

INDIGENOUS EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION:
THE CASE FOR THE INCORPORATION OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND POWER
INTO MODERN CONSERVATION PRACTICES

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Abstract:

When designating parks, natural areas, or heritage areas, conservation planners often ignore the fact that indigenous groups often already occupy the land that is designated to be conserved. In the past, rather than including these people in the plan for conservation, these people were often forcibly removed from their lands or had their access to the land significantly restricted. Because of this, the cultures and ways of life of these people were adversely affected. The question becomes how to protect an area from harm while also allowing for the socio-cultural need of the indigenous people on the land. This paper argues that these two ideas are not incompatible and it points out several shortcomings in modern day conservation practices. Finally, it uses the example of a newly proposed world heritage site in Bali to show how local systems of power can be used to encourage local participation and support of conservation systems.

Introduction:

“A more positive attitude in establishing and managing protected areas would open doors for many socially desirable opportunities and actions. For example, preoccupation would change from ‘how can people be removed from the parks and reserves in order to prevent encroachment and poaching’ to ‘how can people achieve improved levels of living so that their reliance on the park resources is reduced and they have a real interest in protecting them?’” (1997 Ghimire and Pimbert, 21)

From the earliest modern movements to protect sections of this world, the idea of conservation has always been a very rigid idea. The earliest conservation movements can be traced to the political campaigning to conserve areas of the American West originally started in the late 1800s. Even in this early example, the focus of conservation has always been to protect the environment from human impact for the benefit of future generations. On the surface, this idea does not seem to be very problematic; most people appreciate nature and it is hard to understand who would oppose the idea of protecting an area from destruction. A more in-depth look at the problem, however reveals that there are many assumptions embedded within the idea of conservation, and that, in the long run, these embedded assumptions can cause severe problems for the conservation of areas and for the well-being of huge swaths of populations living in around conserved areas. The largest problem in modern conservation practices is a failure to recognize that many conserved areas are already populated and generally have been for sometime. The idea of pristine wilderness untouched and unaffected by humankind is, for the most part, false. As such, when populations are removed from their cultural habitat both the people and the environment suffer. In order to try and re- envision conservation practices so that they help both land and people, this work will try to identify major issues within conservation practices and identify possible alternative methodologies. It will then take the example of a proposed heritage site to illustrate how local people can be a positive force in conservation, rather than a population that must be moved.

Introduction of the Problem

In Western society, since as early as the middle ages, the concept of wilderness has been conceived as apart from human society and culture, an area that was full of wild animals that were dangerous and could eat humans and livestock. This can be seen in myths and stories from this time; the earliest known version of little red riding hood and her plight with the “big bad wolf” dates from this period. The woods were conceived as areas fraught with danger and devoid of humanity while areas of civilization became safe refuges. As such, “nature” was perceived as in opposition to civilization.

This idea was slightly? altered during and after the Romantic period; nature, rather than being a place to fear and avoid, became a place where man could recharge from the stresses of life. Thoreau became one of the first people to herald this effect: “Our lives need the relief [the wilderness] the pine flourishes and the jay still screams... little oases in the desert of our civilization” (2003 Colchester, 98). Although Thoreau’s work does mark a shift in the perception and appreciation of wilderness, one fundamental aspect remain unchanged; the emphasis on nature as being exclusive of human contact. It is this idea which has been one of the fundamental foundations of modern conservation practice.

The motivation behind conservation can be defined as the desire to preserve areas that are deemed to have some a socially determined quality that is worth preserving. This value is often characterized as the concept of heritage. The definition

of heritage itself is fairly problematic, but can be conceived broadly as information, objects, or locations which have a cultural value as designated by a general population. Source? This value is usually designated by and associated with a shared history or belief system of a community. As one can see, this definition and its implementation is problematic because it depends on a subjective judgment by a community to decide what has “heritage” and what does not: “One must recognize that the identification of cultural heritage is based on an active choice as to which elements of this broader ‘culture’ are deemed worthy of preservation as an inheritance for the future” (2000 ???Blake, 68). This assessment can change based on the experience and origin of whomever is making that judgment, and in general, the judgment of what has heritage and what does not is decided by people or groups that are dominant within the community. As such, even the idea of what is valuable and what should be conserved is an idea that proves to be highly problematic upon closer analysis.

Even within the realm of heritage, there are distinctions between different types, which carry different values. There is the idea of “cultural” heritage and “natural” heritage, tying back to the earlier beliefs about the distinctions between the two. However, In international law, cultural heritage and natural heritage are viewed as two sides of the same coin and the relationship between the two is defined: “There is an aspect of ‘natural heritage’ which forms a part of the cultural heritage given the importance of certain landscapes and natural features to particular groups and cultures” (2000 Blake, 67). Furthermore, emphasis is placed on the preservation of both cultural and natural heritage for the continued well-being of mankind:

“The protection of cultural heritage is incumbent on States owing to the importance which it holds for all of Mankind and as a means of encouraging international co-operation and thus prevention of international conflict, as well as ‘the feelings aroused by the [...] study of works of the past do much to foster mutual understanding between nations and that [...] the international community as a whole is nevertheless the richer for such discoveries” (2000, Blake , 61).

