

Bridging Cultural Concepts of Nature

Indigenous People and
Protected Spaces of Nature

Edited by

Rani-Henrik Andersson,
Boyd Cothran & Saara Kekki

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CHAPTER I

Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and Nature Protection Collaboration and Changing Paradigms

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“Nature” and the “protection of nature” are cultural concepts often thought to originate in Western or Euro-American societies. In contrast, most Indigenous societies do not routinely differentiate between the realms of humans and the immediate environment in which humans live. Indeed, many if not most Indigenous languages do not have specific words for what in English we refer to as “nature.”¹ When thinking about how to bridge cultural concepts

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in a global context, then, how ought we to define “nature”? What is the relationship between humans and nature, and what are our obligations and responsibilities toward the environment? How should societies manage so-called “natural resources” in light of these differences? Beginning in the early 2000s, a flurry of declarations, constitutional reforms, legislative acts, and legal decisions from around the world have forced government agencies, local Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, academics, and the courts to wrestle with how to bridge diverse and, at times, conflicting cultural concepts of nature. In 2008, for instance, through a national referendum, Ecuador changed its constitution to state that henceforth nature would possess the right “to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles.”² Two years later, Bolivia passed similar legislation stripping human persons of their dominion over the environment by removing their “possessory rights over nature.” In treating the natural world holistically as a living system, the new law ensured that the country’s vital rivers, lakes, and forests would be entitled to the same inherent rights as Bolivian citizens.³

From these initial steps, Aotearoa took a major leap, when the New Zealand Government enacted the Te Urewera Act of 2014. A national park since 1954, Te Urewera has also been home to the Tūhoe people for centuries. After fighting for many years for their rights to this preserved space of nature to be recognized, Te Urewera ceased to be a national park, ceased to be vested Crown land, and became, instead, “a legal entity” with “all the rights, powers, duties and liabilities of a legal person.”⁴ According to then Minister Chris Finlayson, the enactment was a positive step on the Crown’s behalf to “settle the historical claims of Tūhoe, who suffered some of the worst breaches by the Crown in the country’s history, involving large scale confiscation, brutal military campaigns targeting Tūhoe settlements, and unjust land purchases.”⁵ In a similar conciliatory tone, Te Awa Tupua, or the Whanganui River, was granted the rights of a person in 2017. For the Māori, Te Awa Tupua has always had its own identity, and, like so many other non-human entities in nature, it has been respected and acknowledged in ceremonies for centuries. And as a result of this historic

agreement, now, for the first time, a settler nation's government, operating through a Western legal system and worldviews, found a way to officially accept another way of understanding the world. Other, more local steps include the recognition of personhood by regional authorities of the Magpie River in Québec and the Klamath River in Northern California.⁶ Sometimes bridging cultural concepts of nature means a river can be a person.

Throughout much of modern history, and especially within colonial and neocolonial contexts, the worldviews of Indigenous peoples have been marginalized. This is true within a variety of legal, social, and cultural contexts, but it has been especially evident in discourses of nature preservation and conservation. Since the late 19th century, national parks and other protected spaces of nature have become iconic symbols of nature protection and are valuable sites for global cultural heritage.⁷ In fact, the United Nations has recognized many of these places as UNESCO World Heritage sites even as local governments have harnessed these preserved spaces of nature to promote their own nationalistic agendas. Yet, while national parks have and continue to serve as important sites of cultural heritage and nature protection, they are also critical sites for the creation and exercising of colonial power and authority. Often carved out of the traditional homelands of Indigenous peoples, national parks have come to represent tragic loci of cultural loss and social marginalization for many Indigenous peoples who previously inhabited these now bordered spaces of nature. Indeed, for generations, Indigenous peoples have suffered from dispossession, treaty violations, restrictions on their rights and ability to hunt and fish, and the loss of sacred places at the hands of national parks and other protected spaces of nature around the world.⁸

At the same time, policymakers from Kenya to the United States and from Brazil to Russia have marginalized Indigenous voices, perspectives, and concerns. This is particularly evident when decisions are made regarding the preservation and/or management of protected spaces of nature such as national parks, wilderness areas, and marine sanctuaries. For instance, in Finland's Malla Strict Nature Preserve, Sámi reindeer herders are forbidden

from pursuing their customary practices within the perimeters of the park because policymakers fear their activities would despoil the park's "pristine wilderness." The Sámi, of course, have herded reindeer within what is today the boundaries of the preserve for generations, creating, many would argue, the supposedly untouched wilderness conditions policymakers are now trying to manage. Nonetheless, the Finnish Forest Service—the bureau in charge of managing all national parks and nature preserves in the country—maintains that reindeer herding would introduce "unnatural" human activity into an environment untouched by human practices. Driven by their belief in a narrative of pristine wilderness, this policy has led, in practice, to a paradoxical situation where national parks and protected areas permit tourism, even mass tourism, but the original inhabitants—Indigenous peoples—are forbidden from using these designated areas as they have previously done for thousands of years.⁹

The net effect of this history of marginalization and dispossession is that many Indigenous communities today find themselves in tense, or even antagonistic, relationships with governments, especially the agencies tasked with protecting these cherished spaces of nature. Opposition and hostility rarely create room for cooperation and, as a result, many Indigenous peoples today find their voices, practices, and values relating to the natural world silenced at precisely the moment when we need them more than ever before. There have even been calls to return all national parks to Indigenous people.¹⁰

In recent years, Indigenous communities and practitioners, such as park rangers and educators, working alongside both Indigenous and non-Indigenous policymakers, park administrators, and NGOs, have found productive ways to engage with and in national parks and similar preserved spaces of nature. These initial attempts to understand and embrace Indigenous concepts of nature have, in a few cases, resulted in innovative and transformative approaches to co-management, co-interpretation, and accessibility for Indigenous community members and their perspectives. On Vancouver Island, Canada, for instance, the Nuu-Chah-Nulth

people have developed a multi-level cooperation agreement with the Pacific Rim National Park, where a joint “action plan” has been developed to ensure a fuller inclusion of tribal members in various forms in the park’s operations. Likewise, since 2010, the Haida, also in British Columbia, have co-managed Gwaii Haanas National Park together with Parks Canada.¹¹ Examples of successful co-management strategies can be found beyond Canada. For instance, since the mid-2000s, aboriginal Ngunnawal rangers have guided visitors through Namadgi National Park in the Australian Capital Territory offering Aboriginal cultural education programs and activities to the public as part of a holistic attempt to broaden public understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal history in the region.¹² More recently, the Quileute Nation in Washington State has negotiated a land swap with the Olympic National Park so that the Quileute can build a new village safe from tsunamis and rising sea levels caused by climate change.¹³

These examples illustrate a growing trend toward this type of cooperation, but there is still a long way to go. In Northern Finland, the Sámi people still lack permission to herd reindeer in some protected nature areas. Similar restrictions exist in the United States and Canada, where natural resource extraction and use are prohibited in national parks. The rhetoric of “collaboration” and “co-management” are often deployed, but systemic change is not realized. This is particularly the case in developed and so-called progressive nations such as Canada and New Zealand. In other contexts, such as Central America, Latin America, and China, practical and intermediate steps must be taken before anything approaching a co-management strategy can be attempted. More often than not, co-management may be the goal, but many practical issues must be solved and many interests considered along the way. Time and again, researchers, policymakers, and community members have discovered that co-management can work on a general level, but in practice requires compromises and cooperation between many administrative agencies and must often address the needs of several Indigenous communities with varying interests. Different levels of collaboration cause co-management

to work well, for example, when it comes to hunting and fishing rights, but prove less effective in returning economic revenue or long-term planning to the Indigenous communities and individuals. It is also vital that any co-management strategy proceed upon a shared recognition of Indigenous peoples' rights, cultural practices, and ontologies, and not on the dominant society's ideas of what the Indigenous people want or need.

Co-management strategies, then, face a series of challenges. Nonetheless, examples of successful collaborations do exist and they can highlight both new opportunities and new challenges Indigenous communities and practitioners must encounter as they navigate the future of how to protect and live with these preserved spaces of nature. This shift toward Indigenous engagement with national parks provides scholars with new opportunities to investigate their role within nation-states and conservation movements even as these legal, administrative, and rhetorical tensions between Indigenous people, government agencies, environmentalist organizations, and academia continue to endure.

This book speaks to these opportunities by presenting seven historical and contemporary case studies to bring Indigenous concepts of nature and worldviews to the forefront of ongoing discussions on the environment, sustainability, nature protection, and Indigenous rights globally. While a diverse and interdisciplinary conversation has developed over the last few decades focused on environmental issues involving Indigenous peoples, nation-state actors, environmentalists, and various other groups, much of this scholarship has foregrounded histories of conflict and strife. These perspectives have certainly highlighted important issues and situated these conflicts productively within a longer historical perspective. But, as the contributions gathered in this volume suggest, this focus on conflict may have inadvertently solidified the view that relations between Indigenous communities, environmentalists, and state actors are always inevitably antagonistic. With this book, we do not shy away from the challenges, shortcomings, and indeed failures, but we hope to take a step toward changing the conversation. The legacy of conflict, dispossession, and

marginalization must not be forgotten, but it need not dictate our future. Only by examining carefully both the very real successes and the profound challenges facing collaborative efforts between Indigenous communities, state actors, and environmentalist organizations can we begin to repair and bridge these painful divides, and in the process begin to understand and respect our planet and its many peoples' diverse cultural concepts of nature.

The Legacy of Dispossession and Toward a New Paradigm

Indigenous peoples and preserved spaces of nature have been intertwined for centuries. In 1841, the artist George Catlin proposed that the United States government should preserve “in a magnificent park, where the world could see for ages to come, the native Indian in his classic attire, galloping his wild horse, with sinewy bow, and shield and lance, amid the fleeting herds of elks and buffaloes.” This “Nation’s Park,” as he called it, would stand as a monument to the continent’s “pristine beauty and wildness” for ages. Catlin’s idea came to naught. But it represents a 19th- (and even 20th-) century Euro-American mentality toward nature conservation and the rights and role of Indigenous peoples.¹⁴

Colonial societies have long ignored Indigenous perspectives and the legacies of this marginalization have been noted by scholars working in a variety of fields and disciplines for decades. At the heart of this particular mentality, however, lies the romantic stereotype of Indigenous peoples as being magically connected to nature. In recent years, this misconception has been thoroughly set aside. Instead of viewing Indigenous people as the embodiment of the Rousseauian ideal, scholars now embrace a more nuanced understanding and respect for what many call an “Indigenous way of being.” “Indians [i.e. indigenous people] do not talk about nature as some kind of concept or something ‘out there,’” world-renowned Lakota scholar Vine Deloria, Jr. noted. “They talk about the immediate environment in which they live. They do not embrace all trees or love every river or mountain.

What is important is the relationship you have with a particular tree or a particular mountain.”¹⁵ Relationships, then, rooted in kinship, are the key to understanding specific Indigenous meanings of nature. The meaning Indigenous people give to any specific place or environment can be sacred, practical, or both. But, on a fundamental level, Indigenous peoples do not separate themselves from nature and the environment; rather, they are part of them. For Indigenous peoples, time and place are linked through the connection to lands and waters, to places they hunt and fish, and where their ancestors have lived and been buried. It is not only the visible world, but also the invisible, spiritual world that manifests itself through and in nature.

This understanding of how Indigenous people conceive of their relationship with nature and the environment is fundamentally different from how non-Indigenous policymakers and environmentalists have approached the management of preserved spaces of nature. As a result, many such spaces in the United States and elsewhere were created through the dispossession of Indigenous people of vital lands, both sacred and practical. For instance, historian Theodore Catton, writing nearly 25 years ago, observed that white America’s conception of Indigenous peoples as living in harmony with a pristine wilderness jarred with the reality of many Indigenous peoples who used national park resources to live. According to Catton, the post-war debate over the existence of an “inhabited wilderness” resulted in the Alaskan National Interest Land Conservation Act of 1980, which affirmed Alaska Natives’ rights to use National Park Service (NPS) land for “customary and traditional” uses.¹⁶ While the idea of an “inhabited wilderness” seemed at the time unique to Alaska, it has inspired scholars to examine the disastrous role NPS has played in US Indigenous policy. At around the same time, Robert Keller and Michael Turek explored how American conceptions of “wilderness” as “uninhabited” conspired to displace Indigenous communities from their homes and livelihoods. By focusing on the antagonistic and contradictory relationship between Indigenous concerns and environmental policy, Keller and Turek reveal the

tragic ways in which tribal politics and NPS policies have influenced each other since the 1930s.¹⁷ Though less sweeping in breadth than Keller and Turek, Mark David Spence's *Dispossessing the Wilderness* considered the same theme by focusing on the Yosemite, Yellowstone, and Glacier National Parks to argue that the establishment of these national parks was made possible through Indian removal from an otherwise "pristine" and "uninhabited wilderness."¹⁸ Philip Burnham's scathing *Indian Country, God's Country* carried the dispossession narrative further by arguing that the systematic theft of Indigenous lands by the National Park Service had contributed in no small degree to the endemic social and economic malaise on reservations today.¹⁹ Finally, although less focused on the connections between the NPS and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Karl Jacoby's *Crimes against Nature* considers how conservationists used legal measures to restrict access to national park lands for lower-class Americans, including members of Indian tribes, who were once promised access to those very resources.²⁰

Building on these early studies, scholars working in a variety of disciplines have honed in on the complex and multifaceted processes—social, cultural, political, and economic—that have affected protected spaces of nature, highlighting the negative impacts these processes have had on Indigenous peoples. For instance, Stan Stevens' *Indigenous Peoples, National Parks, and Protected Areas: A New Paradigm Linking Conservation, Culture and Rights* remains a groundbreaking study that documents and classifies the numerous ways in which Indigenous peoples have *suffered* because of the creation of protected areas carved out of their traditional territories.²¹ Stevens develops the following taxonomy:

- (1) spatial and physical displacement that includes forced relocation and lack of access to traditional territories;
- (2) economic marginalization, including restrictions or bans on land and marine use, loss of livelihood, loss of access to food security, water, shelter etc., which together result in a lack of benefits from revenues derived from protected areas;

- (3) political marginalization stemming from the loss of territorial control and self-governance and the loss of authority over cultural sites; and
- (4) cultural marginalization as a result of the loss of shared life in homelands, loss of care for homelands, loss of access to cultural sites and resources, and the lack of respect for cultural practices, livelihoods, and customary laws and governance.²²

Stevens concludes that in creating protected spaces of nature, such as national parks, nation-states have built their management strategies on Western notions of wilderness preservation and excluded Indigenous worldviews.

Stevens' analysis has proven correct and provides a useful framework for describing, categorizing, and understanding the many negative consequences Indigenous communities have and continue to endure in the name of conservation movements. But, Indigenous communities, governmental policymakers and practitioners, such as park administrators, rangers, and educators, and even some NGOs have managed to find productive ways of working together to successfully manage preserved spaces of nature while still ensuring access and flexibility. Although not without its problems or limitations, this growing trend toward collaboration among Native peoples and governmental and non-governmental agencies tasked with the protection of nature provides an opportunity for scholars and community members to investigate the vital role Indigenous peoples can play within nation-states to conserve natural resources without negatively impacting their communities. Indeed, several recent scholarly studies have found that allowing or even encouraging Indigenous presence and participation in certain protected areas has boosted conservation efforts by introducing traditional Indigenous place-based knowledge into the discussion.²³ These vital and beneficial forms of Indigenous knowledge have often been ignored or lost when settler-colonial states developed their environmental policies and management practices.

Throughout this volume, then, we seek to balance the successes and problems of Indigenous/state/environmentalist collaborations.

Each author approaches their subject from a different vantage point, in their own way, detailing the many costs Indigenous people have been forced to bear in the name of protecting nature, while nonetheless focusing on examples of or models for successful collaborations between Indigenous people and protected spaces of nature. In some cases, the verdict is decidedly negative or decidedly positive, and in a few cases, incremental progress and best practices are identified, while strategies for addressing shortcomings are considered. But in each case, the goal is to move the conversation toward a new paradigm. Finally, in exploring these complex and vital issues, we have adopted a global perspective on these often local and national concerns in order to build bridges and strengthen our collective efforts to create a more just world for all.

An Interdisciplinary Approach to a Global Problem

This book seeks to engage a variety of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches to the issue of Indigenous peoples, and their participation in the co-management of preserved spaces of nature. As a work of Global Indigenous Studies, it draws on a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches from transnational and global studies to cultural and anthropological studies to environmental and conservation studies, and political ecology.

Global Indigeneity is a vibrant, emerging field of study. From its internationalist activist origins in the 1970s and 1980s, the field has developed rapidly in recent years.²⁴ The landmark 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which encouraged the growth of comparative, international, and transnational studies on Indigenous communities, particularly in settler colonial nation-states, has served as both a political lightning rod and a call-to-arms for scholars in a variety of disciplines from around the world.²⁵ Much of the scholarship on Global Indigeneity has been explicitly comparative ever since.²⁶ The results have been impressive. Besides scores of monographs and edited volumes, scholars of Global Indigeneity have established new professional

organizations, annual conferences, and scholarly journals—even entire degree programs.²⁷

Much of this scholarly intensity has been driven by the urgency of the issues: cultural revitalization, reconciliation, and environmental justice and sustainability.²⁸ But while anthropologists, linguists, sociologists, and political scientists have embraced Global Indigeneity, historians have stood largely on the sidelines with a few notable exceptions. This book brings deeper historical perspective to the field of Global Indigeneity, especially the history of environmental management.²⁹ It intervenes in the established literature on Indigenous peoples and preserved spaces of nature such as national parks and wildlife preserves by complicating the historical narrative of Indigenous dispossession. It investigates the history of Indigenous involvement in these spaces long after legal dispossession. And it leverages collaborative and community-engaged research to reveal previously ignored histories of Indigenous survival and agency. Indeed, several of the authors in this collection are Indigenous community members and practitioners, and their contributions provide vital perspective on these complex issues.

This book also approaches the topic of nature conservation and protection from a cultural standpoint. The authors use current methodologies that highlight Indigenous agency and Indigenous theories about the nature of being and categories of existence known as ontologies. Understanding people's diverse perspectives, values, and objectives, and how people are constrained or enabled by social and cultural systems, will facilitate a more effective and equitable approach to understanding, for example, human-other-than-human relations. There is growing recognition that to solve environmental problems, we need to also understand their human and cultural dimensions. This book addresses this need by engaging a transnational team of interdisciplinary researchers who approach nature conservation through Indigenous ontologies that include human-other-than-human dimensions. We define knowledge of "human-other-than-human dimensions" broadly to include expertise in the social sciences (e.g., anthropology,

psychology, political science, economics), humanities, arts, and Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge. We seek to validate Indigenous understandings of nature and the ontological assumptions upon which they are based. And we embrace Indigenous conceptions of human–animal relations as a form of reciprocal exchange.³⁰ This necessarily brings a broad range of epistemologies and methodologies into conversation.

Traditional ecological knowledge has become an integral part of Indigenous studies that, as a field of science, has seen a tremendous rise in academia over the past two decades. It is a highly cross-disciplinary field bringing methods and theories ranging from political science to history and anthropology, from area and cultural studies to cultural heritage studies, or from religious studies to sustainability and environmental studies, to name a few. As a field, it highlights the importance of Indigenous agency and belonging. Whatever the approach may be, the overreaching theoretical premise comes from ethical Indigenous studies.³¹ This book also addresses methodological issues concerned with how to study Indigenous knowledge, or ethical questions, such as how to handle data or knowledge that is sacred or sensitive in some other way.³² Indigenous knowledges are not only expressed in a written form, but are in their traditional forms typically presented and reflected through diverse practices and ways of communication, and in lived history and places of relational significance, some of which are today under the jurisdiction and administration of national parks and other protected spaces of nature.³³

Bridging Cultural Concepts of Nature thus advances the recent turn toward global comparative work in Indigenous Studies. We embrace the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues (UNPPFII) April 2019 acknowledgment that Indigenous traditional knowledge “must be protected,” and their assertion that it is crucially needed in order to meet the global goals for sustainable development by 2030.³⁴ While recognizing the continued problems of settler colonialism, this book focuses on the many comparative instances of Indigenous agency in maintaining culturally relevant practices of sustainability even

within the context of limited access to power in nation-states. This volume comes out of a series of conversations among academic researchers, community leaders, and government and non-governmental officials.

While our case studies address the issues at hand in a global context, we acknowledge that additional cases representing, for example, Africa or Asia could have been included here. There are many illustrative cases we could have included in this conversation. Along the southern coast of Kenya, the nine tribes of the Mijikenda people are deeply involved in the ecotourism industry surrounding the Sacred Mijikenda Kaya Forests, a complex of 30 sacred forests or *kaya*, which together form a UNESCO World Heritage Site. On the island of Hokkaidō in northern Japan, the Ainu have established a settlement known as Akan Ainu Kotan, where over 200 Ainu people live and work within the Akan Mashu National Park. Tens of thousands of visitors attend performances of their traditional songs and dances, rituals that have been registered as a UNESCO intangible cultural heritage of humanity.³⁵ Similarly, Russia has developed joint programs with the Udege people, an Indigenous people of the Russian Far East, and the Biki National Park to help to preserve the region's rich forests, a key carbon reservoir vital to climate protection, and also to create additional income for the local Udege people. However, the specific dynamics of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations in parts of Africa and Asia are complex and different in form from most of those contained within this volume. This is not to suggest they are not important and could not contribute to the conversation here. But, for a single volume, based on the conversations held at the Bridging Cultural Concepts of Nature Conference in Helsinki in 2018, it is impossible to cover the entire globe.³⁶ We are confident that the case studies presented here offer important insights into the broader topic that can aid a fuller understanding in a global context, and point to new directions of research. And we sincerely hope that future works will be able to bring case studies and regional examples not covered here into this ongoing conversation.

Acting Locally, Thinking Globally, Together

In recent years, much has changed in the relationships between protected spaces of nature and Indigenous people globally. But while the Sámi of Scandinavia are working on their own collaborative models, the Chumash of California and the Anangu of Australia are also forging their own collaborations. More often than not, these Indigenous communities are doing so without really knowing about one another's efforts. Similar models/programs are being developed, but there are few forums, academic books, or networks that would bring these various collaborative models together. One inspiration for this volume was to help build bridges between communities and organizations working in isolation but toward a common goal.

To that end, this volume identifies current working models between Indigenous peoples and administrators of protected spaces of nature and investigates how these cooperations could be further strengthened and developed by including Indigenous ontologies, perspectives, and needs in the management of these selected spaces. We will highlight ways to achieve co-management as realized practice, not only as a theoretical ideal, and ultimately affect not only the discourses, but also the structures that govern nature protection today. By including Indigenous perspectives in programs of nature protection, this book has the potential to enhance cooperation and help develop more humane and inclusive policies and more sustainable practices in the management of national parks and similar protected spaces of nature. This is not to suggest that this book is without conflict. Indeed, persistent and deep conflicts continue to mar even sincere attempts at cooperation. By critiquing current efforts at co-management and bringing forth successful case studies, this book will help build capacity within Indigenous communities so that they may more effectively convey Indigenous practices, perspectives, and ontologies in developing working relations with government agencies. Overall, the conversations around the co-management of preserved spaces of nature is still one very much centered on conflicts.

But throughout this volume, the authors seek to highlight Indigenous agency and belonging to aid in (re)-indigenizing Indigenous homelands now under the administration of park services and similar institutions, while still recognizing the deep and persistent points of dispute, disagreement, and discord. Some authors focus more at the level of policy, while others investigate more practical approaches, such as the ways in which Indigenous peoples can be employed as managers, educators, and interpreters in protected spaces of nature. Ultimately, it is our hope that this approach will directly affect Indigenous communities by easing access to ancestral homelands and help to address questions such as sovereignty, equality, and indigeneity.

. . .

This book is comprised of three parts, each of which explores a distinct aspect of collaboration between Indigenous communities, government actors, and environmentalists. Part I, “Government Policy and Indigenous Agency,” addresses issues relating to Indigenous participation in the development, implementation, and oversight of governmental policy and regulations. We begin with “Personifying Indigenous Rights in Nature? Treaty Settlement and Co-Management in Te Urewera,” in which Māori scholar and environmental geographer Brad Coombes explores the co-management of the Te Urewera National Park. In the ten years following the Treaty settlements, Coombes has gathered much evidence that co-management is not always successful and presents a plethora of legal and moral questions. He further argues that additional problems may arise when Indigenous rights are linked with nature’s rights. Giving a river personhood is not necessarily what is in the best interests of Indigenous peoples in their attempts to reclaim lost lands. At worst, this development is only another form of expressing colonial powers and reframing traditional conservation practices in an effort to preserve the national parks ideal. From Aotearoa/New Zealand, we next turn to northern Scandinavia. In “Discourses of Decentralization: Local Participation and Sámi Space for Agency in Norwegian Protected

Area Management,” political scientist Elsa Reimerson analyzes a series of reforms developed in 2010 to guide Norway’s management of protected areas. The 2010 reforms developed new arenas of influence for the Indigenous Sámi over protected areas within their lands. In her chapter, Reimerson explores how discourses of decentralization and participation in nature conservation shape the space of agency for Indigenous peoples. The results demonstrate both the challenges and the opportunities inherent in developing successful co-management strategies. The discourses governing the reform, she contends, articulated the relationship between Sámi rights and protected areas in relation to a variety of different concepts, problematic representations, and proposed solutions, each with potentially different consequences for the ultimate goal of Sámi participation and influence over decision-making processes.

While Part I focuses more on specific policies, Part II, “Biocultural Diversities across Bordered Spaces,” highlights the many thorny and complex issues related to managing biodiversity across jurisdictional, administrative, and state and national borders. This second part opens with “People, Animals, Protected Places, and Archaeology: A Complex Collaboration in Belize, Central America,” in which archaeologists Meaghan Peuramaki-Brown and Shawn Morton discuss the interplay between archaeological research and the interactions between individuals, communities, and institutions that structure their archaeological work in Belize. The authors begin by discussing the history of the development of the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, connected forest reserves, and the ongoing co-management of the region, which depend on productive relationships with adjacent Indigenous Maya communities. They frame these developments within the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and supplement historical records with informally gathered impressions from local rights-holders and stakeholders, as well as through their own experiences and observations. They conclude by suggesting best practices for co-management and community engagement—and propose areas for improvement.

In “Indigenous People, National Parks, and Biodiversity in the Maya Region” by Latin Americanist Harri Kettunen and Indigenous practitioner Antonio Cuxil introduce readers to recent developments in the vast Maya region, which encompasses areas in five countries, and their specific focus on the Selva Maya, a tropical forest region extending over Belize, northern Guatemala, and southeastern Mexico. Drawing on their years of experience in the region, the authors explain the political and economic context in which the national parks and nature preservers operate, and then discuss the opportunities—or the lack thereof—that the protected spaces provide for the Indigenous peoples as they strive to earn their living working in the ecotourism business.

