

7. The Politics of Democracy and its Connection with the Conservation of Biodiversity: A Research Project on Strategic Sustainable Development (SSD) to Connect the Geopolitics of International Relations with the Art of Biodiversity Conservation

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Abstract:

Biodiversity, geopolitics, and international relations have important connections because more capitalism leads to more exploitation of wildlife resources, forest resources and natural resources which will be used more abundantly to meet the trade requirements of developed countries. And on the other hand, in order to survive economically and improve their living conditions and living standards, developing countries will continue to exploit biodiversity with a view of selling raw materials for manufacturing. If effective and all-inclusive conservation policies and agreements are not implemented, most of the biodiversity and natural resources we have will probably disappear, and after that globalization and capitalism have not much to do.

Eventually unless environmental problems become an integral part of the global agenda, the world will undergo major changes in the forms of climate change, and extinction of various rare species of flora and fauna, which will, in turn lead to the decline in the growth of biodiversity. Increasing human inhabitation is threatening biodiversity conservation practices and is also leading to the extinction of plant and animal species worldwide. This research argues that national political institutions, governmental institutions, and democratic institutions form an important platform for conservation. However, it has also discovered that the relationship between the democratic processes of these governmental institutions and the nation's efforts to create and track biodiversity remains unclear. In this article, key manuscripts have been reviewed to explain the doctrinal connection between democracy and biodiversity conservation.

While most studies report positive rather than negative interactions between democracy and biodiversity conservation, the most common result was a cohesive relationship which is often dependent on economic conditions. The research has found that the use of various proxies to measure biodiversity, including deforestation, protected areas, threatened species and fishing statistics emerged as the major barrier to biodiversity integration.

This research proposes to overcome this threat by presenting an all-inclusive definition of democratic institutions that cooperate with the stakeholders of biodiversity conservation to work in accordance with a guaranteed statistical framework of environmental governance. The article concludes by drafting some of the most important research priorities to improve policies against various biodiversity losses.

Keywords: *All-Inclusive Conservation Policies; Biodiversity Conservation; Capitalism; Democratic Institutions; Environmental Governance; Geopolitics; Governmental Institutions; International Relations.*

7.1 Introduction:

In the contemporary international politics, the most recent trend of global geopolitics emphasizes provincial behavior and the subsequent magnitude of the region, especially on regional and global scale.

The scope and focus of geopolitics however have changed over time to include the representation of the “*self*” and the “*other*”, political actors, the material aspects of daily life, and the dissemination of issues affecting the emotional state of the people (making people feel one with their respective nation states) (Ekene 2019).

This hypothesis requires critical attention to the ways in which domestic policy becomes the geopolitical device that allows for the internationalization of local and national economies (Li and Jonas 2019, 70).

Given that the concept of geopolitics and the ideas and processes of conservation have changed over time, how do we find meaningful links between geopolitics and conservation of biodiversity? Another possibility is to consider the natural environment of the earth as a statecraft element (Won 2017).

We can also trace the ideas of geopolitics and its impact on protected areas over time. The most effective way is to use a variety of examples of protected areas to illustrate the link between conservation projects and the range of interests, as well as the subsequent power relations that open up conservation as a global project.

Conservation geopolitics is the latest addition to the broader discussion of natural geopolitics. Examples of that discussion include the study of polar geopolitics (Powell and Dods 2014) and natural disasters as a post-Cold War phenomenon characterized by a redefining of national security concepts (Dalby 1992).

However, the question of how this geopolitical lens improves our analysis of protected areas as the subject of geopolitical research has not been fully answered. In other words, the new geopolitics that seeks to construct assumptions with theoretical knowledge of empowerment processes at various sites (Tutuila and Dalby 1994, 514) has not yet been fully utilized in the study of protected areas as a national phenomenon.

Chaturvedi (1996, 3) is of the opinion that the new geopolitics provides opportunities to address questions related to the environmental and economic security in the context of a growing society. While concerns about safety issues are important to world peace, they often mask the subtle manifestations of political power in nature.

