involvement in Garamba was initiated under the received conservation paradigm of the time – integrated conservation development programmes (ICDPs). This model of conservation accorded much importance to the proper role of an INGO and sensitivity to the potential conflict between conservation and other important international values, such as development and the rights of people in the post-colonial 'South'. Responding to a 1972 UN report on the relationship between development and conservation and the decade-long debate that followed, in March 1980 the IUCN, WWF, and the UN Environment Program launched a joint World Conservation Strategy that introduced the idea of sustainable development and enshrined the notion that conservation was best addressed by building capacity within communities and integrating conservation and development.⁴⁶ The holistic integration of human and wildlife uses of the park's resources undertaken by the project reflected this commitment.

Increasingly reflecting a vision more consistent with what is labelled the 'protection paradigm', the staff on the ground were concerned with conservation, first and foremost, and willing to take steps outside the bounds of what was typical or well received in other issue communities in order to accomplish their mission. This included playing a significant role in the management of the park from the very beginning and thinking outside the box to respond to the increasingly difficult set of circumstances in the park.

The protection paradigm links together a variety of critics of the 'win-win' solution promised by ICDPs. In ICDP's pursuit of a balanced approach, these critics assert, the environment is frequently the loser.⁴⁷ They advocate an emphasis on strict protection by the international community, particularly in dire circumstances. Given the high risks – once lost, species cannot be recovered – the critics make a variety of arguments. Many of them argue that conservation organisations should take a hard look at whether win-win solutions are possible and remember their commitment to conservation first. Some argue that ICDPs may work sometimes, but whether they are used or not (and how they are best used) should be different, based on the

⁴⁶ In the lead up to the 1972 UN Conference of the Human Environment in Stockholm, the conference secretary-general Maurice Strong asked a commission of experts to produce a report on the relationship between the environment and development. This report, and the Stockholm conference itself, generated a decade-long debate about the relationship between development and the environment. In March 1980 the IUCN, WWF, and the UN Environment Program launched a joint World Conservation Strategy that introduced the idea of sustainable development. See Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, pp. 123–6; World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). Keck and Sikkink argue that this approach enhanced the depth and moral authority of the conservation community because it brought conservation to terms with the rights of peoples.

⁴⁷ Kramer, van Schaik and Johnson, *Last Stand*; Brandon, Redford, and Sanderson, *Parks in Peril*; Terborgh, *Requiem for Nature*.

circumstances surrounding the problem.⁴⁸ Others argue more boldly that the goal should not be sustainable development, but a smaller human population and more of the earth free from population pressure.⁴⁹ What brings this school of criticism together is a focus first and foremost on protection of species; thus it is frequently referred to as the ‘protection paradigm’.

The tensions between these approaches were felt in Garamba as the project unfolded. The staff on the ground’s response to the fact that the park was far from the nation’s capital and not a high priority for the government was increasing involvement in the structure and operations of the park. Evaluations of the project, however, were held to ICDP standards and expressed worries that the expatriate staff on the ground had assumed too much authority.

In 1996, a team made up of members of the African Rhino Specialist Group (AIRSG) of the IUCN and WWF visited Garamba and suggested that, in concert with generally recognised principles linking conservation and development, more responsibility should be given to local authorities. The evaluators also advised that the expatriate park staff collect data and pursue practices in the park more closely following general theories of rhino conservation. To facilitate both of these goals, they recommended a reorganisation of WWF’s presence that would increase local, governmental control of the project and tie the projects’ goals to general conservation lessons.⁵⁰ The WWF followed through on the evaluation team’s recommendations and assigned a programme officer to oversee the project from Nairobi, take recommendations from the African Rhino Specialist Group, and link the goals in the park to the overarching models of successful rhino conservation.