Part II concludes with “Amazonia Beyond Borders: Indigenous Land Protection for an Indigenous Group in Voluntary Isolation” by Indigenous Studies scholar Pirjo Kristiina Virtanen and Indigenous spokesperson and researcher Lucas Artur Brasil Manchineri. In this chapter, they explore the land protection efforts by the Manxineru of Brazil, whose lands are affected by numerous actors: state agencies, enterprises, and transnational mega-extraction projects. The authors draw especially from the experiences and activities of the Manxineru to protect the land for the Yine Hosha Hajene (Mascho-Piro), a closely related Indigenous community the Manxineru consider to be their kin living in voluntary isolation, and whose traditional territory increasingly includes regions of the forest belonging to the Manxineru in the Brazilian–Peruvian border area. Unique to this case study is an example of a co-management effort between an Indigenous community and the relevant governmental agencies on behalf of another Indigenous community. The chapter presents the Manxineru as intermediaries who have developed key land protection practices, social networks of different actors as a go-between with the other Indigenous group, and authorities of the dominant society, as well as best practices for managing forest resource use, gathering economies, and hunting practices that rely on Indigenous knowledge and perspectives for the protection of ancestral land, beyond the borders of the state-set Indigenous reserves and protected areas.

The result, according to the authors, is that the Manxineru have managed to cope with differing economic interests and values, though the mosaic of different Indigenous areas and conservation still need the implementation of state protective activities by a variety of governmental actors.

Part III, “Re-Indigenizing Knowledge and Nature” provides a more intimate glimpse into Indigenous worldviews about nature, and individual and personal journeys of discovery as they relate to some of the world’s preserved spaces of nature. In their chapter, “Blackfeet Discourses about Dwelling-in-Place: Our Homeland, a National Park,” Communication Studies scholars Donal Carbaugh and Eean Grimshaw present to readers the spoken words of Blackfeet people who have discussed their homeland, its landscape, and all that it entails. In the process, the chapter seeks to help readers hear in those words the Blackfeet way of speaking about their land, introduce some of the cultural meanings of Blackfeet in that way of speaking about it, and offer an understanding of this way as a communal touchstone which is anchored in the discourse produced by Blackfeet participants as they speak about their homeland.

Sámi scholar Hanna Ellen Guttorm in “Becoming Earth: Rethinking and (Re-)Connecting with the Earth, Sámi Lands, and Relations” deploys a methodology of writing that embraces wondering and wandering on the Earth, in Sámi land(s) and Sámi/Finnish/global worlds. It is a way of thinking inspired by different Sámi concepts, like *eana* (Land/Earth), *siiddastallan* (having/living a *siida*, living in a sustainable relation between people, animals, and environment), *meahcci* (forest/mountain/waters), and *ruoktu* (home). After contemplating these Sámi concepts, she shares various ‘mystories,’ stories of her own and stories from the people with whom she has talked during her revitalizing journeys through Sámi land.

Finally, to conclude the volume, historian Joshua L. Reid (Snohomish) provides an erudite discussion of the historical trajectories that brought us to this moment of re-evaluation and then draws a series of generative and insightful connections

between the various pieces in this volume. Along the way, he offers a historiography of the ideals of nature protection versus conservation and compares the transnational movements for Indigenous rights. Highlighting the history of dispossession and the myth of Indigenous peoples as ecologists *par excellence*, Reid argues that these pernicious and persistent legacies and stereotypes, combined with the limitations of a Western, rights-based framework, continue to hinder efforts at a more egalitarian and even decolonized approach to the management of preserved spaces of nature. If settler nation-states and Indigenous communities are to forge a new path forward, Reid contends, it must be based not on a discourse on rights and participatory government, but on contemporary and historical Indigenous relationalities to their homelands.

Notes

- ¹ Joks, Østmo, and Law, “Verbing *meahcci*,” 305–21.
- ² Constitution Política de la República del Ecuador, article 71 cited in Gordon, “Environmental Personhood.”
- ³ Gordon, “Environmental Personhood,” 55.
- ⁴ Section 11 Te Urewera Act 2014.
- ⁵ Minister Chris Finlayson cited in Department of Conservation, “Tūhoe Claims Settlement.”
- ⁶ Lowrie, “Quebec River”; Smith, “Klamath River”; Te Awa Tupua (Whanganui River Claims Settlement) Act 2017.
- ⁷ This book is predominantly concerned with national parks, but also includes other protected spaces of nature such as World Heritage sites, marine sanctuaries, nature preserves, and historical sites.
- ⁸ Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature*; Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*.
- ⁹ See, e.g., Magga and Ojanlatva, *Ealli biras*; Turi, *State Steering*. See also Paltto, “Role of Mass Media.”
- ¹⁰ Igoe, *Conservation and Globalization*; Mander and Tauli-Corpuz, *Paradigm Wars*; Treuer, “Return the National Parks.”
- ¹¹ Andersson, “Re-Indigenizing National Parks,” 65–82. See also Gwaii Haanas Gina, “Waadluxan KilGuhlGa.”
- ¹² Department of Territory and Municipal Services, “Namadgi National Park.”
- ¹³ For more on the Quileute and the Olympic National Park, see Keller and Turek, *American Indians & National Parks*, 117–19.

- ¹⁴ Catlin, *Letters and Notes*, 261–62. See also Hausdoerffer, “That Shocking Calamity,” 65–88.
- ¹⁵ Vine Deloria, Jr., as quoted in Scinta and Foehner, *Spirit & Reason*, 223–24.
- ¹⁶ Catton, *Inhabited Wilderness*.
- ¹⁷ Keller and Turek, *American Indians & National Parks*.
- ¹⁸ Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*.
- ¹⁹ Burnham, *Indian Country, God’s Country*.
- ²⁰ Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature*.
- ²¹ Stevens, *Indigenous Peoples*. Other books that encourage including native perspectives are, e.g., Burnham, *Indian Country, God’s Country*; Keller and Turek, *American Indians & National Parks*; Nabokov and Loendorf, *Restoring a Presence*; Thompson, Kootenai Culture Committee & Pikuni Traditional Association, *People before the Park*.
- ²² Stevens, *Indigenous Peoples*, 38.
- ²³ See Cordero and Isha, *Chumash Ecosystem Services Assessment*, 1–20. This report has been used here with the permission of the authors. See also Nelson and Shilling, *Traditional Ecological Knowledge*; Ross et al., *Indigenous Peoples*.
- ²⁴ Merlan, “Indigeneity,” 303–33.
- ²⁵ United Nations, *General Assembly Adopts Declaration*.
- ²⁶ Maaka and Andersen, *Indigenous Experience*; Sissons, *First Peoples*; Sleeper-Smith, *Contesting Knowledge*.
- ²⁷ See, for instance, *Journal of Global Indigeneity*, 2015–present; *Alternative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 2005–present.
- ²⁸ On cultural revitalization, see Phipps, “Globalization,” 28–48; Wilson and Steward, *Global Indigenous Media*. On reconciliation, see Lightfoot, “Indigenous Rights Norms,” 84–104; Short, *Reconciliation and Colonial Power*. On environmental justice and sustainability, see Mander and Tauli-Corpuz, *Paradigm Wars*; Ross et al., *Indigenous Peoples*.
- ²⁹ Coates, *Global History of Indigenous Peoples*; Cothran, “Indian Field Days,” 194–223.
- ³⁰ Nadasdy, “Gift in the Animal,” 25–43.
- ³¹ For more on ethical Indigenous studies, see AIATSIS, *Guidelines for Ethical Research*; Raven, “Protocols”; Windchief and San Pedro, *Applying Indigenous Research Methods*.
- ³² Battiste, “Research Ethics,” 111–132; Raven, “Protocols,” 36–43.
- ³³ For more on Indigenous knowledge and nature, see Edington, *Indigenous Environmental Knowledge*; Gordon and Krech, *Indigenous Knowledge*.

- ³⁴ For the discussion on Indigenous traditional knowledge and sustainability goals at the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues resolutions, see UN News, “Traditional Knowledge.”
- ³⁵ UNESCO, “Traditional Ainu Dance.”
- ³⁶ In 2018, with the support of the University of Helsinki Faculty of Arts Futures Fund and the University of Washington, 18 scholars and Indigenous practitioners convened at the Bridging Cultural Concepts of Nature symposium (<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/conferences/bridging-cultural-concepts-of-nature>). This book is the result of the conversations that began during the meeting.

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PART I

**Government Policy
and Indigenous Agency**

CHAPTER 2

Personifying Indigenous Rights in Nature?

Treaty Settlement and Co-Management in Te Urewera

Brad Coombes
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The Making of New “Rights” and New Legal Persons

Although the Treaty of Waitangi 1840 included protection mechanisms for Māori environmental interests, resource- and conservation-based grievances are numerous within the Treaty settlement process of Aotearoa New Zealand. In 1985, the Waitangi Tribunal was authorized to research and make recommendations on historical claims, broadening the scope and significance of its work, but recently the state has found new ways to circumvent those recommendations. The process has become mired in administrative

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rationalism, an over-emphasis on cultural redress sidelines questions of resource ownership or constitutional reform, and state preferences for corporate governance structures have provoked elite capture of compensation mechanisms.¹ Although the 30 percent of the country that is contained within the conservation estate was initially unaffected by the redirection of the settlement process, latterly Treaty settlements for conservation lands have become contentious. Te Urewera is one of four national parks that has or will become subject to special legislation that personifies landscapes and Māori-landscape relations with the intent to resolve Indigenous land claims while inspiring nature's protection. It remains unclear, however, whether person rights for Te Urewera will be effective for the Māori communities whose Treaty claims provoked those changes. Ngāi Tūhoe and neighboring *iwi* (tribes) claimed that cultural suppression, land loss, and developmental restrictions inflicted contemptible impacts upon them. In a perverse response to that history, the Treaty settlement process implemented person rights for Te Urewera with commitments to retain protectionist conservation, so few Tūhoe attained a right to live or work within their *rohe* (tribal territory). Past negotiations for such resolution mechanisms as co-management in Te Urewera were conflictual, but the new ambiguity in whether Tūhoe or Te Urewera will have primary agency further problematizes collaboration. Redressing a colonial history of national parks requires a rethinking of conservation and development, but local implementation of a rights-for-nature approach represents the veiled continuation of strict protectionism.

Between 1954 and 2014, Te Urewera was a national park and was managed according to the preservationist style of the National Parks Act 1980. Early negotiations for Treaty settlement stalled because the government rejected Tūhoe's ownership demands. Further impasses surrounding land ownership forced the state to consider application of proposed redress mechanisms for the Whanganui River, where person rights were subsequently awarded in 2017. Te Urewera Act 2014 rescinded the national park status and granted Te Urewera the right of "a legal entity,"

with “all the rights, powers, duties and liabilities of a legal person” (section 11(1)). Te Urewera and the Whanganui River “are no longer ‘things’ over which humans exercise dominion; they are ‘persons’ with which humans have a relationship.”² Although represented by a co-management board and two guardians, respectively, they have become legally self-owning.

I argue that the award of person rights to nature as a solution to land claims within national parks may invalidate Indigenous rights to development and self-determination, especially when mixed with the falsely inclusive politics of co-management. The current regard for person rights may also inhibit the project of Indigenous leaders to decenter “rights” as the desired end point of Indigenous activism. Experiments with legal personhood emerged during a confluence of seemingly unrelated processes, but awareness of their intersections is crucial for understanding the limitations of a rights-of-nature approach. First, that personhood emerged at a time of unprecedented dissent toward parks and protected areas may suggest that it is a technique for appeasing dissenting voices or delimiting Indigenous activism. Second, personhood follows the unmasking of co-management as an attempt to salvage preservationist conservation from its contradictory performance and socio-cultural impacts. It is unsurprising, therefore, that in certain national parks person rights are implemented concurrently with co-management. Third, rights-of-nature became prominent at the same time as Indigenous philosophers contested stridently the rights discourses that had dominated land claims settlement until that time.³

Many Indigenous scholars have grown wary of rights-making practices as the primary means for achieving Indigenous political agendas. The politics of recognition, false inclusion, and the repressive authenticity that shape claims settlements account for loss of Indigenous patience with rights discourses.⁴ This should evoke suspicion about missions to resolve jointly Indigenous peoples’ and nature’s rights. It has been difficult to achieve either agenda, so problems will surely escalate when trying to achieve both. Yet, Indigenous philosophers also accept that there should be interaction among different types of rights.⁵ In the pursuit of

common kinship, they suggest we avoid viewing tensions between the rights-of-nature and human rights in binary terms, but they are also sensitive to how rights-making involves the social construction of identities.⁶ Ghosts of the ecologically noble savage and biased expectations of Indigenous support for conservation have triumphed over rights to development in the past.⁷ The academy should apply a critical gaze to this new claim that recognizing nature's rights may also address Indigenous rights. It seems, however, that such criticality is often lacking, particularly in Aotearoa. Through repetition of interviews with members of Māori claims committees, I review two phases of debate about co-management in Te Urewera: one before hearings of the Waitangi Tribunal and one after the settlement of Treaty claims. Although person rights were absent from the first phase, they dominated the second era of deliberations. The research confirms the role of personhood in the unjustified continuation of preservationist conservation, even after the Waitangi Tribunal discredited that mode of conservation.⁸

Preservationism Resuscitated

The parks and protected areas approach to conservation has been criticized for two significant failings. First, its human rights abuses have been confirmed, with an expanding list of biopolitical displacements, inter-cultural offences and socio-economic impacts upon neighboring or evicted peoples.⁹ Indigenous peoples suffer the most and, despite claims that those outcomes are a legacy of historical harm, associated injustices for Indigenous communities are similar in colonial and neo-colonial times.¹⁰ Forced resettlement of Indigenous communities to address ecological crises, biosecurity dilemmas, and poaching networks is increasing. Hence, application of personhood to resolve jointly nature's and Indigenous rights seems contradictory. Second, strict protectionism emphasizes wilderness preservation, and its inflexible attempts to lock nature in particular states are inapt for the disequilibrium ecologies of the Anthropocene.¹¹ Reform away from strict protectionism during the early part of this century was short-lived and preservationists

have since moved to prolong the parks and protected areas approach through a politics of appeasement. Both rights-of-nature and co-management are practices intended to resuscitate strict protectionism through purportedly more inclusive and caring governance.

Co-Management: Prolonging the Protected Areas Approach

Rather than performing as a bridge to self-determination, co-management has imposed a globalized rights-making discourse on state–Indigenous conflicts. It has concealed demands for land repatriation and renewal of Indigenous polities, delimiting those agendas within a cultural heritage logic that is compatible with the preservation of natural heritage.¹² The competing objectives of actors involved in co-management shape the case against its inclusion within land claims settlements. The state promotes collaborative management as a reconciliation process that will calm Indigenous protests, allowing for the perpetuation of national parks. Its motivation to pursue co-management is, therefore, a disguised and sometimes contradictory case of biocentrism.¹³ Indigenous communities are more interested in land recovery or political resurgence and may therefore understand such forms of reconciliation as a means to control their political activism.¹⁴ The environmental components of claims settlement yield many dilemmas for Indigenous peoples, especially because attacking the colonial or postcolonial state on the basis of a poor environmental record may be framed later as primal support for conservation. That may lock Indigenous communities into a future of limited development, wherein co-management imposes a ceiling on usufruct allowances and any community rights are vulnerable to withdrawal if plans depart from scripted biocentric identities.¹⁵

The dilemma that apparent acceptance of biocentrism may follow Indigenous consent to co-management has become greater over time. The original vision of co-management to enable joint decision-making among state and local actors has been “conceptually stretched” to accommodate non-local stakeholders and corporate

interests, entrenching the hierarchical governance that co-management was intended to replace.¹⁶ Rather than an equal, *a priori* influence for parties in a state–local dyad, co-management increasingly defaults to *post hoc* consultation or involvement in advisory boards.¹⁷ The outcome is a façade in which claims about inclusion and proof of elitism co-mingle, confounding any Indigenous demand for collaboration. Co-management reconfigures as liberal legitimating power for the nation–state and proof again that the efforts of Indigenous leaders to work within the state apparatus inevitably stray from a decolonial trajectory.¹⁸

Those problems are acute where historical injustices are the prevailing source of present Indigenous concern. In such cases, fairer “management” of parks may have an ambiguous relationship with accountability for past land loss, genocidal policies, or state assimilation. Yet, because co-management is well-known for ahistorical moments of inclusion in the present, Indigenous leaders are often doubtful about its capacity to address the historical traumas that are their primary concern.¹⁹ The promise of material benefits from co-management seldom generates new work opportunities or development rights, sometimes leading to an Indigenous backlash after implementation of co-management. Yet, “non-recognition” of and failure to deliver the *non-material* benefits that Indigenous peoples anticipate from co-management is also significant.²⁰ Thwarted expectations that cultural preferences or pre-colonial governance practices will recommence, or that feelings of insecurity and dislocation will dissolve, lead to *new* conflicts. The potency of Indigenous negotiating power may achieve transactional benefits from co-management despite its weaknesses, but it seldom achieves self-dependence or substantive reform.²¹

The most successful examples of co-management include a step-down from leadership by state actors and, therefore, they no longer resemble co-management as it is known in academic literature.²² More commonly, retention of final decision-making power with state officials, community–state capacity differences that shadow the persistence of expert-systems, and token inclusion maintain hierarchical governance *after* initiation of co-management. Co-management may reiterate Crown jurisdiction over natural

resources in a way that excludes Indigenous environmental preferences. It unites administrative rationalism with biocentric intent, but any commitment to the biosphere is weak and fails to heed Indigenous teachings about the sanctity of other species or landscapes.²³ Land claims agreements generate forms of citizenship that are intended to demarcate and make governable their subjects rather than implementing citizenship for all creation.²⁴ Where collaboration is included in such agreements, perpetuation of non-Indigenous styles of conservation often becomes a precondition of settlement provisions. Multiple, competing models are labelled co-management, but they are united by the furtive reassertion of the same preservationism against which co-management was promoted to Indigenous communities as an alternative.

Personhood for Nature: Preservationism Concealed

That person rights and co-management of parks are increasingly implemented in tandem means that Indigenous beneficiaries may confront dual techniques of statecraft that aim to co-opt Indigenous activism and secure a future for preservationism. A principal difficulty for resolving Indigenous interests within a rights-of-nature framework is that the latter is, at best, a form of recognition for nature that may have indirect benefits for Indigenous communities.²⁵ As a novel form of acknowledgment, personhood may serve as a distraction from, or containment device for, rather than fairly responding to, Indigenous demands. Therefore, it is a rights discourse and an identity politics that Indigenous peoples have already rejected in criticisms of “Indigenous rights” and “human rights” that cannot reauthorize Indigenous leadership.²⁶ Rights-of-nature emerged first in community lobbying against petrochemical and mining developments in the Global North. Its genealogy and dispersal suggest that academics and NGOs utilized similar vocabularies within rights-of-nature and Indigenous cosmologies of human–nature kinship in the Global South to advance a case for more protected areas there.²⁷ Although personhood has a unique history in such countries as Ecuador and Bolivia, the way overseas conservation elites valorized rights-of-nature to influence public

debates on Indigenous rights is significant. Interspecies justice is an important counter to colonial or neocolonial resource extractivism, so it is vital for decolonization, but attempts to implement it are easily co-opted within white settler society.²⁸

Rights-of-nature default to a further case of ventriloquism, whereby non-Indigenous actors speak for Indigenous peoples and misrepresent their eco-cultural values.²⁹ Their implementation is understood as a proper approach to managing land claims because it is assumed that Indigenous peoples are archetypal citizens of nature, but that has consequences for their developmental interests. The academy has championed personhood as a solution for treaty claims, but it seldom unpacks the global influences upon, nor engages critically with, rights-of-nature discourses.³⁰ The risks in applying rights-of-nature reflect the temporal context in which they have become prominent, a time when Indigenous demands for land repatriation are becoming unfashionable. Attempts to discredit Indigenous ownership claims are an important context for the sudden appreciation of personhood approaches, suggesting a zero-sum game where any gains from award of personhood are at the expense of aspirations to repatriate homelands.

Just as co-management is biocentric yet fails to secure Indigenous environmental interests, personhood may only appear to protect Indigenous environmental values. Legal protection for “Pachamama” in Ecuador and Bolivia coincided with a long era of accelerated resource extraction in those countries.³¹ For the Rio Atrato, a person-river in Colombia, “when the river would have *locus standi* to be defended against any harm is unclear and has been left to be decided on a case-by-case basis.”³² That uncertainty enabled non-Indigenous corporations to exploit resources of importance to Indigenous communities. Likewise, the higher courts in India quickly annulled a regional court’s celebrated award of person rights to parts of the Ganges River system.³³ Those examples of implementation failure confirm the lack of durability in person rights, but they also infer the non-Indigenous precepts upon which they are founded.

Despite the failure of personhood for Indigenous peoples in other countries, gushing approval has characterized appreciation

Table 2.1: Representations of legal personhood in Aotearoa, New Zealand

“A new dawn for conservation management” and “the basis for long lasting transitional justice” ³⁴
“plural legal systems ... a mutually acceptable, innovative solution” and “an interstitial legal structure” ³⁵
“transcends identity with the Crown and iwi finding a novel way to govern together” ³⁶
“a powerful precedent” and a “recognition of the inseparable connection between people and place” ³⁷
“a pluralistic place-based governance framework for implementing biocultural approaches” ³⁸
“flexible and adaptable” and “allows existing worldviews to be bridged” ³⁹
“evidence that unity between the Crown and an Indigenous federation is possible” and “a powerful demonstrator of” how “we can build respectful futures” ⁴⁰
“ground breaking legislation” that provides “transformative landmarks” and “a new legal era” ⁴¹
“a form of principled compromise” and “demonstrates the possibilities of law acting as a bridge between worlds” ⁴²

of its capacity to address Treaty of Waitangi claims. The asserted benefits range from transitional justice and positive role models to a platform for social transformation and enhanced ecological citizenship (see Table 2.1). The only other Māori scholar to criticize rights-of-nature maintains that nature’s “personality is a Western legal concept [that] comes close to expressing some fundamental ideas from within Māori legal traditions,” but it fails to recognize their deeper meaning and value.⁴³ Allegedly, rights-of-nature reflect Māori-specific ways of relating to landscapes and recognition that an expanded understanding of responsibility is required to resolve planetary crises.⁴⁴ Yet, biocentric discourses outweigh Indigenous interests in academic appraisal of rights-of-nature. Personification of nature is most celebrated because it might realize nature’s rights, thereby “Improving the Global Environmental Rule of Law,” so analysis of its capacity to address Māori concerns is less common.⁴⁵

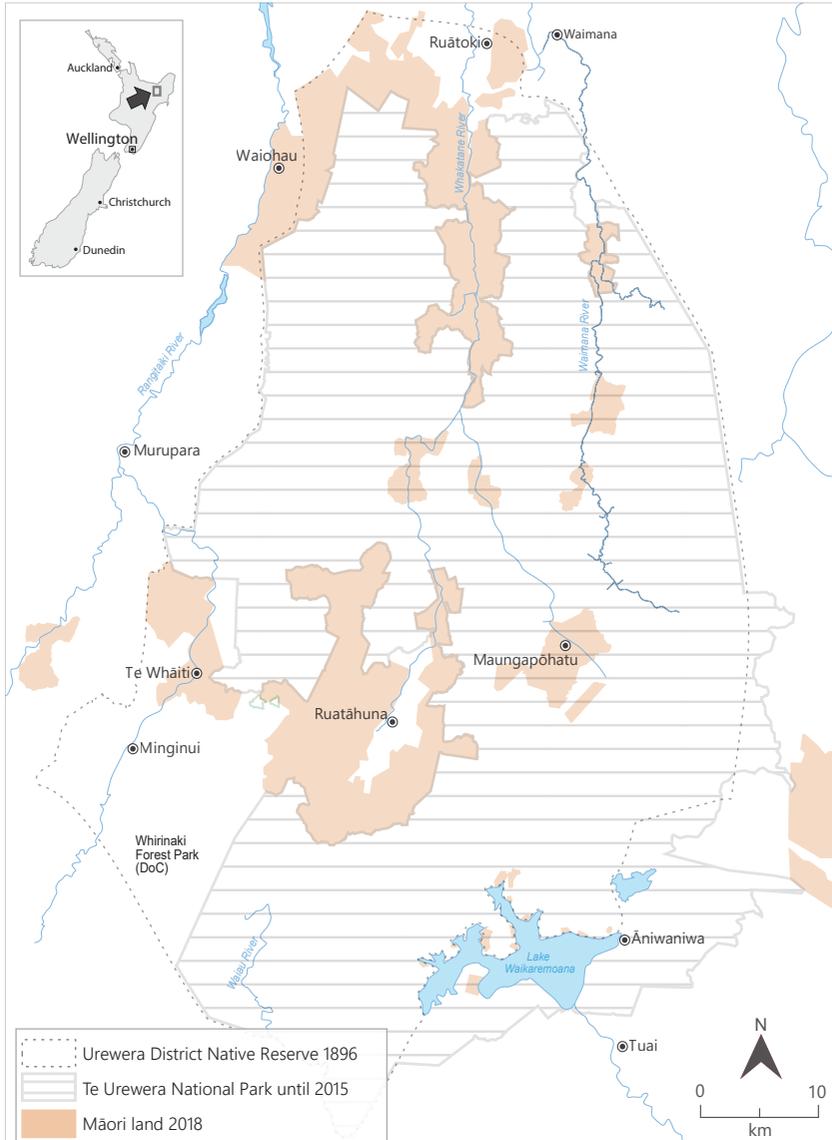
Te Urewera: A Colonial History to Rescind

The Waitangi Tribunal is a permanent commission of inquiry that is authorized to hear and make recommendations on “acts or omissions” of the Crown since 1840. The Treaty of Waitangi includes Māori rights to retain and manage independently their resources. While it provides a template for justice in the resolution of environmental disputes, discord between its English and Māori versions and among its three articles weaken its protective mechanisms. Article II of the Māori version upholds tribal *rangatiratanga* (chieftainship) over lands, resources, and traditional food sources. Contradictorily, the English text of Article I transferred sovereignty to the Queen of England, even though the Māori version relinquished only *kāwanatanga* or limited governance. Crown policies for Treaty settlement generally prohibit the return of conservation lands, so it is difficult to balance appropriately articles I and II in a conservation setting.⁴⁶ Restoring *rangatiratanga* is the lead priority for Māori claimants,⁴⁷ but as neither co-management nor rights-of-nature reference the person or the function of *rangatira* (chiefs), it is uncertain how either could achieve *rangatiratanga*.