Take agreements and treaties to protect biodiversity through the establishment or enlargement of protected areas, which bring together weak and powerful states to agree on

common benefits. This inequality of power leads to the pursuit of national interests under the guise of global interest.

In Africa and elsewhere in the global South, conservation agreements need tools to fund and bind provinces, especially the release of land so that conservation often harms local people who depend on that land for their livelihood.

Geopolitics of protected areas is often reflected in the representation of environmental issues in the pursuit of provincial interests, in the way environmental news provides an opportunity to look at things while discriminating against others, and in the way, nature creates a global arena where international relations exist in either an engraved manner or a broken manner (O'Leary 2013).

In this research project, I have contributed to this field of work by analyzing protected areas as a place for political thinking and action. My premise is that protected areas act as axes of geopolitics and are a lens through which we can investigate ways in which environmental problems and solutions influence the interests of powerful regions, non-governmental organizations, and global capitalism. The following discussion shows how these characters perceive nature in ways that have a profound impact on the management of the environment. The actors create an environment that also produces natural boundaries such as unlimited, timeless and precious wilderness for protected areas by safeguarding the livelihoods of people, especially indigenous communities (Ramesside 2004; Guyot 2011).

7.2 Materials and Methods: Research Methodology:

The methodology for this research study involved three phases: Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III. In the Phase I, a literature review was steered along with exploratory interviews with actors in the fields of strategic sustainable development, conservation of biodiversity, global geopolitics, and peace work. From this, both theory and real-world examples were explored. In the Phase II of my research study, the materials and information gathered from both of the above-mentioned fields were linked to establish a conceptual framework. The results of this research are evaluated in the Phase III. The results were established based on the relations built between the conceptual framework (established in the Phase II) and the hypothetical deliberations (originally derived from the Phase I) in the field of geopolitics and its relationship with sustainable development which is supposed to be achieved by successfully practicing the art of biodiversity conservation. The results comprise the primary set of guiding principles and sustainable developmental strategies for employing a Strategic Sustainable Development (SSD) approach in conscripting a nation's foreign policy inclined towards the conservation of biodiversity.

7.3 Research Hypothesis:

In this research project, I propose to integrate the concept of telecommunication with the geopolitical approach, which focuses on the intangible power relations between nature reserves and how these relationships are built through long-term partnerships.

The general hypothesis of my research project is that the art of biodiversity conservation can be successfully practiced by focusing on governmental inputs from the geopolitical framework which can help to expose spatial performance as “*network effects*” but are actually “*flawed, incomplete and unstable*” approaches and strategies to conserve biodiversity (Painter 2009, 73).

I express the view that the disclosure of this network flexibility is an important aspect of the critical political process in protected areas.

I pursue this goal by investigating the impact of remote flows on the governance and management of Protected Areas (PAs) and the relationships between remote actors, national governments and local communities.

This research project is aimed at establishing a contextual analysis of the area of the border crossing “*W*” of the Tigris conservation complex which is named after the “*W*” curve of the Tigris River. The *W* complex has been repeatedly redesigned by locals, management systems and also by allowing cash flows, animal species, and human inhabitation since its creation in the 1950s.

7.4 Observations:

7.4.1 Discovery of the Politico-Economic Relationship between the Geopolitics of International Relations and the Art of Biodiversity Conservation: A Qualitative Analysis:

An ecologically protected frontier area is a colony between the remnants of the desert and civilization and is an active area where natural resources are considered the most important (Redcliff 2006; Guyot and Richard 2009; Heritier et al. 2009; Guyot 2011, 2017); Arnold de Sartre et al. 2012). As the name originally coined by the green community organization, an ecological frontier indirectly supports a local process that encourages people to conquer the endless, timeless and precious wilderness on behalf of many species in order to fulfill their aspirations for control and construction of the environment (Guyot 2011, 678).

