



## Spill-over effect in media framing: Representations of wildlife conservation in Zimbabwean and international media, 1989–2010



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### ABSTRACT

Myths and metaphors that occur in media frames play an important role in influencing public perceptions of an issue in times of war, political conflict, crisis and disaster. This, in turn, influences policy makers and (inter)national assistance and aid programmes. We investigated whether a metaphoric spill-over of frames used in connection with political events could explain the misrepresentation in the framing of wildlife conservation. Zimbabwe experienced a severe political conflict and economic downturn in 2000 when land reforms took place. We analyzed newspaper articles on Zimbabwe's wildlife conservation published between 1989 and 2010 from newspapers in Zimbabwe, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. We selected three issues about wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe in the local and international media, namely, the ivory ban, rhino protection, and Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources to investigate the spill-over effect. Our results show that in the 1990s, the majority of newspaper articles highlighted that wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe was largely successful. However, two major changes occurred after 2000 following the land reforms in Zimbabwe. First, the international media showed little interest in wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe as evidenced by a sharp decline in published articles and second, the frames changed in the international media with the "political unrest and land reform" blame frame becoming more dominant. This transition in reporting, frames, and low frame parity shows that there was a spill-over effect of political frames into wildlife conservation following Zimbabwe's land reforms in 2000. Metaphoric spill-over effects may thus create myths in the readership, in turn influencing policy-derived actions in a sector that is not or poorly related to the actual disaster.

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### Introduction

Zimbabwe has been a subject of political crisis and economic collapse since the end of the 1990s (Coltart 2008). The country seems nowadays to be mainly known for its extreme land reforms, economic malaise and contested elections. These themes have been the main focus of articles appearing in the different media over the

last years (Ndlela 2005; Shaw 2008). The American Ambassador even declared Zimbabwe a disaster area on several occasions after the year 2000 following the country's land reforms (United States Agency for International Development 2012). Wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe has also been widely reported in the mass media as having suffered from the unstable political situation and economic collapse in the country (Shaw 2008). However, recent scientific studies provide evidence that at least in some state protected areas in Zimbabwe wildlife populations have remained stable or have increased over the past two decades (Dunham et al. 2010; Gandiwa 2013; Gandiwa et al. 2013b; Valeix et al. 2008; Zisadza et al. 2010). This suggests that framing of wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe in the international media to some extent does not reflect reality.

Media studies on the role of media in times of political conflict and crisis (Alozie 2010; Entman 2003; Kolmer & Semetko 2009; Tierney et al. 2006) and natural disaster (Fu et al. 2012;

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Tierney et al. 2006) show that the media often use metaphors that unintentionally misrepresent the situation in ways that confirm prevailing myths – such as looting, social disorganization and deviant behaviour during disaster – despite accumulating counter evidence which shows that in reality social cohesiveness and mechanisms of social control actually increase during disasters, resulting in a lower incidence of deviant behaviour than during non-disaster times (Binu et al. 2008; Gandiwa et al. 2013b; Tierney et al. 2006). This misrepresentation in the media is worrisome because the media are one of the principal arenas within which issues come to the attention of decision makers, interest groups and the public (Barua 2010). The way media choose to frame an issue influences how the readership – including policy makers (Boykoff & Roberts 2007) and national and international donors (Entman 2004; Garner 1996; Kolmer & Semetko 2009) – perceives certain issues and subsequently acts upon it (Callaghan & Schnell 2005; Sun 2011). For nature conservation this could imply that misrepresentation in the international media could lead to reduced international aid and support (e.g., Olsen et al. 2003).

In this paper we address the following question: is there a spill-over effect from frames on the political unrest into the frames of wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe after the land reforms that occurred in 2000? Thus, we define the spill-over effect as the resultant impact of frames from one domain (i.e., the political unrest) triggering an influence on other domain (i.e., wildlife conservation). Identifying such a possible ‘spill-over effect’ is valuable in understanding the dynamics of media framing and the consequences of this, particularly in areas that have experienced unrest or other crises in society. We analyze how issues on wildlife conservation are framed, which frames are dominating the discourse, how these frames changed over time, how these frames related to the framing of the political events in the country, whether these frames reflected the actual state of wildlife conservation at the time.

## Conceptual framework

Myths related to the communication of disasters refer to the often negative, fixed ideas people often seem to have about what happens in a disaster area (Kuttschreuter et al. 2011; Stock 2007; Tierney et al. 2006); they can have a great influence on how certain situations are responded to. For example, news coverage after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in the United States of America (USA) in 2005, was generally sympathetic to victims, but also included instances of violence, looting and crime (Iyengar & Hahn 2007). The “looting” frame greatly exaggerated the incidence and severity of looting and lawlessness, despite evidence to the contrary. Yet, it was accepted as the truth by many influential decision makers. It emerged as the problem frame in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina (Tierney et al. 2006), and resulted in the USA Government starting to treat the crisis in a completely different manner, shifting the focus on creating order rather than giving aid (Tierney et al. 2006).

Framing, a term first coined by Goffman (1974), is an important process through which myths may emerge. According to Goffman (1974), framing is defined as a means to organize experience and enact action in a rather micro-sociological interest in flow of events and acting as staging. Specifically for this study, framing is used in the communication context following Entman (1993, p. 52) who defined framing as: “to select some aspect of a perceived reality and make it more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.” Framing, therefore, refers to how the media, media professionals and their audience make sense of events or issues (Reese 2007). Thus, framing plays an

important role in media representation (Entman 1993; Hallahan 1999; Tuchman 1978) since it defines the boundaries of the debate by placing the event or issue within a certain sphere of meaning (Kruse 2001).

It has been noted that media frames used in one realm (e.g., politics) can influence and spill-over to other societal domains (Graber & Smith 2005; Vliegenthart & Walgrave 2011). In such cases frames used in one domain are used as a metaphor (i.e., a figure of speech that suggests resemblance between essentially unrelated phenomena) for what happens in another domain (Lakoff 1993; Lakoff & Johnson 1981). Metaphors are regularly used by journalists for the purposes of: (i) popularizing, representing and dramatizing issues in order to make issues both newsworthy and interesting for the relevant audiences and (ii) helping people understand unfamiliar and complex issues by making them familiar through shared experiences, and by narrowing the perspective of complex issues (Hellsten 2002; Tierney et al. 2006). When metaphoric spill-over of frames happens in the context of amplification in the media following disasters or crises in one realm (Eckler & Kalyango 2012; Kuttschreuter et al. 2011; Ndlela 2005) it is clear that this may contribute to the creation of myths regarding the other domain. For instance, some metaphors in wildlife conservation include: (i) bushmeat hunting (poaching) resembling looting, and (ii) beneficiaries of the land reform in Zimbabwe being referred to as squatters settling (illegally) in the private and state game reserves, a form of social disorganization that caused many problems for the owners.