Land repatriation was the main component of Tūhoe’s statement of claim, so tribal members were surprised that their claims were later translated into deliberations about rights-of-nature. By 2011, some accepted that the strength of public opinion against Tūhoe ownership of Te Urewera had made that goal unattainable, so there was scope for compromise. Nonetheless, because the illegal acquisition of Tūhoe property reduced the tribe’s present land holdings to eight percent of their extent in 1872, forfeit of ownership claims was unanticipated. In the 1860s, land was confiscated at the north and south, even though Tūhoe involvement in the civil wars of that time was minimal.⁴⁸ Escaping armies and displaced peoples sheltered within local forests, so the government dispatched its armies to pursue them, and later it punished all parties through land confiscation. Past confiscation is not a legitimate basis for today’s conservation, but national will to address ongoing legacies of land loss is negligible.

A Liberal government that was elected at the end of the 19th century experimented with Tūhoe autonomy over remaining tribal lands, leading to the Urewera District Native Reserve Act 1896. The reserve provided for limited self-rule, and it restricted land loss by permitting only a Tūhoe general committee to sell land (Long Title, s. 21). Private and government speculators soon breached those provisions, hopelessly dividing titles for all and restricting Tūhoe to a few land enclaves.⁴⁹ Leveraging those conditions, the scenery preservation movement petitioned for a reserve to cover the catchment of Lake Waikaremoana. To settle rival agendas, new laws were passed in 1921 that extinguished the Native Reserve and associated legislation. Land titles were coercively amalgamated in 1927, but with less land confirmed for Tūhoe than it owned in 1921.⁵⁰ The government offered new roads for Tūhoe to make best use of fragmented blocks, but it insisted Tūhoe pay for them by defraying costs against lands implicated in the amalgamations. The roads were never completed, but public reserves were established on the new Crown lands, becoming the initial core for Urewera National Park. After extensions, the park overlapped most of the Native Reserve, signifying injustice in conservation and why land retitling was at the forefront of Treaty negotiations.⁵¹

Parks and protected areas (see Map 2.1) inflicted multiple impacts on local tribes.⁵² Strict protectionism outlawed the bird harvests upon which forest peoples were reliant. The earlier title amalgamations resolved only some of the land fragmentation, so protected areas, along with new watershed control and regional planning mechanisms, imposed heavy restrictions on use of the remaining land. There is a matrix of Māori and conservation lands throughout Te Urewera, with the latter surrounding the former and circumscribing whether Tūhoe land can be usable or livable.⁵³ Park management policies stipulated few provisions to consult with neighbors, so conservation was an insensitive, omnipresent imposition for local Māori. Yet, in research and hearings for the Urewera Inquiry District, inflexible management was much less a focus than land dispossession. Until the passing of Te



Map 2.1: Te Urewera as a spatial contradiction: Native Reserve and National Park. Map: Brad Coombes and Heli Rekiranta.

Urewera Act 2014, return of land was understood as non-negotiable for Tūhoe.⁵⁴

During negotiations, the collaborative models that are used in some Australian parks were evaluated, whereby co-management

also accommodates land transfer to Aboriginal claimants, state payment of rentals to the new owners, and retention of protected areas in perpetuity. The idea of leaseholder co-management was both criticized and appreciated within Te Urewera, with the positive observers commending its basis in land retitling. Meetings were scheduled to apply the “give over, lease-back and co-manage” approach in 2009. While supported by many claimants and governmental representatives, near the end of deliberations Prime Minister John Key unexpectedly rejected the Australian model, stating his concern about the precedent it would establish for other parks.⁵⁵ The UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples criticized the government’s *volte-face* and pleaded for it to “reconsider the return of Te Urewera National Park to Ngāi Tūhoe.”⁵⁶ By 2012, however, all parties understood that ownership transfer had been proscribed from settlement negotiations. Rights-of-nature ascended quickly thereafter and became central to all options for settling the Urewera claims.

Two legal interventions were required to implement personhood and extinguish local Treaty claims. Te Urewera Act 2014 established a legal identity for Te Urewera as a person, and it also determined its rights and the procedures for upholding them. Section 2(c) removed Te Urewera from the jurisdiction of the National Parks Act 1980 and made the former parklands inalienable. The Tūhoe Claims Settlement Act 2014 instituted protocols for relationship-building and identified an asset base to be transferred to Tūhoe. \$170 million in cash and Crown properties were included, but the only lands to be returned were outside the former national park. A co-management board will perform the needs of Te Urewera-as-person, and it now operates with a two-to-one majority in favor of Tūhoe.

Along with the two acts of 2014, a Mana Mohutake (self-dependence) policy for health social services and emerging protocols include too many provisions to cover in depth. Those for independence in service delivery are more radical and are more likely to restore the purpose of the Native Reserve.⁵⁷ Te Urewera Act 2014 re-centers *Tūhoetanga* (Tūhoeness) within environmental planning and it also reauthorizes Tūhoe approaches to natural

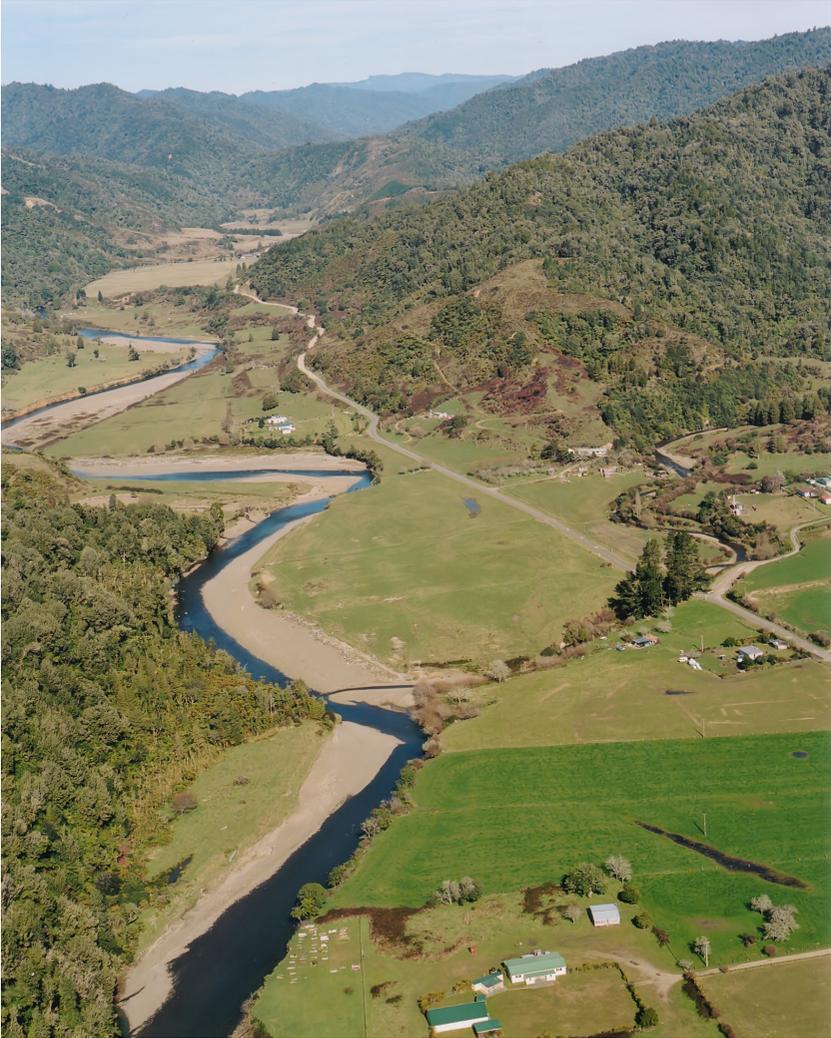


Figure 2.1: Omnipresent conservation: A matrix of Māori land and public forests. Photo: Brad Coombes.

resource management (section 18(2)). The new Urewera Board has a defining role as author of management plans, and a draft of the first was released in 2017. The plan is innovative, with an emphasis on managing human processes rather than the natural entities on which they impact.⁵⁸ With the exception of harvesting flora for craft and *rongoā* (medicinal) purposes, however, there is

continuity with previous methods of conservation. Tūhoe individuals appreciate the changes, but many also question whether the intent of their claims can be achieved in the new context.

Personhood for, and Co-Management of, Te Urewera

During 2001 to 2009, I was contracted to provide research support for claims submitted to the Tribunal's Urewera Inquiry District. Subsequently, my research was used throughout the Tribunal's *Te Urewera Report*.⁵⁹ The work included archival study into conservation's impacts, along with legal opinions about and overseas experience with co-management. I completed 23 interviews with land managers, claims negotiators, and *kaumātua* (elders). From 2017, several participants contacted me, suggesting that I return to consider whether Treaty settlements had fulfilled local aspirations. Authorization was attained to use recordings for new purposes, and ten of the original participants were re-interviewed. Interviews were conducted with six new participants, so the research presented here is based on 29 interviews with 19 individuals, facilitating comparisons before and after Treaty settlement.

Transferable and Extensible Rights?

Most participants were ambivalent about rather than openly critical of the new arrangements. To explain their openness to compromise, they raised the threat of invasive competitors to such cultural keystone species as kererū (native woodpigeon, *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae*) and kiwi (the “national bird,” principally *Apteryx mantelli*). As Tūhoe have a *whakapapa* (genealogical) relationship with those species, personhood for Te Urewera has some merit: “we know our whakapapa and where kiwi and kererū are located in it, so we had to step down for them.”⁶⁰ The only species that thrived during 30 years of claims research, deliberations, and hearings were invasive and “with each draft settlement we rejected, the winner was the possum and the loser was Te Ngahere [The Forest].”⁶¹ Compromise for the benefit of *taonga*

(treasured) species extended to co-management because “although we never agreed to co-management if offered separately from ownership, delays while waiting for the best governance model benefitted only pest species.”⁶² Most participants were gratified that new co-management provisions extend beyond advisory functions and include a majority for Tūhoe on the Urewera Board. Nonetheless, even “the best approaches to collaboration ... will fail if isolated from the issue of land ownership.”⁶³

Before finalization of Treaty settlements, local Māori were wary about whether co-management would disrupt or dilute land claims (see Table 2.2(a)). They wrestled with the potential for co-option and with the possibility that co-management would communicate validity for the status of conservation practices and public lands. After granting of personhood, some are more worried about those possibilities because it is unclear whether Te Urewera’s new rights are transferable to them. Land ownership remains the central issue, and the fabrication of personhood makes achieving that more challenging. As confirmed in Table 2.2, Māori leaders vacillated between endorsement of how rights-of-nature could authorize their kinship with Te Urewera and thoughts of betrayal. They feared that the combination of co-management and rights-of-nature was a final, insuperable barrier to the restoration of Māori land ownership. Echoing the ideas in Table 2.2(b)(ii), many considered metaphors of slavery or liberation in relation to personhood for Te Urewera, noting that land use or ownership will now be associated with enslavement and may become, therefore, a public relations difficulty.

It is more difficult to fight against the idea that “nobody owns Te Urewera” than it is to fight against Crown ownership. The notion that Te Urewera is self-owning confronts older ideologies that *everybody* owns the conservation estate. The contradictions in the “fiction of personhood” will inevitably “come unstuck, and in their wake will be a more difficult idol to dislodge from public consciousness.”⁶⁴ National agendas, the public good, and the rights of all typically prevail over Māori rights, so personhood is too resonant with the past for some. Like all Treaty agreements, this is a “full and final settlement”⁶⁵ and Tūhoe will likely receive

Table 2.2: The transferability and extensibility of person rights

(a) 2000–2009 Interviews	(b) 2017–2020 Interviews
<p>(i) “Co-management might work if it is set within a program of ownership transfer, but never if the two are separated. They do that right in Australia, but I don’t see the will to do it here.” (Claims Negotiator, March 19, 2009)</p>	<p>(i) “I flip from ‘this new legal person thing is just what we wanted’ to ‘it’s a gutless attempt to make it impossible for us to own our lands.’ More respect for a living spirit of Te Urewera is only <i>one</i> thing we wanted.” (Tūhoe Resident, May 22, 2018, speaker’s emphasis)</p>
<p>(ii) “Co-management is temporary, a transitional procedure, as one day we will have our lands back. We’re disinterested in collaboration unless it’s part of taking back our land.” (Kaumātua, October 12, 2002)</p>	<p>(ii) “So now, if we bring up the fundamental issue—that being theft of our ancestral lands—will we be treated as slavers? Future generations won’t listen to slavers.” (Kaumātua, October 13, 2018)</p>
<p>(iii) “We want something more than the sharing of management. After all, the claim is mostly about who is the rightful owner of Te Urewera and its resources.” (Claims Negotiator, October 16, 2001)</p>	<p>(iii) “Ultimately, whether we get anything from the status of Te-Urewera-as-Person comes down to the work of the new Board, so it’s no more certain or fair than any other form of co-management.” (Claims Coordinator, February 15, 2020)</p>



Figure 2.2: Unofficial sign near the Waimana entrance to the former Urewera National Park. Photo: Brad Coombes.

no further opportunities to own ancestral lands. Hence, many interviewees associated personhood with “diversionary tactics intended to bypass our ownership claims.”⁶⁶

Enforceable and Effective Rights?

Before joint implementation of co-management and rights-of-nature, some leaders feared that co-management was a manipulative, artificial construction of consent. In Table 2.3(a), the probability that co-management will be used to manage protest rather than to implement Māori rights is clearly articulated, as is the possible default to Ministerial decision-making in times of deadlock and the difficulty in handling Māori diversity. After conclusion of Treaty settlements, however, there is greater concern about how enforceable tribal rights can be. Those rights are scattered across separate acts of parliament, so policy fragmentation may deny Māori interests. Of most concern, though, was that Te Urewera’s new rights are not directly Tūhoe’s rights (see Table 2.3(b)(ii)). Rights-of-nature seem relevant to some Māori interests, but emancipation for Te Urewera is no direct honoring of the Treaty for Tūhoe. Some feared that filtering Tūhoe rights through Te Urewera’s agency was a weak form of tribal influence.

Tūhoe views on collaborative management are broad, but a trend is observable. If co-management is tied to land repatriation, it is commended; if not, it is viewed as token and dishonest (Table 2.3(a)). Tūhoe representatives understood that inherent problems within co-management would persist irrespective of whether it is mixed with rights-of-nature. Although there is a two-thirds Māori majority on the Urewera Board, all members must “promote unanimous or consensus decision making.”⁶⁷ If that cannot be achieved, the Board is required to seek “a minimum of 80%” consensus and assent by two of the three appointed members.⁶⁸ Thus, “because two thirds is less than 80 percent, we don’t really have a majority” and “where’s the *rangatiratanga* when consensus decisions must be reached within a context of rights for nature?”⁶⁹ The influence of personhood inevitably restricts the

Table 2.3: Enforceability and effectiveness

(a) 2000–2009 Interviews	(b) 2017–2020 Interviews
(i) “I worry that there isn’t a model of joint management that can handle our diversity. Tūhoe is the main tribe, but it’s divided into eight <i>hapū</i> (sub-tribes) and there are other tribes with overlapping interests.” (Tūhoe Planner, March 15, 2004)	(i) “Special purpose laws like Te Urewera Act are limited. They rarely make it into the news after they’re passed. We lost some leverage by abandoning the <i>National Parks Act</i> for a new, entirely <i>local Act</i> .” (Policy Advisor, January 27, 2019, speaker’s emphasis)
(ii) “Co-management doesn’t realize its promises. You get stalemate between governmental reps and us Māori, then a Minister uses that as an excuse to take a casting vote. That’s worse than <i>status quo</i> because it’ll look like we were involved.” (Kaumātua, February 17, 2007)	(ii) “It’s confusing. Who’s in charge here? The Urewera Board will ‘express and perform’ the person rights and judge on them. Are we boss or is Te Urewera boss? When there’s confusion like that, you can be sure that neither of us are in control.” (Tūhoe Politician, February 12, 2019)
(iii) “If you collaborate on a decision, it’s much harder to disagree or revisit it later. Joint management is a sophisticated way of handling protest without resolving its causes.” (Kaumātua, September 3, 2001)	(iii) “We had land titles and rights vested in the unliving before. ‘Ancestors in common’ was the Native Land Court way—they didn’t front up back then. The new ‘Person’ can’t front now.” (Land Administrator, July 19, 2018)

range of decisions that the Board can make, so Māori participation may self-collude against Māori interests.

Seen in historical perspective, the vesting of Māori rights in figures who cannot materialize within public deliberations is a false innovation. As recorded in Table 2.3(b)(iii), “ancestors in common” were used within the country’s land courts to adjudicate among Māori claims for title to disputed land blocks. Multiple kinship groups valued intensely the small land blocks that survived the amalgamations of the 1920s, so determining their

shareholders was difficult. In part, the Native Land Court vested the lands in long-dead ancestors as an expedience, so that it could evade responsibility for resolving competing claims. Those ancestors could not, of course, arrive in court to negotiate directly for local rights, and neither will river- nor forest-persons and other legal personalities of nature. There were no effective champions for the remnant land blocks and, despite their significance, for decades they were used and abused as parkland. Many fear that similar outcomes will emerge under rights-of-nature.

Relationality or Biocentrism?

Before the 2014 settlement, some locals favored co-management approaches that aimed to resolve jointly developmental needs and environmental protection (Table 2.4(a)(i)). Accordingly, some models of co-management were acceptable because they recognized that the interests of Tūhoe and Te Urewera overlap (Table 2.4(a)(iii)). Tūhoe claims negotiators envisioned potential for integration and relationality in co-management as a possible antidote to the singular, biocentric intent of preservationism. Now, however, their developmental prospects are sequestered within separate legislation and, although person-focused, the Urewera Act is a biocentric paradox: “It’s not clear what Te Urewera Act was intended to do for Te Urewera, but it’s even less clear what it does for Tūhoe, and the separation of the two laws makes Tūhoe rights even less obvious.”⁷⁰ Australia’s leaseholder co-management was considered more appropriate for balancing multiple agendas than was Aotearoa’s personhood co-management.

In Table 2.4(a), objections to possible duplicity in collaboration are juxtaposed against multiple, albeit conditional, instances of support. It was the *combination* of co-management and personhood that elicited a more condemnatory stance against the former (Table 2.4(b)). A Tūhoe politician concludes that “at first we were attracted to co-management,” but when “watered down by person rights, well, society won’t let you harvest, farm or develop a person.”⁷¹ The separation of the Tūhoe Claims Settlement Act from the Te Urewera Act is revealing. It mimics the failure of park

Table 2.4: From relational to biocentric conceptions of rights

(a) 2000–2009 Interviews	(b) 2017–2020 Interviews
(i) “Joint management is for show and doesn’t provide an opportunity to properly balance the rights of nature with the rights of Indigenous peoples. Co-management is there to serve the purpose of conservation, not to secure Māori rights.” (Board Chair, January 18, 2003)	(i) “Policy fragmentation restricted us, but now there’s more of it. The TCSA [Tūhoe Claims Settlement Act] is about commercial redress and the Urewera Act is all cultural or biological protection. There’s no balance.” (Claims Negotiator, March 7, 2019)
(ii) “Co-management is the biggest insult of all. For years they just wanted us to die off ... They don’t understand that we need to live here, and not just preserve the forests.” (Kaumātua, November 17, 2002)	(ii) “TCSA is in our name but provides only economic opportunities <i>outside</i> our <i>rohe</i> . Te Urewera Act is not in our name, but it denies any development <i>in</i> our <i>rohe</i> .” (Tūhoe Ecologist, September 15, 2017, speaker’s emphasis)
(iii) “Joint management will work right if we remember that what’s good for Tūhoe will also be good for Te Urewera. I think it can strike the right balance between economic rights and conservation. But just because it can do that, doesn’t mean it will do that. It’s too risky.” (Tūhoe Planner, March 15, 2004)	(iii) “The Act may be a good thing for Te Urewera, but what it does for Tūhoe is largely unspecified and uncertain. The charade where rights are in the name of a nature that cannot itself stand to be heard is more of the same old thing.” (Land Administrator, July 19, 2018)

management the world over to reconcile conservation with development. It is notable that the few land parcels or development rights that were offered in the Tūhoe settlement are located outside ancestral boundaries: “Within our *rohe*, we have almost nothing but conservation to look forward to.”⁷² Many interviewees commented on the historical repudiation of Tūhoe development through Crown intervention to disrupt tribal tourism or to prevent land-use conversion. Some understood legal personhood as a continuation of such restrictions because “it’s the same type of

denial, or maybe it's worse because any resource use will now be scorned as desecration of a living being."⁷³

One commentator argues that the Te Urewera Act abandons Western conceptions of wilderness preservation that are core principles of park administration in Aotearoa.⁷⁴ However, his conclusion overlooks how much of the National Parks Act 1980 has followed Te Urewera into Te Urewera Act 2014. Table 2.5 suggests there were few benefits from removing Te Urewera from the outdated Parks Act because its objectives and methods of conservation are near identical to those in Te Urewera Act. Commitments to protect cultural heritage and implement *Tūhoetanga* are new, but preservationism overwhelms those provisions as well as any benefits in co-management. That strict protectionism endures under personhood was a common topic for the second round of interviews. Participants noted how “elite sports and recreation were influential before” and that representatives of those pastimes “championed the rights-of-nature approach because it impacted the least on them.”⁷⁵ White privilege was invested in the few human activities that are tolerated under the National Parks Act, but it remains dominant in a governance system now led by Tūhoe. The tribe “battled the scenery preservation and recreational crowd since the early 1900s, but we’ve never been further from victory in that battle than we are now.”⁷⁶

Preservationism Redux

The Urewera case represents a dual setback for Māori authority because the encumbrances of person rights are mixed with the contradictions in co-management. Land confiscations, the illegal termination of the Native Reserve, coercive amalgamation of land blocks, and a history of restrictive land-use policies are grave matters with lasting impacts. It is ahistorical to suggest that transcultural collaboration of any form can remedy the brutalities of land loss in the colonial past, but collaboration within the context of legal personhood amplifies such concerns. In a decision-making scenario where the rights-of-nature must come first, it is inevitable

that the charge of co-option will adhere to Treaty settlements. Even though the Urewera settlement includes an Indigenous majority influence on local conservation policies and restores Māori approaches to environmental management, neither of those advances satisfy *tangata whenua* (people of the land) objectives to reclaim land portfolios and political influence. Both person rights and co-management generate ambiguous agency, and the combination of the two is further indefinite. They divert attention from a long history of Māori activism to recover ancestral lands, so they are best framed as state strategies of dispute management that include little scope for Indigenous self-determination.

It is important not to overstate the manipulative characteristics of this amalgam of co-management and legal personhood. In their kin-centric worldviews, it is authentic for Tūhoe and other *iwi* to conceive of Te Urewera as an ancestor, so person rights have some cultural legitimacy. The threats of invasive species, climate change, or others' perceived use rights ensure that *some* Māori objectives are congruent with biocentric management. Nonetheless, it is also important to recognize that the genealogy of legal personhood is associated with a globalized rights discourse: despite similarities, it is not an endogenous expression of Tūhoe's affection toward Te Urewera. Indeed, "improving the health of Tūhoe and Te Urewera is ultimately about reinstating *aroha* (love) more than restoring Tūhoe land ownership," but the only acceptable path forward "is to do things in the right order [and not to] pack multiple and competing objectives into one instant of Treaty settlement."⁷⁷ That speaker, like many of the interviewees, accepted that there could be a valid future for a rights-of-nature approach, but that it must *follow* land claims settlement rather than replace it. As Treaty settlements at Te Urewera were not ordered sequentially, local grievances about conservation cannot be resolved in a "full and final" manner, and "person rights were the best of the many bad options that were put to us, but not the just option."⁷⁸ Claims about joint resolution of Indigenous and nature's rights are naïve, and they are not being implemented with a genuine commitment to Treaty rights or tribal needs.

Table 2.5: Continuity of preservationist discourses in legislative purpose statements*

National Parks Act 1980	Te Urewera Act 2014
<p>“4 Parks to be <u>maintained in natural state</u>, and public to have right of entry ...</p> <p>(1) ... the purpose of <u>preserving</u> in perpetuity as national parks, for their intrinsic worth and for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of the public, areas ... that contain scenery of such distinctive quality, ecological systems, or natural features so beautiful, unique, or scientifically important that their <u>preservation</u> is in the national interest.</p> <p>(2) ... national parks shall be so administered ... that (a) they shall be <u>preserved</u> ... in their natural state (b) ... the native plants and animals of the parks shall ... be <u>preserved</u> ... (e) ... the public shall have freedom of entry and access ... so that they may receive ... inspiration, enjoyment, recreation, and other benefits ...</p> <p>5 <i>Indigenous plants and animals to be preserved</i></p> <p>(1) <u>No</u> person shall ... cut, destroy, or take ... any plant or part of a plant that is indigenous ...</p> <p>(2) <u>No</u> person shall ... disturb, trap, take, hunt, or kill any animal that is indigenous ...</p> <p>14 <i>Wilderness Areas</i></p> <p>(1) The Minister may ... set apart any area of a park as a wilderness area ... (2) ... its indigenous natural resources shall be <u>preserved</u> ...”</p>	<p>“(3)(1) Te Urewera is ancient and enduring, a fortress of nature, alive with history; its scenery is abundant with mystery, adventure, and remote beauty ... (5) For Tūhoe, Te Urewera is their ewe whenua, their place of origin and return, their homeland ...</p> <p>(8) Te Urewera is also prized by all New Zealanders as a place of outstanding national value and intrinsic worth ... for its ... biodiversity ... cultural heritage, its scientific importance, and for outdoor recreation and spiritual reflection ...</p> <p>4 <i>The purpose of this Act</i> is to establish and <u>preserve</u> in perpetuity a legal identity and <u>protected status</u> for Te Urewera for its intrinsic worth, its distinctive natural and cultural values ... and for its national importance ... to—(a) ... <u>maintain</u> the connection between Tūhoe and Te Urewera; and (b) <u>preserve</u> ... the natural features and beauty ... the integrity of its indigenous ... biodiversity, and its historical and cultural heritage; and (c) <u>provide</u> ... a place for public use and enjoyment, for recreation, learning, and spiritual reflection ...</p> <p>5 <i>Principles</i> (1) ... (a) Te Urewera is <u>preserved</u> in its natural state (b) the indigenous ecological systems and biodiversity of Te Urewera are preserved (c) Tūhoetanga, which gives expression to Te Urewera, is <u>valued and respected</u> ...”</p>

***Note:** Purposes of conservation in **boldface**; approaches to conservation underlined (author’s emphasis).



Figure 2.3: Artist's installation at the Whakatane entrance to the former Urewera National Park. Photo: Brad Coombes.