It also draws attention to various and evolving political strategies that conserve the environment in time and space. An eco-frontier is a way of understanding the geopolitics of modern land consumption by natural actions and expressions. Eco-frontiers magnify the environment, and in so doing lead to geopolitical conflicts (Guyot 2011).

This political aspect of environmental control is often hidden under other requirements and can be fully explained by post-Foucauldian ideas of eco-governmentality and the environment (Hebden 2006), which integrate political environmental issues and important geopolitics. This part of the forum contributes to the “*Eco-Frontier Theory*” by analyzing the corresponding evolution of local production and its environmental support.

Eco-governmentality is partly based on Foucault’s vision of governance (Foucault 2004) that incorporates the concepts of biological power and government in the analysis of social cohesion in the natural world (Guyot 2017, 24).

It is based on Foucault's assessment of regions with a focus on environmental thought and governance technology (Malette 2009). Scientists have also considered environmental governance as a natural process that integrates many aspects of the current global control system (Luke 1999, 2000; Bryant 2002; Hebden 2006; Guyot 2015, 2017).

For its part, the environment is defined as "*the process by which a natural state constructs the concept of the environment while also determining the conditions necessary for that environment in order to maintain their political systems*" (Guyot 2017, 25).

Agrawal (2005) emphasizes that part of these conditions lies in the representation of natural agents among many people. Clearly, an eco-frontier is a local process that incorporates certain forms of natural politics. In fact, the eco-frontier is driven by nature in two related contexts.

The first involves a case in which a government agency or international environmental NGOs use science to justify the creation and management of protected areas. This ultimately leads to determining, for example, park areas and boundaries, to ensure some form of dominance over the area in these NGOs.

In the second case, low-level environmental agents strive to feel their natural boundaries by creating ecosystems, various ecosystems or environmental education programs, where disciplinary standards are at stake (Guyot 2017). The eco-frontier therefore reflects the local impact of the hidden species of nature.

7.4.2 The Politics of Democracy and its Connection with the Conservation of Biodiversity:

In literature, communication between nature and the environment is complex and often reinforces internal and cultural differences. Dualism exists among the ideas of a place-to-place nature. There are two key elements in the analysis of this division. The first focuses on the timeless, eternal, precious and non-human nature, the wilderness, the scope, and the sustainable developmental relationships with the eco-tone features.

The second not only captures the geographical details of the limited, appreciated and human-controlled ecosystems but also focuses on the design of designated and natural habitats with green belts, protected areas, nature corridors, endangered areas and a range of natural areas (Guyot 2011).

These two perspectives are puzzling because they do not pay much attention to the evolution of natural systems. They also overstep the bounds of ecosystems and the human diversity of life and space. Although the desert is intended to remain a wild and uninhabited place in its original state, no space in the world meets such a strong definition.

Alternatively, a protected area such as a national park is regarded as a "*land and/or marine environment dedicated primarily to the protection and conservation of biodiversity and to be managed in a lawful or effective manner*" (IUCN 1994). The fact is that tourism and recreation often take the place of nature in small parks and agricultural systems.

Ecotourism represents modern forms of elitist movement and discards the infinite size of protected areas. Ironically, it does this while preventing the ancient ecological movement of local residents (Guyot 2015). The concept of eco-frontier defines these two by presenting them as a process of environmental management and architecture.

The eco-frontier can embrace the whole eco-conquest process, both psychologically and geographically, without limiting its temporal size (Guyot and Richard 2009). It represents both a local and a temporary concept in which new forces constantly revisit old processes. Both variables are embedded in the “*Eco Frontier Concept*” of conquest, and both define the current natural conditions for political control over the environment.

7.5 Results and Discussion:

7.5.1 Sustainable Development and Biodiversity Conservation in Cross-Border Ecologically Protected Zones: Socio-Economic, Geopolitical, and Foreign Policy Perspectives:

Global social and economic trade has led to a steady increase in the flow of people, information and commodities. In this context, the interaction between remote points on the globe is much greater than ever before (Liu et al. 2007).

