



Conservation

Nature conservation is not a simple concept; its diverse meanings transform significantly through time and space and with different cultural viewpoints. Nature conservation laws already existed many centuries ago in different countries such as Babylon, Egypt and India (Lyster 1985). International conservation actions developed more recently. According to Adams (2004) preserving colonial hunting traditions was the earliest motivation for species conservation. Diminishing game herds, due to excessive hunting by Europeans, in Africa and India became noticeable around the middle of the 19th century and protected areas were established to ensure that game stocks were preserved. Grove (1995) argues that environmentalism can be traced back further to the encounter of European scientists with the tropics and local perceptions of nature. The richness of the tropical ecosystems induced a religious search for the lost Garden of Eden and formed the imaginative basis for early Romanticism. By the mid 17th century, scientists developed a coherent perspective of the destructive impact of extractive colonial activities on peoples and environments, the depletion of earth's natural resources and awareness of a need for conservation (Grove 1995).

To protect wilderness, Yosemite in 1863 and Yellowstone in 1872 were established in the US as the first National Parks in the world. Although protected areas existed before, Yellowstone quickly became the model for National Parks and game reserves all over the colonial world (Adams 2004). Protected areas became the principal method for nature preservation (!!! INVALID CITATION !!! (Anderson and Grove 1987; Beinart and McGregor 2003; Igoe 2004; Nash 2001)). Local people were often excluded and removed from these top-down PAs. Their exclusion was assisted by a 'fences and fines' system. This methodology is commonly known as 'fortress conservation', which was the chief conservation discourse and practice for much of the twentieth century (Brockington 2002; Hutton et al. 2005).

This system of vast protected areas, developed in Africa, was inspired by the perception of pristine nature and the portrayal of local black populations as negatively affecting nature (Singh and van Houtum 2002; Beinart and McGregor 2003). This notion was based on racial discrimination and supported by the political-economic systems of suppressive colonialism of the time (Beinart and McGregor 2003; Büscher and Whande 2007). Whereas European hunting practices were seen as civilized, sportive and even beneficial for species conservation by providing revenues for guards (Adams 2004), native hunters were portrayed as the exact opposite. This was especially true since commercialization of game encouraged local people to use more efficient, non-traditional hunting methods which seemed to the European eye as cruel, un-natural and irresponsible (Adams 2004). Natives were to be protected against 'their own reckless exploitation of their natural resources' (Earl of Onslow 1941, cited in Adams 2004: 110).

PAs separate people from nature; a well known popular phrase asks visitors to Protected Areas (PAs) to 'Take Only Pictures, Leave Only Footprints'. In this context hunters became poachers, wood cutters became illegal loggers and farmers are the conservation's worst enemies (Adams 2004). During the years, these notions have received persistent support through purely biological views of nature and reality which disregarded the socio-political and economic factors behind environmental change (Büscher and Whande 2007).

This fortress conservation model has faced a crisis of legitimacy since the end of colonialism in the 1950s and 1960s and growing movements concerned with international social justice and economic development in the 1970s (Büscher and Whande 2007). Exclusive PA's were also criticized for being inefficient in biodiversity conservation as they alienated local resource users and created negative reactions (West and Brechin 1991; Brown 2002). PA's therefore, began incorporating social concerns into protected area management instead of the

former rigid separation of people and conservation (Breunig 2006; Büscher and Whande 2007). Gradually the connection between environmental degradation and issues of social injustice, rural poverty, and indigenous rights was given growing emphasis in the conservation literature (Gray 1991; Peluso 1993; Shiva 1993; Broad 1994).

Biodiversity discourse concerning species loss and rainforest destruction gained extensive international attention during the second half of the 1980s, stimulating the launch of numerous international institutions and NGOs working mainly towards in-situ conservation (Adams 2004). The importance of this new focus on the international conservation movement was manifested in the global strategic plan: *Conserving the World's Biodiversity* (McNeely 1990) and the Convention on Biological Diversity of the 1992 Earth Summit¹.

Although the major concentration of biodiversity is in the tropics, its conservation became an increasingly global matter; primarily popular, institutionalized and funded, in Europe and North America; with major differences in values and economic means to developing countries' environmental movements (Adams 2004). It was noticed that conservation agents from around the world consider themselves to be morally obligated to intervene in Africa's biodiversity conservation affairs (Nelson 2003; Büscher and Dietz 2005). As well as an increasing phenomena of western philanthropists who purchase extensive lands which they believe need their protection (Chudy 2006). Vandana Shiva (1991) criticises the intensity to which Northern institutions and agencies have monopolized biodiversity conservation in Third World countries.

Academic literature offers varied moral and rational reasoning for conservation of both species and ecosystems, which can generally be divided into anthropocentric and ecocentric categories (Cafaro 2001; Paterson 2006). Anthropocentric ethics are the most prevalent in

¹ See section 5.1.2

recent political environmental agendas such as the World Commission on Environment and Development's sustainable development concept (WCED 1987) and Neoliberal resource management concerns (Palmer 2003). This ethic emphasizes the importance of conserving species which can potentially benefit people such as species attractive for tourism, game species, or ones important for agriculture (Paterson 2006). On the other hand, ecocentric environmental ethics such as Leopold's "The Land Ethic" (Leopold 1970), or the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD 2001), stress the intrinsic value of biological diversity and therefore the importance of a much more holistic approach to conservation.

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Questions

- **In general, does the text give a good overview of the term Conservation, or do you think there are better ways to cover this issue?**
- **Does this need more background info?**
- **Is it easy and interesting to read? Does the English need editing? Can you suggest edits?**
- **Are parts of the text irrelevant, repetitive, or should be rephrased or deleted?**
- **Are there any relevant issues that are not covered by this text? Would you be able to add them or just list them to be added by us?**
- **Can you suggest a person or an institution that might have the right experience and perspective to rewrite this text? Are you happy to forward this text to them?**
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