Perhaps the academy's uncritical fascination with rights-of-nature is grounded in their apparent honoring of Indigenous eco-cultural values. Many Indigenous scholars call for a greater sense of kinship with non-human others, so concurrent resolution of nature's rights and Indigenous rights is arguably compatible with essential Indigenous philosophies.⁷⁹ Rather than something new, however, nature's personification has always been co-produced with environmentalism and, historically, it saturates the national parks project. From the Crying Indian motif within North America wilderness preservation to the erroneous understanding that Māori "gifted" several mountains so they could become national parks, Indigenous environmentalism has long been recast to support non-Indigenous agendas. Past, romanticized depictions of nature as earth mother who cares for her Indigenous children normalized the idea that Indigenous communities will forego their right to development. In Te Urewera, Tūhoe must adopt a new identity as manager of a sentient being, but with miserly compensation for past or future loss of economic opportunities. In Aotearoa, there is a tendency to regard personhood as a good outcome because it is novel and innovative.⁸⁰ In retrospect, though, there is nothing unique in how rights-of-nature are inserted into, and disrupt, a history of Māori activism to recover their lands. I have argued that legal personhood in Aotearoa reproduces the same forms of biocentrism that have denied Indigenous rights in

the past. It is a new trajectory for old preservationism, and it is a belated attempt to save the ideal of national parks.

Notes

- ¹ Mutu, “Smoke and Mirrors.”
- ² Geddis and Ruru, “Places as Persons,” 299.
- ³ Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*.
- ⁴ Borrows, *Freedom and Indigenous Constitutionalism*; Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*.
- ⁵ Valverde, “Persons and Their Acts.”
- ⁶ Whyte, “Settler Colonialism.”
- ⁷ Bedriñana, Umaña, and Martín, “Living Well.”
- ⁸ Waitangi Tribunal, *Te Urewera*.
- ⁹ Duffy et al., “Militaryisation of Conservation.”
- ¹⁰ Athens, “Indivisible and Living Whole”; Lunstrum and Ybarra, “Deploying Difference.”
- ¹¹ Crotty et al., “Foundation”; Newman, “Disturbance Ecology.”
- ¹² Grey and Kuokkanen, “Indigenous Governance.”
- ¹³ Coombes, Johnson, and Howitt, “Indigenous Geographies I.”
- ¹⁴ Palmer and Pocock, “Aboriginal Colonial History.”
- ¹⁵ Witter and Satterfield, “Ebb and Flow.”
- ¹⁶ Pearson and Dare, “Framing Up.”
- ¹⁷ Young et al., “Consulted to Death.”
- ¹⁸ Elliott, “Indigenous Resurgence.”
- ¹⁹ Ayers, Kittinger, and Blaich-Vaughan, “Whose Right to Manage?”
- ²⁰ Thondhlana et al., “Non-Material Costs.”
- ²¹ Diver, “Co-Management.”
- ²² Webster, “This Land Can Sustain Us.”
- ²³ Nadasdy, “First Nations.”
- ²⁴ Borrows, “Challenging Historical Frameworks.”
- ²⁵ Tola, “Pachamama and Mother Earth.”
- ²⁶ Correia, “Reworking Recognition.”
- ²⁷ Espinosa, “Intelligibility.”
- ²⁸ Deckha, “Anthropocentric Legal Systems.”
- ²⁹ Martínez Novo, “Ventriloquism.”
- ³⁰ Rawson and Mansfield, “Producing Juridical Knowledge,” 100.
- ³¹ Bétaille, “Rights of Nature.”
- ³² Cano-Pecharroman, “Rights of Nature,” 8.
- ³³ Knauß, “Human Stewardship.”

- ³⁴ Ruru, “Recognition of Māori Law,” 216 and 218.
- ³⁵ Ruru, “Listening to Papatūānuku,” 214 and 221.
- ³⁶ Geddis and Ruru, “Places as Persons,” 301 and 315.
- ³⁷ Jones, *New Treaty, New Tradition*, 98.
- ³⁸ Iorns Magallanes, “From Rights to Responsibilities.”
- ³⁹ Iorns Magallanes, “Environmental Rule of Law.”
- ⁴⁰ Ruru, “Treaty in Another Context,” 313 and 324.
- ⁴¹ Charpleix, “Whanganui River,” 20 and 26.
- ⁴² Frame, “New Zealand,” 51.
- ⁴³ Iorns Magallanes, “Environmental Rule of Law,” 84 and 90.
- ⁴⁴ Lyver et al., “Building Biocultural Approaches,” 5.
- ⁴⁵ O’Donnell and Talbot-Jones, “Creating Legal Rights for Rivers,” 5 and 6.
- ⁴⁶ OTS, *Ka Tika a Muri*.
- ⁴⁷ O’Sullivan, “Māori Self-Determination.”
- ⁴⁸ Binney, *Encircled Lands*.
- ⁴⁹ Waitangi Tribunal, *Te Urewera*.
- ⁵⁰ Wazl, *Waikaremona*.
- ⁵¹ Coombes and Hill, “Na Whenua, Na Tūhoe.”
- ⁵² Waitangi Tribunal, *Te Urewera*.
- ⁵³ Coombes, *Conservation Ecologies of Te Urewera [II]*.
- ⁵⁴ Higgins, “Tūhoe-Crown Settlement.”
- ⁵⁵ Sanders, “Beyond Human Ownership?”
- ⁵⁶ HRC, “Te Tiriti O Waitangi.”
- ⁵⁷ Stephens, “Tūhoe-Crown Settlement.”
- ⁵⁸ Geddis and Ruru, “Places as Persons.”
- ⁵⁹ Waitangi Tribunal, “Te Urewera.”
- ⁶⁰ Kaumātua, Interview, May 23, 2018.
- ⁶¹ Claims Manager, Interview, January 19, 2019.
- ⁶² Interview, Claims Negotiator, November 22, 2018.
- ⁶³ Interview, Land Administrator, February 19, 2018.
- ⁶⁴ Interview, Kaumātua, July 11, 2018.
- ⁶⁵ Tūhoe Claims Settlement Act 2014, s. 6(2)(f)
- ⁶⁶ Interview, Tribal Policy Advisor, January 27, 2019.
- ⁶⁷ Te Urewera Act 2014, s. 31(1)(b)
- ⁶⁸ Te Urewera Act 2014, s. 36(1)(a),(b)
- ⁶⁹ Interview, Kaumātua, October 13, 2018.
- ⁷⁰ Interview, Claims Coordinator, February 15, 2020; see also Table 2.4(b)(iii).
- ⁷¹ Interview, February 12, 2019.
- ⁷² Interview, Tūhoe Resident, May 22, 2018; Table 2.4(b)(ii).

- ⁷³ Interview, Social Worker, November 13, 2018.
- ⁷⁴ Strack, “Land and Rivers.”
- ⁷⁵ Interview, Tūhoe Politician, February 12, 2019.
- ⁷⁶ Interview, Kaumātua, July 11, 2018.
- ⁷⁷ Interview, Kaumātua, October 13, 2018.
- ⁷⁸ Interview, Social Worker, November 13, 2018.
- ⁷⁹ McGregor, “Reconciliation and Environmental Justice.”
- ⁸⁰ Frame, “New Zealand.”

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CHAPTER 3

Discourses of Decentralization

Local Participation and Sámi Space for Agency in Norwegian Protected Area Management

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Introduction¹

In 2010, the Norwegian Government implemented a reform that provided for local management of a broad range of protected areas.² Carried out despite concerns raised by both researchers and governmental bodies, the reform represents an attempt to decentralize protected area management, increase local participation, and safeguard the Indigenous rights of the Sámi people in Norway. It reflects ongoing trends and developments in discourses of protected areas and Indigenous rights, and it provides an interesting case for studying Indigenous peoples' space for

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agency in decentralized and participatory protected area governance approaches.

Traditional conservation discourses have enabled and encouraged centralized and standardized protected area governance and management, based on scientific knowledge and regulated by bureaucratic control. Indigenous presence and land use in areas set aside for protection has often been ignored or suppressed. Indigenous peoples have suffered forced displacement, loss of livelihood, criminalization of traditional practices, and loss of land as a result of protected areas.³

Following failing efforts to manage natural resources and the frustration of local populations affected by externally imposed arrangements and priorities, nature conservation discourses are increasingly emphasizing decentralization and local participation—often with the assumption that this will also lead to greater equity, increase democracy, and benefit minorities and marginalized groups, including Indigenous peoples.⁴ Parallel to the general shift toward more participatory and decentralized approaches in natural resource governance, recent decades have seen an increased focus on Indigenous peoples' participation in conservation governance and management. In particular, there is a growing attention to Indigenous traditional knowledge and practices as potentially beneficial for sustainable development and nature conservation outcomes, pushed for by Indigenous organizations and representatives and used by Indigenous peoples to strengthen their political position.⁵

Discourses of decentralization and public participation in nature conservation and discourses of Indigenous rights intersect and may be mutually reinforcing, but this convergence also holds potential for friction. Conservation goals or other social or developmental goals might be incompatible or even directly conflicted with Indigenous rights.⁶ Participatory approaches may sustain inequalities and power divisions on the local level, or risk enflaming local conflicts between different users or interests.⁷ Decentralization without additional efforts to include marginalized populations, mediate local conflicts, or build the capacity of marginalized

actors may result in increased inequalities.⁸ Colonial discourses are still present in conservation policy and practice, and the old paradigms of centralized control seem to be pervasive.⁹

Historically, protected area governance in Norway has been a largely top-down process. State agencies have held the main authority over the planning and management of national parks, nature reserves, and protected landscapes. The division of responsibilities and power between local, regional, and national levels has been debated since environmental authorities were first established in the 1970s, and Norway has engaged in efforts aimed at increasing local influence in environmental policy matters since the 1980s.¹⁰ The 2010 reform reflects ongoing trends in natural resource governance and Indigenous rights internationally, as well as the position of local and participatory democracy as an important cornerstone in the Nordic public management model and Norway's profile as actively engaging with Indigenous issues.¹¹

The aim of this chapter is to explore how discourses of decentralized nature conservation and protected area management shape the conditions for Indigenous influence and participation, using the Norwegian reform as an example and point of departure. I investigate the articulation of participation and Sámi rights in the design and implementation of the reform, and discuss the structuring of and conditions for participation in the new model for local protected area management.

Protected Areas on the Norwegian Side of Sápmi

Norway has a relatively short history of setting aside areas for protection and conservation. The country adopted its first nature conservation legislation in 1910, but until the 1950s, Norwegian nature conservation policy focused mainly on trees, rare plants, and threatened animal species. The first national park was established in 1962. Norway has since picked up the pace and taken active part in the international development of concepts for integrated use and protection of natural resources, for example,

sustainable development.¹² Today, 17 percent of the Norwegian land area is set aside for protection.¹³

Protected areas in Norway are designated by the national government's Ministry of Climate and Environment¹⁴ under the Nature Diversity Act of 2009¹⁵ (NDA). The authority to define goals for protected areas and decide on regulation and management plans lies with the national government. The Norwegian Environment Agency¹⁶ (NEA), an administrative authority under the Ministry of Climate and Environment, has delegated authority to approve management plans and to monitor municipal implementation of the NDA. County Governors (CGs; regional state authorities) have traditionally been responsible for the management of protected areas.

A large proportion of Norway's protected areas are situated in Sápmi, the traditional lands of the Indigenous Sámi people (see Map 3.1).¹⁷ The Sámi have lived in and used large parts of northern Fennoscandia since prehistoric times, and their traditional livelihoods have included combinations of reindeer herding, hunting, fishing, trapping, and farming. Reindeer herding occupies a central position in traditional and contemporary notions of Sámi culture and identity in both Sámi and majority discourses, although only a minor proportion of the Sámi are actively involved in reindeer herding today.¹⁸

Sámi experiences of colonization date back to the Middle Ages, when the Nordic kingdoms started to compete for land, tax revenues, and trade profits in the north.¹⁹ By the end of the 19th century, the Nordic states had claimed ownership over most of the Sámi territories and established policies that built openly on racist and colonial assumptions. Norwegian Sámi policies have included land appropriation, discrimination, and harsh assimilation policies.²⁰ After World War II, discourses on minorities and Indigenous rights shifted, and Sámi political mobilization gained momentum. The controversy over the damming of the Alta River in the late 1970s and 1980s put Sámi rights on the Norwegian political agenda, fueled Sámi decolonization efforts, and eventually led to a strengthening of Sámi rights in Norway.²¹ A Sámi



Map 3.1: Sápmi. Map: Heli Rekiranta.²²

Parliament, Sámediggi, was established in 1989, and in 1990, Norway became the first country to ratify the International Labour Organization Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (ILO 169, 1989). As a consequence of the ratification, Norway has established agreements with the Sámediggi on consultation procedures for matters affecting Sámi interests.²³

Previous research on area protection on the Norwegian side of Sápmi indicates that protected areas can benefit Sámi interests by safeguarding against industrial development and other intrusions. However, protected areas may also be perceived as intrusive, limiting influence, obstructing reindeer herding, and increasing conflicts. Dominating discourses of nature and conservation do not always correspond well with Sámi notions of the environment; Sámi land and natural resource use may clash with other

parties' interests; and Sámi rights are often subordinated to other environmental commitments.²⁴ Norway continues to claim state ownership over Sámi territories, although developments in recent decades suggest a change in attitude on behalf of both the state and the courts.²⁵

The main form for Sámi inclusion and participation in protected area governance in Norway is through consultations with the Sámediggi, as regulated through the agreement between the Norwegian Government and the Sámediggi.²⁶ The Sámediggi was consulted on both the new NDA and on the 2010 reform of protected area management.²⁷ Since the introduction of the reform, Sámi participation in protected area management mainly takes place in the form of Sámi representation in local National Park Boards (NPBs).

The 2010 Reform

In its contribution to the budget bill for 2010,²⁸ the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment introduced a new management model for large protected areas in accordance with the new NDA,²⁹ which allowed for administrative authority for protected areas to be transferred to a "specially appointed body." The reform authorizes the Ministry to delegate the management of national parks and other large protected areas to inter-municipal NPBs, if a majority of the affected municipalities in each area agrees to the delegated management authority. The reform has also opened up for a reorganization and relocation of protected area management staff. Whereas previously employed by and placed with the County Governors' offices, protected area managers are now employed by the CGs, but located outside of their offices and subject to instruction by the NPBs.³⁰

Regulations, management plans, and operational rules for protected areas remained largely unchanged after the reform.³¹ The NPBs' mandate includes development and revision of protected area management plans (subject to approval by the Ministry), individual applications for exemption from protected area

regulations, and management activities to safeguard conservation values of protected areas.³² The CGs have the right to appeal decisions made by the NPBs to the NEA. The Ministry may revoke the NPBs' delegated authority and mandate, if it finds an NPB's decisions or activities to be inconsistent with relevant legislation or regulations.³³

The Ministry appoints the NPBs after nominations from municipal councils, county councils, and the Sámediggi. The degree of Sámi representation is determined based on the area's importance for Sámi culture and industry.³⁴ As of March 2021, 42 NPBs have been established.³⁵ The Sámediggi has appointed representatives (42 in total) to 21 of the NPBs. Their mandate is to represent Sámi interests and the Sámi people in their capacity as Sámi persons, and the Sámediggi does not have the authority to instruct them.³⁶

The reform drew on trial schemes for decentralized management of certain smaller protected areas implemented between 2002 and 2008, and was carried out despite concerns raised by both researchers and the NEA about the implementation and outcomes of the trials.³⁷ Studies of the trial schemes and the reform have pointed to how different goals, aims, and priorities between local and national levels have led to conflicts over management design, division of responsibilities, and identification of legitimate stakeholders.³⁸ Different understandings of the meaning of conservation, management, and knowledge and of the trade-offs between conservation and use have affected the implementation and legitimacy of the new management model.³⁹ Disparate notions of the role and function of the local boards have also caused tension,⁴⁰ and opinions differ on whether the reform does in fact increase local control over conservation policies.⁴¹

Analytical Framework

This chapter applies a discourse theoretical approach, departing from a recognition of language as constitutive of the social world.⁴² Social phenomena are given meaning through language, as concrete subjects or objects are connected to specific linguistic

signs, defined by their relation and difference to other signs.⁴³ While both possible and necessary, fixations of meaning are always temporary, represent sites of challenge and contestation, and need to be reproduced in order to maintain stability.⁴⁴ They are thereby always processes of power and politics.⁴⁵ Discourse analysis is concerned with mapping the processes through which meanings are established, considering their historical, cultural, and political context, and critically interrogating the power relations underlying them.⁴⁶

“Discourse” is understood here as a system of social relations, rules, and practices that systematically form the meaning of subjects and objects.⁴⁷ Discourses set limits for thought and action, thereby constraining or enabling certain policy options.⁴⁸ They govern what knowledge is perceived to be possible or legitimate, and whose claims to hold such knowledge are recognized as true.⁴⁹ Discourses create subjects, entail them with certain characteristics, and produce subject positions that set limits for subjects’ ability to speak and act.⁵⁰ Subject positions structure and regulate the field of possible identification and action, provide an interpretative frame for subjects within a social formation, and thus shape the space for subjects’ agency.⁵¹ Certain subject positions will make it difficult, or even impossible, for an individual or group to speak with authority or be recognized as a legitimate actor in a particular context, while other positions strengthen and add legitimacy to the claims or statements of a person or a collective.

The ability and capacity of Indigenous peoples to participate in or influence protected area governance and management is thus both enabled and constrained through discourse, as it is constructed and shaped through the discursive positioning of them as actors, the articulation of the conditions for their agency, and the construction of protected areas as a policy area.⁵² I use *space for agency* as a concept to describe and discuss the effects of these positionings, articulations, and constructions.⁵³ To investigate the formation of meaning and the shaping of spaces for Sámi agency in the new Norwegian model for local protected area management, I draw on Carol Bacchi’s application of the concept *problem*

representations and discourse theoretical concepts developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe.⁵⁴

Bacchi suggests that policies and policy proposals, as prescriptive texts, contain implicit representations of the problems they aim to address. Representations of political problems work to fixate elements within discourse according to specific interpretations of the world. Furthermore, problem representations attribute identities to individuals and groups, thus shaping and governing their agency.⁵⁵ The analysis of problem representations in policy texts can illuminate their underlying assumptions and explore their consequences for spaces for agency. It exposes the construction of nature conservation as an area of politics and the positioning of subjects in relation to that domain.

With Laclau and Mouffe, focus lies with the production of meaning through the establishment of relationships between discursive elements. These processes, or *articulations*, invest meaning into linguistic signs, objects, subjects, subject positions, and other social phenomena and order them in relation to one another, thus resulting in a temporary fixation of the discourse.⁵⁶ Signs and concepts are sorted, linked, and defined in relation to one another and in opposition to other signs and concepts. These constructions privilege certain identifications while excluding or silencing others, thus shaping the space for agency of individuals and groups.

Through this combined approach, I am able to investigate the foundational assumptions of protected area discourses, as well as the fixation of meaning of particular concepts. It enables a discussion of tensions in the discourse, hegemonic formations, and power relations, and the effects of these processes on the space for Sámi agency under the Norwegian protected area reform.⁵⁷

Material and Methods

The reform of Norwegian protected area management was introduced through the Ministry of the Environment's budget bill for 2010⁵⁸ (hereafter, the 2010 budget bill). The reform had been made

possible by the passing of the new NDA,⁵⁹ which was preceded by a government-commissioned inquiry appointed to review Norway's legislation on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity. The inquiry committee submitted its final report (hereafter, the NDA Committee report) in 2004,⁶⁰ and the report was then circulated for comment to a broad range of governmental and civil society organizations. The Ministry of the Environment addressed the NDA Committee report, considered the statements from the consultation bodies, and introduced their bill to Parliament in 2009⁶¹ (hereafter, the NDA bill).

These documents—the legislative history of the NDA and the budget bill introducing the reform—provide a comprehensive basis for the analysis of the discursive context of the 2010 reform. The NDA sets the framework for the reform, as it provides the legal basis for its introduction and implementation. The legislative history of the NDA offers the opportunity to examine the discourses within which it was possible to propose and implement the reform and to trace tensions in discourse.

In addition, the empirical material for this chapter includes semi-structured interviews and observations.⁶² I have interviewed persons with insight into the consultations between the Sámediggi and the Norwegian Government on both the NDA and the protected area management reform (Interview 1, March 2014) and with experience of participation in local protected area management under the reform (Interviews 2–4, September 2014). The interviews covered a sequence of themes relating to the reform and local protected area management, including: the interviewee's role and experiences; the functioning of the new management model; relationships between different groups of actors and different administrative and political levels; potential conflicts and conflict resolution; and Sámi rights and influence. The observations were carried out during a board meeting of an NPB, which included a one-day field trip into one of the national parks they manage. My role as an observer resembled what Alan Bryman calls the “minimally participating observer,” where the researcher interacts with members of the observed group, but participates minimally

in the group's core activities and does not rely on observations as the main source of data.⁶³ My participation included a short presentation of my research interests and methods to the board, and interactions with board members and staff during the field trip and over meals. I took notes continuously and wrote them out the same day. I also discussed my observations with the interviewees.

The interviews and my observations complement the documents with local perspectives and insights into how persons directly involved in local protected area management experience and make sense of the reform. Furthermore, they allowed me to establish relationships with and learn from persons with direct experience of local protected area management under the reform.

Documents and interview transcripts were coded through the identification of themes drawn from theoretical assumptions and emerging from the empirical material. I searched the material for articulations of decentralization, participation, local influence, and Sámi rights; looked for descriptions of roles and responsibilities; and examined representations of and proposed solutions to problems. All translations of the material to English used in the following are my own.⁶⁴

Results

Articulations of Sámi Rights and Protected Areas

The NDA Committee report and the NDA bill articulate Sámi rights in relation to protected areas in connection with two, slightly different, problem representations. These two articulations could entail different conditions for Sámi participation and influence in protected area governance and management, and enable and restrain Sámi space for agency in relation to protected areas in different ways.

The first problem representation focuses on Norway's obligations to respect, protect, and preserve Sámi culture and rights, and the ways in which protected areas can achieve this. The NDA Committee report refers to area protection as a tool to strengthen the

natural resource base of Sámi culture.⁶⁵ It argues that as protected areas aim to preserve the natural values of an area, they can contribute to the safeguarding of land, water, and natural resources of importance to Sámi culture, as well as traditional Sámi use of remote areas.⁶⁶ The NDA bill establishes that since the Sámi often have a closer relationship with nature than others have, and rely more on natural resources to maintain and develop their culture, the new law is highly relevant to the protection of Sámi interests and rights in Norway.⁶⁷ It further states that, in many cases, including Sámi contexts, the continuation of traditional use and cultural practices is dependent on conservation and area protection.⁶⁸

The second problem representation is occupied with the possibilities to combine conservation of natural values with continued use of land and natural resources. It expresses the relationship between protected areas and Sámi rights as a mutually beneficial convergence of interests, but emphasizes that conservation will be prioritized over any user interest and that protected areas are *not* a means to secure Sámi rights. The NDA Committee report states that considerations of biodiversity conservation and of Sámi interests often overlap, that area conservation can contribute to the protection of the natural resource base for Sámi culture, and that management plans for individual national parks may include the safeguarding of the natural resource base for Sámi culture and continued Sámi traditional use.⁶⁹ However, it also articulates protected areas as potentially conflicting with Sámi use, refers to instances where Sámi use can affect biological diversity negatively, and argues that protected areas are not established with the objective of conserving areas for reindeer herding.⁷⁰

The NDA bill argues that a new Nature Diversity Act is important to the protection of Sámi interests and rights in Norway, as area protection can safeguard the natural resource base for Sámi culture and industry.⁷¹ It proposes an amendment of the statutory objective of the law to acknowledge the value of nature as a basis for Sámi culture.⁷² Nonetheless, it emphasizes that the protection of natural values is the main objective of conservation and clearly states that protection of user values is not a goal in itself for the

new law. It establishes that consideration of conservation values will be prioritized over user interests in protected areas and argues against area protection as a measure to protect any form of use, industry, or cultural practice over others.⁷³

My observations and interviews illustrated the potential tension between these representations. One of the points for discussion during the field trip was facilitation for visitors to the national parks. A related issue, concerning information and signage at entry points to the national parks, was one of the board meeting's agenda items. The discussions mainly concerned the preparation of trails, the installation of footbridges, and the location and design of signs. They did not address the purpose of the signs, the focus of the information displayed, or the potential conflicts between national park visitors' access and reindeer herders' interests and needs.

The main problem in these discussions was not how to use protected areas to protect Sámi interests and rights. If it had been, the discussion of entry points could have covered visitor access to reindeer grazing pastures and reindeer herding areas, the focus of facilitating activities could depart from the needs of reindeer herders, and the orientation and content of visitor information could be aimed at minimizing disturbance to reindeer herding and other Sámi activities. Instead, the second problem representation—the potential conflict between and need to balance conservation and use, and the prioritization of conservation objectives over Sámi rights—appeared more prominent.

Articulations of Participation

The NDA Committee report, the NDA bill, and the 2010 budget bill all articulate local participation as central to protected area management and Sámi participation as a given in Sámi areas.⁷⁴ A closer analysis of these articulations shows that the documents define, describe, and argue for participation in relation to a number of different concepts, problem representations, and proposed solutions. Among these, Norway's commitments under

international law, the importance of local knowledge to fulfill environmental goals, and issues of legitimacy and conflict resolution appear as especially salient.

International commitments

The documents articulate Norway's international commitments as central to the issue of local and Sámi participation in protected area governance and management. The NDA Committee report describes the principle of public participation as "a principle in environmental law."⁷⁵ The NDA bill refers to how international guidelines for sustainable use, and the concept of sustainable development itself, emphasize local management and the connection between rights to a resource and responsibility for sustainable use of that resource.⁷⁶ Both the NDA Committee report and the NDA bill refer to the *ecosystem approach*⁷⁷ as a guiding framework for nature conservation and protected area governance and management.⁷⁸ The documents thus position Norway as having committed to principles of subsidiarity, decentralization, and local participation.

The concept of participation is here linked to involvement, responsibility, and sustainability. It is connected to notions of a holistic, ecosystem-based approach and associated with an understanding of sustainable development, with social aspects as an integral component. The policy problem represented centers on Norway's commitments under international law and agreements to promote and facilitate local and Sámi participation in protected area governance and management. This problem representation positions Norway in relation to an international discourse where participation in conservation and protected area governance and management is desirable and necessary. A related representation centers on Norway's obligations under the CBD, including the use of different kinds of knowledge to ensure effective management. Here, *Sámi participation* is linked to *traditional knowledge* and *sustainable use*.

The NDA Committee report, the NDA bill, and the 2010 budget bill all underline the right of the Sámi as an Indigenous people to participate or be consulted in decision-making procedures

on matters of significance to them, as established through Norway's ratification of ILO 169.⁷⁹ The documents establish the Sámi as holders of traditional knowledge and Norway as having obligations under Article 8(j) of the CBD to acknowledge, protect, and make use of that knowledge and to guarantee Sámi consent and participation in the process.⁸⁰ References to Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights⁸¹ connects the protection of nature and biological diversity to the protection of the natural resource base for Sámi culture.⁸² With the problem represented to be Norway's obligations under ILO 169 and the full and effective implementation of these obligations, *Sámi participation* is articulated as a *right* held by the Sámi as an *Indigenous people*.