The present study focusses on understanding if the (mis-)representation of wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe in the international media could be explained by a possible spill-over effect through getting insights into whether the framing of political issues had influenced the framing in the conservation realm. To get insight into the framing of nature conservation in the national and international media and its underlying assumptions, we will draw on the four functions of frames as defined by Entman (1993) namely (i) defining the problem, (ii) diagnosing the causes, (iii) making moral judgement evaluating the cause and its effects, and (iv) offering remedies and justifies treatments for it. In addition to that, we will also investigate the biases in the media representation of nature conservation by looking into the extent of ‘frame parity’ in the newspaper articles. Frame parity refers to the desired objectivity of the media through highlighting all sides of a story, a condition that most free press prefers (Entman 2004). Last but not least, we will investigate if there are certain discourse coalitions within the national and international media by investigating the ensemble of story lines, the actors that utter these story lines, and the practices that conform to these story lines. Discourse coalitions is defined as ‘the ensemble of a set of story lines, the actors, that utter these story lines and the practices that conform to these story line all organized around a discourse’ (Hajer 1995). The concept of discourse coalitions in this research was used to identify the different groups and relations that play a role in wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe. Discourse coalitions occur because differences and competition causes actors to group together in coalitions to enhance certain discourses and constrain others (Hajer 1993, 1995).

## Historical context

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country located in southern Africa. Colonization started when the British South Africa Company entered the country exploring for minerals in 1889 (Lucas et al. 2011). In 1923 Britain annexed what at that time was called Southern Rhodesia from the British South Africa Company (Lucas et al. 2011). In 1965, the Ian Smith government declared independence, which was neither not recognized by the British Government nor

by the black majority (Onslow 2005). After a liberation struggle, the Lancaster House agreement was signed in 1979, which gave Zimbabwe independence from Britain (Slinn 1980). After the 1980 elections, Robert G. Mugabe became the first Prime Minister as Zimbabwe achieved an internationally recognized independence in 1980. Land has been a major issue in Zimbabwe before and after independence in 1980 (Moyo et al. 2000). Historically, there has been bitter competition for land and resources between black and white farmers in Southern Rhodesia, with the state providing extensive and crucial support to white agriculture (Palmer 1990). A major concern for the Zimbabwe Government after independence was to carry through land reform in the rural areas (Palmer 1990).

After independence, 31 nations and 26 international agencies pledged about \$1.5 billion in economic aid to Zimbabwe that was to be disbursed over a three-year period as of 1981 (Dougherty 1981). Of the amount contributed 94% came from western countries. The USA pledged \$225 million over a three-year period (Chigora 2007). By the end of 1986 the USA had contributed \$380 million. However, in July 1986, the US Government decided to discontinue future bilateral aid to Zimbabwe as a result of a continuing pattern of uncivil and undiplomatic statements and actions by the government of Zimbabwe in the United Nations and elsewhere (Chigora 2007). Full programming was restored in 1988. The Lancaster House agreement made clear that the British/United Kingdom (UK) Government would pay the white farmers that would volunteer to sell their land for market price, thus enabling land transformation (Musemwa & Mushunje 2011; Nmoma 2008). However, in 1997 British Prime Minister Tony Blair declared that his government had no intention of honouring former Prime Minister John Major's commitment to finance land redistribution (Nmoma 2008).

In February 2000, mass land occupations on large-scale commercial farms and private-owned wildlife reserves started in Zimbabwe (Willems 2004) following the government loss of the 1999 constitutional referendum, ahead of the 2000 parliamentary and 2002 presidential elections (Ndlela 2005). A law was passed in 2002 allowing the government to pursue the fast track land reform programme (Moyo & Yeros 2005). Fast track refers to the speedily nature in which the land reform process was conducted in the identification of at least five million hectares of land for compulsory acquisition and resettlement. This was condemned by the British Government and others, and sanctions were imposed on Zimbabwe by the European Union and USA. Loans and economic aid from many donors were limited or completely withdrawn (Chigora 2007; Logan 2007). This resulted in food shortages, high rates of unemployment, high inflation and economic collapse (Hanke & Kwok 2009; Ndlela 2005). Also the 2008 elections were controversial, and led to a power sharing agreement—referred to as the Global Political Agreement (Raftopoulos 2010). In 2009, the US Dollar, Rand and Euro replaced the Zimbabwean dollar ending hyper-inflation (Chingono 2010). The situation in Zimbabwe has been described as a disaster on several occasions over the last decade (Coltart 2008). Other sources have described the situation in Zimbabwe as a humanitarian crisis (Human Rights Watch 2002).

## Methods

### Research approach

Given the political turmoil in Zimbabwe, this country was considered an interesting case for studying spill-over effects. We approached our case study from a holistic, historical and comparative perspective. A holistic perspective implies an effort to shed

light on the connections between and interactions of various phenomena in a greater whole. A historical perspective intends to uncover how events and phenomena in the past affect following events and phenomena. A comparative perspective enables refinement of interpretations produced in a case study, as well as the concepts and frameworks that were used to create interpretations (cf. Blok 1977). In this study, a case is used as a synonym for “site” or “setting”, the semi-bounded location which is considered to have potential for illustrating the focus of the research interest (Haverland & Yanow 2012). Thus, we use a single-site case study (Yanow & Freitas 2008) and adopt an analysis driven by the desire to learn more about the multiple social realities that characterize both the setting and its actors (Haverland & Yanow 2012), both in the local and international newspapers.

The holistic perspective, lead us to deal with context of how wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe as a whole was generally framed in the media over the study period. Specifically, the holistic perspective allowed us to evaluate the interactions between the following key components of wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe: (i) ivory ban, (ii) rhino protection and (iii) wildlife conservation policy (Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources – CAMPFIRE). CAMPFIRE was taken to represent wildlife conservation policy since this was the most covered wildlife issue under the general wildlife conservation component in Zimbabwe, thus showing the importance of local people involvement in wildlife conservation. The historical perspective, lead us to follow the framing of wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe over a period of more than 20 years. We focussed on newspaper articles including the subject of wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe, published between 1989 and 2010. The year 1989 was the starting point because this is the year in which the ivory ban was placed by the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) (Abensperg-Traun 2009) and also the year in which CAMPFIRE was implemented in Zimbabwe (Child 1996; Taylor 2009). More detailed description of the CAMPFIRE programme are provided elsewhere (Child 2000; Gandiwa et al. 2013a; Martin 1986). Moreover, rhino protection was also an important component of wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe by 1989. We included articles up to 2010 to cover the period after the fast track land reforms after the passing of the land reform bill by the Parliament of Zimbabwe in 2002. We divided the data in two periods, i.e., 1989–1999 and 2000–2010 in order to compare the media frames before and after the land forms that occurred in 2000.