By analyzing this statement, one can begin to see where a potential conflict between people who want to conserve sites and people living on the actual site might arise. The motivating factor for the conservation of heritage sites—both cultural and natural—is highly problematic. The idea that these sites are being preserved for a well-being and the appreciation of humankind in general creates a conflict of ???in constitutes the “appreciation of mankind” versus how a local population would go about using the same landscape for their own subsistence. Preservation law often prevents local populations from gathering, cultivation and cultural practices that are critical to functioning of some societies. The lack of regard for the values of local-level people is present, and the emphasis on the value “for all mankind” could indicate that this value should be placed above that of the local people. Indigenous groups value the land for its ability to support them at a subsistence level whereas conservation groups value land for its contribution to mankind and for commercial enjoyment value (1997 Ghimerie and Pimbert).

Furthermore, the idea that these sites are conserved so that people can visit them is also problematic. By conserving these sites and making them something to be visited, international doctrine is creating a situation in which the value of the land as an “untouched” and “pure” site to be visited and gazed upon is much greater than the value of land and it is probably actually being used by indigenous peoples: "Local people often express their sense of deep frustration with these externally imposed priorities by saying that ‘people should be considered before animals’ and they often view wildlife conservation as alien, hypocritical and as favoring foreigners” (1997, Ghimerie and Pimbert, 16). International doctrine states that these areas are being conserved for the well-being of mankind in general, but upon closer analysis, it becomes clear that there is a large disparity between who is able and willing to benefit from these sites, who either cannot benefit or whose livelihood is actually hurt by the creation of these sites. The idea of protecting an area from harm is a noble idea; however, there are many other political currents and motivations that get tied up with this idea of conservation. It is these other currents and assumptions which can have such a negative impact on the livelihood of indigenous peoples.

Historical Background

The idea of conservation as it is still used today can be traced historically from several different threads, although the one that has certainly been the most influential is the one that grew out of the American conquest of the west. The American West was largely perceived as “virgin” (free from civilized human impact) land in the late 1800s. As

people gradually moved westward into this land, certain individuals became aware of the importance and beauty of some of these landscapes and started to make efforts to protect it. There were several problems with these early conservation movements, one of which was these lands were not actually devoid of human influence. Native Americans already occupied the majority of the land that settlers were moving into. However, because these people were believed to be untamed savages, they were often considered to be part of the wilderness themselves, and were therefore discounted as being anything other than part of the land. REFS? When the national parks were created in the 1880s, this perception of the Native Americans proved to be problematic. The worst and most violent of the Indian wars was occurring at the same time as early discussions about the conservation of the first national parks, Yosemite and Yellowstone. Because of this, anti-Indian sentiment was prevalent and conservation could be used as a tool to exclude many Indians tribes from land that they traditionally occupied. The fact that the people were considered to be part of the land, rather than people who actively owned only made the Native American's bid for land tenure even more tenuous, as their previous occupation was completely disregarded when the parks were created.REFS?

This political situation combined with already existing views of nature as defined by the absence of human influence combined to mean that the creation of these parks required the forced removal of all tribes living on the land. This early decision-making established a precedent for all later conservation efforts. By definition, a "nature conserve" or park became an area that was absent from human impact. This can be

seen in the US legislation about national parks. The 1964 Wilderness Act defined wilderness as a place “where man himself is a visitor who does not remain” (2003, Colchester 34) and forced evictions of native people from national parks were enacted up until the late 1970s. REFS, examples?

This conception and management of the parks within the United States became the norm outside of the United States as well. Throughout the early and mid 20th century there are recorded cases of parks being created in areas and the subsequent forced migration of uncounted thousands of indigenous peoples to other areas. In most cases, these forced migrations had disastrous results; people were unable to adapt their traditional ways of life and the total breakdown of subsistence and social systems ensued. Furthermore in some cases, such as that of several parks in South Africa, conservation was used as a tool to deliberately marginalize and disempower certain groups (2005 Boswell).

As could be expected, many of these minority groups did not appreciate being forcibly required to leave their land and formed some sort of resistance. In some cases this resistance was in direct conflict with the goals of the conserved area. There are cases in conserved Indian forces of villagers deliberately killing animals and burning large swaths of forests as a form of resistance (1997 Ghimire and Pimbert pp?). The results show a basic flaw in modern conservation practice. Conservation groups prefer to interact with governments and with the state rather than groups that are actually in the area being taken over. This could be for several different reasons. First of all, this unwillingness to interact with indigenous people at the site of the area actually being

affected is indicative of a general prejudice about indigenous people: that they are not wise enough to be put in charge of their own land (1997 Ghimire and Pimbert). Furthermore, conservation agencies believe that the government will be able to influence people at the site to do what they want. What is not understood is that indigenous people at these sites do not typically belong to the same ethnic group as the group in power, and that by giving the government power over these minorities, these groups can become further disenfranchised and disempowered.

Contrary to the popular perception of nature, most areas designated as conservation areas have pre-existing indigenous populations living on the land who in general have been living in these locations for many generations. Colchester makes this point baldly: “The fact is, however, that like it or not, most protected areas are inhabited. Recent figures for Latin America suggest that 86 per cent of protected areas Latin America are inhabited” (1997 Ghimire and Pimbert, 7). There are very few areas that are completely devoid of human influence . In fact, many areas that are cultivated by indigenous people actually show increased biodiversity than areas which are not occupied. Ghimire and Pimbert observe “Many indigenous groups have evolved ways of harvesting resources without depleting them. Biodiversity rich areas—denser forests, relatively undisturbed grasslands, reefs and waterways—are generally found associated with territories claimed or used by indigenous peoples” (6). Ironically, it is probably because the presence of indigenous groups increases biodiversity and environmental health that these areas are chosen as parks. An interview with a Karen, an indigenous group in Thailand characterizes a sentiment that is likely felt among other different

minority groups that have been displaced: “When we moved into these forests over two centuries ago, Bangkok was just a small village surrounded by lush vegetation. Over these many years, we Karen have protected our forests lands and out of respect for our ancestors and our children. Maybe if we had cut down the forests, destroyed the land, and built a great city like Bangkok, we would not now be faced with possible eviction.” (1997 Colchester, 103).