The NDA Committee report makes efforts to define and qualify this right. It rejects an interpretation⁸³ of Article 15(1) of ILO 169 that the right of Indigenous peoples to "participate in the use, management and conservation" of the lands and natural resources that they traditionally occupy and use entails the right to participate in decision-making and to be represented in decision-making bodies. The report concludes that such an interpretation would either have consequences for the composition of the Norwegian Parliament and Government, or prohibit these bodies from adopting laws or regulations on natural resources in Sámi areas, and that this would go too far beyond Norway's obligations under other international law.⁸⁴

Local knowledge and environmental objectives

The articulation of participation in relation to international commitments relates closely to an articulation of participation as important to environmental objectives, particularly to gain access to local knowledge relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and natural resources. Article 8(j) of the CBD and the articulation of the ecosystem approach are central to this articulation, which reinforces the linking of *participation* to *local* and *traditional knowledge* and *sustainable use*, here assumed to contribute to *strong* or *strengthened management*.

The NDA Committee report concludes that Norway is obligated to respect, preserve, and maintain traditional knowledge, and that this requires the inclusion of holders of traditional knowledge in relevant decision-making and policy processes.⁸⁵ The NDA bill refers to Norway's obligations under the CBD to promote a wider application of traditional knowledge and practices, and stresses the importance of letting holders of such knowledge determine to what degree it should be shared and used.⁸⁶ The 2010 budget bill establishes the access to and use of local knowledge and experience as desirable, particularly in protected area management, where it can contribute to a strengthened management and add value to conservation efforts.⁸⁷

The problem is represented to be the importance of incorporating local knowledge, experiences, and practices in protected area management in order to strengthen protected area management and achieve environmental goals. Sámi participation is part of the solution to this problem, as the use and promotion of traditional knowledge requires the consent and participation of traditional knowledge holders. This articulation of participation thus includes an acknowledgement of the potential contribution of Sámi traditional knowledge and practices to conservation objectives and links these potential contributions to issues of influence and participation.

In interviews with NPB members appointed by the Sámediggi (Interview 2) and a municipality (Interview 4), both interviewees described access to and use of local and Sámi traditional knowledge as an advantage of local management, but also pointed to a lack of effective recognition of traditional knowledge and traditional knowledge holders in the existing structure. The municipality representative (Interview 4) discussed the institutional and organizational structure, modeled on Norwegian municipal and state organization, as a potential obstacle for Sámi participation and unfavorable for the incorporation of traditional knowledge.

Legitimacy and conflict resolution

A third articulation of participation focuses on public legitimacy of conservation policies and protected areas and participation as a way to reduce and resolve conflicts both within and across levels.

The NDA Committee report states that issues of political legitimacy have been particularly pertinent to conservation policy and establishes delegation as a potential tool to reduce conflicts between state and local authorities.⁸⁸ The report recognizes that protected areas may be a source of conflict in relation to Sámi use of land and natural resources. It maintains that conflicts over protected areas in Sámi territories often relate more to issues of rights to, and management responsibilities for, land and natural resources than to the actual restrictions or activities in a particular protected area, and suggests strengthening Sámi and local influence in conservation processes as a remedy.⁸⁹

The NDA bill acknowledges an inherent conflict of interest in protected areas, referring to conservation versus use, and points to open and inclusive conservation processes and exchanges of information as means to reduce conflict and increase acceptance for area protection.⁹⁰ The 2010 budget bill stresses the necessity of increased local affiliation with and sense of ownership of protected areas, states this as an argument for increased participation in protected area management, and articulates Sámi participation as a prerequisite in Sámi areas.⁹¹

Participation is here linked to *conflict reduction*, *conflict resolution*, *legitimacy*, *acceptance*, and *affiliation*. The problem representation centers on a lack of legitimacy and acceptance of conservation policies and protected areas, and a need to avoid, reduce, and resolve conflicts in relation to area protection. It focuses on two principal dimensions of conflict: conflicts between conservation and use, and conflicts between authorities, goals, and commitments on international, national, and local levels.

The interviewees confirmed notions of participation and local management as a way to reduce or resolve conflict, increase acceptance of protected areas, and increase the legitimacy of protected area governance and management. They focused on the same dimensions of conflict as the documents—between conservation and use, and between different administrative and political levels. A Sámediggi employee (Interview 1) stated that local management could potentially increase Sámi acceptance of protected areas, if it increases the possibilities to influence management and

creates new income opportunities for local people. A member of the management staff of an NPB (Interview 3) pointed out geographical proximity and interaction with local people as a factor for conflict reduction and as an advantage of local management over centralized arrangements.

However, the interviewees also expressed disappointment in the functioning of the NPB and described ongoing friction and conflict between different sectors and levels. An NPB member representing a municipality expressed frustration over the lack of space for local discretion and flexibility in the new management model (Interview 4). An NPB member appointed by the Sámediggi (Interview 2) called for increased Sámediggi involvement, both to support Sámi representatives on the board and to influence protected area governance at the national level.

Discussion

The results of this analysis illustrate the potentially different consequences for Indigenous space for agency following from different articulations of Indigenous peoples and their rights in relation to protected areas. The discourse of the Norwegian reform reproduces notions of how decentralization could, or should, make management more effective, benefit minorities and marginalized groups, and ensure the appropriate use and incorporation of local and traditional knowledge in protected area management. However, the relationship between Sámi rights and protected areas is articulated in different, potentially contradictory, ways, and central concepts remain open for different ascriptions of meaning. This may open up discursive struggles where histories of marginalization and remaining unequal power relations can work to limit Sámi space for agency in protected area governance and management.

On the one hand, the documents articulate an understanding of protected areas as a potential means to secure Sámi culture and rights. This articulation could enable space to argue for initiation of conservation efforts or protected areas, as well as against them, depending on the perception, interests, and strategies of concerned

Sámi communities. On the other hand, the documents express the relationship between protected areas and Sámi culture and use as potentially mutually beneficial, but also potentially conflicting. This articulation reproduces the prioritization of conservation objectives over Sámi rights. Its consequences could include Sámi rights, traditions, or knowledge being recognized only when they correspond with or contribute to conservation objectives.

The concept of *participation* appears as a central point in Norwegian protected area discourse. Participation is ascribed a variety of meanings, each of which could potentially shape and direct Sámi space for agency. The analyzed texts articulate participation as a requirement following from Norway's international commitments on both conservation and Indigenous rights; as a contributor to the fulfillment of environmental objectives; and as an instrument for reducing, resolving, or avoiding conflict. Participation is defined through its links to *involvement, responsibility, and sustainability; Indigenous rights; traditional knowledge and sustainable use; and conflict reduction, legitimacy, acceptance, and affiliation*. While the different meanings invested in the concept of participation are not necessarily mutually exclusive, they may not always correspond well, and they each potentially shape the space for agency of participants in protected area management.

The articulation of participation as a right pertaining to the Sámi as an Indigenous people, following from Norway's commitments under ILO 169, positions the Sámi as rights-holders and Norway as having obligations to protect those rights. By comparison, the articulation of participation in connection to the merits of local and traditional knowledge, following from Norway's obligations under the CBD, gives a more instrumental value to Sámi participation, thus qualifying the participation of Sámi subjects in protected area governance and management on their position as holders of traditional knowledge.⁹² The focus on Indigenous peoples' contributions to conservation objectives and ability to manage natural resources sustainably has often proved a fruitful way to advance Indigenous rights, but it also entails a risk of reproducing stereotypes and colonial constructs of Indigenous peoples.⁹³

The articulation of participation and local management as a tool to access and make use of traditional knowledge could potentially strengthen Sámi influence or serve as an argument for alternative management structures, based on Sámi organizational knowledge and practices. However, there appears to be a discrepancy between this articulation and the space for local and Sámi traditional knowledge in the established local management structures. The articulation of participation in relation to conflict reduction and legitimacy appears to be open enough for actors on the local level to interpret it as a promise of local discretion and opportunities to prioritize in ways that benefit the municipality and its inhabitants, while authorities on the national level see it as a tool to implement national goals.⁹⁴

The construction of *participation* in the discourse of protected area management makes the concept possible to integrate into the existing structure without fundamentally changing or challenging dominating relationships of power, divisions of responsibilities, or objectives for management.⁹⁵ My results indicate the hegemony of a discourse that structures conduct and agency as “participation” within a rather inflexible system modeled after traditional, centralized organizational structures. Articulations of protected areas as instruments to safeguard Sámi culture and rights could open up for protected areas based on Sámi priorities and use, protected areas with restrictions on other land uses but not Sámi use, and management structures based on Sámi organizational knowledge and practices. Such effects are not visible in the material I have analyzed here. Participation under the reform is organized largely through arrangements modeled on conventional, centralized governance and management structures, and the results of this study suggest that environmental objectives and the conservation of biological diversity continue to take priority over Sámi rights to control their traditional territories.⁹⁶

Concluding Remarks

Discourses of decentralization and local protected area management in Norway shape the conditions for Sámi influence

and participation in ways that both enable and restrain Sámi space for agency in relation to protected areas. Articulations that connect to international Indigenous rights law and promote Sámi rights within existing structures enable space for Sámi agency through consultations and consideration. Articulations of Sámi participation that stress their contribution to conservation objectives enable space for Sámi actors to protect and promote their traditional knowledge. Nonetheless, these articulations also work to obscure alternative understandings, and they restrict Sámi space for agency by shaping it according to hegemonic discourses.

Norway's organization of protected area governance and management provides arenas for Sámi influence both through consultation and direct participation. All representations and articulations analyzed in this chapter acknowledge Sámi political and procedural rights and underline the importance of safeguarding Sámi culture and rights. In this regard, the Norwegian case could serve as an example for protected area governance and management on Indigenous lands elsewhere. However, the discourses analyzed mainly concentrate on Sámi rights within existing governance and management structures and do not necessarily enable the space to question those structures. The failure to radically reconsider the fundamental assumptions of discourses of protected area management risks upholding or reinforcing asymmetrical relationships of power, reproducing stereotypes, and hindering decolonization efforts.⁹⁷ Further research should continue to scrutinize the hegemonic discourses governing these arenas and explore alternative approaches to Indigenous peoples' rights and participation in relation to protected areas.

Notes

- ¹ A previous version of this manuscript was included in the author's PhD thesis (Reimerson, "Nature, Culture, Rights"), which was published as an Umeå University Department of Political Science Research Report. The manuscript is included in full text in the

printed version of the thesis (approximately 200 copies), but not in the digital repository.

- ² Prop. 1 S (2009–2010), Proposisjon til Stortinget (forslag til stortingsvedtak) for budsjettåret 2010, 218–26.
- ³ Adams, “Nature and the Colonial Mind”; Adams and Hutton, “People, Parks and Poverty”; Colchester, “Conservation Policy and Indigenous Peoples”; Stevens, “Legacy of Yellowstone”; West, Igoe, and Brockington, “Parks and Peoples.”
- ⁴ Dressler et al., “From Hope to Crisis”; Kothari, Camill, and Brown, “Conservation as if People Also Mattered”; Lemos and Agrawal, “Environmental Governance”; Reed, “Stakeholder Participation.”
- ⁵ Berkes, Colding, and Folke, “Rediscovery”; Colchester, “Conservation Policy and Indigenous Peoples”; Heinämäki, “Protecting the Rights”; Stevens, “New Protected Area Paradigm.”
- ⁶ Hirsch et al., “Acknowledging Conservation Trade-Offs”; Kashwan, “Politics of Rights-Based Approaches.”
- ⁷ Falleth and Hovik, “Local Government”; Hovik, Sandström, and Zachrisson, “Management of Protected Areas”; Riseth, “Indigenous Perspective on National Parks.”
- ⁸ Bay-Larsen, “Constitution of Power”; Lane, “Participation”; Ribot, *Waiting for Democracy*; Robins, “Insiders Versus Outsiders.”
- ⁹ Reimerson, “Sami Space for Agency”; Reimerson, “Nature, Culture, Rights”; Reimerson, “Between Nature and Culture”; Wilshusen et al., “Reinventing a Square Wheel.”
- ¹⁰ Bay-Larsen, “Conservationists’ Concerns”; Fauchald and Gulbrandsen, “Norwegian Reform”; Fauchald, Gulbrandsen, and Zachrisson, “Internationalization of Protected Areas”; Hovik and Reitan, “National Environmental Goals.”
- ¹¹ Falleth, Sandkjaer Hanssen, and Røiseland, “Introduction”; Hongslo et al., “Decentralization of Conservation Management,” 998–1014; Minde, “Sami Land Rights.”
- ¹² Bay-Larsen, “Bureaucrats and Boundaries,” 14; Fedreheim, “Value Creation,” 96–103.
- ¹³ State of the Environment Norway, “Protected Areas.”
- ¹⁴ 1972–2013 Ministry of the Environment, 2014– Ministry of Climate and Environment.
- ¹⁵ The 2009 Nature Diversity Act replaced the Nature Conservation Act of 1970.
- ¹⁶ The NEA was created in 2013 through a merger of the Norwegian Directorate for Nature Management, which was the agency previously

- responsible for protected areas, and the Norwegian Climate and Pollution Agency.
- ¹⁷ *Sápmi* is the name for the Sámi territory and people in *davvisámegiella* (Northern Sámi), the most widely spoken of the Sámi languages.
- ¹⁸ Lantto and Mörkenstam, “Sami Rights.”
- ¹⁹ Hansen and Olsen, *Samernas historia*.
- ²⁰ Hansen and Olsen, *Samernas historia*; Minde, “Assimilation of the Sami”; Minde, “Challenge of Indigenism.”
- ²¹ Minde, “Challenge of Indigenism.”
- ²² Place names gathered from Kartverket (Norwegian Mapping Agency), “Norgeskart”; Sámediggi (Sami Parliament of Sweden), “Ortnamn”; Sammallahti, *Sámi-suoma-sámi sátnegirji*.
- ²³ Ministry of the Environment, and Sámediggi—Sametinget, “Avtale”; Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, and Sami Parliament, “Procedures for Consultations.”
- ²⁴ Heikkilä, “Sámi Reindeer Herding”; Riseth, “Indigenous Perspective”; Risvoll et al., “Pastoralists’ Participation,” 71; Ween and Lien, “Decolonization in the Arctic?”
- ²⁵ Allard, “Nordic Countries’ Law.”
- ²⁶ Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, and Sami Parliament, “Procedures for Consultations.”
- ²⁷ Ot.prp. nr. 52 (2008–2009), Om lov om forvaltning av naturens mangfold (naturmangfoldloven), 33–39.
- ²⁸ Prop. 1 S (2009–2010).
- ²⁹ Nature Diversity Act, Act of 19 June 2009 No. 100 relating to the management of biological, geological and landscape diversity, Section 62 (2009).
- ³⁰ Fauchald and Gulbrandsen, “Norwegian Reform,” 214.
- ³¹ Aasen Lundberg et al., “Nye lokale forvaltningsmodellen.”
- ³² cf. Norwegian Environment Agency, “Vedtekter.”
- ³³ Prop. 1 S (2009–2010), 225.
- ³⁴ Prop. 1 S (2009–2010), 224.
- ³⁵ Norges nasjonalparks-og verneområdestyrer, “Nasjonalpark-og verneområdestyrer.”
- ³⁶ Sámediggi—Sametinget, “Areal, klima og miljø.”
- ³⁷ Falleth and Hovik, *Lokal forvaltning*; Falleth, Hovik, and Sandström, *Blåfjella*; Norwegian Environment Agency, *Lokal forvaltning*.
- ³⁸ Falleth and Hovik, “Local Government”; Fauchald and Gulbrandsen, “Norwegian Reform”; Hovik, Sandström, and Zachrisson, “Management of Protected Areas.”

- ³⁹ Bay-Larsen, “Constitution of Power”; Bay-Larsen, “Conservationists’ Concerns”; Eira, “Medforvaltning”; Engen, Fauchald, and Hausner, “Stakeholders’ Perceptions.”
- ⁴⁰ Riksrevisjonen, *Riksrevisjonens undersøkning*; Risvoll et al., “Pastoralists’ Participation.”
- ⁴¹ Hovik and Hong slo, “Balancing Local Interests”; Overvåg, Skjeggedal, and Sandström, “Management of Mountain Areas”; Skjeggedal, Overvåg, and Riseth, “Land-Use Planning.”
- ⁴² Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, *Discourse Analysis*, 10–12.
- ⁴³ Howarth, *Discourse*, 101–02; Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy*, 105.
- ⁴⁴ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy*, 110–13.
- ⁴⁵ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 98, 119, 198; Howarth, *Discourse*, 9.
- ⁴⁶ Howarth, *Discourse*, 129; Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, *Discourse Analysis*, 10–12.
- ⁴⁷ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 54; Howarth, *Discourse*, 9.
- ⁴⁸ Feindt and Oels, “Does Discourse Matter?”
- ⁴⁹ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 55–61.
- ⁵⁰ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy*, 115; Smith, *Laclau and Mouffe*, 55–59.
- ⁵¹ Smith, *Laclau and Mouffe*, 56–64.
- ⁵² Davies, “Agency,” 343–44; Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 98; Mouffe, “Democratic Citizenship,” 80; Smith, *Laclau and Mouffe*, 68, 158.
- ⁵³ Reimerson, “Sami Space for Agency”; Reimerson, “Nature, Culture, Rights”; Reimerson, “Between Nature and Culture.”
- ⁵⁴ Bacchi, *Analysing Policy*; Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy*.
- ⁵⁵ Bacchi, *Analysing Policy*, 16–32.
- ⁵⁶ Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy*, 105–14, 127–30.
- ⁵⁷ Bacchi, *Analysing Policy*, 2–21; Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony & Socialist Strategy*, 127–30, 136–43; Winther Jørgensen, and Phillips, *Discourse Analysis*, 43–45, 50–51.
- ⁵⁸ Prop. 1 S (2009–2010).
- ⁵⁹ Nature Diversity Act 2009.
- ⁶⁰ NOU, Lov om bevaring av natur, landskap og biologisk mangfold (2004:28).
- ⁶¹ Ot.prp. nr. 52 (2008–2009).
- ⁶² Flick, *Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 222–33; Kvale, *Doing Interviews*, 51.
- ⁶³ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 443–44.

- ⁶⁴ Official versions of the analyzed documents are available in Norwegian only. An unofficial translation of the NDA is available at Ministry of Climate and Environment, “Nature Diversity Act.” Interviews and observation were undertaken in Swedish and Norwegian.
- ⁶⁵ NOU 2004:28, 478–79.
- ⁶⁶ NOU 2004:28, 485, 78.
- ⁶⁷ Ot.prp. nr. 52 (2008–2009), 33.
- ⁶⁸ Ot.prp. nr. 52 (2008–2009), 187.
- ⁶⁹ NOU 2004:28, 298, 463.
- ⁷⁰ NOU 2004:28, 463.
- ⁷¹ Ot.prp. nr. 52 (2008–2009), 202.
- ⁷² Ot.prp. nr. 52 (2008–2009), 60–61.
- ⁷³ Ot.prp. nr. 52 (2008–2009), 60–61, 198, 202.
- ⁷⁴ NOU 2004:28, 352; Ot.prp. nr. 52 (2008–2009), 226. Prop. 1 S (2009–2010), 222.
- ⁷⁵ NOU 2004:28, 196.
- ⁷⁶ Ot.prp. nr. 52 (2008–2009), 76, 84.
- ⁷⁷ As defined and developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and including a distinct focus on decentralization and incorporation of local and traditional knowledge. See COP-CBD, *Report of Workshop*; SCBD, “Ecosystem Approach.”
- ⁷⁸ NOU 2004:28, 148–51, 86–89; Ot.prp. nr. 52 (2008–2009), 51–52, 76, 84, 94–95, 97, 206.
- ⁷⁹ NOU 2004:28, 469, 86–87; Ot.prp. nr. 52 (2008–2009), 47; Prop. 1 S (2009–2010), 222.
- ⁸⁰ NOU 2004:28, 464–66; Ot.prp. nr. 52 (2008–2009), 89–93; Prop. 1 S (2009–2010), 222.
- ⁸¹ ICCPR, *United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 999, p. 171* (1966).
- ⁸² NOU 2004:28, 466–68; Ot.prp. nr. 52 (2008–2009), 46–48.
- ⁸³ The report refers here to an evaluation of a government bill concerning the Finnmark Act (2005), requested by the Standing Committee on Justice of the Parliament and delivered to the Ministry of Justice as part of the legislation process. See Graver and Ulfstein, *Folkerettslig vurdering*.
- ⁸⁴ NOU 2004:28, 469.
- ⁸⁵ NOU 2004:28, 462, 65, 85–86.
- ⁸⁶ Ot.prp. nr. 52 (2008–2009), 89–90, 92.
- ⁸⁷ Prop. 1 S (2009–2010), 222, 23.
- ⁸⁸ NOU 2004:28, 94–96.

- ⁸⁹ NOU 2004:28, 463, 72–74; NOU 2004:28, 486.
- ⁹⁰ Ot.prp. nr. 52 (2008–2009), 226.
- ⁹¹ Prop. 1 S (2009–2010), 222.
- ⁹² cf. Reimerson, “Sami Space for Agency”; Reimerson, “Between Nature and Culture.”
- ⁹³ cf. Conklin and Graham, “Shifting Middle Ground”; Lindroth and Sinevaara-Niskanen, “Crossroads”; Nadasdy, “Transcending the Debate”; Redford, “Ecologically Noble Savage.”
- ⁹⁴ cf. Hovik and Hongslo, “Balancing Local Interests”; Overvåg, Skjeggedal, and Sandström, “Management of Mountain Areas.”
- ⁹⁵ cf. Methmann, “Climate Protection.”
- ⁹⁶ cf. Overvåg, Skjeggedal, and Sandström, “Management of Mountain Areas”; Skjeggedal, Overvåg, and Riseth, “Land-Use Planning.”
- ⁹⁷ Banerjee and Linstead, “Masking Subversion”; Howitt and Suchet-Pearson, “Rethinking the Building Blocks.”

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PART II

**Biocultural Diversities
Across Bordered Spaces**

CHAPTER 4

People, Animals, Protected Places, and Archaeology

A Complex Collaboration in Belize

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Introduction¹

In 1981, the country of Belize (formerly British Honduras) in Central America became an independent nation within the British Commonwealth. That same year, the Government of Belize passed the National Park Systems Act and the Wildlife Protection Act. It also began enforcing the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.² The Belize landmass measures 22,920 km², encompassing a population of 398,050 with

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a very low density compared to other countries, and is considered a middle-income nation.³ It is home to unique ancient Maya archaeological places (aka “sites”),⁴ the world’s second-longest barrier reef, and several popular terrestrial parks and reserves. As a preferential development strategy, the country had focused on ecotourism rather than more traditional tourism pursuits typical throughout Mexico and Central America; however, this shifted somewhat in the late 1990s when efforts began emphasizing cruise ship tourism.

A preliminary survey by the Belize Audubon Society and the Wildlife Conservation Society noted many jaguars within the Cockscomb Basin of the eastern Maya Mountains of Belize. As a result, the Government established the world’s first jaguar preserve in 1984, much to the dismay of many then-local residents of both Maya and non-Maya villages. Fast forward to 2014, at which time we (the authors) initiated the Stann Creek Regional Archaeology Project (SCRAP).⁵ Our investigations initially focused on an area adjacent to the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary (CBWS) —now totaling 1,011 km² of “protected” space with its connected forest reserves. Soon after, we expanded into the Cockscomb Basin proper, having been approached by members of an adjacent Maya village who requested local archaeological/heritage investigations.

In this chapter, we discuss the history of the CBWS development, ongoing co-management organization and use relationships with adjacent Maya communities, and how community and park leaders are negotiating the increasing pressure of tourism development within the country. We situate our experience of establishing an archaeological research program within this broader narrative of complex relations: Indigenous communities, not-for-profit organizations, colonial and neocolonial governments, and foreign researchers, alongside current heritage-related legislation in Belize. We question how the ecological, economic, cultural/ ethnic, historical, and political conditions afoot in the region relate to archaeology and, more specifically, to “cultural heritage”—itself an inseparable whole together with “nature” in the Maya world. We also question how people view and value the past or conversely denigrate, destroy, or ignore it. We aim to relate

the elements that should be considered for successful collaborations in this part of the Stann Creek District, based on understandings of local histories and past failures of foreign researchers and investors, although we acknowledge at the outset that there is no singular process for such collaborations. We echo American archaeologist Patricia McAnany's sentiments in stressing that "[b]y avoiding dialogue about and sensitivity to the social and political issues that precondition our research, we flirt with the dangerous possibility of exacerbating existing inequalities."⁶ We emphasize that the material presented herein is anecdotal and is biased toward our personal experiences, privileges, and perspectives as two foreign (Canadian) archaeologists with over 40 years' combined experience researching in Central America. We did not engage in formal interviews for the purposes of exploring this issue. Although these are personal narratives, we situate them amid unique and actual locations, historical events, and recent activity. We are not official members of the villages/communities discussed and do not speak on behalf of them or any other bodies addressed in this chapter, nor is it our intention to directly critique anyone but ourselves.

A Brief History of Conservation in the Cockscomb Basin

In 1975, a group of Mopan Maya families picked up and moved roughly 100 km north from the Toledo District of Belize into the Stann Creek District's southern reaches (Map 4.1).

Dramatic transitions across its landscape characterize this part of the country. Within a mere 20 km east–west span, you can move from crystal Caribbean waters and white sandy beaches alongside coastal mangrove shoreline and lagoons, through pine savannah, to the broadleaf forests of alluvial valleys, and up into the undulating foothills and steeper peaks of the eastern Maya Mountains (Map 4.2). Much of the Stann Creek District lies within the vast anthropogenic Maya Tropical Forest (see Kettunen and Cuxil, Chapter 5, for discussion of the *Selva Maya*). Stretching across Belize, northern Guatemala, and parts of Mexico's Yucatan Penin-



Map 4.1: Map of Belize, Central America, showing location of individual districts. Map: Shawn Morton.

sula, this is the largest remaining tropical rainforest in the Americas (after the Amazon). Stann Creek District boasts many endemic species and is notable within the broader Forest because of the igneous and metamorphic bedrock (Maya Mountains) that characterize this region—versus the karst landscape that dominates

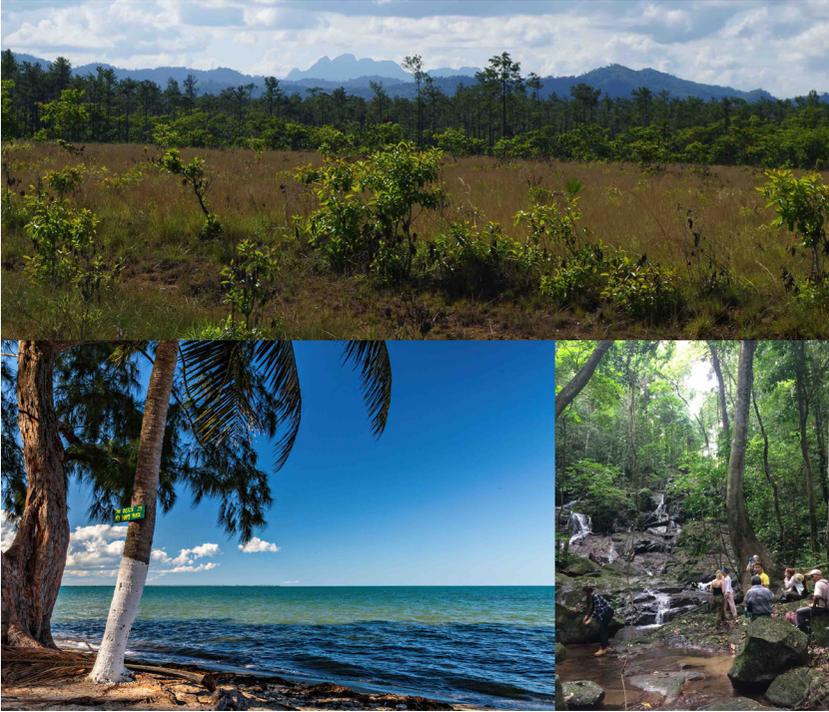
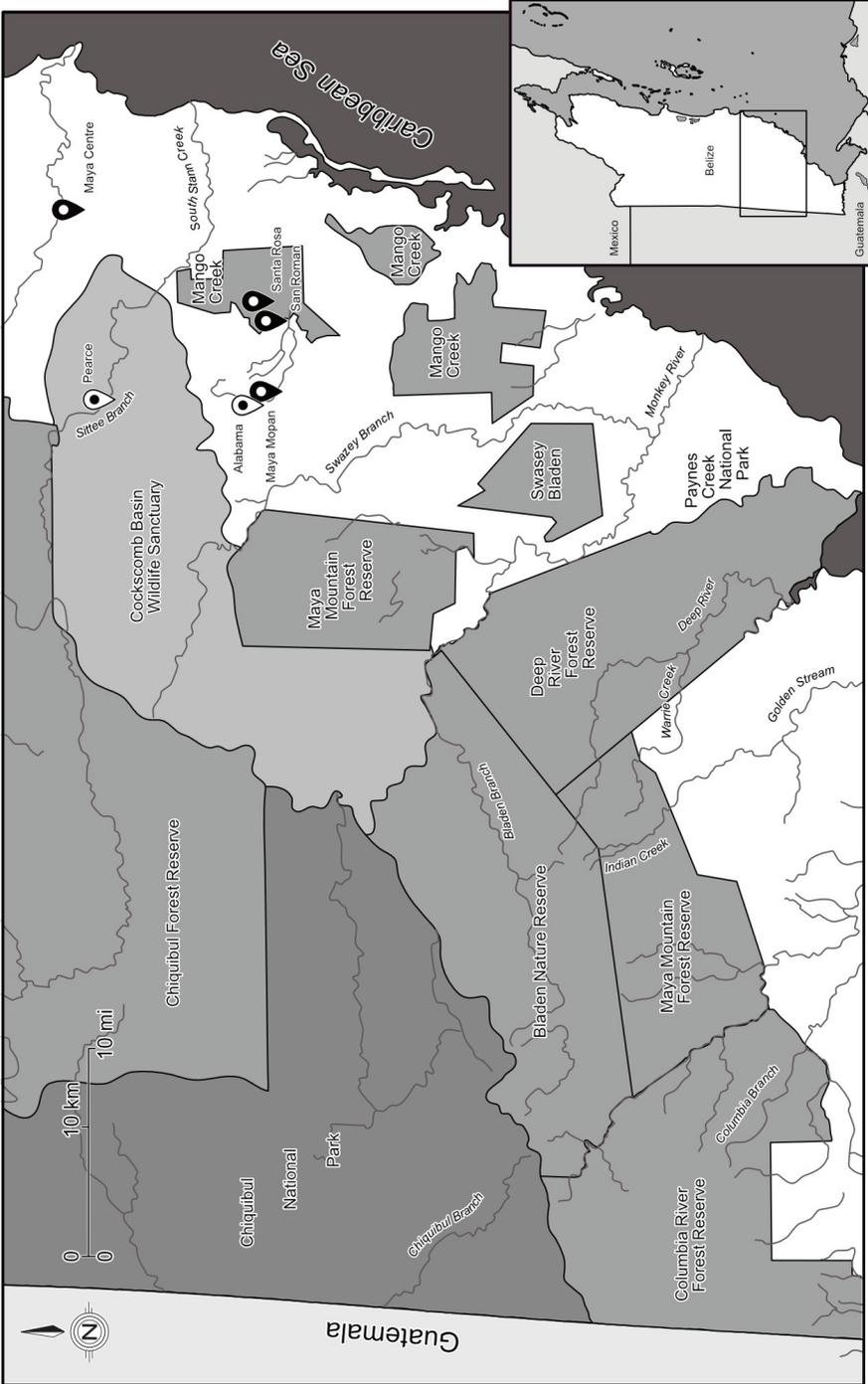


Figure 4.1: Mosaic image showing landscapes of the Stann Creek District (top, counterclockwise), including pine ridge (savannah) with Cockscomb Range in background, Caribbean coast and beaches, and broadleaf forest in alluvial valleys and Maya Mountains' foothills. Photos: SCRAP.

much of the rest of the Maya lowlands.⁷ The Stann Creek District has been one of the major agricultural and industrial regions of Belize since the 1800s: the coastal waters have long supported a significant fishing and shrimping sector; the rich, volcanic-derived alluvial soils along the various creeks and rivers support long-established banana, sugar cane, and citrus industries; the forest-covered foothills were the focus of early logging pursuits up until the 1980s. Additionally, the towering waterfalls of the eastern face of the mountains and their proximity to the beach and Belize's Barrier Reef make the district a prime tourist destination.⁸ Before the 1800s, at the height of ancient Maya civilization (ca. 600–800 CE), this region was a key producer of salt along the coast, cacao inland, and likely various products derived from the Maya Mountains.⁹



Map 4.2: Map of the southern portion of the Stann Creek District, showing associated sanctuaries, parks, reserves, and villages discussed in the text. Map: Shawn Morton.

The families, as mentioned above, established the village of Maya Mopan along the Waha Leaf Creek of the eastern slopes of the Maya Mountains in the southern end of the district (Map 4.2).¹⁰ They searched for private land following foreign encroachment in 1974 and plans for abolishing Maya community reservations established by the British in Toledo District. The Stann Creek District also drew them for its more significant economic opportunities in various industries. Their arrival roughly coincided with the abandonment of the modern village of Alabama, which included the barracks of the defunct Waha Leaf Banana Company (M. D. Greene and J. Atkins of Mobile, Alabama).¹¹ The only other people remaining were a couple of recently settled Maya families to the east in the area of Santa Rosa and a handful of Garifuna (or Garinagu) families in the nearby area that is today Georgetown (formally established as a village by coastal refugees following Hurricane Iris in 2001). Along with the various Maya groups, the Garifuna are a recognized Indigenous population of Belize, of mixed African and Carib descent.¹²

Less than a year into settling their new village, fractious arguments between some members resulted in several families moving approximately 30 km to the north, where they formed the village of Maya Centre along Cabbage Haul Creek.¹³ Four families also moved further inland from Maya Centre. They set up the settlement of Quam Bank, where they could practice traditional *milpa* farming (swidden agricultural practices, or *kol* in Mopan) among the rolling foothills of the Maya Mountains. Although the migrants considered the Quam Bank location more desirable, access to the area was difficult; therefore, most people stayed in Maya Centre and established a school and church. Maya Mopan and Maya Centre are the two villages/communities which are the primary focus in this chapter.

In 1984, the Government of Belize established the roughly 380 km² Cockscomb Basin Forest Reserve (CBFR) inland from Maya Centre and just north of Maya Mopan, encompassing the Quam Bank community, where the present park headquarters lie.¹⁴ The reserve's primary purpose was to protect jaguar populations in the region, following a study by American zoologist Alan Rabinowitz.¹⁵

He demonstrated the population was at significant risk due to industrial-level logging and agriculture (banana and citrus) taking place in the region, and many years of foreign-sponsored hunting for their pelts. A general “no hunting” ordinance—not just jaguar, but all wildlife (*ba'al che*, which are harvestable types of animals from the forest and part of the Mopan circle of *tzik* or respect)¹⁶—was declared for the reserve. Organizers engaged in limited consultation with the buffer villages—Maya and non-Maya—regarding this development. Residents of Quam Bank (by then almost a dozen families) were told to leave the area with little notice (30 days) or assistance and reintegrated into both the communities of Maya Mopan and Maya Centre. Not surprisingly, this generated considerable resentment among members of the affected Maya families, some of whom are our acquaintances in Maya Mopan, and created a divide between Quam Bank families and those of Maya Centre, whom the former viewed as being in league with reserve management.¹⁷ This issue was even more contentious because the government continued to grant logging permits for the reserve, primarily to non-Maya and foreign/non-local individuals.

In 1986, the government developed a portion of the forest reserve into the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary (CBWS), with boundaries to the west of Maya Centre and north of Maya Mopan, and would not permit *milpa* (*kol*) farming or logging around the area of the former. Around this time, the Kekchi and Mopan Maya of southern Belize initiated the first formal discussions of territorial claims (ancestral land rights), resulting in a proposed “homeland” map drafted by its leaders.¹⁸ It is important to note that the ability to make *kol* is integral to Mopan Maya identity, which they intimately weave into their communities’ fabric.¹⁹ This action of banning *kol*, requiring Maya Centre residents to go elsewhere to engage in subsistence farming, was taken partially to protect bounding forest lands. Another reason was to maintain an appearance of “pristine” wilderness for newly associated ecotourism pursuits as the official tourist entrance was located along the eastern border of the CBWS and accessed via Maya Centre (see the Introduction to this volume for an example of a similar situation in Finland). Such endeavors promoted a false narrative of modern-day and ancient Maya lifeways.

Scholars estimate that by 800 CE, the Classic Maya had modified at least 75 percent of their environment, if not more, through agricultural/agro-engineering activities, forest management, and other built environment pursuits.²⁰ The Cockscomb forest itself is a subtropical moist forest, primarily of secondary growth due to ancient Maya activity and modern logging.

In the late 1980s, the Belize Audubon Society (BAS)—a branch of the non-governmental Florida Audubon Society that manages the property on behalf of the Government of Belize²¹—attempted to alleviate the tensions resulting from the initial set-up of the reserve/sanctuary. Such attempts included the unsuccessful and contentious appearance of US Peace Corps volunteers to provide a presence and advocate on behalf of the BAS in the area. Conversations with community members led to expressed desires on the part of the Mopan Maya to support a multi-use function, including recreation, weddings, research, and nature-based tourism; in the end, the BAS has only continued to emphasize the latter two. The earliest benefits to the village of Maya Centre were linked to secondary/side ventures not directly connected to the sanctuary, positioned to take advantage of visitor traffic to the CBWS, including the Maya Centre Women's Cooperative development.²² Later on, an agreement led to the Cooperative sharing in revenue from ticket sales to the park by managing tourist registration at the village entrance. Local leader, teacher, and first regional park director, Mr. Ernesto Saqui, was hired to serve as a liaison between the BAS and the village and negotiated the initiative mentioned above.²³ The BAS hired village people as frontline workers for the reserve; originally, Maya Centre members made the request (later denied) that only local Maya people manage/operate the park (including frontline and higher-level decision-making), bringing in other support only as required.

In 1997, the government further expanded the CBWS to roughly 495 km² by adding part of the Maya Mountain Forest Reserve, to connect with the Bladen Branch Nature Reserve. Local co-management now took place through the Cockscomb-Maya Centre Advisory Committee,²⁴ and surrounding (buffer) communities formed similar advisory committees, including Maya Mopan. In

2006, the boundaries of the CBWS were demarcated, with a total area calculated as 502 km², in part to alleviate confusion for surrounding communities such as Maya Mopan that were using (and continue to do so today) surrounding Crown land for *kol*, firewood gathering, logging, and hunting purposes. The connection mentioned above with the Bladen reserve to the south made the overall reserve/protected corridor 1,011 km².

For a while, the World Bank and other international organizations hailed the co-management agreement between the Government of Belize, the BAS, and the local communities as a significant success. Unfortunately, the arrangement turned out to have a fatal flaw: specifically, the plan's foundation rested not so much on solid institutional or legal planning as much as it did on the individual personalities and goodwill of those operating within the systems. Thus, as new park directors have taken over, the arrangement has been easily changed to reflect a similarly new set of management principles that do not necessarily accommodate local co-management. For example, when the BAS moved the CBWS entrance gate to the reserve headquarters, the village lost out on ticket sales. This physical shift led to a series of conflicts, including protests and blockades. According to some non-BAS-employed residents in Maya Centre, it also led to a change from a primarily local co-management approach to one involving an increasing number of stakeholders that eventually included more non-local than local representatives. All major management decisions are now made in Belize City at BAS headquarters by board members not connected to the communities. One community member characterized these board members as "... rich people in their air-conditioned black cars, [and] fancy shoes ..."²⁵ These same residents believe they can no longer honestly describe the park as truly co-managed; however, the CBWS and reserves still hire primarily local peoples as frontline staff and have maintained a stable, "good" relationship. "The BAS will call on the community to help at times; for example, when they want help to clean up after a hurricane."²⁶

The establishment by the BAS of a single tourist entrance for the CBWS—through Maya Centre—has also caused local concern. This decision effectively locked Maya Mopan and other buffer

communities out of the economic/tourism benefits promised by the government when they established the reserve/sanctuary.²⁷ The BAS initially set a warden's entrance near Maya Mopan, just north of the Alabama archaeological site discussed below. Some residents were led to believe (by whom remains unclear to us) that it would eventually become a tourist entrance; unfortunately, it was never opened to the public and the associated building has since fallen into disrepair and is left unused.²⁸ This significant discrepancy in actual and perceived village benefits directly related to the sanctuary continues to foster tensions between Maya Centre and Maya Mopan residents, adding to the decades-old disputes that were a part of their initial founding in the 1970s. To further complicate matters, recently, much to the dismay of local park wardens, an "outside" party negotiated a new access point in the area between Maya Mopan and Maya Centre, but from private property and reserved for their own tourism development.²⁹

In general, the narrative of the beginnings of the CBWS is that of a large, integrated conservation and development project, often viewing local people as a problem. The initial approaches adopted by involved parties were paternalistic, lacking in local expertise, and often one-sided in that they were mainly driven by foreign conservationists' interests.³⁰ Rabinowitz clearly expresses such paternalism on multiple occasions in his account.³¹ Over time, approaches have shifted to being more sensitive to local involvement and knowledge, albeit with degrees of fluctuation, including initiating more significant community-led conservation and development. As such, the dynamics of the CBWS and surrounding buffer communities are complex and influenced by forces well beyond the Stann Creek District proper.

The Stann Creek Regional Archaeology Project

We are archaeologists. As such, we bring along a certain amount of baggage related to how we see humans in their broader environment and the discipline's colonial history. We exist within a "triadic network of archaeologists, communities, and places/ objects of the past. The presence of other interest groups (nation-states,

tourists, collectors) and historical factors—such as colonialism—also impinge upon what can be a very delicate relationship between archaeologists and communities.”³² Such a network uniquely complicates our study of the past. To be clear, for the most part, we explicitly reject the notion of a human-free, “pristine” wilderness, and we include ancient cultural heritage (archaeological places and associated material belongings) among the wonders that parks and protected areas are intended to preserve.

We discuss how we have negotiated our current research at two archaeological places in light of the aforementioned historical contexts and experiences. These places differ in terms of local interest, type of “protection,” and access, located within two very different yet connected buffer villages (communities) of the CBWS: Maya Mopan and Maya Centre. By no means do we pretend to be experts in the official top-down administrative pressures, responsibilities, or processes of the nation-state concerning the environment’s co-governance; neither are we directly involved in any such development from a bottom-up perspective. Nonetheless, we routinely interact with both of these systems through our research under our potentially turbulent position as community-engaged researchers attempting to move toward more community-based archaeology.³³ We are in direct face-to-face contact with multiple rights-holders, stakeholders, and interest groups, while at the same time serving as representatives of the state. The Government of Belize, via the Institute of Archaeology (IA), permits our research activities, and our university/college affiliations and granting bodies represent colonial education/academic systems from abroad. As such, we have the potential to find ourselves at the center of contentious issues of land and resources access rights, conflicting notions of identity and the role of tangible and intangible heritage in such negotiations, and questions about who owns the past and can benefit from it.

In the remainder of this chapter, we speak from a particular experiential position that resonates with many themes throughout this volume. We address some of the elements that we consider when engaging in archaeological study, promotion, and potential

future development in the region and do our best to situate this within the villages' specific contexts amid which we conduct our research. These communities, and others of the area, are effectively caught between discourses and practices of biodiversity conservation, culture history research (including tangible and intangible heritage conservation), and tourism development. Each of these elements have their ultimate management housed within government institutions and NGOs that do not typically represent local voices, and can transform daily life for both the good and the bad. The resulting consequences are economic and environmental and extend into negotiating cultural identity issues, "being Maya,"³⁴ and the inclusion or exclusion of local Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities within the Belizean national space.³⁵

Maya Mopan and Alabama

Since 2014, SCRAP has conducted investigations at the archaeological site of Alabama—named after the village and banana barracks mentioned above—located on private land that includes a surrounding citrus orchard, just north of Maya Mopan Village.³⁶ The site was initially investigated in the mid- to late 1980s as part of the Point Placencia Archaeological Project.³⁷ Some consolidation of the ball court and other structures of the site's monumental core occurred at this time, with the expressed intention of "preparing the site for visitors."³⁸ Unfortunately, when the principal investigator suddenly passed away in the 1990s, these efforts and research ceased, much to the dismay of local Maya Mopan residents and to the detriment of those structures left exposed and untended.

We initially visited the village in 2013, given leave to do so by the then Director of the IA, who was looking to help establish new projects in the district, as none had been present since the late 1990s/early 2000s. As researchers, we were also very interested in this "frontier" region of the Maya lowlands, which had been subject to minimal previous archaeological investigation. Our initial visit served to determine if there were both a viable research program and local interest in renewed research at the site. During

this visit, villagers we spoke with provided much casual encouragement, including the then *alcalde* (“mayor,” for lack of a better word [see below]; this individual now serves as our community liaison and project foreman). However, they also did not want their hopes raised regarding tourism development—a discussion that we, as archaeologists permitted by the state, are expressly prohibited from spearheading at any rate. Most communities in this part of Belize can point to a list of broken promises related to failed foreign-led investment and development, including the original citrus grove planting in Maya Mopan (recounted in the *Maya Atlas*³⁹). Additionally, previous experiences and unkept promises of archaeologists and their impact on communities in the Toledo District of Belize led to dramatic events, including the vandalism of archaeological places, burning down portions of project camps, and the threatening of project members.⁴⁰ These concerns were worth considering from the earliest planning stages and remain at the fore of our decision-making processes to this day.

Maya Mopan is currently home to just over 600 people, consisting of roughly 100+ households.⁴¹ For the most part, community members seem only vaguely familiar with the bulk of the archaeological site itself; its location on private land limiting regular access to orchard employees and the occasional passing feet of hunters and *milperos*, and the dense bush covering the monumental center (with its squadrons of thirsty mosquitoes) deterring all but the most curious (Figure 4.2).

Nonetheless, most community members regularly interact with ancient material culture. Such interaction occurs through finds such as figurines and other objects encountered at the riverside while washing or swimming and ancient residential mounds (house platforms) in their house lots or *milpas* (Figure 4.3). It seems likely that most households in Maya Mopan keep at least one memento of the region’s ancient past; however, when asked if they consider these old belongings as those of their ancestors, we have yet to encounter a community member that views these items as such. Instead, community affiliations seem concretely historical: although they acknowledge the ancient people of Alabama were “Maya,” and therefore connected to them in some manner of speaking, they



Figure 4.2: Aerial shot of Alabama, showing monumental core of site covered in broadleaf forest and surrounded by modern citrus orchard, looking west into the foothills. Photo: D. Zborover.



Figure 4.3: Children from Maya Mopan Village, posing with a ceramic figurine fragment they recovered while washing in Waha Leaf Creek. Photo: SCRAP, with permission from parents to use.

see their direct ancestors as being represented at the archaeological places in Toledo (e.g., Lubaantun and Nim Li Punit) and further afield in Guatemala where most Belizean Mopan and Kekchi communities originate, having immigrated into the country starting in the late 19th century.⁴² Of course, this brings up engaging and important narratives of place-based and network-based identities among Maya peoples, both past and present;⁴³ however, we must also remember that heritage alienation can be situational and does not necessarily represent a fixed relationship with the past.⁴⁴ Indeed, some community members have expressed the opinion that, regardless of affiliation, the site should have a Mayan name (the ancient name is currently unknown) and serve as a culturally relevant resource for the Maya Mopan community.

Additional sources of disjunction between Maya Mopan residents and Alabama's ancient remains are, more broadly, meta-physical. According to the *Maya Atlas*, the community is primarily Protestant and "other Christian" (over 66 percent of the population⁴⁵), compared to the over 89 percent Catholic identity in Maya Centre (discussed below; numbers by individual village not available in current national census reports).⁴⁶ Many residents associate the Maya of the past with "heathen" practices and beliefs, from which they distance themselves in formal speech and action today. At the start of our excavations each season, we are given a ceremonial blessing or smudging by our hosts in Maya Centre: a practice we usually do at the site. Maya Mopan representatives, including the *alcalde*, have asked that we not conduct such ceremonies in Maya Mopan, related to the aforementioned Protestant sensibilities, among other reasons. Our informal conversations with Maya Mopan crewmembers and other villagers reveal that deeper elements of Mesoamerican belief are still present in many peoples' ideas/values—or reflected on as memories of parents and grandparents—concerning places and things of the surrounding environment. These include the ideas that obsidian/volcanic glass is the result of lightning, forests breathe, and mountains are alive. They also include the telling of morality tales related to various animals such as monkeys and dogs, or supernatural

beings living on the fringes of the village, and taboo beliefs, such as eating/drinking very cold substances on sweltering days (related hot/cold concepts⁴⁷). Many villagers also embrace the view that ancient space aliens influenced the ancient Maya past in a distinctly modern twist. This belief may relate to easy access to popular pseudoarchaeology programs (e.g., *Ancient Aliens*) or tales linked to the crystal skull falsely reported by F. A. Mitchell-Hedges as discovered in the 1920s at the site of Lubaantun near their communities of origin in Toledo.⁴⁸ Questions about the crystal skull were so prevalent in the question/answer period at our 2019 *Fajina* presentation (discussed below), conducted along with a representative of the IA, that we opted to host a free movie night later in the season featuring a documentary that lays out the argument debunking this “find.”⁴⁹

On the surface, most Maya Mopan villagers seem to view the value of archaeological study at Alabama in terms of its potential catalyst for future economic development related to tourism—comparable to that associated with Maya Centre and the CBWS—as well as current employment opportunities with our research team. With those caveats of association/identity previously noted, in one-to-one conversations with local team members, a subtler effect of our collective efforts seems to be a growing appreciation for the affinity (if not direct link) between modern and ancient populations. We hear constant comparisons between our team’s findings and current or recent-past domestic practices in Maya Mopan as well as back in Toledo (e.g., stories of how grandparents used to make pottery). Community members express their interests in these places through discussions of local soils, rocks, plants, animals, and their relationships to daily home life. Their stories emphasize views of people-spaces/places-things as one entity or a “biocultural diversity complex,” as discussed by Kettunen and Cuxil (Chapter 5, this volume). On more than one occasion, their stories have also expressed the importance of archaeological places as locations to teach younger generations about concepts that older community members feel are actively at risk of being lost (traditional ecological knowledge⁵⁰). More recently, requests

for books on the ancient Maya and archaeological practices have also been made to us by our crewmembers, both young and old.

This take on the potential value of cultural/heritage sites stands in opposition to much of the current elite-focused, overly historical (versus locations of contemporary identities), and sterile style of presentation at “developed” archaeological reserves in Belize. These local views highlight the importance of promoting “everyday houses,” “natural” spaces, and entire landscapes in archaeological tourism development. We cannot deny the broad appeal of past elites’ grand monumental architecture, particularly as it relates to foreign tourism interests;⁵¹ however, we often overlook the political implications of such focus. With relatively few exceptions (development at El Pilar, Belize, offering a notable exception to the norm), it seems that we have been negligent in emphasizing those elements of ancient cultural heritage that are most relatable to modern-day, local communities. We consider this of critical import in our research, and it is one of the reasons our activities focus not only on elite, monumental architecture (with pressure to do so by the IA), but also the houses, spaces, and activities of the non-elites of the past, and their surrounding environments, both “cultural” and “natural.”⁵²

Maya Centre and Pearce

Since 2014, we have also attempted to initiate a research program at the ancient site of Pearce, located in a portion of the CBWS/CBFR and not accessible to the general public. Except for our 2016 reconnaissance trip⁵³ and the 2019 LiDAR survey (results yet to be published), this remains in a preliminary stage of development. Additional planning requirements related to access issues through both rugged physical terrain and multiple levels of bureaucracy (Government of Belize/IA, BAS, Maya Centre representatives, etc.) make this a delicate process. Despite intense local interest (Maya Centre villagers initially approached us about the site), the BAS carefully controls access. It also dictates accommodation, hiring practices (BAS staff versus independent local crewmembers),

additional fees (e.g., overnighting), specific access routes, and the degree of impact of archaeological endeavors while in the sanctuary/reserve. Since it is an organization focused primarily on wildlife protection (mainly birds and cats), this level of control is not unexpected.