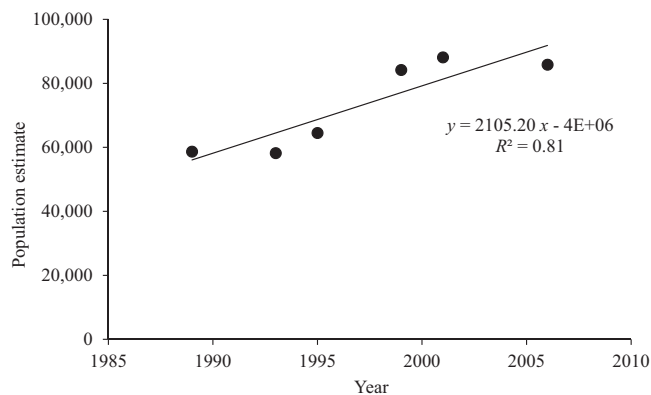
Last but not least, we compared newspapers in different countries in order to see whether there were differences and similarities in framing wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe (in particular on ivory ban, rhino protection and CAMPFIRE) and between these countries in the articles published overtime. Three countries were selected for this perspective. First, Zimbabwe, which was expected to report mostly positively on wildlife conservation practices in the country. Second, the UK because of its colonial history and present-day relationship with Zimbabwe, and third, the USA because of its involvement and support of Zimbabwe's wildlife conservation practices and other close economic and political links. From these three countries, a total of seven newspapers which published articles covering the study period were selected: UK (The Guardian, The Independent and The Times), USA (The Miami Herald, The New York Times and The Washington Times) and Zimbabwe (The Herald). The Herald (Zimbabwe) was chosen as it was the only newspaper in Zimbabwe which published relevant articles on wildlife conservation throughout the study period. All our newspapers can be classified as ‘generalist’ papers in the sense that they cover a broad range of environmental issues and also all are daily newspapers. However, it is likely that there are differences in the target audience of the newspapers since they have varying funding agencies, which may also influence the way issues are framed.

### Data collection and analysis

Available data on elephant populations in Zimbabwe between 1989 and 2010 were collated from published sources (Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management 1996; Dunham & Mackie 2002; Government of Zimbabwe 2010). Data on rhino populations and rhino poaching in Zimbabwe and South Africa between 1989 and 2010 were collected from published sources (Lindsey & Taylor 2011; Milliken & Shaw 2012), the World Wildlife Fund Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority whereas data on revenue accrued from CAMPFIRE (i.e., money from sport hunting, selling of wildlife products and/or photographic safaris) were collected from the CAMPFIRE Association of Zimbabwe. However, data on national elephant populations in Zimbabwe and CAMPFIRE revenue were only available for the period 1989 to 2006. We performed simple linear regression analyses using SPSS version 19 for Windows (SPSS Inc., Chicago, Illinois) to determine trends in elephant population, rhino population and numbers of rhinos poached between 1989 and 2010. Rhino data were  $\log_{10}(x+1)$  transformed prior to regression analyses to achieve normality. Year was the independent variable and elephant and rhino data the dependent variables. For rhino (transformed) and CAMPFIRE revenue data, we performed independent samples two-tailed *t*-tests with unequal sizes to determine if there were differences before and after 2000.

Moreover, data on published articles on wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe were collected using two methods. First, for the UK and USA newspapers, data were gathered using the online LexisNexis® Academic database. Three main key words used for the online search were Zimbabwe AND Wildlife AND Conservation. Second, for The Herald newspaper (Zimbabwe), data were manually gathered through collecting hard copy newspaper clippings which discussed wildlife conservation from the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority Library in Harare in May 2011. Editorials, forums, opinions and/or views were excluded from the frame analyses as these are commonly subjective. Overall, a total of 650 articles were used for this study.

The selected newspaper articles were read and coded by the first two authors, based on the main contents of the article. From this the following three issues identified under the holistic perspective emerged as key issues: (i) the ivory ban, (ii) rhino protection and (iii) wildlife conservation policy (CAMPFIRE). These issues were: (i) mostly published in newspapers in all three countries, (ii) important in showing innovative ways in animal species protection, and reducing illegal hunting and trade in wildlife products, and (iii) important in revenue generation for wildlife conservation and local community development. Then Entman's (1993, 2004) four functions of a frame were used in each article in order to identify the different types of frames that appeared in the articles. According to Entman (1993) four functions can be found in fully grown frames. The first function is that it defines the problem, secondly it diagnoses, identifying the forces that create the problem, thirdly, it offers solutions and justifies treatment for it and finally, it makes moral judgement, evaluating the cause and its effects (Entman 1993). The articles were further classified for frame parity. In the case of the rhino protection and CAMPFIRE issues, the articles were labelled as showing frame parity or not. On the ivory ban issue, six categories were chosen: in favour of the ban (no frame parity), opposing the ban (no frame parity), neutral (frame parity), neutral leaning towards opposing the ban (some frame parity), neutral leaning towards in favour of the ban (some frame parity), and neutral but against Zimbabwe (some frame parity). Discourse coalitions were closely examined through careful review of newspaper articles on possible coalitions' actions and positions regarding wildlife conservation.



**Fig. 1.** Trend in Zimbabwe's elephant population estimates from 1989 to 2006. Source: Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management (1996), Dunham and Mackie (2002) and Government of Zimbabwe (2010).

### Results

We first present the trend analysis of elephant population, rhino population, rhino poaching and CAMPFIRE revenue in Zimbabwe between 1989 and 2010; then the quantitative overview of the entire study period for the three study issues, followed by a frame analysis for the each of the two periods (1989–1999 and 2000–2010).

#### Trends in elephant, rhino populations and CAMPFIRE revenue

The elephant population in Zimbabwe significantly increased between 1989 and 2006 ( $F_{1,4} = 16.66$ ,  $P = 0.015$ ; Fig. 1). Moreover, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a high rate of rhino poaching was recorded in Zimbabwe, mostly from cross-border poachers. Thereafter, poaching was reduced due to the establishment of rhino intensive protection zones and implementation of dehorning programmes. Rhino poaching resurfaced in Zimbabwe after 2000. Compared to South Africa, Zimbabwe recorded worse losses between 1989 and 2010, both in absolute and relative terms (Table 1). However, rhino populations ( $R^2 = 0.04$ ,  $F_{1,18} = 0.73$ ,  $P = 0.405$ ) did not decline and numbers of poached rhinos ( $R^2 = 0.01$ ,  $F_{1,20} = 0.002$ ,  $P = 0.962$ ) in Zimbabwe did not change significantly between 1989 and 2010. Furthermore, the rhino population ( $t = -2.03$ ,  $df = 18$ ,  $P = 0.057$ ) and number of poached rhinos ( $t = -0.80$ ,  $df = 20$ ,  $P = 0.432$ ) in Zimbabwe did not differ significantly before and after 2000. In contrast, the rhino population ( $R^2 = 0.96$ ,  $F_{1,20} = 540.72$ ,  $P < 0.0001$ ) and number of poached rhinos ( $R^2 = 0.50$ ,  $F_{1,20} = 20.10$ ,  $P < 0.0001$ ) in South Africa have shown a steady increase between 1989 and 2010.