The general lessons of rhino conservation reflected the values prominent in the ICDP paradigm – a focus on building local governance to manage the relationship between development and conservation, as well as the increasing interest of donors in the efficient use of funds by INGOs. Thus, the WWF was generally moving to focus its rhino conservation efforts on project most likely to be effective. Effective rhino conservation projects tended to be in concert with governments where INGO involvement could ‘boost’ a project over the effective threshold. Also, rhino conservation was the most effective when it focused on animals in a small area, and not on a border or in an insecure zone. Closer consideration of these lessons led some at the WWF to begin to wonder about the viability of the Garamba project.⁵¹

The expatriate staff, and increasingly the IRF, however, argued that these lessons made no sense in the Garamba context. Giving more responsibility to the local

⁴⁸ Brandon, for instance, divides projects into two categories: conventional (where no one lives in the park and the management challenge is to enforce the law –that is, restrict resource use and stabilise outside threats that might spill into the park) and biosphere parks (where there are different zones in the park and the management challenge is to come up with new law to better manage the variety of property/conservation rights). She argues that in biosphere parks some new kind of management authority, often with political significance, must overlay prevailing social and political systems in order to achieve success. Brandon in Brandon et al., *Parks in Peril*, pp. 421–3.

⁴⁹ Terborgh, *Requiem for Nature*.

⁵⁰ See Holly Dublin and Alison Wilson, ‘The Fight for Survival: what have we learned?’ http://www.panda.org/resources/publications/species/african_rhino/what_learned.htm. There are some complications, however. See Richard Emslie and Martin Brooks, *African Rhino: Status Survey and Conservation Plan* (Gland, Switzerland, IUCN, 1999), p. 45.

⁵¹ Interview in Nairobi, Kenya with Deborah Snelson, WWF Eastern Africa Regional Programme Officer, 24 February 2000; Interview in Nairobi, Kenya with Holly Dublin, Senior Conservation Advisor, WWF Africa and Madagascar Programme, 25 February 2000.

authorities when the government was falling apart was a recipe for disaster. Also, they claimed that focusing on the most successful use of rhino conservation biased conservation against protecting the most endangered rhinos. They claimed to focus their efforts instead on doing whatever it took to deal with the conservation issues that arose in the park.

This difference in perspectives generated additional tension between the newly appointed programme officer for the park who was housed at the WWF Eastern Africa Office in Nairobi and the expatriate staff on the ground. As the civil war pushed the Garamba project into chaos in 1997, these tensions were heightened. Even as the expatriate staff was soliciting its second proposal for security in the park, the WWF had decided to restructure the project, terminate the contracts for the two expatriate staff, and have the programme officer in WWF's Eastern Africa Office in Nairobi work directly with the ICCN (formerly IZCN).⁵²

Even before the crisis, then, there was evidence of tension within the conservation community. Some based their thinking on the developmental model prominent at the time, which gave primacy to an INGO's proper role and the relationship between its behaviour and other important international norms. Many WWF staff in the US office endorsed this view, as did WWF staff in the Eastern Africa office. Others gave primacy to an INGO's conservation mission in a way that accords with the emerging protectionist challenge. The expatriate staff on the ground in Garamba were the strongest proponents of this view, but other individuals scattered throughout the WWF concurred, as did the IRF.

Looking at who lined up where in this debate fits well with a bureaucratic politics approach to transnational communities; it is frequently the case that under conditions of uncertainty, differential contact with other organisations and/or preoccupation with different aspects of a problem leads to divisions within an organisation or community.⁵³ One of the common distinctions is between 'staff' and 'line' units (line units having direct responsibility for specific projects).⁵⁴ People on the ground have a greater commitment to their mission and a more pragmatic attitude toward their role in this instance, while those working on the mission from a distance gave greater deference to their role.⁵⁵ The social, material, and ethical reasons why this makes sense overlap. Those on the ground wanted to protect the project – for their job security, their professional reputation, and because they are genuinely committed to the wildlife in Garamba. Those working on the project from a distance have a wider range of projects in their portfolios, must explain the organisation's actions to interested donors and other organisations, and have their moral commitment linked to a broader understanding of their mission.

Looking at the difference between the WWF and IRF also reflects this logic. The WWF is one of the oldest and broadest-reaching conservation organisations and is

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ March and Simon, *Organizations*; Ascher, 'New Development Approaches'.

⁵⁴ Ascher, 'New Development Approaches', pp. 432–4.

⁵⁵ Other differences within WWF may bear investigation as well. WWF-US reacted the most vociferously against the training/strike force. This could reflect differences in national affiliation, different proximity to the project (the US offices had had little financial commitment before 1997), or differences in individuals.

closely integrated with the global conservation issue community.⁵⁶ IRF is younger, has a more specific mission to protect rhinos and is less closely integrated with the general conservation community.⁵⁷ The more closely linked to global culture, and the material incentives that support it, the more likely it is to attend to norms of proper INGO behaviour.⁵⁸

Competing responses to the 'tragic choice'

Over the course of a year, between the spring of 1997 and the spring of 1998, the WWF solicited three proposals to respond to the security situation in Garamba from a variety of private security entities: the Game Ranger's Association (of South Africa), Saracen International Ltd (of South Africa and Angola), and an independent security consultant.⁵⁹ By displaying the significance of the security situation in the park in sharp relief, these proposals prompted a wider discussion within the organisation and its associated conservation community about the proper approach in such insecure areas. This discussion reflected and intensified the divisions between developmental and protectionist approaches to the park.

The expatriate staff elaborated on protectionist thinking in a paper presented to the World Congress of the International Rangers that September. The paper suggests Garamba is indicative of a general pattern where civil unrest causes problems for security in wilderness areas. While careful to pledge cooperation with the new government and express hopes that the government would take control of the security situation, the paper concludes that national priorities may lie elsewhere and that private security offered the best hope for the rhinos' survival.⁶⁰ They claim

⁵⁶ 'A History of WWF: the Sixties', [wysiwyg://62/http://panda.org/wwf/history/history_602.htm](http://panda.org/wwf/history/history_602.htm). Individual contributions make up 53 per cent of WWF's annual income. The balance comes from other donors, including many governments.

⁵⁷ See <http://www.rhinos-irf.org>. The International Black Rhino Foundation was begun as an organisation to protect black rhinos in 1989. In 1993 it evolved into IRF and directed its attention to all five species in 1993. It has a similar funding base to WWF and lists WWF as one of its partner organisations.

⁵⁸ There is not a perfect correlation. A number of individuals within WWF did support some kind of security action in Garamba and looked for options that might be more palatable (using a firm other than Saracen, developing a security policy within the organisation that could better inform decisions of this sort, and so on). Of course, some of these individuals ultimately ended up working for IRF rather than WWF.

⁵⁹ All three of these are part of a new breed of security organisation that employs retired police and military personnel to offer security advice and assistance for a price. The Game Ranger's Association focuses specifically on those issues surrounding game parks. The security consultant is a private individual who has experience working with a variety of state and non-state actors to generate security planning for law enforcement activities. Saracen International also casts a broad net, working for the private sector as well as state and INGOs. For an overview of these companies, see David Shearer, *Private Armies and Military Interventions*, Adelphi Paper 316 (Oxford University Press, 1998); Peter Singer, *Corporate Warriors* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Deborah Avant, *The Market for Force: Private Security and Political Change* (forthcoming).

⁶⁰ In this paper Smith and Hilman-Smith indicate that they had sought clearance from the Ministry of the Environment for the plan, acknowledge that they would need to re-establish ICCN authority over arms and equipment before such a contract would be feasible, and state that they had project funds available to carry it out. Smith, 'Conservation Crises and Potential Solutions'.

that a training team, synthesising a wide range of conservation law enforcement in support of local authorities, might have both an intervention and training role; such a force might 'hold the fort and protect nationally and internationally valued resources in times of crisis'.⁶¹ They recommend that some organisation explore a mobile training force, in conjunction with the United Nations African Crisis Initiative or the International Green Cross.⁶² By January 1998, the expatriate staff had solicited two proposals for such assistance, one from the Game Ranger's Association and the other from Saracen International.

Saracen International proposed to deploy a 12-man team to the park. The team would patrol with the guards to secure the park from poaching at the same time that they trained the guards for the future. It called for donors (such as the US) to provide a variety of equipment and supplies. It also called for the Ministry of Environment, Conservation of Nature and Tourism (MECNT) and the Institute Congolais Pour La Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) to obtain authorisation and support for intervention from the President and government of the DRC. Along with this authorisation should come visas and work permits for Saracen personnel. According to a variety of sources, the Saracen proposal had support within ICCN and the DRC government.⁶³ The cost of the three-month operation was set at US \$414,252.

In response to first seeing the Saracen proposal, developmentalists were appalled.⁶⁴ They saw hiring private security forces to patrol on the ground as clearly crossing the line of appropriate activity. Given the chequered history of white mercenaries in the region, if a Western-based INGO contracted with a private military firm to hire not only training, but also protection for the park, it would hark back to colonial times. Their discomfort was deepened by whom the security personnel might be – former forces from apartheid South Africa or forces that had fought in an immoral Angolan rebellion. Also they pointed out that it was not only SPLA affiliated troops, but also refugees who were poaching. The thought of even the remote possibility that the WWF would fund mercenaries from South Africa and Angola who could potentially shoot at refugees trying to stay alive was repulsive to these staff members.⁶⁵ These people argued that INGOs should not hire private security personnel to patrol a park.

WWF began to think even more seriously about the viability of the park. They sought an independent evaluation by another security consultant to establish what the security concerns were, how they might be addressed and how much it would cost. The consultant's report, discussed in detail below, made a number of recom-

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶² The International Green Cross was formed under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1993. As of now, it operates as an international network to transform values, encourage dialogue and reconcile trade-offs between the environment and economic development. See <http://www.gci.ch/>.

⁶³ Interview with Kes Smith 26 February 2000; interview with Deborah Snelson, 24 February 2000.

⁶⁴ In February 1998 WWF-US staff met at the state department to discuss a proposal from the WWF Eastern Africa Office to the US government for funding for the park. It was here that the WWF-US staff first learned of the Saracen International proposal. The World Wildlife Fund is organised around an international secretariat (which coordinates policy), national organisations (which raise and disperse funds) and programme offices (which execute projects). WWF Eastern Africa is a programme office. Its main funding came from WWF-US and WWF-UK.

⁶⁵ Interview with Kate Newman, Director for East and Southern Africa, WWF-US, January 2000.

mendations for improvement, including an overall redefinition of the strategic leadership role of ICCN and its legal relationship to the central government in Kinshasa and with the WWF, as well as better standards, communications, logistics, supplies and training for the guards.⁶⁶

What struck the WWF about these recommendations, however, was their cost. In order to create a secure situation for the rhinos in Garamba the consultant estimated an initial investment of US\$1,099,367 (\$601,000 in capital investment and \$498,367 in annual recurrent cost). This was even more than the Saracen bid. If the WWF spent \$1m on Garamba, that project alone would eat up almost the total annual overall budget for rhino conservation.⁶⁷ As it was, the WWF was spending 60 per cent of its money for rhino conservation on Garamba.⁶⁸ In addition, the security situation in Garamba made conservation there a particularly difficult and risky situation for which success was far from assured.

The WWF staff thus began to ponder where they should draw the line between doing all they could to save the rhinos in Garamba and their responsibility to use conservation money efficiently. The examination led the WWF to the conclusion that its efforts in Garamba were not an efficient use of conservation money. Given these considerations, the WWF decided that it should phase out its commitment to the park *per se*, and suggest to the ICCN a different way to protect the rhinos. The WWF offered to pay for an assessment of the potential to move the animals from Garamba to a place where they could be more easily protected.⁶⁹

The expatriate staff remained committed to preserving the park as it was. They argued that translocation would be difficult, expensive, and potentially unsuccessful.⁷⁰ Furthermore, they argued that the park had much more worth protecting than the rhinos but feared that motivation for preserving the rest of the park would be diminished if the rhinos were moved.⁷¹ ICCN officials shared these concerns and declined WWF's offer to assess the costs of moving the rhinos. Instead, ICCN proposed to WWF that they use funds for continuing field support through 2000.⁷²

In the wake of ICCN's choice, though, the WWF made its decision. It opted to withdraw its financial support for the Garamba project at the end of 2000 and direct rhino conservation money to efforts more likely to be effective. The WWF no longer participates in the Garamba project. Though the WWF website lists the northern white rhino as critically endangered, it claims that efforts to protect them have been severely disrupted by armed conflict and lists only its support for Traffic and the CITES convention to disrupt the sales of rhino horn and its support for the IUCN/SSC African Rhino Specialists Group's analysis.⁷³

⁶⁶ Mike Buser, Training Consultant, 'Final Report', submitted to Programme Officer Sylvie Candotti, 17 August 1998. These recommendations are explored further below.

⁶⁷ Interview with Holly Dublin, 25 February 2000.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Rhinos are territorial and if they are not all moved at once, those established in a new area first have been known to kill newcomers.

⁷¹ Interview with Kes Hilman-Smith, 26 February 2000.

⁷² All funds raised for Northern White Rhinos did go to the Garamba project. Follow up communication with Deborah Snelson, January 2001.

⁷³ See http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/what_we_do/species/what_we_do/on_the_ground/rhinos/white_rhino_projects.cfm

The IRF supported the position of the expatriate staff. Furthermore, they charged that WWF's action to dismiss the expatriate staff and move more authority to the ICCN just when there was effectively no government was wrong.⁷⁴ Believing that expatriate support is the key to maintaining Garamba's viability, and that generally INGOs are vital to conserving biodiversity when governments are incapacitated, the IRF took up the mantle in Garamba, hired back the expatriate staff, and continues to support efforts to protect the park. The expatriate staff persists in advocating the need for international responses to conservation in crisis situations; if the international community believes conservation is necessary, they argue, there should be an international capacity to push conservation forward.⁷⁵ With the IRF's support, the expatriate staff has continued its efforts to acquire training and support from private security as well as Ugandan troops and other coercive forces operating near the park.⁷⁶

The Garamba crisis also precipitated a debate within the WWF about whether to institute security guidelines that would ease decision-making when security issues cropped up in the future. Some advocated a set of criteria that must be met before INGOs engage in a given project and argued that such criteria would force the organisation to think about what kinds of coercion they could support under different circumstances and that this would clarify decision-making as crises unfold. Even among the developmentalists, though, there were concerns that too strong a criterion would remove the flexibility necessary to become involved in some conservation efforts – and conservation was, after all, the key mission of the WWF. Instead of a policy on security, then, the WWF congratulated itself on not accepting the Saracen International proposal, released a statement that the WWF does not hire mercenaries, and decided not to continue its efforts in the park on a different set of criteria – the failure of the Garamba project to meet the standards of conservation efficiency.

The two sides of this debate each cast the other side as making a taboo trade-off – where secular values (money, personal position) take precedence over sacred values (preserving a species, role-appropriate behaviour). Protectionists cast developmentalists as more concerned with efficient use of money than the survival of a species.⁷⁷ Developmentalists cast protectionists as 'cowboys' willing to take highly inappropriate actions – to preserve their careers and position in the park.⁷⁸

The missed opportunity for effective implementation

In the midst of this debate, however, the assessment of the security situation in the park that WWF commissioned demonstrated some serious deficiencies in the way

⁷⁴ Interview with Tom Foose, International Rhino Foundation, 24 January 2001.

⁷⁵ Interview with Kes Hillman-Smith, 26 February 2000. She is not alone. In *Requiem for Nature*, John Terbough writes, 'If peacekeeping has been widely accepted as an international function, why not nature keeping? If local guards are too weak or too subject to corruption and political influence to carry out their duties effectively, internationally sponsored guards could be called in to help'. See p. 201.

⁷⁶ Interview with Tom Foose, International Rhino Foundation, 24 January 2001.

⁷⁷ Interview with Kes Hilman-Smith, 26 February 2000.

⁷⁸ Interview with Kate Newman, February 2000.

the park was set up at the outset and ongoing problems with control and management of the guards that had little to do with the developmental *versus* protectionist debate. This assessment, however, was not a central element in the discussion about what to do in Garamba. The report itself, as well as the reaction of both sides to it, demonstrate a common lack of expertise among the members of the conservation community. The debate over principles exacerbated the consequences of this lack of expertise by reducing the chance that organisations would think about ways to improve the long run security in the park.⁷⁹

The first problem the report documents was the lack of clear legal status for the WWF – or any INGO – in the park. The WWF had neither demanded – nor received – legal standing as the project began.⁸⁰ Indeed, the only official document on the DRC side providing authority for WWF to operate in the country was a letter from the government dated 1990, long after the project was established, simply allowing WWF to conduct its business in the country, but still not specifying the standing of INGO personnel in the operation of the park. In practice, this meant that there was not a clear chain of command over the security personnel. Officially, the government in Kinshasa hired and fired the personnel, but they were supervised and paid by the expatriate staff from WWF. It is not clear what supervisory role the expatriate staff was authorised for. There was a management committee in place at the park that debated the daily routine but left lines of responsibility and accountability unclear.⁸¹

Deficiencies in clear legal standing are common among donor-funded INGOs, in general; INGOs are eager to gain entry to the field and try to do something – anything. Competing for donor funds often reinforces their desire, based on their commitment to their mission, to gain entry. This often leads INGOs to accept unclear legal arrangements for their presence, however, which leads to an unprofessional working environment as they implement policy in concert with local personnel. This is a particular problem for guards and other security personnel.⁸²

The consequences of this deficiency in Garamba were striking. While competent, experienced and well-motivated senior ICCN personnel were on site, they lacked a command and control structure to effectively manage and translate instructions into action. This was reflected in serious disciplinary problems – like non-reporting for field duty and desertion – but also in the basic structure of the guard force, over one-third of which were past the age of retirement and many others close to retirement age. The assessment concluded that only 40 of the 147 guards in Garamba were fit for extended patrol duty.⁸³

The assessment also argued that while the protection of the northern white rhino required a long-term, routine, tactical law enforcement operation, the park was being run on a shoestring in a crisis management mode – more like the kind of

⁷⁹ I am assuming that if INGOs are devoting resources to security, they would prefer these resources to lead to effective policy. The question of whether effective protection of the rhinos would be 'better' or 'worse' unquestionably depends on one's viewpoint. For analyses sensitive to the human and other trade-offs involved in coercive conservation, see Peluso and Watts, *Violent Environments*.

⁸⁰ Interview with WWF staff member in Washington DC, February 2001. Correspondence with Mike Buser, consultant to WWF, February 2001.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Law Enforcement Field Inspection Report, Garamba National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo, June 1998, p. 8.

organisation one would expect among ethnic or religiously motivated fighters who have the goal of making the world a better place.⁸⁴ This mode of management, the consultant suggested, was not a realistic way to run law enforcement and led to unprofessional forces that were ineffective.⁸⁵ This is also a common problem among conservation projects. INGOs are interested in making the world a better place and used to operating on a shoestring to do whatever they can to improve a situation. This attitude, though, is at odds with clearly articulated, professional standards for security professionals.⁸⁶

The lack of professionalism was reflected in a force that did not specify (or meet) basic operating principles and failed to reach even minimum standards for performance. Some guards were unable to field-strip their weapons, weapons were not clean, guards had no first-aid kits, and there were no procedures for safely carrying and storing weapons. Furthermore, communication systems between the guards and between patrolling guards and headquarters were not established. The communication equipment was not well coordinated – for instance, while radios had multiple channels, the repeater stations had only one.

Without the basic professional infrastructure, the money that had been dedicated to anti-poaching in the park did not build the foundation for a solid and professional force and infrastructure, but allowed the project to operate in a constant state of ‘crisis-management’ so that despite the infusion of resources, the guard force was no better able to perform its duties in 1996 than it had been in the mid-1980s.⁸⁷

The ineffectiveness of the guards was exacerbated by failure to articulate a clear mission. Discussion with senior ICCN staff revealed that although the general idea was clear, ‘to protect the park from poaching’, they could not break this down into more specific missions.⁸⁸ Even the area of operation was not clearly defined; there was confusion among the staff over whether it was the rhino sector or the entire park including the hunting reserves.

The security assessment asserted that the key to effective anti-poaching in Garamba required solving the legal and professional problems – not hiring mercenaries. This requirement cast the choice facing INGOs more starkly. If a clear legal framework is required for effective security, INGOs must either refrain from action in ungoverned territory (violating their mission) or impose such a framework from outside (violating their role). The debate between protectionists and developmentalists did not address this trade-off. Indeed, the consultant argued that both sides misunderstood and dismissed his advice. The WWF refused to even set up a time for him to present the report and focused exclusively on the cost, and the IRF was too concerned with remaining in the park to consider forcing the issue of their legal status.⁸⁹ Though the

⁸⁴ For an argument linking law enforcement to successful conservation, see Aaron G. Bruner, Raymond E. Gullison, Richard E. Rice, and Gustavo A. B. da Fonseca, ‘Effectiveness of Parks in Protecting Tropical Biodiversity’, *Science*, 291 (January 2001).

⁸⁵ ‘Law Enforcement Field Inspection Report, Garamba National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo, June 1998, p. 4.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*; Bruner et al., ‘Effectiveness of Parks’.

⁸⁷ Confidential correspondence with INGO staff, 18 February 2001.

⁸⁸ Law Enforcement Field Inspection Report, Garamba National Park, Democratic Republic of Congo, June 1998, p. 5.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*.

more protectionist IRF and the more developmental WWF chose different responses to the crisis, neither faced the legal and operational problems required to work effectively in insecure territory.

Some of the initial problems in the park can be explained by a lack of expertise in security issues. Those running the park in Garamba both in the field and from headquarters had backgrounds in biology, ecology, and economics. Though no one should doubt these peoples' commitment to (and skill at) the science of saving species, they had less impressive security portfolios – a condition common among INGOs.

The lack of expertise was exacerbated by incentives for both sides of the debate to maintain a commitment to *both* their mission and their role. Though the IRF was willing to engage with coercive forces as a way of doing whatever it could to save the rhinos (including bringing in outside forces or trainers), the organisation was not willing to move outside its role enough to put in place the legal and operational scaffolding required to improve the guards' long-term performance. IRF's activities in Garamba are taking place in a legal vacuum and with a patchwork of arrangements to manage poachers in the park in whatever way looks possible – simultaneously interfacing with Ugandan troops and pushing to get park guards trained in South Africa with UN Foundation funding.⁹⁰ This only continues the crisis management mode that is both ineffective and contributes little to long-term security. It does allow, however, members of the protectionist portion of the conservation community to maintain their commitment to their mission and their role as world saviours.

The developmentalist approach represented by the WWF also missed the point. The WWF's focus on the *expense* of the security, the consultant argued, was a mechanism to avoid facing the real choices in the park. Indeed, the consultant argued that WWF never intended to take his report seriously and was looking for an excuse to make the problem go away.⁹¹ Had WWF availed itself of the opportunity to go over the report, it may have informed the debate over whether WWF should have a set of security guidelines that would force the organisation to think twice before it engaged in a country under unclear legal frameworks – but this approach would have also forced the organisation to take responsibility for its choices in ways that might have called into question other projects or past practices. Maintaining ambiguity allowed WWF more flexibility in pursuing projects – and donor funds – and allows the organisation to continue to fudge its commitment to both its role and its mission – even as it did decide to pull out of the Garamba project.

The reaction to the proposal demonstrates that conservation organisations not only lack expertise on security issues, but also approach the world in a way that is antithetical to the development of professional law enforcement. Part of the problem, then, may have to do with the deeper distinction between the kind of enterprise associated with a successful law enforcement operation and the typical INGO organisation. The commitment to a non-governmental role, the motivation to make the world a better place, and the willingness to do whatever it takes to be

⁹⁰ Background interview with INGO staff, February 2001; interview with Tom Foose, 24 January 2001; <http://www.unesco.org/whc/news/newsUNF091299.htm>

⁹¹ Ibid.

present, all fly in the face of a commitment to clear legal status, and the long-term professional development of a guard force.⁹²

This is consistent with the arguments analysts have made about the motivation of INGOs. Keck and Sikkink, for example, argue that there is a difference between transnational advocacy networks (motivated primarily by principles) and epistemic communities (motivated primarily by shared causal ideas).⁹³ The consequence of this orientation, however, is problematic when INGOs are implementing policy. As INGOs implement policy, they will be judged by their results as well as their motivations.⁹⁴ Often it will be hard to meet the demands of both.

The patterns of decision-making in both organisations suggest that neither are on their way to a decision-making process that generates effective policy – either by deciding that coercive conservation is not something they are willing to do or by devising a strategy to do it well. Though those individuals in WWF most concerned with their proper role seemed the most open to a clear plan for security decision-making, they did not exhibit strong skills in evaluating the security plan, and the need to maintain a commitment to mission eroded their willingness to have guidelines that might preclude some projects. Those most worried about their conservation mission and casting their role as world saviours may be more willing to experiment with innovative coercion in insecure settings, but are likely to be less willing to sacrifice any commitment to their mission or change their mode of operation to ensure a clear security framework.

The costs and benefits of principled actors

It is clear that INGOs accomplish many goals in the world. Even in Garamba, the IRF's funding allows expatriate staff to continue their education of the local population about conservation and to demonstrate the commitment of people around the world to conservation. Similarly, even as the ICCN was rejecting WWF's offer to pay for an assessment to move the rhinos, the local government personnel expressed warm feelings about WWF and its empowerment of them as local governors, and expressed the wish that WWF's involvement would be a model for future interactions between INGOs and the local government.⁹⁵ The effect of conservation INGOS on raising awareness and pressuring governments to consider conservation goals is also well documented.⁹⁶

This case suggests, though, that there may be trade-offs between different capacities and strategies. INGOs, as principled actors, have a hard time shedding their commitment to principles to make a reasoned trade-off when two principles conflict. Even as a debate emerged, both sides avoided the key trade-off at stake for security in the park. Part of their problem had to do with lack of expertise – having

⁹² Background interview with INGO staff, January 2001.

⁹³ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, p. 30.

⁹⁴ Florini, *The Third Force*, p. 214.

⁹⁵ Interview with Mr. Mafuko, Chief Park Warden, Garamba National Park, 24 February 2000; interview with Deborah Snelson, 24 February 2000.

⁹⁶ See for example, Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, ch. 4.

the requisite expertise to evaluate security strategy in a meaningful way is crucial to effective reasoning about conservation in conflict zones. But this expertise is found in former police and military personnel who often have very different attitudes about operating on a shoestring and doing the most with what you have. Furthermore they may hold different values about the relationship between conservation, development, justice, human rights and so forth. The pragmatic thinking associated with security expertise sits uneasily with the idealistic commitment common among INGOs. Even acquiring security expertise, then, may make conservation organisations uncomfortable by causing them to think in ways that some may see as inappropriate.

This is not the first critical analysis of INGO effects.⁹⁷ This case, though, adds an additional angle to bear in mind as we evaluate the increasingly complex role of INGOs in world governance. Organisations set up around (and deriving their authority from) commitments to principles may be less effective when they are required to implement policy amidst conflict. Beyond the particular concerns associated with security, however, the very conditions that draw INGOs into policy implementation in the first place often imply state weakness and require some method of enforcement – and yet the very idea of enforcement falls out of the stated mission and capabilities of these actors. This is not only a problem for conservation organisations. INGOs that work on relief, development, and refugee assistance face a similar dilemma. Any time INGOs work amidst antagonistic or hostile political actors in an uncertain legal and/or security environment, they will face issues of enforcement.

Conclusions

Prevailing analyses of INGOs have focused on their advocacy role, assumed that INGOs are motivated by values and that the monopoly over force lies with the state, and have generally been optimistic about the outcomes associated with INGO efforts. This case suggests, however, that when INGOs implement policy, the control of force is often contested and maximising one value frequently conflicts with another. I have used insights from political psychology and bureaucratic politics to explain how value-motivated actors had difficulty implementing effective policy in this case. These insights can be generalised. When values conflict, we should expect divisions to emerge within issue communities based on uncertainty and the way

⁹⁷ Nancy Peluso, 'Coercing Conservation', in Ronnie Lipschutz and Ken Conca (eds.), *The State and Social Power in Global Environmental Politics* (Columbia, NY: Columbia University Press, 1993), argues that conservation strategies can redistribute power and benefits in ways that override, ignore or collide with customary forms of resource management. In addition, regardless of whether conservation 'works', it strengthens the state to govern *via* the use of force. See especially pp. 51–2. See also the essays in Jyrki Kakonen, *Green Security or Militarized Environment?* (Dartmouth/Aldershot: Brookfield, 1994); Peluso and Watts, *Violent Environments*. For critical analyses of INGO effects in other issue areas, see Sarah Mendelson, 'Democracy Assistance and Political Transition in Russia: Between Success and Failure', *International Security*, 25 (Spring 2001), pp. 68–106; Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine, 'Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas', *International Security*, 21 (Fall 1996), pp. 5–40; Cooley and Ron, 'The NGO Scramble'. See also Edwards and Hulme, *Beyond the Magic Bullet*.

individuals manage the pull of different roles. We should also expect that value-motivated actors will be ill-suited for making pragmatic trade-offs – both because of their intrinsic commitment to principles and the bureaucratic incentives that reinforce this commitment. Incidents of INGO implementation around the world in the last decade – providing relief, development, conservation, and more, should provide ample opportunities for social scientists to test these expectations.

For those more interested in the policy outcomes, these insights also suggest potential courses of action. Neither the principles INGOs ascribe to, nor the bureaucratic incentives that reinforce their importance, are written in stone. Efforts to get INGOs (and the donor governments that increasingly use them to implement policy) to note value conflicts and face issues of enforcement squarely may lead to more effective strategies for global governance.