Ironically, Pearce's location within the protected boundaries of the CBFRC/CBWS may introduce additional risks to the site. As the size of the warden/conservation officer crew is not large enough to frequently patrol all areas of this massive reserve, looting has been a problem in the past, along with other illegal activities (e.g., logging, hunting). When a research team entered the area to conduct archaeological mapping in the 1990s,⁵⁴ looters followed.⁵⁵ Community members commonly attribute this activity to non-local individuals, as the crew the researchers brought in were not all from the nearby communities (possibly reflecting a degree of soreness for not having included more local crewmembers). By way of comparison, we've noticed no serious looting at the infinitely more accessible and ostensibly "unprotected" Alabama since the 1950s, when the banana plantation was first in operation. We credit recent property owners' protection initiatives for Alabama's relatively excellent condition. Additionally, observers' constant presence on/near the property (engaged in citrus crop or *milpa* activities) is critical. A crewmember proudly told us they once refused to reveal the site's location to a stranger posing as an archaeologist.⁵⁶

Many residents of Maya Centre (almost 400 people arrayed in just under 90 households⁵⁷) seem to have many varying views of the archaeological materials (places and belongings) present within the CBWS/CBFRC, including Pearce. Admittedly, we know comparatively few individuals, given that we have only operated out of this village since 2018. At present, our primary form of interaction with the community is through the guest cottages owned and operated by Mr. Ernesto Saqui, a Mopan Maya and former village chairperson and CBWS park director, and his wife, Ms. Aurora Saqui, a Yucatec Maya traditional healer and cook originally from the Cayo District.⁵⁸ In as much as the village takes

advantage of their position at the entrance to the park for economic gain, there seems to have developed a more openly sympathetic tendency toward more “traditional” aspects of Maya culture and belief. This acceptance may be related to the high number of individuals who identify as Catholic (mentioned above); contrary to popular perception, the Catholic Church has been far more receptive of syncretic elements of traditional religion than have other Christian churches.⁵⁹ Therefore, it may come as no surprise to find—both in sharp contrast and similarity with Maya Mopan Village—that some community members draw a direct connection through archaeological remains to their ancestors. They also see the potential of using ancient places and belongings as tools for cultural teachings and maintenance. There is also an explicit recognition of the marketing advantage of promoting direct culture-historical connections in terms of tourism development. If the archaeological site were made available for use, some families have also expressed interest in conducting ritual/religious-oriented ceremonies on site, not only for personal use, but also for tourism purposes.⁶⁰

The Alcalde System and Archaeological Stewardship

The station of *alcalde*, *Notch Winik* or *Pohlil Kah* in Mopan, has its origins in the Medieval Spanish municipal magistrates who had judicial and administrative functions. In its modern usage, the term is more akin to a mayor, supported by a series of officers.⁶¹ Within the Maya communities of Belize, villagers elect the *alcalde* for two years. The *alcalde*'s role is as a *de facto* cultural and moral leader, ensuring that community values and responsibilities are upheld, presiding over local courts, managing communal lands, and acting as a school officer. The position is alongside the village's federal government representative and chief public servant: the officially elected chairperson, supported by a village council.

Not all Belizean Maya communities have an *alcalde*, and we have found this difference to be important in the way each community interacts with and perceives us. While Maya Mopan has

both an *alcalde* and a chairperson, Maya Centre has only the latter. In Maya Mopan, the *alcalde* has generally served as our primary point of contact for village leadership—namely because, until 2019, the elected chairperson was inactive in the community. Our community liaison regularly contacted this individual, but they never expressed interest in meeting with us; however, we always provided updates on our research to the village council via crewmembers seated on the council. We seek informal permission from Maya Mopan’s *alcalde*—being the village located nearest the site, from which all our local crewmembers originate—to conduct our research. We also consult with them to receive advice and feedback on priorities, research focus, other interests, and general or specific concerns of the community regarding our activities (e.g., the hiring of local individuals and how that practice occurs). Other recent issues have included planning for future archaeological materials storage, and co-organizing outreach/knowledge mobilization activities and interest groups within the community. Currently, the IA does not formally require such permission/consultation/notice; instead, we are only required to provide “[l]etters of permission from landowners in the research areas per field season.”⁶² The only mandatory reporting required of all activity is to the government itself, through which individual Belizeans may request access.

As mentioned above, it is only since 2019 that the village chairperson has become an active contributor to/participant in our project activities. However, their interest seems to lie primarily with the economic element represented by our presence as a labor source for the community, and even more so in the context of potential future economic benefits associated with archaeological tourism. Crucially, it is also through the *alcalde* and chairperson (as well as our project’s community liaison) that we are best able to articulate our intentions and the limitations of our presence. Our efforts at articulation/outreach helps to manage the expectations of both our team and the community-at-large. For example, we can only guarantee our funding for a limited period. While we can support community efforts in tourism development by providing

information about the archaeological past, we can neither ethically nor legally drive such growth. The *alcalde*'s and chairperson's views and intentions (along with those of their supporters) can frequently be in opposition. We must navigate and satisfy both of these essential village elements to the best of our abilities, which is not easily achieved, as members of different social and political networks within the village often fall to one side or the other. Through the *alcalde*, Maya Mopan villagers are also now pushing to take up a measure of stewardship over the site of Alabama. Under their direction, the community is seeking permission to "maintain" the place (keeping vegetation growth low, policing, etc.) as an element of the *Fajina* (village communal labor cleaning). The *alcalde* calls the *Fajina* twice a year, and all heads of households participate. This one activity alone significantly elevates the site's visibility and its prominence in the community's consciousness.

By contrast, the lack of an *alcalde* in Maya Centre makes our interactions less culturally guided on an elevated community level. This difference hinders our involvement in village-level consultation for current research and future directions. Thus, we are focused, by necessity, on individuals and smaller group representation (e.g., the Cockscomb-Maya Centre Advisory Committee, Women's Cooperative, or village council via the chairperson). Maya Centre villagers seem very interested in the Pearce research, based on the question period at our public presentations hosted by the Saquis in 2019. However, when moving to research Pearce, our ability to do so will be heavily dictated by the BAS. This dictation strongly contrasts the situation at Alabama, where the property owner is unconcerned about how exactly we conduct our research, as long as it does not significantly impact the citrus operation, the safety of our crew, and the protection of the archaeological site itself.

In neither case do the villages in question, at present, have the legal authority, finances, administrative capabilities, or training required to manage (to government-required levels) the archaeological resources at their fingertips. However, thus far, our experience suggests that general, voluntary stewardship is entirely possible.

Even so, there lies a substantial gulf between the legal or community powers of available organizations in Maya Centre and the ethical or cultural capacities that the *alcalde* can bring to bear in Maya Mopan. Ultimately, the chairperson and village council must actively push for accessibility at the federal level and formal property owner collaborations should they wish to pursue development of this nature.

Identifying and Engaging Rights-Holders, Stakeholders, and Interest Groups

As part of our research alongside formal leadership in the two villages, we must also take time to identify and engage all potential rights-holders, stakeholders, and interest groups concerned with ancient cultural heritage research and broader environmental/ecological issues. We define a rights-holder as one whose realization of human rights is inextricably linked to customary and socially defined rights to particular tangible and intangible cultural heritage (past or present). We understand stakeholders to include any person interested in or concerned for the material past, mainly related to business or economic pursuits and impacts. We label interest groups as all others with interest in or concern for such heritage (e.g., tourists). In other words, we continue to identify the individuals, groups, and communities that are engaged in a myriad of ways with the southern Stann Creek District “archaeoscape”: “the physical and ideological intersection of the past in the present.”⁶³

The Government of Belize does not recognize unique “rights-holders” for ancient Maya archaeological remains. Whether formal archaeological reserves, ancient (+100 years) artifacts, or sites on private, communal, or Crown land. The government identifies them under Article 4 of the Ancient Monuments and Antiquities Act of 1972 (amended in 2000) as “absolutely vest in the Government,”⁶⁴ which holds them in trust for all people of Belize. It is also important to note that property owners have land rights as they pertain to the control of physical access to archaeological

sites, but not to the places or heritage objects themselves. The National Cultural Heritage Preservation Act⁶⁵ goes on to identify archaeological sites and belongings as “heritage assets” for “the benefit and enjoyment of the present and future generations of the people of Belize” versus providing special rights to particular groups. This identification operates alongside the Belize National Cultural Policy 2016–2026, which aims to build a national heritage for all Belizeans, even those who do not identify as Indigenous. The policy asks all “to fulfil their functions within the mores, laws and customs of a multi-cultural and democratic society ... so that persons may properly assert their Belizean cultural identity and exercise creativity for personal growth and national development.”⁶⁶ It identifies all Belizeans as rightful “owners” of tangible and intangible heritage elements (versus individual groups of rights-holders). The government justifies this through the declaration that “patterns of settlement and resettlement and intermingling have led different ethnic groups to adopt cultural forms characteristic of other groups.”⁶⁷ It employs archaeology to verify the essentialized ethnic political history typical of young nation-building and associated economies.⁶⁸

The overall lack of federally acknowledged rights-holders counters the view of many Maya individuals, groups/organizations, and communities, particularly in the Toledo District (although we have heard similar sentiments in the Stann Creek District). These Maya argue for their natural and unique rights to ancient archaeological places and belongings,⁶⁹ more recently under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Article 11.1 states that “Indigenous peoples have the right to practise and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artifacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.”⁷⁰ Article 11.2 adds that “States shall provide redress through effective mechanisms, which may include restitution, developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples, with respect to their cultural,

intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs.”⁷¹ Article 12, section 2, addresses the repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains to Indigenous communities. Article 15 states Indigenous peoples’ right to have their cultures and traditions accurately represented in education and public information. It also effectively calls on museums and other institutions to carefully evaluate and review how they collect, curate, display, and communicate information about Indigenous peoples.

Regardless of actual or perceived status, at this time, we believe that all rights-holders, stakeholders, and interest groups should be made aware (informed) of the nature and precarious state of archaeological places and belongings in the district. They should be encouraged to take part (engage) in the recovery science of archaeology and assist where possible with the stewardship of places and belongings—particularly those whose lived existence is proximate to the heritage location under discussion. Finally, they should also have the opportunity to meaningfully engage in dialogue about their views and concerns regarding cultural resource identification, access, and management.⁷² As archaeologists in Belize, the IA limits us to direct involvement in the first two elements, and only tangentially to the latter two. Thus, we have spent significant time focusing on making sure people have the information and experiences they need to make informed decisions about their involvement with ancient cultural heritage. We also believe that our research results and any accompanying benefits should be (as much as possible) equally accessible for multiple groups and individuals to minimize exacerbation of existing tensions, which we have outlined above. Table 4.1 presents the rights-holders/stakeholders/interest groups that we have identified for the area we are currently investigating (the southern reaches of the Stann Creek District) and the current status of our efforts in informing and engaging with each (Figure 4.4). This table clearly shows directed efforts and in which areas we must improve. We are attempting to broaden participation in archaeological research, mainly through greater engagement and dialogue



Figure 4.4: Images of various SCRAP consultation, information, and engagement activities: (left to right, top to bottom) consulting with chairperson; presenting to Fajina; local crewmember, tourist, and government rep. learning to excavate together; lab tour; experimental archaeology; pottery making; artifact viewing; year-end presentation and viewing; instruction in mapping; website; movie night. Photos: SCRAP.

with communities with a vested interest in the sites due to proximity. We look to foster a practice of archaeology “that is not only acceptable to communities but also useful and perhaps even necessary in our contemporary world.”⁷³

Conclusion and Future Directions

At the start of this chapter, we ponder how the ecological, economic, cultural/ethnic, historical, and political conditions afoot in the southern half of the Stann Creek District relate to archaeology and, more specifically, to cultural heritage. As a result, we also wonder how people view and value the past or conversely denigrate, destroy, or ignore it? Throughout this chapter, we attempt to outline the back- and foreground elements that shape the nature of our collaborations in Belize concerning these questions and as they relate to our archaeological research. To summarize the challenges of weaving together views of the state, the international tourism industry, tourists, and local/Indigenous villagers, etc.—which we must navigate alongside our “actual” studies—we developed the following list of considerations (terms of engagement) for our team. This is not intended as a guidebook for others, but rather is a product and reflection of our own histories, experiences, and relationships operating at the intersection of those diverse interests/contexts as we have come to understand them. The writings of Indigenous archaeologist Sonya Atalay, and American archaeologists Patricia McAnany and Anne Pyburn, and the ethics of our own professional archaeological associations (e.g., Canadian Archaeological Association, Society for American Archaeology, Register of Professional Archaeologists) have heavily influenced these terms.⁷⁴ In listing these elements, we clarify the potential impacts of practicing archaeology. It allows us to understand the factors that shape our research, develop an awareness of local histories and inequalities, and recognize local knowledge and values regarding relevant biocultural diversity complexes.

Rights-Holders/Stakeholders/Interest Groups

	Maya Mopan	Maya Centre	Garifuna Communities	Other Maya Communities	Spanish-speaking temporary workers	Menonite communities	Belizean public	Foreign public	Property Owner(s)	Belize Audubon Society	Institute of Archaeology	Stann Creek House of Culture	Tourists	Tour Guides	Businesses	Belizean students	Foreign students	Archaeological community
SCRAP-sponsored activities since 2014																		
Engaging																		
Site tour	X	X							X	X	X	X				X	X	X
Virtual tour (YouTube)	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Alabama digital application (development)	X										X	X				X	X	X
Hands-on artifact displays	X	X	X													X	X	X
Experimental archaeology activities	X	X	X	X			X						X	X		X	X	X
Excavation opportunity (paid)	X																	
Excavation opportunity (volunteer/field school)	X		X	X							X		X			X	X	X
Discussions/consultations	X								X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Virtual reading group	X			X													X	X
Glyph workshop participation	X															X	X	
Day trips to other archaeological sites	X															X	X	
Community artifact inventory and site survey	X															X	X	

*Items accessible through our project website, in print at the Institute of Archaeology, or via print copies distributed by project

1. *Identify and engage rights-holders, stakeholders, and interest groups* (discussed above). Frequently revisit and update this list.
2. *Learn about and acknowledge aforementioned historical associations between rights-holders, stakeholders, and interest groups.* Such associations include territorial claims and existing government policies/acts and their potential impact on tangible heritage and associated research. By educating ourselves through listening to and talking with diverse community members and groups, we attempt to be better versed in local (and national) issues that may foreshadow situations that can and likely will develop in our region and to minimize the impact of our own action on such elements (i.e., do no harm).
3. *Help, when possible, to un-silence the voices/values of associated Indigenous and/or marginalized communities.* We can achieve this by relating the views and opinions of our friends, acquaintances, and colleagues from communities we research alongside, through forums such as this volume and in conversation with other groups.
4. *Continue archaeological consultation and engagement processes,* regardless of whether or not this is legally required, mainly through democratically elected and traditionally acknowledged community leaders.⁷⁵
5. *Enable learning from place whenever possible and for any interested parties, provided they do not infringe on the aforementioned situations/associations/legalities.* As much as is possible, we encourage visitors from multiple groups/communities to join us at the site to learn through doing (e.g., excavate) or being/experiencing (e.g., touring) or to visit through virtual tours.
6. *Promote activities that advocate for protected and multi-use heritage environments—including co-stewardship, anti-looting campaigns, ceremonial and educational components, etc.*
7. *Counter false narratives that are harmful to Indigenous and marginalized communities and the archaeological record.* Counter notions of pristine wilderness that are promoted by various entities—particularly as they pertain to tourist education—and pseudoscientific narratives. Honestly address beliefs that foreign researchers are “stealing” materials away from the country. Presentations at gatherings such as the *Fajina* are critical events where we can be clear about who we are, why we are present in the region, what we can offer, and what is beyond our scope, and offer ourselves up for interrogation/scrutiny.
8. *Constantly revisit and question Western notions of archaeological conservation and preservation, along with similar initiatives focused*

on “nature.” Question who such notions and actions are serving and how more meaningful consultation can occur in their development.

Research processes and preservation/conservation initiatives do not exist in vacuums. They cannot be separated from their use in the contemporary world, involve no clear formula of engagement (i.e., each situation is unique, requiring an understanding of both past and present processes), and take time to achieve correctly. All ideas and concerns—no matter how problematic—are worth contemplating and engaging with, whether you view tangible heritage (including “nature”) as part of your direct ancestry or current identity, or as a commodity for the purpose of the economic bettering of yourself, your family, or your community. If done correctly, requiring ongoing negotiation, these can be effectively woven together for ideal outcomes.

It is important to emphasize that, while we increasingly and consciously position the issues under discussion in this chapter toward the fore of SCRAP planning, we are cautious of falling afoul of the idiom that *people living in glass houses should not throw stones*. Reflecting on Table 4.1, while we feel we have successfully engaged with some sectors (in particular and not surprisingly, people in Maya Mopan and Maya Centre), there are definite areas for improvement. We can expand our efforts to include more transient populations (such as temporary workers) or local Mennonite communities, at least to the degree considered acceptable/desirable by these communities. At the other end of the spectrum, we can ensure that we are engaging with institutional stakeholders and interest groups to a greater extent. Perhaps most significantly, we have to remind ourselves that ethically and consciously engaging and collaborating with multiple rights-holders, stakeholders, and interest groups, while at the same time serving as representatives of the state, is not an event, but a “long-durational relationship” process.⁷⁶ This process must be continuously revisited and worked on to maintain and improve.

Calls for the democratization of archaeological research are relevant for ethical practice and speak to fundamental rights held by people in all communities, both Indigenous and other. We challenge

the assumption that archaeologists and governments are the only—or even the best-qualified—stewards of the archaeological record. Instead, we assert that both descendant and non-descendant communities have the right to be actively involved in producing knowledge about the past, and gain benefits from the research. Ideally, all processes must be transparent and not vested in the goodwill of a single planner. Participants should meet as often as possible to share different information, beliefs, and approaches that can be woven together (or “braided” *à la* Atalay⁷⁷). As such, individuals, governments, organizations, and institutions must be prepared to support a “slow archaeology” and an “archaeology of the heart.”⁷⁸ There are no singular voices regarding archaeological research and preservation, as communities are diverse both within and between, related to the diversity of lived experiences. Our understanding and acknowledgement of this must be via a local consultative and participatory-based approach, not relying on broad generalizations put forward in previous “studies,” and must be regularly revisited by us as opinions, views, and data change over time. The archaeologists’ crucial role is not to make promises they cannot keep or are not in a position to be making. Be honest. Listen. Do not focus on the commodification of ancient cultural heritage, at least not to begin with. Start with the goal of mutual and reciprocal learning about past, present, and future, and approach archaeology as a way of creating collective benefits for all.

Notes

- ¹ We want to say *botik* to the community members of Maya Mopan and Maya Centre, Belize, whom we have been fortunate enough to research alongside and learn from since 2014. Thank you to the various *alcaldes* and chairpersons we have had the good fortune of engaging with as part of SCRAP. We also recognize the essential contributions and permissions of the IA/National Institute of Culture and History Belize, Athabasca University, the University of Calgary, Northern Arizona University, the Stann Creek House of Culture, the Belize Audubon Society, Mr. G. Greene, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Thank you to the two

anonymous reviewers who provided helpful feedback on an earlier version of this chapter. Any mistakes are our own.

- ² “What Is CITES?” <http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/what.php>.
- ³ The Statistical Institute of Belize, *Annual Report*.
- ⁴ Awe, *Maya Cities*.
- ⁵ “The Stann Creek Regional Archaeology Project,” <http://www.scrapar.chaeology.com>.
- ⁶ McAnany, “Transforming the Terms.”
- ⁷ Bridgewater, *Natural History of Belize*; Graham, “Stann Creek District”; Nations, *Maya Tropical Forest*, 229.
- ⁸ Bulmer-Thomas and Bulmer-Thomas, *Economic History of Belize*; Moberg, *Myths of Ethnicity and Nation*; Simmons, *Confederate Settlements*; Smith, *History of Enterprise*; Thomson, *Belize*.
- ⁹ Graham, *Highlands of the Lowlands*; Peuramaki-Brown, Morton, and Jordan, “Maya Archaeology”; Sills, “Re-Evaluating.”
- ¹⁰ TMCC/TAA, *Maya Atlas*, 7–8, 112–13.
- ¹¹ Moberg, *Myths of Ethnicity and Nation*, 34.
- ¹² Palacio, *Garifuna*.
- ¹³ Saqui, “History of Maya Centre,” 18–21; TMCC/TAA, *Maya Atlas*, 110–11.
- ¹⁴ Lindberg, Enriquez, and Sproule, “Ecotourism Questioned”; Nations, *Maya Tropical Forest*, 244–46.
- ¹⁵ Rabinowitz, *Jaguar*.
- ¹⁶ Danziger, *Relatively Speaking*.
- ¹⁷ Saqui, “Community Conservation,” 43.
- ¹⁸ Parks, “Winning Title”; TMCC/TAA, *Maya Atlas*, 4, 7–8; Wainwright and Bryan, “Cartography, Territory, Property.”
- ¹⁹ Saqui, “Mopan Maya Science.”
- ²⁰ Canuto et al., “Ancient Lowland Maya Complexity”; Fedick, *Managed Mosaic*; Whitmore and Turner, “Landscapes of Cultivation.”
- ²¹ Young and Horwich, “Protected Area Designation.”
- ²² Gould, “Tale of Two Villages.”
- ²³ Saqui, “Community Conservation.”
- ²⁴ Moreno, “Co-Management Project.”
- ²⁵ Maya Centre resident, personal communication with authors, 2018.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Lindberg, Enriquez, and Sproule, “Ecotourism Questioned,” 558, tab. 6.
- ²⁸ Maya Mopan residents, personal communication with authors, 2019.
- ²⁹ CBWS park warden, personal communication with authors, 2018.

- ³⁰ Lyon and Horwich, “Community Conservation.”
- ³¹ Rabinowitz, *Jaguar*.
- ³² McAnany, “Transforming the Terms,” 162.
- ³³ Atalay, *Community-Based Archaeology*.
- ³⁴ Taylor, *Being Maya*; Wainwright, *Decolonizing Development*.
- ³⁵ Wilk, “Whose Forest?”
- ³⁶ Peuramaki-Brown, “Ancient Maya of Alabama, Belize”; Peuramaki-Brown and Morton, “Maya Monumental ‘Boom.’”
- ³⁷ MacKinnon and May, “Ballcourts of C’habben K’ax”; MacKinnon, Olson, and May, “‘Megalithic’ Maya Architectural Features.”
- ³⁸ MacKinnon, “C’habben K’ax,” 3.
- ³⁹ TMCC/TAA, *Maya Atlas*, 113.
- ⁴⁰ Parks, “Collision of Heritage and Economy,” 440.
- ⁴¹ The Statistical Institute of Belize, *Population and Housing Census*, 68, tab. P1.9.
- ⁴² Thompson, *Ethnology of the Maya*; Woods, Perry, and Steagall, “Composition and Distribution.”
- ⁴³ Beyyette and LeCount, eds., *Only True People*; Tokovinine, *Place and Identity*.
- ⁴⁴ McAnany, “Transforming the Terms”; Wilk, “Whose Forest?”
- ⁴⁵ TMCC/TAA, *Maya Atlas*, 113.
- ⁴⁶ TMCC/TAA, *Maya Atlas*, 111.
- ⁴⁷ Messer, “Hot and Cold.”
- ⁴⁸ Walsh, “Skull of Doom.”
- ⁴⁹ Remme, *Crystal Skull Legend*.
- ⁵⁰ Inglis, *Traditional Ecological Knowledge*; Saqui, “Mopan Maya Science.”
- ⁵¹ Ramsey and Everitt, “If You Dig it.”
- ⁵² Peuramaki-Brown, “Revisiting Ancient Maya.”
- ⁵³ Peuramaki-Brown and Morton, “Archaeological Reconnaissance.”
- ⁵⁴ Dunham et al., “Field Report.”
- ⁵⁵ CBWS park warden, personal conversation with authors, 2018.
- ⁵⁶ Maya Mopan resident, personal communication with authors, 2018.
- ⁵⁷ The Statistical Institute of Belize, *Population and Housing Census*, 68, tab. P1.9.
- ⁵⁸ Saqui, *Ix Hmen U Tzaco Ah Maya*; Saqui, *U Janal Aj Maya*.
- ⁵⁹ Watanabe, “From Saints to Shibboleths.”
- ⁶⁰ Maya Centre resident, personal communication with authors, 2018.
- ⁶¹ TMCC/TAA, *Maya Atlas*, 6–7.
- ⁶² Institute of Archaeology, *Conditions for Archaeological Permits*.
- ⁶³ Parks, “Collision of Heritage and Economy,” 437.

- ⁶⁴ Government of Belize, *Ancient Monuments and Antiquities Act Chapter 330*.
- ⁶⁵ Government of Belize, National Cultural Heritage Preservation Act, 373.
- ⁶⁶ NICH, *Belize National Cultural Policy 2016–2026*, iv.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ⁶⁸ Rowan and Baram, *Marketing Heritage*.
- ⁶⁹ Parks, “Winning Title.”
- ⁷⁰ UN General Assembly, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 6.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 6.
- ⁷² Ducady, “Gathering Public Opinions.”
- ⁷³ Atalay et al., “Transforming Archaeology,” 8.
- ⁷⁴ Atalay, *Community-Based Archaeology*; McAnany, “Transforming the Terms”; Pyburn, “Activating Archaeology”; Pyburn, “Archaeology for a New Millennium”; Pyburn, “What Are We Really Teaching.”
- ⁷⁵ Klein et al., “Future of American Archaeology.”
- ⁷⁶ McAnany, “Imagining.”
- ⁷⁷ Atalay, *Community-Based Archaeology*, 27.
- ⁷⁸ Caraher, “Slow Archaeology”; Supernant et al., *Archaeologies of the Heart*.

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CHAPTER 5

Indigenous People, National Parks, and Biodiversity in the Maya Region

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Maya-Kaqchikel People

Introduction

The Maya region, encompassing Guatemala and Belize, and parts of Mexico and Honduras, presents a multifaceted and challenging case for the study of protected spaces of nature. While the Indigenous presence in the area (both past and present) is one of the strongest in the Western Hemisphere, the region is also within one of the world's biodiversity hotspots,¹ creating a *biocultural diversity complex* where culture and biodiversity should not be separated, but, instead, studied as a whole.

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The region, divided between four countries, incorporates a multitude of protected natural areas with varying statuses. One of these is the Maya Forest, or *Selva Maya*: the second-largest reserve of tropical forest in the Western Hemisphere after the Amazon. The forest is exposed to a number of threats due to human activity in the area, including illegal logging, forest fires, and consequent fragmentation or discontinuity of the ecosystem, as well as dangers to cultural heritage, such as the looting of archaeological sites and black-market trade of pre-Columbian artifacts.

The reserve is divided between different countries and communities; therefore, its protection must be an inter-community, national, and international team effort. Furthermore, as parts of the protected areas are inhabited, sustainable use of the resources contained within them is in the common interest of everyone. This chapter seeks to present an overview of the protected areas in the Maya region, with an emphasis on the *Selva Maya* and the Maya Biosphere Reserve in northern Guatemala, and to propose long-term strategies for the preservation of the environment and sustainable use of the natural resources within the protected areas.