In many cases, indigenous groups have developed traditions and practices over many generations which allow them to extract what they need from their native land while also contributing to its general health. These traditions and generally ignored, discouraged, or prohibited by the people in power of conservations areas. This is mainly due to existing prejudices and the belief that these indigenous are arcane or uneducated. As indigenous practices are banned or discouraged, they become less common and can be replaced with practices that have a more negative impact on the environment. An example of this deterioration of tradition can be seen in the central Bastar region of India. In this region, law has limited the traditional use of the forest. One of these traditional practices involves fishing by dyking streams and using plant poisons that only affect certain types of fish. The problem with this practice is that it occurs in areas which are now off-limits and usually requires many people and is therefore noisy and attracts the attention of the Forest Department. Because of this, local practices have started to deteriorate and villagers have started to use chemical pesticides to kill the fish instead of the plant poisons. The pesticides, unlike the plant poisons, kill many different types of fish as well as other species of aquatic life. It also

produces fish that is rotten and smelly, but has the advantage of being a silent technique. Over a few years villagers have noticed a decline in the number and species of fish. However nothing has been done to change this behavior. (1999 Ramnath, 50)

This is one of myriad iterations in the way that disruptions in the relationships of people and their natural environments can lead to deterioration and loss of traditional practices which actually served to maintain environmental health:

“Traditional balances between humans and their environments are disrupted. People are confined to small and inappropriate land area; social institutions and patterns of land management and tenure, which are used to regulate resources, are undermined. Short-term problem-solving behaviours replace long-term planning. The net result is environmental degradation.” (1997 Colchester, 106).

In these examples it can be seen that the oversights and prejudice of conservationists works directly against their intended of maintaining the health of natural areas.

Even more serious is the issue of what happens to these groups after they have been forcibly removed from their land. The same processes occur as in the cases of land use and access restriction but they occur much more dramatically. Rather than living on the same land, but having some traditions hindered by certain regulations, these people are transferred to an entirely different land. In most cases the social customs and traditions that exist within a culture are highly tied to the people’s relationship with the land. When people are removed from their traditional land a dramatic and sometime complete deterioration of social customs and practices occurs: “The consequences of

forced removal are, of course, dire. Cultural collapse, social and political marginalization, impoverishment, and the destruction of age-old community-based natural resource management have all too often ensued.” (2003 Colchester, 35). This is detrimental to not only the indigenous groups, but also to the environments

From these surveys of the history of conservation as well as examples from specific case studies, one can see that in many instances the way that conservation practices are practiced today have as many negative side effects as positive. In many cases, the enactment of conservation practices cause a significant amount of damage that would not have occurred had the area remained open. This can be explained in several different ways. The first and most glaring is that outlined in the introduction: a basic conflict of interest in how the land should be used and how the land is valued. This conflict is a current that runs through many of the problems that conserved areas face. It is important to evaluate how the specific policies that are in place today have failed and use this information to determine what actions could specifically be taken to improve management, empower indigenous people and still protect and preserve areas that have unique environment, structures or cultural artifacts.

Outline of Specific Problems to be Addressed

On a basic level, many of these conservation projects have failed or are struggling due to basic prejudice and bias. Most conservation groups and governments do not trust native people to care for the environment or to understand why it is important to all “mankind”. The contrast to this is that most governments and

conservation groups do not understand why and what elements of the area being conserved are important to the native people. Western economists consistently underestimate the intrinsic value that indigenous people assign the land due to misunderstandings as to how the land, as well as the flora and fauna which live on the land is used. In general “The priorities of and needs of rural people in developing countries simply cannot be understood and met through concepts and categories derived from the urban industrial experience of the developed countries” (1997 Ghimire and Pimbert, 18). Because of this, evaluations of people needs are poorly represented and understood. When sites are designed that try to accommodate people’s need by creating “buffer zones” or other compromises, those designing the sites do not truly understand the degree to which they are disrupting a people’s way of life. From an international point of view it becomes very difficult to understand the specifics of a people’s way of life and to say with certainty that certain alterations will or will not affect their way of lay. There is a basic conflict in scale of governance; the interests on an international level do not line up well with local interest due to a lack of understanding about the specific needs of each community.

Another conflict of scale has to do with the way projects are designed and pitched on an international level. Small, locally based projects are represent the views and needs of indigenous and local people best. However, small and locally governed projects are also have less international appeal precisely because they are small and locally governed:

Big is beautiful because big is bankable; pressures to spend aid funds are best overcome through large projects [...] They are usually highly visible and photogenic [...] They may provide opportunities for corruption at the high levels of government. They provide contacts for local professionals and civil which may make it easier for them to join the brain drain to the richer world. Consultants [...] find large projects a source of profitable employment. (1997 Ghimire and Pimbert, 20)

Aside from the problems listed above, big projects also create the problem in the distribution of funds. Although these larger projects do draw more investment and more money, very little of this is ever seen by local populations or local regulatory agencies, such as field stations and local government. Additionally, because organizations funding big projects tend to mistrust local people, a large portion of the budget is often spent on policing the area. Because of this mistrust, big projects are often unsustainable; they tend to break down at the end of a project cycle because they are entirely dependent on funding from outside and they do not set up a local infrastructure that can continue the process. Furthermore, the lack of trust for local people and the fact that little money actually goes to organizations working on the ground means that they cannot fill the hole left when these big projects move out of an area.

This problem highlights one of the major problems in the way conservation is practiced today: a lack of local participation at all levels. Despite the valuable information and knowledge that local participation could bring to policy and

governance, local people do not hold positions in which they actually wield any real power. This is partly due to the fact that “the way conservation bureaucracies and external institutions are organized and the way they work currently inhibit the devolution of power in protected area management”(1997 Ghimire and Pimbert, 23). This explanation, however, is not sufficient as to why there is no real evidence of indigenous groups carrying out real power. The problem is that, for the most part, professionals are unwilling to relinquish control on any of the aspect of conservation planning that have any real impact on the actual site. The act of conservation has a lot more value than simply conserving the site and protecting it from harm. It can also be an important source of revenue, notoriety and other benefits that affect people external to the site rather than local inhabitants. Because of this, local inhabitants are less likely to be concerned about such things, and conservation professionals are unwilling to cede them any real control.

Most of the injustices and mismanagement that have been discussed in this section are the result of a failure to understand how land is actually used and how it is important to people living on the ground. Rather than taking power from local peoples, it would be much more useful and less disruptive to strengthen local pre-existing structures that are already respected and understood by local peoples. In this way, conservation practices would be much more adapted to the specifics of community on the ground.

Theoretical Arguments For Self-Governance

There are many theorists who give strong arguments why governance at local levels allow for more control and better protection than top down governance. The following arguments provide a theoretical argument why decision-making and regulatory power should be put in the hands of local people. The argument for empowerment of local people in the cases given above ties in strongly with arguments made by Michel Foucault about capillary power, the effects of community surveillance and power from the ground up.

In his writings and lectures on the concept of governmentality, Foucault makes arguments about the nature of power. He argues that power as it is wielded by governments is too narrowly conceived as a top-down avenue of power and that there is much power in other disciplinary domains besides that of the government. Organizations such as schools, hospitals and prisons wield the same if not more power because they create norms and expectations according to which all of society must behave. For example, our perceptions of what is healthy what is not healthy and what is sane and what is not sane are entirely based on how we are informed about health from medical institutions. Foucault argues that this type of power is much more effective than the coercive top-down government because most people do not realize that they are in fact being affected by it or obeying its rules. He also argues that this fragmentary power is the major type of power present in Western societies today, and that we are, for the most part, unaware of our role in the system and its effect on us. By the same token, Foucault also recognizes that local citizens and participants play a role in creating molding the institutions that generate fragmentary power. For example, a

school may mold the way that individual thinks about certain practices, but individuals also mold the way the education occurs. This is referred to as capillary power, because power can be drawn up as well as projected down.

On a very rudimentary level, this ties in with conservation practices when one looks at current policy's major failures or shortcomings. As discussed above, one of the explanations for conservation planners' failure to enlist local support for their programs is the fact that they rely on bigger government policies and enforcement to coerce local people to adhere to their programs. Based on Foucault's theories about power, a more effective way to gain local support, harness local power, and to convince them to participate in conservation practices would be to communicate with them through local institutions, which already have some sort of disciplinary function. These local institutions can in turn affect the way that the conservation policies are carried out through avenues of capillary power and this can lead to adaptation to a mode of enforcement which achieves a balance between conservation needs and local needs.

Another important element that Foucault discusses is that of the panopticon and the enforcement of rules. Foucault's arguments come from Bentham's design of prison in which each prisoner's cell can be observed from a central post, but the prisoners cannot see whether they are, in actuality, being watched. The result of this is that the prisoner start to discipline themselves; they start to refrain from delinquent and illegal behavior for fear that someone might be watching. This self-discipline spreads the burden of regulating behavior from an enforcement organization to the individual and is much more effective and much less expensive to regulatory organizations: "He who is

subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes himself in the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection.” (1967 Foucault, 203). This pattern can be seen in other environment besides that of the prison; it is present in any community in which community members watch and monitor each other’s behavior.

In the case of small communities, the panopticism is generally always present, because people are all very aware of what everyone else is doing. As such, community regulation is probably one of the best tools that can be used in order to enforce sustainable practices. This is yet another reason why power to enforce and create rule should be placed in the hand of the local community.

In his work *Environmentality*, Agrawal takes many of Foucault’s theories about governance and applies them to forest conservation and regulation. He performs a detailed historical analysis of the management of forests in the Kumaon region of India over the last 150 years. He bases the theoretical framework of his work on ideas presented by Foucault such as those presented above and does a detailed analysis of how such factors such as community size, level of community involvement, and restrictions placed on forest use by the local government work in Foucault’s framework. Some of his most interesting findings have to with the importance of local involvement and its relations with feelings of local responsibilities to the forests.