The revenue accrued in the CAMPFIRE programmes in Zimbabwe between 1989 and 2006 are shown in Fig. 2. The peak in CAMPFIRE revenue in 2003 was associated with the final funding by many donor agencies before they withdrew their funding. Consequently, a very large decline in CAMPFIRE revenue was recorded in 2004 and 2005. However, average CAMPFIRE revenues did not significantly differ before and after 2000 ( $t = -2.00$ ,  $df = 16$ ,  $P = 0.062$ ).

#### Wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe, 1989–2010

##### Ivory ban

In all three countries the ivory ban seemed to have played an important role. In the UK, Zimbabwe often did not play an active role in the frames but was only mentioned. The Herald provided the clearest frames on Zimbabwe's position and in these articles Zimbabwe always played a central role throughout the years. Peaks in article frequencies co-occurred in USA and UK, and these were

**Table 1**

Trends in rhino (both black and white) populations (on both private and state land), numbers and percentages of rhinos poached annually between 1989 and 2010 in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Notes: n.a.–not available; dash (–) denotes not applicable.

Country	Zimbabwe			South Africa		
	Year	Population estimate	Poached	Percentage poached	Population estimate	Poached
1989	1900	126	6.6	5410	0	0.0
1990	n.a.	172	–	5554	14	0.3
1991	n.a.	153	–	5828	5	0.1
1992	585	105	17.9	6116	18	0.3
1993	462	103	22.3	6820	14	0.2
1994	473	0	0.0	7336	27	0.4
1995	484	1	0.2	7524	14	0.2
1996	495	0	0.0	7670	6	0.1
1997	506	0	0.0	8100	6	0.1
1998	550	0	0.0	8410	12	0.1
1999	594	0	0.0	8580	13	0.2
2000	671	3	0.4	8800	12	0.1
2001	742	2	0.3	9450	9	0.1
2002	836	2	0.2	10,400	25	0.2
2003	786	42	5.3	12,470	22	0.2
2004	812	25	3.1	11,310	12	0.1
2005	860	10	1.2	14,390	17	0.1
2006	870	21	2.4	16,490	36	0.2
2007	904	38	4.2	16,700	13	0.1
2008	780	164	21.0	18,750	83	0.4
2009	724	39	5.4	19,810	122	0.6
2010	717	52	7.3	20,400	333	1.6
Total poached	–	1058	–	–	813	–

Source: Lindsey and Taylor (2011), Milliken and Shaw (2012), World Wildlife Fund Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority.

encompassed by the peaks in *The Herald* (Zimbabwe), in particular in 1989 which was the start of the ivory ban, but also in 1997 and 1999, when the first international ivory sale after the ban was allowed (Fig. 3). As from 2000, the political situation started to play a central role in many of the articles. In the USA the ivory ban subject generally disappeared from the newspapers after 2002. In the UK, Zimbabwe's role in the ivory ban became smaller in the late 1990s but it did continue to produce a small number of articles and frames on Zimbabwe's position. The peak in the UK newspapers in 2001 was linked to the CITES meeting in Nairobi whereas the peak in 2008 was linked to a CITES meeting, this time in Geneva, Switzerland, where an ivory sale was approved during this meeting. In Zimbabwe, the majority of articles on the trade in ivory were published in the 1990s.

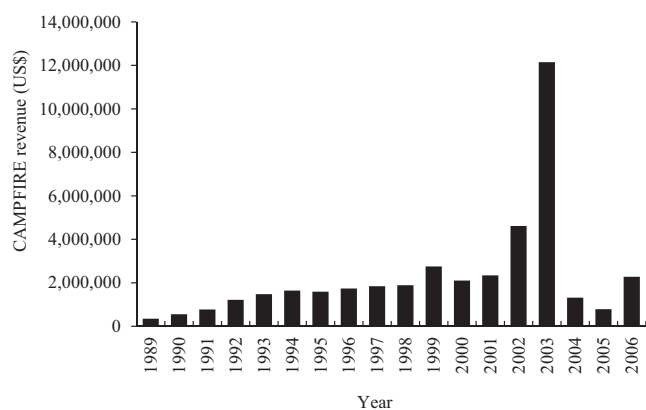
### Rhino protection

In all three countries the majority of articles on the rhino issues were published in the beginning of the 1990s, dropped in the following decade, and increased again after 2005 (Fig. 4). The increase of articles in the 1990s was associated with the start of rhino

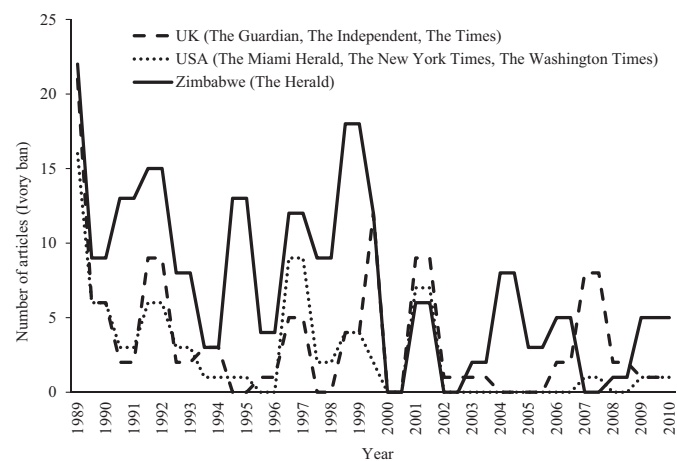
dehorning programmes, creation of rhino protection areas, and the adoption of the “shoot-to-kill” policy in Zimbabwe. The disappearance of rhino articles between 1997 and 2006 was associated to the overall good protection of rhinos in the country. However, the rhino issue reappeared in the UK and Zimbabwe newspapers as from 2007, following increased rhino poaching in Zimbabwe. The UK and *The Herald* (Zimbabwe) published more articles compared to the USA newspapers.

### Wildlife conservation policy (CAMPFIRE)

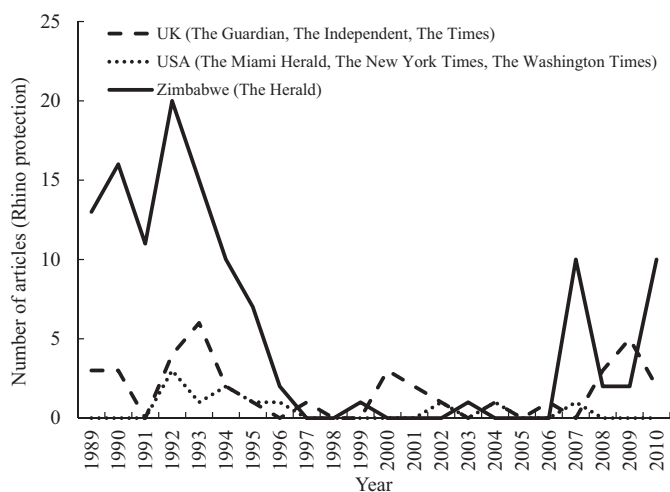
In the UK, Zimbabwe's wildlife conservation policy played the smallest role; the issue was never the main subject in the articles. In the USA more in-depth frames surfaced probably because the USA was the main donor of CAMPFIRE and also more lead articles were published on the issue. In Zimbabwe a substantial number of articles were published on the topic throughout the years, all of which focused on CAMPFIRE. In all three countries the majority of the



**Fig. 2.** Trends in Zimbabwe's CAMPFIRE revenue accrued between 1989 and 2006. Source: CAMPFIRE Association of Zimbabwe.



**Fig. 3.** Trends in sum of articles of all newspapers per country focusing on ivory ban, and featuring Zimbabwe, in the United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA) and Zimbabwe newspapers between 1989 and 2010.



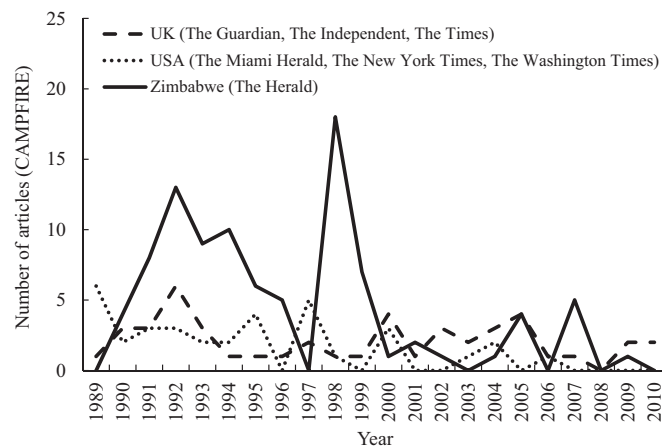
**Fig. 4.** Trends in the total number of published articles focusing on rhino protection and Zimbabwe in the United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA) and Zimbabwe newspapers between 1989 and 2010.

articles were published in the 1990s. The peaks in the Zimbabwe's articles were associated with the ivory sales (1998 and 2007) and the revenues received by the local communities from CAMPFIRE (1992, 1994 and 2005) (Fig. 5).

#### Frame analysis of wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe, 1989–2010

##### Frames on ivory ban

Between 1989 and 1999: in all three countries the main frame that surfaced on articles on trade in ivory featuring Zimbabwe was the “opposing the ban” frame, e.g., “Southern African states, such as Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa, have already declared their opposition to a ban, as their stocks of elephants are rising, allowing profitable culling for ivory, meat and leather” (The Independent London, 10 October 1989, N. Cater). In all three countries two supporting frames on opposing the ivory ban surfaced: the “too many elephants” frame, referring to the argument that some countries in southern Africa including Zimbabwe had too many elephants: “The country is bursting at its environmental seams at a time when much of the world is expressing alarm that the African elephant is on its way to extinction” (The Miami Herald, 5 October 1989, R.T. Knight, Ridder News Service). The other frame was the “loss of income” or “income will be used for conservation by local people” frame, referring to



**Fig. 5.** Trends in the number of published articles focusing on Zimbabwe's wildlife conservation policy (CAMPFIRE), in the United Kingdom (UK), United States of America (USA) and Zimbabwe newspapers between 1989 and 2010.

the loss of income for conservation and local people because of the ivory ban. Overall, there were no differences in frames that were noted between the newspapers from the three countries between 1989 and 1999.

After 2000, the majority of the earlier frames disappeared from the articles in the international papers and one overall blame frame, supported by sub-frames, started to dominate articles: the “political unrest and land reform” blame frame. Zimbabwe's political situation in general and its fast track land reform in particular were blamed for the deteriorating situation for wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe. For example: “The UN rejected a request from Zimbabwe and Zambia to sell ivory under similar arrangements. Delegates said they were concerned that the two countries could not properly monitor ivory sales because of corruption and political instability” (Washington Post, 13 November 2002, Reuters).

##### Frames on rhino protection

Between 1989 and 1999: in the articles on rhino protection and Zimbabwe, all newspapers framed the same main problem, i.e., the near extinction of the rhino, for example: “The rhinoceros is one of the world's most endangered species, with only 9,000 left in the whole of Africa...” (The Independent London, 12 March 1992, T. McCarthy). The main cause for the near extinction of the rhino was attributed to poaching: “At the heart of the debate (how to save the rhino and elephant from extinction) lays the problem of poachers” (The Guardian, 4 September 1990).

This frame came with different solutions or protection frames. Three dominant protection frames surfaced in all three countries. First, a “war” frame, accompanied by the “shoot-to-kill” frame given as a protection measure to stop the poaching of the rhino, for example: “In some regions such as the Zambezi Valley dividing Zimbabwe and Zambia, it involves a shoot-to-kill war between poachers and game officials” (The Washington Post, 9 February 1992, S. Taylor). Second, the “dehorning” protection frame, this conservation measure started to surface as a frame around 1992: “Zimbabwe's game warden's start a huge campaign today to dehorn up to 300 black rhino's in a desperate bid to save them from the guns of the poachers” (The Independent London, 1 June 1992, M. Cole). These “war” and “dehorning” protection frames surfaced in all three countries and played an important role as ways of rhino protection in the beginning of the 1990s. The “dehorning” frame disappeared from the articles after a few years in all three countries. A third conservation frame that surfaced in all three countries was the “trade in rhino horn” frame, referring to a conservation measure by the Zimbabwe Government which was criticized in the UK and USA.

Differences emerged too. First, in Zimbabwe it appeared as if rhino protection was more or less under control, whereas in the international newspapers a constant reference was made to the severity of the situation. Second, frames in the USA and Zimbabwe seemed to “personalize” the story more than the UK: names of people involved in the protection of the rhinos were mentioned in the USA and Zimbabwe, but not in the UK.

After 2000, there was a complete turnaround on the issue of rhino poaching in Zimbabwe after the mostly positive frames that were published in the 1990s in both the UK and USA. Similarly, the “political unrest and land reform” blame frame became dominant. For example: “Six months of violent land invasions in Zimbabwe have opened the door to a wave of poaching that has endangered rare animals in a nation that until recently has been acclaimed as one of Africa's most scrupulous defenders of wildlife” (Washington Post, 27 May 2000, R. Herbert).

##### Frames on wildlife conservation policy (CAMPFIRE)

Between 1989 and 1999: in both the UK and USA a similar main frame surfaced on CAMPFIRE, namely the “sustainable use of wildlife” frame. This frame was associated with two sub-frames.

**Table 2**  
Summary of frames that appeared in the study newspaper articles for the period 1989–1999 and 2000–2010 on wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe.

Issue	Period and Frames	
	1989–1999	2000–2010
Ivory ban	(i) Opposing the ban (ii) Too many elephants (iii) Loss of income/income will be used for conservation by local people (iv) Increase in poaching (v) Us vs. them	Frames that appeared on wildlife conservation in international newspapers: (i) Political unrest and land reform  (ii) Blaming the international media (iii) Us vs. them
Rhino protection	(i) Near extinction of the rhino (ii) War (iii) Shoot-to-kill (iv) Dehorning (v) Trade in rhino horn (vi) Illegal possession of rhino horn and trade (vii) Five-year sentence or big fine	
Wildlife conservation policy (CAMPFIRE)	(i) Sustainable use of wildlife (ii) Human–wildlife conflict (iii) Income for rural communities (iv) Benefits from CAMPFIRE (v) Us vs. them	

First, the “human–elephant conflict” sub-frame, for example: “Mr. Mandizvidza is far too scared of elephants, which kill at least one person a year in this district 100 miles north of Harare, to stay up all night banging a pot to drive them away” (The New York Times, 12 April 1997, S. Daley). Second, the “income for rural communities” sub-frame, for example: “Zimbabwe is helping to pioneer this. It gives communities the legal right to manage the wildlife in their areas, as long as they show that they can do it. The communities then work out their own ways of profiting from it, in consultation with the wildlife department. As the communities benefit from the wildlife, they take care to conserve it: poaching has fallen dramatically” (The Independent London, 10 May 1998, G. Lean). These frames showed why Zimbabwe’s wildlife conservation policy was necessary and working. In Zimbabwe similar frames were found: “people should benefit from their natural resources” and “wildlife is a nuisance.”

Some differences were noted between the newspapers from the three countries. The articles and frames in the USA were more detailed than in the UK. In Zimbabwe, the articles were typically very small scale and locally oriented; this caused many different frames to occur that did not surface in the international newspapers. The main frame in Zimbabwe was the “benefits from CAMPFIRE” frame, reporting how participants of CAMPFIRE benefit from the programme. For instance: “Beitbridge Rural District Council has distributed US\$28,000, part of the CAMPFIRE proceeds from natural resources management last year. . .” (The Herald, Zimbabwe, 19 September 2009, Herald Reporter). Moreover, in both the USA and Zimbabwe, some articles “personalized” the issue by naming the person or communities that benefited from CAMPFIRE or suffered from wildlife. In the UK newspapers no reference was made to a person or community.

After 2000, the “political unrest and land reform” blame frame also became dominant in the articles on CAMPFIRE. Although the state-owned wildlife reserves were not officially included in the fast track land reforms, some areas were affected at least

according to the articles. For example, in the articles on CAMPFIRE in the UK newspapers, the following quote refers to the consequences of the inclusion of some of the wildlife reserves in the fast track land resettlement. In the case of Gonarezhou National Park, southern Zimbabwe: “It was disastrous for the park: wild animals were slaughtered, bush and trees burnt for cultivation of crops and building of houses, and wildlife habitat destroyed. Nor was it particularly beneficial for the people: the soil where they settled was poor, rainfall was minimal and the mixing of cattle and wildlife exposed both to diseases such as foot and mouth” (The Guardian, 3 April 2002, L. McGregor).

Overall, not all three issues showed the change in the frames equally clear. In the articles on the ivory ban in the UK and USA, the change only showed in one or two articles. In the USA, few articles with the ivory ban issue were published between 2000 and 2010. The change of frames in newspapers in both countries became clearer in the articles on the rhino and CAMPFIRE issues. Table 2 shows the summary of main frames before and after 2000.

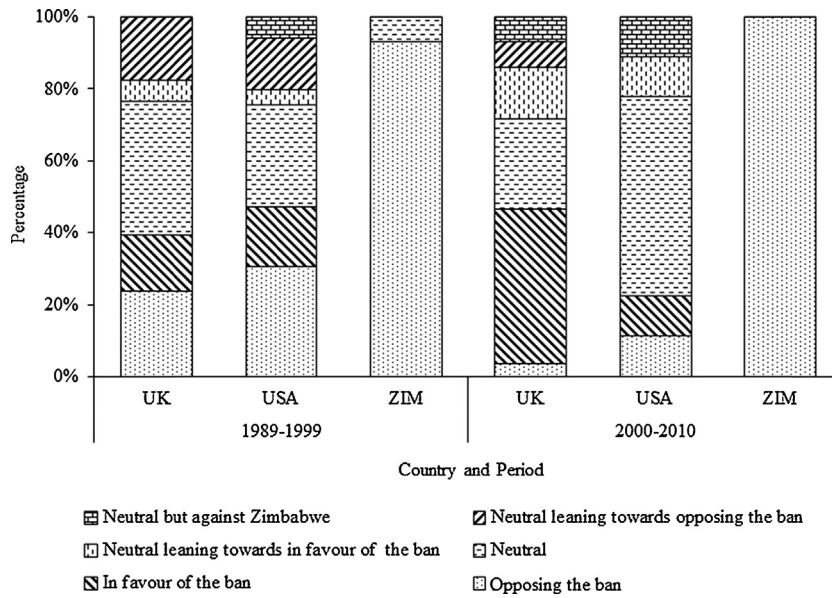
#### *Discourse coalitions, blame frames and us vs. them frames, 1989–2010*

Between 1989 and 1999: in all three countries, the articles on the ivory ban and CAMPFIRE showed the us vs. them frame, i.e., “utilizers vs. protectionists”, hence two discourse coalitions on the ivory ban and CAMPFIRE, respectively. These two discourse coalitions reflect two different ways of wildlife conservation policies: the protection of wildlife as a way of conservation, “protectionism”, and the utilization of wildlife as a way of conservation, “utilitarianism.” For example: “On the face of it, this is a head-on collision between those who believe that only drastic measures can save the elephant from extinction in the face of a voracious ivory trade, and those who argue that an all-out ban on killing would in reality put some subsistence economies at even greater risk. Members of the latter group also hotly contest the extent to which the species is beleaguered” (Times London, 2 October 1989, J. Raath and A. Franks).

USA and Zimbabwe’s articles showed a strong preference for the utilitarian discourse, particularly in the beginning of the 1990s, in which Zimbabwe played a prominent role. In these articles blame frames surfaced against Kenya’s preservation policy in the 1990s. “Somebody is taking away something that belongs to us. Kenya failed to manage its elephants, Tanzania failed and now it is we who are being punished” (Cde. Ephraim Chafesuka, Chairman of the Guruve District Council) (The Herald, Zimbabwe, 3 October 1989, A. Raphael). The similar discourse coalitions in the two issues can be explained by an overlap between these two issues. Ivory provides income for CAMPFIRE, and so does hunting, both of which do not fit in the “protectionist” philosophy of wildlife protection. In contrast to the CAMPFIRE and ivory ban articles, no discourse contrasts surfaced in the articles on rhino in any of the countries. Moreover, although newspapers frame ideas against the shoot-to-kill policy (as part of frame parity outlined below), this did not lead to a coalition.

Between 2000 and 2010, the USA and UK media reduced the parity in their framing of Zimbabwe: the articles no longer focused on Zimbabwe as an example of a state with good wildlife conservation policy or practices in the international newspapers. They focused instead on the negative effect that land reform had on wildlife conservation. In Zimbabwe, the discourse on the ivory ban remained the same between 2000 and 2010. For example: “. . . while countries, such as Kenya, were clearly losing the battle for conservation of the elephant due to inadequate investment in anti-poaching operations, the four SADC states have increasing animal population” (Mr. Stephen Kasere, CAMPFIRE Director) (The Herald, Zimbabwe, 20 March 2000, Herald Reporter).

One other blame frame occurred in 2010, in which the Zimbabwean Government blamed the international media, western



**Fig. 6.** Contribution of published newspaper articles to frame parity on the ivory ban issue. Notes: UK – United Kingdom, USA – United States of America and ZIM – Zimbabwe. Number of newspaper articles: 1989–1999 (UK = 51, USA = 49, ZIM = 126) and 2000–2010 (UK = 28, USA = 9, ZIM = 42).

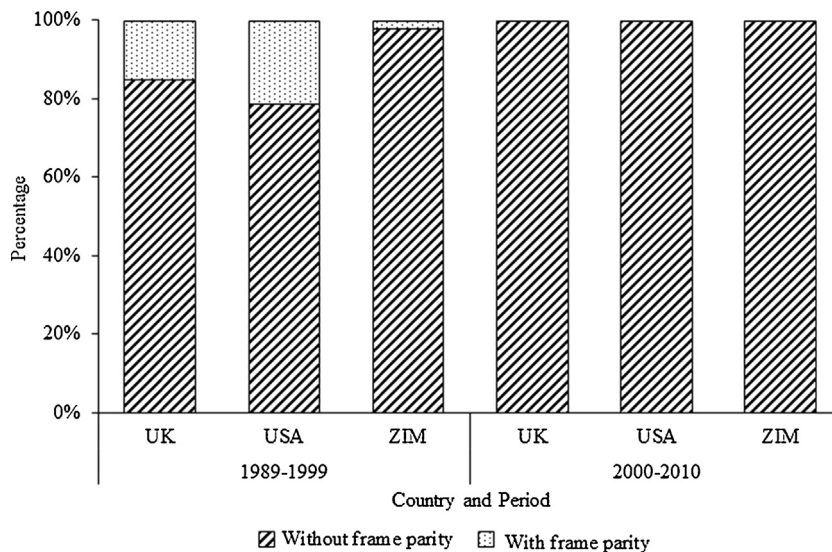
governments and non-governmental organizations for bringing negative reports about Zimbabwe wildlife management in the media. For example: "...the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species should realize that Zimbabwe has two faces: that of what is happening on the ground and that what is peddled by hostile foreign media" (The Herald, Zimbabwe, 10 February 2010, Herald Reporter). This resulted in an "us vs. them" frame.

*Frame parity, 1989–2010*

The articles on the ivory ban from the UK produced the most frame parity, followed by the USA. Zimbabwe showed the least frame parity, particularly after 2000. Almost all Zimbabwe's articles solely produced frames opposing the ivory ban. The majority of the USA articles opposed the ban, but showed more frame parity than in the articles in Zimbabwe (Fig. 6). The UK showed the most frame parity with many articles producing frames and counter frames for

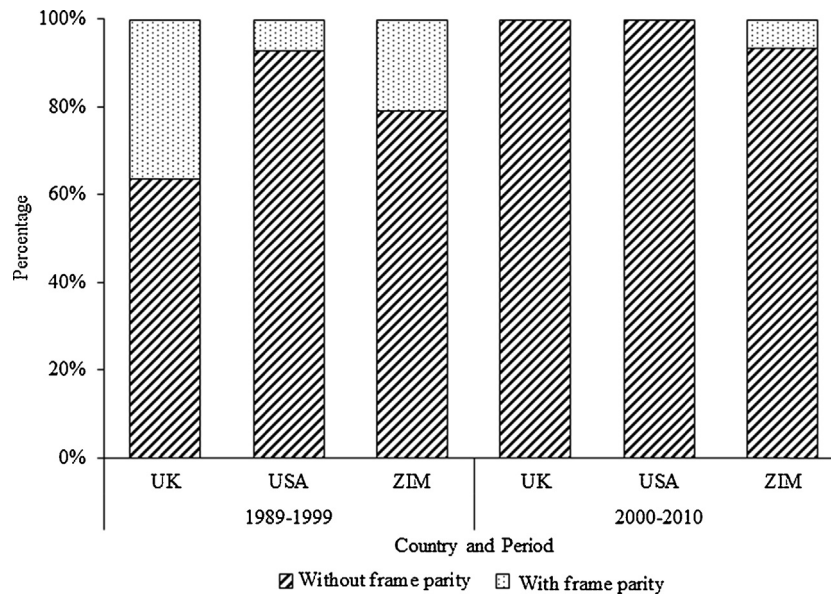
each of the discourses, for instance: "The arguments for and against banning the ivory trade should be judged by one criterion only. That is: which policy is most likely to save the African elephant from extinction" (Times London, 12 October 1989, J. Dettmer). In contrast, lack of frame parity was evident in the following quote: "...if you remove the elephant (from international trade), you kill us." Dr. Willi Nduku, Director of National Parks and Wildlife Management" (The Herald, Zimbabwe, 11 October 1989, Herald Reporter).

UK and USA newspapers did produce some frame parity on articles on the rhino issue between 1989 and 1999 (Fig. 7). These newspapers produced counter frames for the "dehorning of the rhino" frame, for example: "They claim it is inhumane, and they point out that sometimes poachers still kill dehorned rhino's..." (The Washington Post, 2 April 1995, R. Slusser) and for the "shoot-to-kill" protection frames: "But what nobody can justify is the present Zimbabwe's Government's shoot to kill strategy against poachers: some 57 poachers were killed" (The Guardian, 4 September 1990).



**Fig. 7.** Contribution of published newspaper articles to frame parity on rhino protection in Zimbabwe. Notes: UK–United Kingdom, USA–United States of America and ZIM–Zimbabwe. Number of newspaper articles: 1989–1999 (UK = 20, USA = 14, ZIM = 95) and 2000–2010 (UK = 18, USA = 4, ZIM = 25).





**Fig. 8.** Contribution of published newspaper articles to frame parity on CAMPFIRE in Zimbabwe. Notes: UK – United Kingdom, USA – United States of America and ZIM – Zimbabwe. Number of newspaper articles: 1989–1999 (UK = 22, USA = 28, ZIM = 81) and 2000–2010 (UK = 23, USA = 7, ZIM = 15).

In contrast, Zimbabwe produced the least frame parity, except for two articles on the rhino horn trade, including: “. . . the resumption of legal rhino horn trading would make it almost impossible to control the trade in poached horn, especially in Asia” (The Herald, Zimbabwe, 30 April 1991, Herald Reporter). However, after 2000, the majority of articles that appeared in the UK and USA newspapers on rhino protection in Zimbabwe lost frame parity, as the articles became one sided with no counter frames being produced (Fig. 7). Only the “political unrest and land reform” blame frame remained in the UK and USA. Similarly, the Zimbabwean newspaper lost frame parity on rhino protection articles.

In the CAMPFIRE articles all three countries’ newspapers showed some frame parity, particularly between 1989 and 1999 (Fig. 8). Zimbabwe showed some frame parity when framing the problems with CAMPFIRE even after 2000. The UK had the most frame parity in the beginning of the 1990s, when both discourses were framed quite clearly. For example, in the following quote from Richard Leakey, the then Director of Kenya’s Wildlife Service: “He (Richard Leakey) is scathing about Zimbabwe, where culling and licensed shooting by amateur hunters have already been introduced” (The Independent, 26 October 1992, K. Graves). The USA showed the least frame parity on CAMPFIRE issues before 2000. The majority of the articles showed a clear preference for Zimbabwe’s wildlife conservation policy and hardly any other or critical frames were produced. However, after 2000, all articles that appeared in the UK and USA newspapers on CAMPFIRE lost frame parity, as the articles became one sided with no counter frames being produced (Fig. 8). Only the “political unrest and land reform” blame frame remained in the UK and USA. On the other hand, only the Zimbabwean newspaper showed some frame parity on CAMPFIRE after 2000.

## Discussion

We started this research by wondering if the misrepresentation of wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe in the international media could be explained by a possible spill-over effect. In particular, if the framing of political issues had influenced the framing of wildlife conservation leading to possible metaphors and myths in relation to wildlife conservation. Our research showed indeed the framing of political issues spilled over in the framing of wildlife

conservation was then metaphorically represented as a disaster or crisis, despite empirical evidence to the contrary. Hard data considering two iconic wildlife species, the elephant population in Zimbabwe significantly increased whereas the rhino population remained stable despite severe poaching between 1989 and 2010. Recent evidence suggests that this is due to law enforcement in state-owned wildlife reserves, for example in Gonarezhou National Park, which was strengthened after 2004 following the structural reforms in the wildlife authority in Zimbabwe and which likely helped reduce the level of illegal wildlife exploitation (Gandiwa et al. 2013a,b). However, in the international media, it appears as if there has been massive decline of wildlife across Zimbabwe (Shaw 2008). Although some articles attempted to make a distinction between state-owned wildlife reserves which were less affected by the land reforms and the private-owned game reserves which were largely negatively affected by the land reforms since 2000 (Lindsey et al. 2011, 2013), the majority of the articles did not. Moreover, although CAMPFIRE revenue did not change significantly before and after 2000, a decline in CAMPFIRE revenue was recorded between 2004 and 2005 following the withdrawal of donor support from Zimbabwe.

In the 1990s, the majority of the newspaper articles appeared to agree that wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe was successful and Zimbabwe was also seen as one of the leading countries in wildlife conservation. After 2000, the international media showed little interest in wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe as evidenced by the decline in published articles but the few articles that were published framed wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe as unsuccessfully making explicit references to the internal politics. Our results showed that after 2000, the focus of the articles on wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe particularly in the UK and USA newspapers shifted to the political situation in the country, and particularly on the suffering of people and wildlife poaching. Consequently, Zimbabwe was no longer seen as a good example or leader in wildlife conservation and most of the blame was given to the political unrest and land reforms in the country. This demonstrates a spill-over effect in international newspapers on Zimbabwe’s wildlife conservation.

This appears akin to a spill-over effect following a natural disaster. Current disaster literature, which primarily focuses on natural disasters, seems to agree on the fact that spill-over of frames does

occur in the media in times of natural disasters and that this can influence how a disaster is addressed and handled (Binu et al. 2008; Goltz 1984; Stock 2007). For instance, one frame contributing to myth formation that appears to be playing a prominent role in the disaster literature is “looting” (Barsky 2006; Goltz 1984; Quarantelli 1994; Tierney et al. 2006). In the present research, “looting” seemed to appear in the frames not in the traditional way, but the bush equivalent, i.e., poaching for ivory, rhino horns or bushmeat. Another frame that contributed to myth formation that appeared to be playing a role was the frame of ‘social disorganization’ or ‘self-interested reactions’ leading to the disappearance of social cohesion in crisis times as recorded in the *Titanic* disaster (Frey et al. 2011). In present research, this frame appeared in articles reporting on land reform beneficiaries as squatters settling (illegally) in the private and state game reserves, a form of social disorganization that caused many problems for the owners or management according to the articles.

As result of the metaphors and myths on wildlife conservation in the international media, international donors significantly withdrew their support when the land reforms started. Both the UK and USA were major donors to Zimbabwe but as the UK and USA relations with Zimbabwe deteriorated since 1997 both these countries stopped developmental aid, funding and also imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe following the country’s land reforms. Consequently, following Zimbabwe’s land reforms in 2000, some donor agencies and international media reacted with a “hands off” reaction on issues related to wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe (Mtsambiwa 2003). For example, non-governmental organizations such as the United States Agency for International Development which was actively involved in the CAMPFIRE initiative since its inception in 1989 and Canadian International Development Agency which was involved in the programme prior to 2000 withdrew their support following the Zimbabwean Government’s implementation of the controversial fast track land reform programme in 2000 (Mapedza 2009). Surprisingly, our results showed that CAMPFIRE revenues steadily increased between 1989 and 2003, and was only followed by a big decline in 2004 and 2005, subsequently followed by an increase in 2006. The high level of CAMPFIRE revenue in 2003 could be a result of the carry-over effect of the foreign aid which Zimbabwe received up to 2002/2003 which was followed by the drop in revenues in 2004 and 2005. However, income from sport-hunting in both state owned reserves and some private areas was least affected by the political crisis in Zimbabwe (Lindsey et al. 2007, 2009; Gandiwa et al. 2013b) which resulted in some revenue being accrued by the CAMPFIRE communities after 2003.

The “hands off” reaction also showed in the international media, and even more so in the USA than in the UK. This could have been caused by differential historical relations. Unlike the UK, the USA has no political historical ties to Zimbabwe so when the USA strongly condemned the Zimbabwean Government for its land reforms, wildlife conservation was no longer newsworthy for USA newspapers whereas interest in UK newspapers continued. Interestingly, even in the Zimbabwe newspaper, the number of wildlife conservation related articles decreased after 2000. Yet, the issues continued to play an important role in the media, which could be explained by the fact that wildlife utilization in CAMPFIRE areas continued to directly affect local communities (Taylor 2009).

## Conclusion

Our study showed that there was indeed a spill-over from the frames of the political upheaval in Zimbabwe into frames on wildlife conservation after the political changes in 2000 following the land reforms. The recorded spill-over effect in UK and USA newspapers on Zimbabwe’s wildlife conservation could be a

result of the changes in political and historical relations between Zimbabwe, UK and USA. Throughout the 1990s politics did not play a visible role in the frames on wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe. However, after 2000 one overall blame frame started to dominate, i.e., the “political unrest and land reform” blame frame. The political situation and land reform were blamed in the restrictions in ivory trade, poaching of rhinos and in the reduction of CAMPFIRE revenues. However, our results showed that elephant populations increased, rhino populations remained stable, and, the CAMPFIRE revenues were not severely affected by the land reforms over the study period. It does seem that the spill-over effect influenced donors and other important organizations to withdraw their funding to wildlife conservation in Zimbabwe.

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