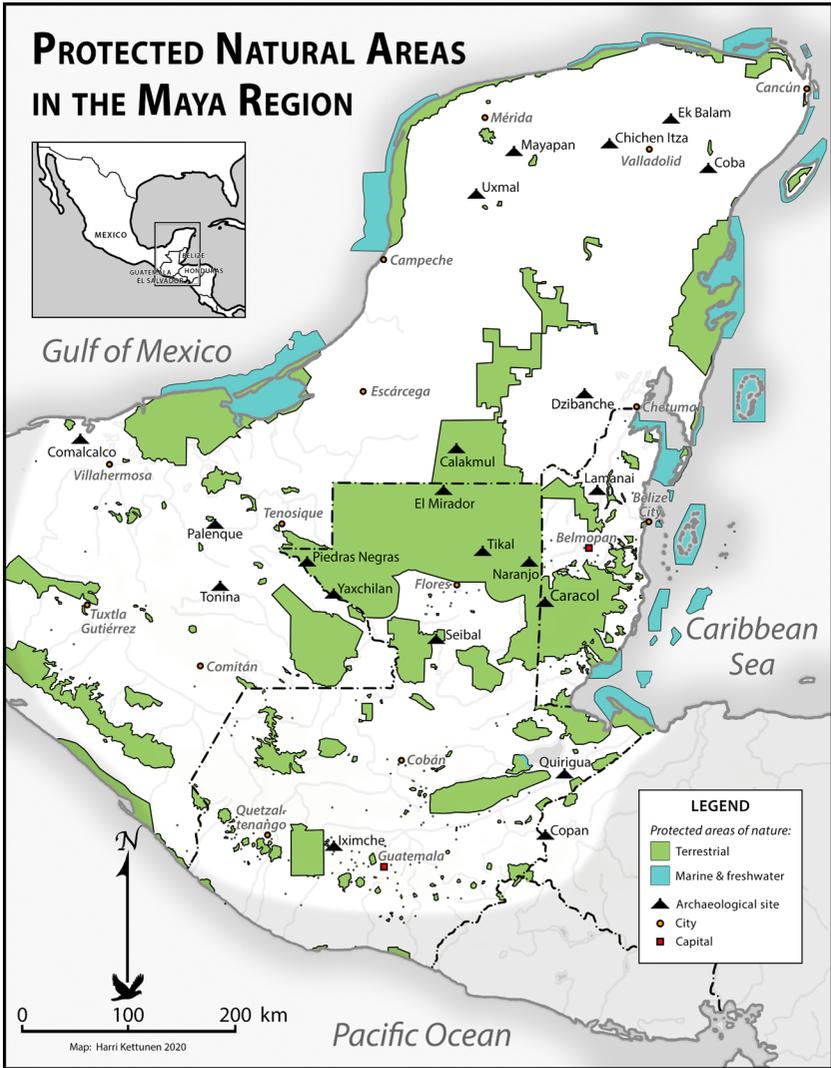
While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a systematic survey of how natural resources in the Maya region are being managed in each country and jurisdiction, based on our 30 years of experience working in the region, we have observed both ebbs and flows in the management of protected areas. Despite the recent advancement of deforestation and other threats to the environment, we have also witnessed optimism in the form of educational programs, sustainable use of natural resources, reforestation programs, successful concession agreements, thriving cooperatives, and expanding community-based tourism.

Protected Areas in the Maya Region

“[M]an’s heart, away from nature, becomes hard.”

Mathó Nážin (Luther Standing Bear)²

There are altogether 50 national parks in the Maya region, together with 81 to 390 other types of protected natural areas, depending



Map 5.1: Map of protected natural areas in the Maya region. Map: Harri Kettunen.

on designation and classification (see Map 5.1). Guatemala has 21 national parks and five biosphere reserves, along with 125 other types of protected natural areas and 184 private nature reserves.³ Belize has 17 national parks, seven nature reserves, 16 forest reserves, and five natural monuments,⁴ while Mexico features 12 national parks and 31 biosphere reserves, nature sanctuaries,

natural monuments, and other protected nature reserves that are located entirely or partly within the Maya region.⁵

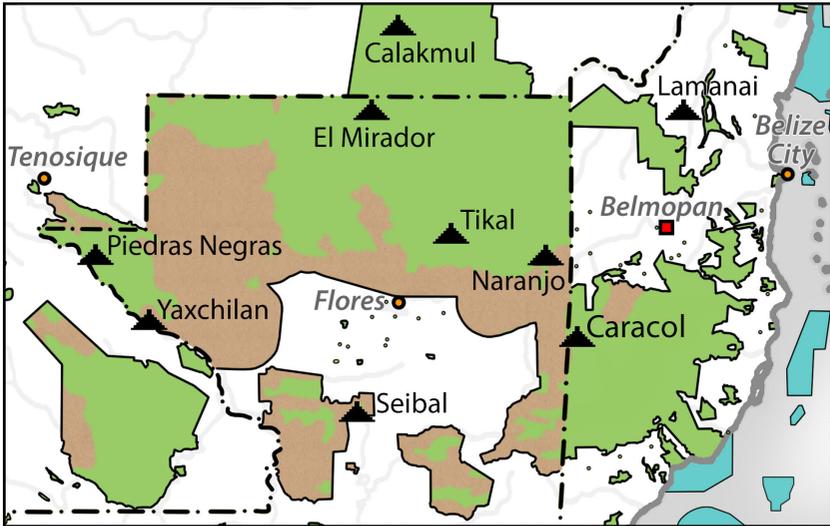
Honduras, situated on the extreme eastern rim of what is regarded as the historical and pre-Columbian Maya area, has two nature reserves within the area that can be regarded as belonging to the Maya sphere at any given time in history: Cerro Azul and the Trifinio biosphere reserve. The latter, officially named the *Reserva de la biosfera transfronteriza Trifinio-Fraternidad*, is composed of the Trifinio biosphere reserve in Guatemala, *Parque Nacional Montecristo-Trifinio* (Montecristo Trifinio National Park) in Honduras, and *Parque Nacional Montecristo* (Montecristo National Park) in El Salvador.⁶

Besides these, all countries within the current and past Maya region have countless archaeological sites whose protection, preservation, and conservation vary a great deal depending on available resources and the overall significance of the sites. Due to the vast number of archaeological sites, structures, and monuments in the area, resources to protect them from looting and other types of destruction vary significantly from place to place.

In Belize, the Institute of Archaeology is in charge of the protection of archaeological and historic monuments/sites in the country,⁷ while in Guatemala, the *Instituto de Antropología e Historia* (IDAEH) is the governmental institution responsible for such protection. In Honduras, the *Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia* (IHAH) is “dedicated to the protection, research, conservation and dissemination of the country’s cultural heritage,”⁸ and in Mexico, the governmental *Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia* (INAH) is responsible for the “protection and conservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage,”⁹ including archaeological, anthropological, historical, and paleontological findings, sites, and legacies.

In reality, designated “protected areas” lack protection in many regions. This is especially the case in northern Guatemala, but also in a number of other areas. Regarding Belize, Colin Young points out that:

26.2% of Belize’s national territory is under some form of protection On the surface, it appears that Belize is doing an excellent job in protecting its natural resources. However, upon closer



Map 5.2: Map of deforestation within protected areas in northern Guatemala and adjoining areas. Map: Harri Kettunen.

inspection, only 13% of the protected areas in Belize are reserved strictly for the conservation of biodiversity; the majority of the protected areas are extractive reserves that allow the removal of flora, timber, and fauna. The situation is worsened by the fact that some of these parks are “paper parks” with no visible on-the-ground management or no management plan.¹⁰

In Guatemala, 31.90 percent of the country is (at least nominally) composed of protected areas (see Map 5.1). However, the reality is very different, especially in the Petén Department, where deforestation has taken a heavy toll on a large portion of the protected areas (see Map 5.2 and Figure 5.1).

Although the protected areas are safeguarded by law in this area (at least on paper), the land itself is not always owned by the government; for example, in the case of Mexico, Nicolás Vásquez points out that the “actual land ownership remains at the community level” and that this “fragmentation requires continuing local-level negotiation among agencies and between agencies and communities, something the legal arrangements do not contemplate.”¹¹ Consequently, we believe that a co-administration of archaeological sites and national/nature parks by the Indigenous



Figure 5.1: Google Earth image of northwestern Guatemala in 1984 (above) and 2016 (below). Dark green color indicates forested areas, while light green, yellow, and brown colors show various degrees of deforestation.

people, local communities, and governments is a strategy worthy of envisioning and pursuing. Besides governmental guardianship and supervision, these areas would benefit from the protection and maintenance by the local (or nearby) population, who would also participate actively in the development, management, and

preservation of the parks and sites.¹² Furthermore, part of the revenue would be used directly for community needs, improving the standard of living in the areas (see Peuramaki-Brown and Morton in Chapter 4, this volume, for the discussion of challenges regarding the co-management of protected areas in Belize).

On a governmental level, one solution to the problem is a more effective environmental taxation where the revenue would be targeted directly to the preservation of nature. Environmentally related (GDP-weighted) tax revenue was 0.02 percent in Belize, 0.96 percent in Guatemala, 0.96 percent in Mexico, and 2.3 percent in Honduras in 2018,¹³ while the OECD average was 2.28 percent. Furthermore, as Clark Gibson and Fabrice Lehoucq have pointed out,¹⁴ a balanced cooperation between the government and local authorities is the key to a successful protection of the environment. However, Gibson and Lehoucq also point out that the “success of decentralization hinges on the behavior of the local politician” and that while the pressure from the local community and the support of the central government ought to encourage mayors (in Guatemala) to value forest protection, the mayors usually “care about forests when it is in their political interest to do so.”¹⁵

Sacred Places

Some sacred places are within national parks, while some national parks are simply national parks, and some sacred places are simply sacred places. Likewise, some sacred places are *in* archaeological sites and some archaeological sites *are* sacred places. Furthermore, Indigenous elders in some communities consider *all* archaeological sites to be sacred places, while others believe that all regions and countries that have remains of ancient cultures should be considered as sacred places.

Many Indigenous people in the Maya region grow up in touch with and in close relation to nature. Each person is considered to be part of nature and, as a result, grows up respecting all aspects of it. In the Maya calendar—still observed in various locations in the highlands of Guatemala—there are 20 days in each month and all of them are devoted to different deities or aspects of nature. All natural



Figure 5.2: Ceremony at Quirigua. Photo: Antonio Cuxil.



Figure 5.3: Ceremony at Cerro de Oro, Sololá Department, Guatemala. Photo: Antonio Cuxil.

resources, national parks, and archaeological sites, or any other places considered as sacred places, are respected as such. There are also places where many Maya people go to participate in ceremonies and to connect with the deities in order to ask for fertility, health, good crops, balance of nature, etc. (see Figures 5.2 and 5.3).

Case Study: The *Selva Maya* Region

In 2017, representatives of organizations from Belize (Corozal Sustainable Future Initiative [CSFI], the Forest Department [FD], and Program for Belize [Pfb]), Guatemala (Consejo Nacional de Áreas Protegidas/National Council of Protected Areas [CONAP]), and Mexico (Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas/National Commission of Natural Protected Areas [CONANP]) met in Belize to discuss the strengthening of tri-national cooperation and preservation of the Maya Forest (*Selva Maya*). An agreement was made to strengthen the cooperation in: (1) biological monitoring; (2) bi- and tri-national cross-border patrols and surveillance programs; (3) capacity-building in areas such as conflict resolution, environmental legislation, and use of remote sensing equipment; (4) environmental awareness and education in key border communities; and (5) control and prevention of transboundary forest fires.¹⁶

The meeting was followed by a workshop in Chetumal, Quintana Roo (Mexico), to further a project titled *Support for the Monitoring of Biodiversity and Climate Change in the Selva Maya Region*, attended by representatives of the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD), the General Directorate of International Cooperation and Implementation of the National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO) of Mexico, the Mexican National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP), the Guatemalan National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP), the Forest Department of Belize (FD); the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the Environment Secretariats of Campeche and Quintana Roo, Mexico.¹⁷ Subsequent meetings have been organized every year in Belize, Guatemala, and Mexico.

Smaller-scale meetings have been regularly organized in the respective countries, such as the exchange of experiences between Belize and Mexico on the management of natural protected areas, involving the Corozal Sustainable Future Initiative (CSFI) in Belize and the Bala'an K'aax Flora and Fauna Protection Area/Área de Protección de Flora y Fauna de Bala'an K'aax (APFFBK) in

Mexico.¹⁸ Topics on the agenda included restoration of vegetation areas and, among others, knowledge of and practices in organic beekeeping. These opportunities for dialogue “promote collegial learning among peers who share their knowledge and experience of best practices.”¹⁹

Other interesting connections and outcomes of the cooperation include an exchange of experiences of the projects *Environment and Peace of Colombia* and *Protection and Sustainable Use of the Selva Maya* in late 2019 in Petén, Guatemala, promoting the use of best practices of land use after a long internal armed conflict (the Guatemalan Civil War [1960–1996] and the Colombian conflict [from the 1960s to present]). The *Selva Maya* project offered ideas and solutions for the sustainable use of land and natural resources, as well as sustainable alternatives for generating income, such as agroecological practices, silvopastoral systems, and use of non-timber products, with the ultimate intention of generating “alternatives to illegal land use practices that combine biodiversity and sustainable management of forest resources.”²⁰

Furthermore, it can be demonstrated that up to 87 percent of the deforestation in the Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR) is based on illegal cattle ranching, largely funded by drug traffickers²¹ (and, consequently, labeled as “narco-cattleranching”²²). In contrast, areas controlled by community concessions were largely intact. In 2017, the community concessions belonging to the Association of Community Forestry of Petén (*Asociación de Comunidades Forestales de Petén*, ACOFOP) had 398,300 hectares of forest under their responsibility in the Multiple Use Zone within the MBR while only 0.8 percent of all forest fires in the MBR took place in community concessions—although they control over 16.6 percent of the MBR.²³

In addition, a concrete advancement and demonstration of successful projects and procedures are the certificates awarded to communities for promoting and conserving biodiversity within the *Selva Maya*. In May 2020, *ejido* Nuevo Becal obtained the first community certificate in Mexico (and the first certificate of its kind granted in North America) for the “demonstration of the impact on ecosystem services,” granted by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).²⁴



Figure 5.4: Temple V, Tikal National Park, Maya Biosphere Reserve, Guatemala. Photo: Harri Kettunen.

On Biocultural Diversity

The *biocultural diversity complex* mentioned at the beginning of this chapter draws from Luisa Maffi’s concept, encompassing the total diversity of the world’s natural and cultural systems.²⁵ In this way, biocultural diversity differs from existing narrower definitions of the concept, including “traditional ecological knowledge”²⁶ or agricultural aspects related to the diversification of farming and sustainable development²⁷ or “Indigenous knowledge” and “sustainable plants biodiversity conservation.”²⁸ As a result, the concept is understood broadly as the relationship between nature and culture, reflecting Kenyan social, environmental, and political activ-

ist Wangari Maathai's Nobel prize speech in which she connected cultural biodiversity to cultural heritage and local biodiversity.²⁹

According to Maffi:

Cultural diversity is ... profoundly interrelated and interdependent with biodiversity, through the co-evolutionary processes by which, over millennia, humans adapted to life in particular environments. In so doing, human societies needed to acquire in-depth knowledge of local species, ecological relationships, and ecosystem functions, and had to learn how to tailor their cultural practices to suit their ecological niches.³⁰

The topic of biocultural diversity is timely because of ever-expanding deforestation and, consequently, diminishing habitats for flora and fauna—and local knowledge of them. This is especially the case in northern Guatemala, as explained above (see Map 5.2 and Figure 5.1). Moreover, alarming examples from Brazil remind us of the consequences of inconsiderate environmental politics.³¹

In addition, writing this during the COVID-19 pandemic, one cannot escape a reference to the pandemic and the connection between it and the environment. As Gómez Durán puts it, “[t]hose who are dedicated to the ecology of diseases have more and more scientific evidence that allows them to point out that deforestation, fragmentation of habitats, and loss of diversity increase the presence of emerging pathogens, causing major public health problems.”³² Furthermore, to quote David Quammen:

We invade tropical forests and other wild landscapes, which harbor so many species of animals and plants—and within those creatures, so many unknown viruses. We cut the trees; we kill the animals or cage them and send them to markets. We disrupt ecosystems, and we shake viruses loose from their natural hosts. When that happens, they need a new host. Often, we are it.³³

Biocultural Diversity and the *Selva Maya*

With regard to the *Selva Maya*, although a large part of it is located in areas where there are no human settlements in close proximity, people do still present a threat to the rainforest and to the cultural heritage through illegal logging, expansion of settlements, and looting

of archaeological sites. All these are done even though people are aware of the importance of preserving the natural environment and cultural heritage. The *Selva Maya* is a home to a number of endangered, vulnerable, or threatened species of flora and fauna, including the following animal species: jaguar (*Panthera onca*), Baird's tapir (*Tapirus bairdii*), spider monkey (*Ateles geoffroyi*), white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*), ocellated turkey (*Meleagris ocellata*), harpy eagle (*Harpia harpyja*), scarlet macaw (*Ara macao*), great curassow (*Crax rubra*), and the orange-breasted falcon (*Falco deiroleucus*).³⁴ Furthermore, the *Selva Maya* is home to numerous archaeological sites, many of which remain unexplored or unexcavated. At the same time, however, many of them have been heavily looted. Well-known sites include Calakmul and Yaxchilan in Mexico, El Mirador, Naranjo, Piedras Negras, and Tikal (see Figures 5.5 and 5.8) in Guatemala, and Caracol in Belize, connected by the Maya Forest Corridor.³⁵

Another challenge, besides the threatened biodiversity in the *Selva Maya* in general, is the large expanse of monoculture in the area, such as the (African) oil palm, *Elaeis guineensis*, especially in northern Guatemala. Although these plantations are not within the Maya Biosphere Reserve, they are located close to many smaller protected areas and they threaten the natural biodiversity in the area. Furthermore, ever-expanding deforestation (see Map 5.2) is an ongoing threat to the environment, demonstrated noticeably during the writing of this chapter by numerous forest fires in the area (see Figures 5.5 and 5.6).

Yet another challenge is the population growth as well as migration and settlement of people who are not originally from the area and who, consequently, in many cases, lack the knowhow to manage the environment in the lowlands. Furthermore, lack of education of—and connection to—the history of the area disconnects people from the past and may fuel the destruction of archaeological heritage. This development is relatively recent. Northern Guatemala had witnessed a population growth in the Classic Period (ca. AD 250–900), near abandonment after the Classic Period Collapse, sparsely populated settlements throughout the Postclassic Period via the Spanish Conquest (1697) into the 19th century, and growing migration and settling in the area from 1960s onwards.

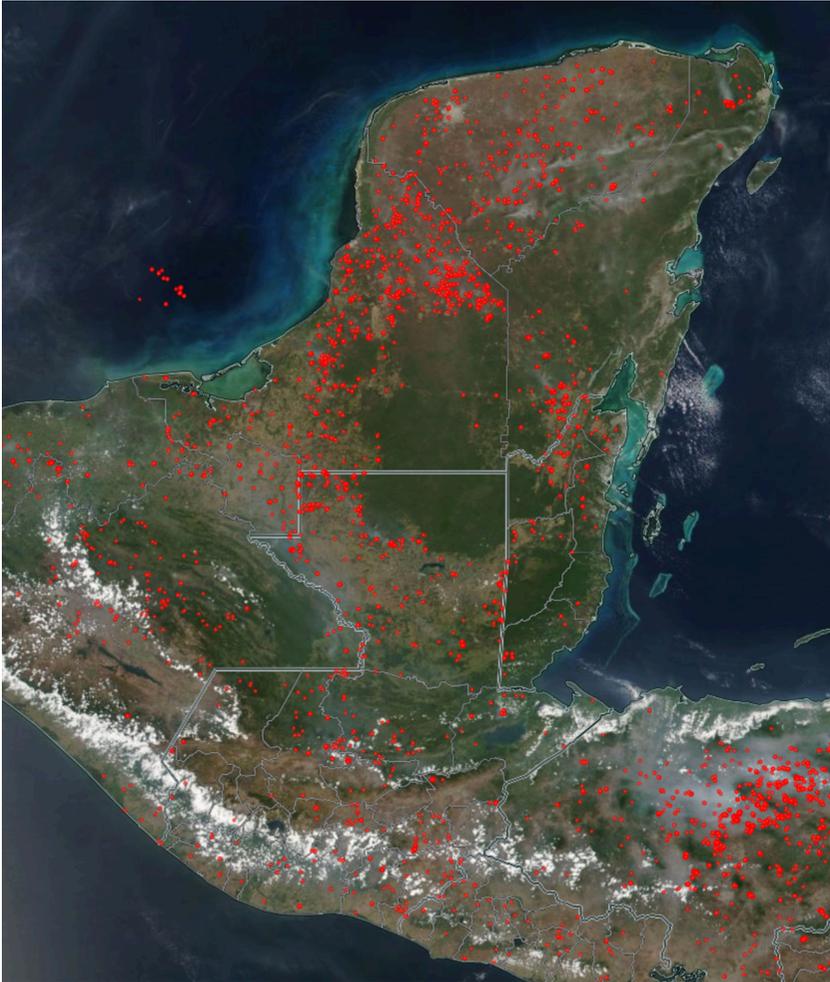


Figure 5.5: NASA Worldview image of fires and thermal anomalies in the Maya region and adjoining areas, April 9, 2020. Overlays: day and night fires and thermal anomalies based on Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS) Corrected Reflectance Imagery on the Suomi NPP satellite, and on Visible and Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) Corrected Reflectance Imagery on Terra and Aqua satellites. Coastlines and borders © OpenStreetMap contributors, Natural Earth. Source: <https://worldview.earthdata.nasa.gov>.

The population of Petén (elevated from a district to the status of department in 1866) was 14,000 in the early 1880s,³⁶ while in 2002 it was 366,735 and in 2019 it was 833,679.³⁷ The migration into



Figure 5.6: Forest fire near Sayaxche, Guatemala. Photo: Antonio Cuxil.

the region—and the subsequent population growth—took place during and after the Guatemalan Civil War. This is also when the Maya Biosphere Reserve was created (in 1990), expanding the protected area of 222,760 hectares in 1989 to a tenfold 2,629,766 hectares in 1990.³⁸ This area has subsequently been threatened by illegal logging and overexploitation of the environment that continues today. Unfortunately, as in many other areas, the interest (and governmental budget) to preserve nature is not sufficient to meet these challenges. Furthermore, the fact that the largest percentage of productive and fertile land is in the hands of a few people is a severe socioeconomic problem.

However, engaging local Indigenous people in the development of projects or programs in the area helps to preserve the parks and natural resources. This involvement includes concession agreements, cooperatives, associations, cultural groups, forest incentive plans, etc. Many of these concessions and cooperatives are found in the lowlands, where the *Selva Maya* is also located (see Map 5.3). The products obtained from the jungle by the families that are part of these cooperatives and concessions include mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*), cedar (*Cedrela odorata*), xate (*Chamae-*



Figure 5.7: Breadnut products from Alimentos Nutrinaturales, a women's cooperative in Ixlu near the Maya Biosphere Reserve. Photo: Antonio Cuxil.

dorea elegans, *C. oblongata*, and *C. ernesti-augusti*), breadnut (*Brosimum alicastrum* [as well as *B. costaricanum*]), allspice (*Pimenta dioica*), and chicle (*Manilkara* spp.). In 2017, these cooperatives and concessions acquired nearly US \$1 million in revenue.³⁹

Independent of the concession agreements, there are also cooperatives, including a women's cooperative, dealing with breadnuts that are used for beverages and cookies. Breadnut is rich in protein, folate, calcium, potassium, magnesium, phosphorus, fiber, and vitamins A and C, and has higher total phenolic contents than almonds, peanuts, or walnuts, and functions as an important natural antioxidant source.⁴⁰ Other than the collection of the nut from the jungle, the entire production process is conducted by women in the village of Ixlu, Petén (see Figure 5.7). One important aspect of this activity is that they do not damage the tree or the vegetation; instead, they only collect the breadnut from the ground and bring it to the small workshop to be used for different products.

Furthermore, the cultural history and traditional use and knowledge of different species within Indigenous or local cultures includes not only the flora and fauna per se, but also the derivatives of them, including a myriad of local food recipes and foodways. As stated in the World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) Mexico campaign “Our Gastronomy, An Echo of Our Biodiversity”: “in the last 50 years, the multiplicity of ingredients that have given life to our cuisine have decreased, some have disappeared, and others are threatened.”⁴¹ One way to improve the situation is to promote local foodways and to protect the natural environment that surrounds them.

Another important topic in national parks management is tourism. At present, there are different ways to take tourists into a national park: regular tourism, ecotourism,⁴² and community (or community-based) tourism.⁴³ Usually, the last two involve the communities. This is also the way to enable communities to participate in the tourism industry, either through associated services (such as providing food or accommodation) or as local guides. This idea of such tourism-related small projects began as an alternative for communities, so that their income does not depend solely on agriculture. This also helps to protect, promote, and preserve the natural resources due to the simple fact that the preservation of natural resources or cultural heritage will assure a future income for the families.

Opposite to small-scale community-based tourism is mass tourism and its side-effects. Thus far, most of the Maya area has avoided the effects of mass tourism, save Cancún, Riviera Maya, and adjacent areas, including archaeological sites such as Tulum and Chichen Itza. However, smaller-scale tourism that penetrates protected areas without restrictions can also have far-reaching consequences. One imminent threat to the environment, as well as the cultural heritage and Indigenous rights, is the *Tren Maya* (Mayan Train) project.⁴⁴ According to Meaghan Beatley and Sam Edwards, “many Indigenous groups, and their conservationist and academic allies ... warn that the train will not only devastate southern Mexico’s ecosystem but also trigger unsustainable development and further marginalize the communities living there.”⁴⁵

In contrast, small-scale community-based tourism is, as a rule, socially and environmentally sustainable. Moreover, people from

local communities are valuable because they know the area and the customs and, at present, the interest in alternative programs for tourism is increasing; for example, there are trekking trails in the jungle, alongside archaeological sites, utilized by local tour guides. Furthermore, several other activities are being developed in the jungle, such as bird watching that involves the local population as guides. An important fact to consider is that the more preserved and protected the environment is, the more chances there are to see different types of birds, along with more variety of flora and fauna in general. Consequently, tourism—if controlled adequately—plays an important role in the interaction and preservation of the rainforest. In 2019, Guatemala had 2.5 million visitors; however, the numbers in 2020 are a lot lower due to the global pandemic.⁴⁶

Incorporating the local population and cooperatives in the tourism industry by promoting community tourism and ecotourism has mostly beneficial results. When visitors are in touch with the local communities and benefit from local knowledge, the local Indigenous population profits from tourism revenue more equitably. However, although community-based tourism has been regarded mainly positively in a number of studies,⁴⁷ there are also critical voices. According to Mitchell and Muckosy, community-based tourism by itself is not the answer to alleviate poverty but, instead, “it is working with mainstream tourism to strengthen links between tourism and local people—often indigenous populations who are located in disadvantaged regions and have vulnerable livelihoods.”⁴⁸

Furthermore, although community tourism and ecotourism have increased in Guatemala, there is room for expansion in order for the local communities—deprived of adequate opportunities for food, health care, and education—to thrive. While archaeological projects hire people from nearby communities, which helps during the field season, it is not enough for the families to make ends meet. However, in well-managed archaeological projects, the awareness of the preservation of environmental and cultural heritage is high, which adds to the overall understanding of the importance of the preservation of biocultural diversity and, potentially, leads to new opportunities for sustainable management of the environment, as described in the following section.



Figure 5.8: A pair of keel-billed toucans (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) flying in the distance over the Great Plaza, Tikal National Park, Maya Biosphere Reserve, Guatemala. