



JUSTCONSERVATION

Towards « just conservation »: linking theories and practices of justice in biodiversity conservation

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Over the past three decades, biodiversity conservation has expanded, from a focus on nature preservation alone, to more ‘people-friendly’ approaches integrating objectives for both conservation and human well-being, as visible in the governance of protected areas and other conservation measures worldwide. **However, integrated approaches have not necessarily led to benefits to local people, giving rise to a further shift from a focus on economic development, to one on social justice.** This shift is gaining high-level attention in international environmental agreements and in conservation organisations, and requires the support of an intense research effort.

This research project will analyse how justice concerns find support and integration in biodiversity conservation; a research need which is currently under-addressed. It asks (a) how different conceptualizations of justice and equity influence the governance of protected areas and other effective conservation measures, and (b) to what extent and through what mechanisms the integration of social objectives in conservation governance influence conservation effectiveness.

Adopting a strong interdisciplinary approach and dialectically studying both theory and practice of justice in biodiversity conservation, it will (1) conceptualize the idea of just conservation by drawing on existing theories of social and environmental justice; by (2) using narrative synthesis to take stock of the dominant practices of justice mobilized by the conservation community, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative data on the governance of conservation extracted from relevant databases, existing empirical research and assessment tools used by conservation organizations; and (3) explore the convergences (or divergences) to thinking and acting about just conservation. **The project will fill a critical gap in current efforts to significantly advance the knowledge underpinning the pursuit of just and equitable conservation, which is critical to the achievement of both social and ecological objectives associated with conservation policies.**

CESAB

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