In the Kumaon region, different areas of forests are managed and protected in different ways. The area is unique because local communities are given the opportunity

to organize forest councils, which are local systems of management for specific areas of forest. Not all areas opt to create these councils; this is mostly due to social conditions that can make it hard to make decisions communally such as differences in castes and wealth. In the cases where no forest councils control the local forests, the area is generally protected by national and regional agencies that have less interest in local needs. In his works, Agrawal shows that communities which have forest councils controlling the local forests often have forests with better health. In these forests, local people also practiced better conservation practices. This was due to several factors, all of which had to do with the concept of fragmented power. The villagers that had forest councils cared more for their forest because they had more direct participation and responsibility for their management. As such, they monitored poaching and illegal activity in their own area, and they were less likely to permit activities such as illegal logging to go on in the area. By giving local people a stake in their environment, rather than not trusting them with the power to govern, the forest becomes better protected. However, there are cases in which these systems do not function so effectively. This occurs mainly in areas in which there is higher social stratification, either in terms of caste or in terms of poverty levels. This is due to the fact that strong social stratification, there were several powerful individuals who could work to counteract some of the decisions made by the forest council. Nonetheless, Agrawal's conclusions still support the idea that increased involvement and participation in actual government and rulemaking will increase a village's willingness to protect and use it in a sustainable way.

Foucault's ideas concerning panopticism and social surveillance are also addressed in this work. Agrawal did a study which looks into which forms of community surveillance are the most effective. Communities practice several different forms of surveillance from having the forest patrolled by outside enforcers to having a rotating schedule of different members of the community actively survey the forest. In cases where the forest was monitored by an external force, such as representatives from the regional government, the number of unreported infractions was much higher than in cases in communities in which local members practiced surveillance. People were more willing to respect regulations in situations in which they felt that any member of the community would know that they were behaving contrary to regulations and against the health of the forests.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites

One of the largest and most powerful organizations which works to protect and conserve sites is UNESCO. It is therefore interesting to investigate how the UNESCO charter goes about addressing the interests of indigenous people in its literature.

The UNESCO convention concerning the protection of world cultural and natural heritage was passed on the 16th of November 1972. Its goal is to create an international framework for the protection of cultural and natural sites deemed to be valuable "for all mankind". The UNESCO World Heritage charter defines three categories of cultural sites which qualify for protection:

Monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science.

Groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal from the point of view of history, art or science;

Sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view. (Article 1)

The majority of sites on the heritage list fall under either the first or the second category, and are not as problematic in terms of indigenous rights and indigenous marginalization because they only concern structures rather than large areas that are often still active used by local populations. The third category has the potential to create many of the issues discussed because it concerns much larger and less well-defined areas. It is the sites from this third category which will be the focus in the rest of this discussion.

There is a good deal of motivation to become an UNESCO World Heritage as it is a draw for tourists and it carries a certain amount of prestige. It also is a source of funding and legitimacy for studies and the management. On top of this, it creates standards and requirement for sites to become UNESCO world heritage site that give some control over how these sites are managed.

UNESCO recognizes the importance of the participation of local people in the process in their *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*: “Participation of the local people in the nomination process is essential to make them feel a shared responsibility with the State Party in the maintenance of the site”. In this way, UNESCO has made some resolutions which deal with the involvement of local people in the site. UNESCO also recognizes the inalienable right that indigenous people have to their own land and how their land is used.

However, despite these guidelines, other issues have emerged in some sites which have still resulted in the marginalization and disempowerment of some of these groups. One of these issues has to do with the actual definition of an indigenous group; governments can ignore local rights if they do not believe that the local people have a stake in the site. In order to rectify this problem, UNESCO has tried to clarify the definition of such groups, but issues still remain because the determining a specific definition of what exactly constitutes an indigenous group is quite difficult. Furthermore, in some cases where indigenous groups are recognized, they still have not been treated adequately. The “buffer zone” system established in the 1970’s, protected certain areas by removing all human impact and relocating peoples to designated “buffer zones”. The problem with this policy was that often the buffer zones were inadequate in size did not have all the necessary resources for indigenous group (2003 Colchester). Despite all of this, UNESCO has recognized some of the failings of its earlier policies and is trying to rectify some of the potential problems. This, however can be a slow a process.

Proposal for the future: the case of Bali

Until this point, this review has outlined issues and contentions between conservation practice and indigenous groups without discussing policies or examples that could be successful in incorporating indigenous groups and creating policies that can both conserve areas and empower local groups. There are several reasons for this. The first is that a good deal of the literature focuses on the failure of these sites in the eyes of indigenous people. The second is that there are not many of examples of conservation sites in which local people participate at a level in which they wield any real power (there are, however several interesting examples, such as Horizontalidad in Argentina, which are not directly associated with issue of conservation). An interesting question to ask is to how one could create a site that would be able to avoid the pitfalls and crises that have been addressed in this paper. The recently proposed, not declared UNESCO site in Bali provides an interesting situation to evaluate and understand how many of the issues of local participation can be taken in account and used to promote local growth and prosperity.

In order to understand how the proposal for the conservation of sites in Bali takes advantage of local governance structures, it is first necessary to understand the context and the role which local knowledge plays in this site. The sites in Bali that have been selected as UNESCO world heritage sites are those that are involved in the unique water temple system that exists in Bali. This system exists as a means to irrigate rice paddies and is remarkable because it irrigates enough rice paddies to feed a dense

population on a steep volcanic island which would not otherwise be able to support such a large population.

The island of Bali is a volcanic island which has a central crater lake and several natural springs as its main sources of water. Because of the volcanic rock, the natural waterways cut steep gullies and ravines on their way down the island to the sea rather than slower moving rivers. These types of waterways do not lend themselves well to the creation of irrigation canals and it is remarkable that indigenous people e.g. the Balinese over 1000 years ago were able to create irrigation systems. In order to achieve this, irrigation tunnels were often cut straight through rock wall to emerge into areas which could then be converted into rice paddies. As this system evolved more canals were created and the system became more complicated.

What is remarkable about this site is not, in fact, the canals themselves; it is the way that the collective irrigation of the island is managed. Because the island is volcanic and therefore somewhat of a mountain, one would assume that there would be a basic irrigation problem in which the villages and communities nearer to the top of the island and closer to the water sources would get enough to irrigate their crops and those at the base of the mountain would not because water would get used up on its way down. This, however, is not what occurs on the island of Bali due to a complex system of water temples which manage the distribution of water on the island, so that all crops produce remarkable high yields.

The local religion of Bali is related to both Buddhism and Hinduism, but a lot of focus is put on the worship of water goddesses. The belief is founded on the principle of

“Tri Hita Karana” or “the three causes of goodness”. The three causes are the relationship between the spirit, the human world and nature. In Balinese religious belief, water is believed to be a connector between these three causes; this is why the water goddesses are the main focuses of worship. This relationship between these three causes play an integral part in the management of these water temples; they do not only serve as places of worship, but also means to control and manage the irrigation of the island. Water temples are built at key weirs throughout the island. Each water temple is responsible for the irrigation of all rice paddies below this weir. All farmers who use waters from the watershed below a certain water temple must visit it on certain ceremonial days to thank the goddess and must give offering in proportion to the amount of water that they use. Water temples are thus responsible for the distribution of water to the various sections of the island. Each of these sections is called a subak: “[...] a unique social and religious institution; a self-governing, democratic organization of farmers who share responsibility for the just and efficient use of irrigation water to grow paddy rice” (UNESCO dossier). The subaks themselves have meetings to discuss irrigation issues and any conflicts that arise. There are also bigger, more important water temples at the main source of water for each canal system. These water temples serve as places for worship as well as mediums for discussions and interactions between subaks. This larger scale of control allows for these temples to deal with issues such as pests in a way that does not involve pesticides. The natural growth pattern of rice requires the fields to lay fallow for a period of time. If large areas of rice paddies all lie fallow at the same time, it restricts the natural habitat of pests and

causes the population to crash. Finally, there is a supreme water temple, which is the most sacred and is located highest source of water on the island is the supreme religious and management force. The water temples are not only the religious centers of the island; they also play a role in the maintenance of sustainable irrigation of the island.

This brief description of the site has is intended to give an idea of the intricate nature of the relationship between culture and nature in this landscape; it does not do justice to the complexity of the culture and the uniqueness of the relationship between religion and water management in Bali. Nonetheless, one can see why a site such as this could be a candidate for a UNESCO world heritage site based on the third criterion outlined earlier in this paper. In reality, it would not be very feasible to designate the whole island as heritage site, and as a result only certain temples and subaks have been chosen. This is for several reasons. First of all, it is important to note that all of the subaks on this island are threatened due to land lost, deforestation, irresponsible tourist practices, and loss of nutrients due to poor fertilizer and pesticide use. The sites that were chosen were some of the best preserved sites, sites that had particularly remarkable temples, and sites that were already practicing sustainable practices such as organic farming.

This is a site that has many of the same issues as sites described in the cases discussed earlier, although it also presents some complexities that have also not been discussed. The important issue is how at every level these issues tie back to issues of local management and how that can be positive or negative in varying cases. This is a site that has a high level of community participation and involvement, and that relies on

specific local ties. When this site is designated a heritage site, it is absolutely imperative that none of these structures are damaged. Furthermore, Bali is an area that already draws a large amount of tourists. World Heritage designation will only increase the number of tourists coming to the area. A challenge will be to preserve these sites while the tourist traffic visiting them is increasing. Finally, it is important to remember that, unlike many heritage sites, the subaks are living sites; people are still very much using them for their livelihoods. There is a challenge in protecting the sites and still leaving room for people's growth and decisions. Part of this challenge will be to try and encourage people to use organic local varieties of rice instead of Green Revolution hybrids of rice. This will be an investigation into how this proposal makes use of local knowledge, local people and existing local governing structure where possible, where it appeals to outside knowledge and enforcement and how it plans to achieve a balance between these two forces.

The management plan strongly emphasizes the importance of local participation and the reinforcement of local power even in the listing of its principle outcomes. This is made explicitly clear in the statement of the first outcome:

Establishment of legal, institutional and administrative structure to coordinate the adaptive co-management of the site among intersectoral policymakers and diverse stakeholders. These policies and structures guarantee that subaks and water temple congregations will retain control of their own institutions and resources. This point needs to be made clear because prior discussion of World

Heritage status for Balinese sites led to confusion and miss-information on this issue. (Management Plan)

In this case, it is critical that the subaks retain control over their institutions and resources because of the critical they play in the maintenance and regulation of the rice paddies. By overtly stating this point in the management plan, it would be very hard for anyone carrying out these outcomes to misinterpret or ignore this detail. This is one way to ensure that a group is responsible for the management of a site and it is important in making sure that the site is well taken care of. The only concern is that there must also be a balance between management by local people, and keeping with the goals of a UNESCO heritage site. There are some restrictions on the types of decisions that these subaks can make, or there would be no point in working to conserve the site at all:

Most of the sites in the Cultural Landscapes of Bali Province nomination are living heritage sites, which are owned by traditional villages and private farmers, and managed by subaks. However, local landowners face significant pressure to sell and subsequently develop property that is currently designated for rice farming. [...] Development restrictions within the sites must then maintain the outstanding universal value of the area, while allowing farmers and community members to sustain their livelihoods. (Management Plan)

The important issue is to be able to achieve a balance to between the reality of maintaining traditional values and practices within a site and to still accommodate the needs for growth and prosperity of the local population. This can be achieved through ideas of adaptive co-management. The difference between management and co-

management is that co-management places a strong emphasis on collaboration and learning. The co-management approach recognizes that the plan as it is laid out currently may not, in fact, be the ideal way to enact some policies. It provides flexibility that will allow for the adaptation of the plan to problems and conflicts and will ultimately make it more resilient. Built into the management plans are frequent meetings in which knowledge gaps and issues that had not been foreseen can be addressed. Furthermore, the local people are given a significant amount of power over what occurs on a day-to-day basis, as well as seats at meetings to identify potential issues that need to be addressed. This cooperative approach will run through all aspects of the plan and will allow flexibility in the system to deal with the wishes of local farmers:

“Effectively managing the site to promote the goals of sustainable livelihood and sustainable ecosystems will require ongoing research into the dynamics of interconnected systems, as well as the emerging institutional processes of adaptive governance” (management plan). The important part of this plan is that it is adaptive. Because it is initially unclear how exactly all these groups will work together, making the system flexible will ensure that no group is marginalized and the plan can be adapted to better address a particular interest group’s needs. This is the most important and fundamental aspect that will give this plan hope in terms of successfully and peacefully maintaining the conservation sites while also improving livelihoods for the local people on the island.

One such issue that may arise is the fact that local groups will be much more likely to participate willingly in these programs if they see livelihood enhancement or

other tangible benefits. The conflict arises when there are practices that may cause livelihood enhancement that may not be in line with the goals of conserving and preserving the site. It is therefore necessary to put restriction on what may be done and to “prohibit inappropriate development within the proposed World Heritage sites”. Built into the plan are mechanisms that will help farmers deal with potential issues that arise, such as close monitoring of programs to ensure that they are successful in enhancing livelihood. There are also two main venues identified that can function to provide tangible livelihood enhancement that do fit within the parameters of the management of the heritage sites: the re-introduction of organic rice crops as opposed to Green revolution hybrids and income from the increased tourist traffic. It is important to understand that both of these programs are only helpful if they are thought out carefully and once again incorporate the close cooperation of local subaks and farmers.

Until the 1970s, farmers in Bali were using native rice seeds and plants in their agriculture, primarily rice farming. Due to the unique local ecology of the island of Bali, there was no need for artificial fertilizers because there were sources of necessary nutrients in the volcanic ash on the island. Thanks to the monsoon rains, These nutrients would leech from the volcanic landscape into the water that flooded the rice paddies and the paddies were naturally fertilized. Unfortunately, in the 1970s the Green revolution and Green Revolution scientists were unaware of the unique ecology of Bali and they brought with them unnecessary fertilizers and hybrids crops which had a higher yield than traditional crops but which also sold at a much lower value. The result was that even though farmers were producing more rice, there were not making much

more money because of the lower value. This led to a pressure to grow even more rice more frequently. On top of this, the over fertilization of the paddies has caused environmental degradation and the runoff from these fertilizers has started to damage and kill the fragile coral reefs that live off the coast of Bali. The use of pesticides does nothing but introduce harmful chemicals into the environment and even onto the rice, because pests are well controlled by the coordination of fallow periods.

In light of these negative consequences, one of the subaks that has been nominated as a heritage site has returned to the traditional practices that were used before the introduction of Green Revolution seeds and practices. It has abandoned the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and started using the local varieties of rice from Bali. The results of this switch have been very positive; there has been an increase in biodiversity, production of rice, and no pesticides were detected on the rice grains (UNESCO Dossier). Furthermore, these local varieties of rice are much more valuable than the hybrid rice and can be sold at higher prices. This means that farmers do not have much pressure to plant too frequently because they make more of a profit off less rice. The interesting thing about this project is that it was started by local farmers, adopted by an entire subak and then adopted by other neighbor subaks; in other words, this movement was entirely local in origin and managed by local systems of government. There is now a locally managed training site in the original subak. The UNESCO management plan proposes to adopt the local management of this system to try and spread the use of organic farming to other regions under protection using the same systems developed by the subaks. This is a perfect example of how adaptive

management strategies can function; instead of imposing new systems to encourage a behavior, it is much better to identify mechanisms that are already in place and that are already respected by local people. This example does present a somewhat ideal situation, however, it is always so important to identify when a local group is already functioning in a way that is in accordance with conservation ideals and identify how and why this strategy is working, rather than imposing ideas without context.

The issue of tourism is much more complicated and problematic than the project to introduce organic farming. This is because, although tourism can be a large and beneficial source of income, it also carries many negative externalities. Examples of this include the degradation of the sites being visited, the selling of natural land for tourism purposes, and the abandonment of traditional practices to cater to the tourist trade. Additionally one of the obvious outcomes of having an area declared a UNESCO heritage is the fact that the number of tourists visiting the site will increase, and Bali is already an area that experiences high levels of tourist traffic. The challenge then becomes how to accommodate for and benefit from the influx of tourists while not compromising livelihoods and traditional ways of life.

One of the main issues is that because Bali is visited for its jewel-like beauty. As such, many farmers are tempted to sell their lands to developers who will convert the land to tourist sites such as golf courses and resorts. These are destructive for several reasons. First of all they take land and water away from the traditional subak system, thus weakening its ability to control pests and water. Another problem is that because these resorts are almost always designed by Western architects, they are disruptive to

traditional designs and layouts. These are problems that are generally associated with land on the island. There is a whole different specific set of problems that occur around actual historical sites that draw tourists.

The first issue has to do with the construction of the sites. In most of these sites, the architecture and layout is very important because the layout itself has strong spiritual meaning. As such, it can be very disruptive to the spiritual functionality of the site if structures such as visitor centers, gift shops, or parking lots are built too close to the actual site. As these future sites are developed and become more visited, it is imperative that issues such as this are given attention. This is a good example because in many structures, the actual layout of the site does not play a significant role, and therefore it is not as disruptive for these structures to be built so close. The plan does not suggest that one should not build these structures; this would not be feasible given the pressure from large amounts of tourist traffic. Rather, they suggest that these sites be effectively planned so that these structures are placed in areas that are not actually disruptive to the actual site. There are already several sites within the proposed heritage sites that do this.

This issue is a problem that is not too difficult to solve because it has to do with the planning of the actual sites themselves, which are managed by a board that understand the importance of layouts as well as many other factors. Something that is more difficult to control is the proliferation of small gift and souvenir shops along the roadways to these sites. In this situation, small shop owner and vendors set up shops along these roads because they are prime real estate for tourists coming and going to

these sites. The problem is that, for the most part, these shops are fairly generic; there is not much variation from shop to shop and the merchandise is not of high quality. The result is a classic tragedy of the commons situations. There is a high proliferation of these stores, which impede and ruin the view on the way to the sites, and do not bring in a lot of revenue to the individuals and serve to destroy the natural beautiful views. In order to combat, the sites must be zoned to prevent vendors from creating stores in these location and pamphlets must be distributed explaining their negative effect.

Unlike the case of organic farming, outside information and knowledge must be brought in to help deal and manage the issue of tourism. This may be because tourism is a phenomenon that is only recently causing pressure within the natural subak system of Bali. Although one could argue that the introduction of Green Revolution farming techniques were a “new” problem, the issue of farming is age-old to the subaks, and thus this was a problem which already had a structure in place that could solve these problems. There are no real indigenous management strategies in place that can deal with new and completely alien problems, such as the problem of having too many people who want to come and see the sites. The management plan takes a very interesting approach to dealing with these types of problems. Rather than taking these problems and dealing with them away from the subaks, the plan envisions using these situations as an opportunity to strengthen their local governing power by giving them opportunities to deal with this new situation. This can be seen in the writing of the dossier provided to UNESCO: “While the temple Pura Ulun Danu Batur is subject to [...] pressure from visitors, responsibility for this temple is firmly in the hands of the village

of Batur and the governing priests and Elders of the temple. World Heritage Status will help to clarify and strengthen this control, and help sustain the temple in the face of continuing tourist development in Bali." It is strategies like this one which make this proposal very strong and which makes for a plan that could be sustained long into the future.

Conclusion

The importance of the indigenous community in the creation, preservation and maintenance of unique and memorable sites cannot be overemphasized. All over the world indigenous communities play important roles in making these sites memorable, yet for the last hundred years, even their presence in the landscape has been largely ignored. In many cases, indigenous groups were worse than ignored; they were forcibly removed from their land, marginalized and saw their entire way of life crumble and dissolve into extreme poverty.

Not surprisingly, at the same time, conservationists also saw problems in the conservation of their sites: things such as resistance, lower biodiversity, and general deterioration. These problems can be linked to the general mismanagement of the site, due to lack of understanding and knowledge about the specific environment, knowledge that indigenous people generally have. The purpose of this study was not only to discuss the injustices that these people have to undergo, but also to emphasize the absolutely critical role that indigenous groups have on these sites. It also aimed to emphasize that the maintenance and protection of a site and caring for the empowerment and well

being of people living on the site were not mutually exclusive ideas; rather these two ideas would probably work best when they are addressed together.

The example of Bali was chosen as a way to illustrate how these two ideas could be used together in a concrete way. Although Bali seems to have some specific attributes that lend itself very well to the concept of local management, it is important to note that part of the reason for this is that the plan was designed by people who have an intimate knowledge of the systems and functioning of people on the island. If similar close attention were paid to other sites, many reliable systems of local governance may also be identified. The critical point is that, indigenous people, rather than being excluded and deemed unable to tend after their own native lands, should be included as an integral part in the planning of any conservation site.

Areas of Further Research

At this point, the heritages sites on Bali have only just been nominated. Nonetheless, under the authority of the Governor of Bali and the Directorate General of Archaeology, the structures of management proposed in the nomination document are gradually being introduced. Still, it is unclear how they will fare in the future. A potentially interesting area of research would be to see how the proposed adaptive management strategies in the Bali management plan fare, and whether they are successful in the goal of both empowering local forms of government and maintaining the traditional use of the water temples.

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