Researchers from the field of global system science have proposed the concept of telecommunications to address the socio-economic and environmental interactions in the range of social and environmental systems (Liu et al. 2013).

For example, they have shown how the demand for international soybeans has led to the transformation of the forest into a vegetation area in South America (Gasparro and Le Polzin de Watrous 2015).

The socio-economic, geopolitical, and foreign policy perspectives take social and environmental connections as a starting point and examine the flow of goods, species and forces within them; identification of agents, causal and effect relationships, and flow-related “*spillover*” programs (Liu et al. 2013). The advantage of this approach in relation to the general approach to global trade is that remote, interconnected systems are an integral part of analysis, making it possible to identify key stakeholders and their processes and conversion options.

However, this framework does not expose the broader effects of long-term interaction in society and the environment in terms of power, control and unequal results. For this reason, several researchers of these domains have proposed an additional heuristic communication system that integrates institutions, player networks and management systems to make power relations in decision-making at all levels more transparent (Frias et al. 2015; Eakin et al. 2017, Ober et al. 2018).

In this research project, I propose to integrate the concept of telecommunication with the geopolitical approach, which focuses on the intangible power relations between nature reserves and how these relationships are built through long-term partnerships.

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7.5.2 Geopolitics of the Welfare State Versus Welfare Geopolitics: Contemplating the Loss of Biodiversity and Unsustainable Development as the Direct Consequences of the Conflict between Geopolitics of the Welfare State and Welfare Geopolitics:

A major revolution took place in 2003 and was driven by what some have called “*traditional freedom*” (Webber 2011). Supported by all indigenous groups from the oriental to the occidental, the leader of the Coca Producers’ Union and the MAS political party, Evo Morales, came to power in 2006 defending “*indigenous*” national identity and moral values with an aim of safeguarding our mother earth (“*Pachamama*”).

His early reforms clearly show his solidarity with the Andean settlement and the “*Cocalero Movement*”. A new agricultural reform law (*Ley de Reconducción Comunitaria de la Reforma Agraria*) facilitated the expropriation of large private territories and the conversion of all TCOs into TIOC (Territorio Indígena Originario Campesino). Both reforms were aimed at meeting the needs of the Andean population in the lowlands.

To achieve this, Morales fired the SERNAP director and appointed someone known to support Andean settlement policies. Many such indigenous communities were also replaced for the same reason. The two cases show Morales’ political economy in terms of protected areas and low-lying areas, namely the **Chepete-Balla Dam** and the **TIPNIS National Park**.

The construction of a hydroelectric dam has threatened about 180km² of protected areas and had a negative impact on the livelihoods of indigenous peoples. So, the natives went on strike for 12 days in protest of the construction of the dam. The Morales government has also shown disregard for protected areas and indigenous areas by building the *Villa Temari-San Ignacio de Moxos Highway* across the **TIPNIS National Park** and the indigenous area. The project may open the park to cocaleros and may serve the purpose of cocaine market shipping to Brazil. In addition, companies have been awarded 25.5% of TIPNIS hydrocarbon testing (Hope 2016).

In short, the highway project has caused tensions between local groups, sparked local opposition, and led to violent clashes with the police (Perrier-Bruslé 2012).

7.6 Implications of the Research in Real Life:

7.6.1 Impact of Biodiversity Conservation on the Territorial Identities of Indigenous Tribes of Brazil a Geopolitical cum Socio-Economic Case Study of Brazil:

Because of their importance to environmental projects around the world, protected areas have become official objects of international encroachment (Dods 2014).

In the years following the Rio conference in 1992, a growing number of national and junior actors participated in political dialogue in protected areas in order to gain legitimacy and access to resources, people and power.

In particular, the daily geopolitics of the Amazon protected areas is the theater for international, national and non-governmental organizations such as indigenous peoples, NGOs, forestry agencies, and forestry companies that are constantly struggling to find existing local claims with regard to cultural conflicts (Albert 2004).

Throughout the reconstruction of the imaginary meaning of the word ‘identity’, those characters have tried to create legitimate conditions for the use of resources. In South America, and especially in the Amazon region, international conservation organizations, local representative NGOs and governments have put forward important ideas and expanded indigenous peoples’ views on environmental management in order to effect local and legal reforms on behalf of many indigenous groups (Albert 2004). In some cases, land claims, by conservation NGOs on behalf of indigenous peoples, had a hidden agenda for timber trade, oil and gas (Chapin 2004). As Brazil’s exemplary study of indigenous peoples will show, efforts to give the indigenous people a land title are very political.

Agricultural and land scholars have used different areas to challenge or oppose the granting of land titles (Deininger and Feder 2009; Grimm and Lysergol 2012; Ramírez-Álvarez 2019). The reasons for granting disregarded land title (i.e., the granting of title deeds) are that the process is necessary to secure land rights and to increase economic value in situations where these rights are dangerous or considered weak and poorly defined.

The irony is that land ownership is incorporated into the Eurocentric concept of land as a private space. In addition, granting land titles to people who share land as a common resource is dangerous to creating land fragmentation conditions as rich and powerful people may have acquired land from the poor, thus leaving them without land. The process of issuing land titles is closely linked to the strategic, international and national political systems.

The legalization of indigenous areas in protected areas has also been criticized for the separation of complex indigenous areas (Reyes-García et al. 2014) or the so-called “*racial segregation*” of land and natural resources (Bortuzzo and Roust 2012; Bortuzzo 2020).

This case study of Brazil illustrates some of the complex problems associated with the “*everyday geopolitics*” of indigenous areas that are plagued by protected areas.

Such an approach to geopolitics emphasizes different interests in natural resources but also reflects the redefined ownership of sub-territories and ecologically protected areas.

Other border parks such as **Noel Kempf Mercado National Park** (on the border with Brazil), **Madid and Apo Lobamba** (on the border with Peru) act as a safe haven to prevent “*pioneer residents*” from neighboring countries from accessing natural resources (Perrier-Bruslé 2005). Until 2006, the temptation to extract hydrocarbon was contained due to the presence of a strong team of conservationists and the promotion of traditional organizations.

7.6.2 Understanding Hydrocarbon as the Weapon for Migration Control in the Tigris River Delta: A Case Study of Sustainable Development and Biodiversity Conservation as Practiced by Indigenous Tribes Inhabiting the Tigris River Delta:

In the 1990s, successive liberal governments in this area re-established the natural state with the **Environmental Law and the Forest Act of 1997**. These laws are the product of long discussions between conservation activists, forestry companies, local forestry user groups, ecologically vulnerable sections, public, and government officials (Pacheco, de Jong, and Johnson 2010).

The final point for the formation of the National System of Protected Areas (SERNAP) comes from the government of President Barham Salih whose daughter, biologist, is the national director of the Department of Biodiversity Conservation (Steinberg 2001). In 1998, 21 protected areas covering 17.5 million hectares were created, seven of which were separated from the official TCO.

This confirms the importance of strategic solidarity between the claims of indigenous areas and the interests of conservationists. During the same period and under the same government, laws were enacted that had a profound effect on the environment and were implemented.

Until 2006, the temptation to extract hydrocarbon was contained due to the presence of a strong team of conservationists and the promotion of traditional organizations. The development of a national plan for such protected areas has been interpreted as a commitment to protect biodiversity while at the same time maintaining control over strategic resources such as mining, gas and oil. Since their inception, 20 protected areas have been granted potentially effective and efficient administrative machinery.

7.6.3 Prospects for “Multiculturalism”:

Brazil’s protected areas should also be considered as places of “*multicultural revolt*” because they were shaped by colonialism, war and the idea of freedom and its effect on the measurement of local product and natural resources, private property, commercial crops and the deliberate increase in the mass production of cattle feed (Bortuzzo and Roust 2012).

In 1996, the so-called “*Second Agricultural Revolution*” took place under the neoliberal regime of Sánchez de Lozada which promoted multiculturalism (Hale 2005; Lacroix 2012).

It has resulted in *Tierra Comunitaria de Origen* (TCO): the official recognition of land allocated to indigenous peoples, especially in low-lying areas and other categories such as small building, public land, solar campesino, private and public properties.

This recognition was part of a strategy to satisfy all groups represented in the Brazilian society by granting certain rights to protect their land.

The ambitious land reform program known as INRA reform (*Instituto Nacional de Reforma Agraria*) in 1996 was heavily funded and used by foreign agencies to support the land registration process (*Saneamiento*) but also promoted certain economic interests in the extraction of natural resources and negatively impacted population control (Lerch 2014).

These changes accelerated the process of legalizing titles and the political recognition of indigenous areas beyond protected areas, many of which are located in low-lying areas.

7.7 Conclusion:

In fact, conservation geopolitics includes the distribution of local vision to save biodiversity but also to influence provinces and citizens to manage the environment in certain ways. It is a form of state art because it redefines state sovereignty over natural resources and creates governance structures to manage these resources and the people who use or need them.

Circumstances in which eco-frontiers are strengthened to produce conservation and political goals are not localized but are themselves the result of global processes.

This means that a protected area such as a national park will not solely include national interests or wildlife interests.

Instead, foreign power could drive its establishment for the first generation of African parks as shown by Grove in the year of 1995. Although this research project is aimed at discussing some of the issues affecting geopolitics in protected areas in different contexts, they collectively reflect the need for concerted attention to protected areas as a place for political thinking and practice.

They highlight the need to place geopolitical discourses on multiple scales and highlight the links between local practices and world politics. If geopolitics is truly a part of daily life (Dods 2014), the need to understand how protected areas are involved in determining the good fortune and misery of ordinary people arising from environmentally inspired actions is an important geopolitical question.

The answers to this question require us to pay close attention to the dialectical relationship between geopolitics and protected areas. This relationship has a spatial cum temporal dimension, which is important in understanding the evolution of protected areas and situations where conservation influences ideological and political practices.

The highlights of this research project are eco-frontier technologies, geopolitical and local-based indigeneity. Taken together, these concepts highlight three important aspects of geopolitics of protected areas.

First, at the core of the geopolitics of protected areas is the concept that allows conservation processes by network-connected agents, whose objectives are pursued at specific sites. Although the environment is important for managing the land and other natural resources, telecommunications facilitate this control through remote operating networks to direct location-based savings projects.

Second, networks that pursue conservation goals are borrowed from national and political interpretations.

Examples of this explanation are that networks serve the global environmental agenda that shapes local policies and jeopardize the national development agenda for fragile regions.

There is also the view that international conservation organizations and organizations working with local and indigenous groups interfere in domestic affairs and thus undermine state sovereignty.

This view is particularly acute when local and indigenous groups oppose governmental actions that interfere with their way of life, including access to natural resources.

Third, environmental action and rhetoric accompanied by eco-frontiers provoke national conflicts. Such conflicts are particularly acute for local people where conservation issues meet local claims. Such claims burn up shifts within the boundaries of protected areas that can be attributed to the consolidation or conflict between global and domestic power (Noah 2019).

This research project is aimed at protected areas to ensure that the movement of people, goods and money must be understood in relation to the interests of the country and the struggles to control this flow and to promote certain ideas.

The flow of conservation ideas and processes has a political impact on shaping provincial values, reshaping relations between central government and local and indigenous peoples, and empowering powerful groups and individuals to build interpersonal relationships as a necessary condition for human life in our planet Earth.

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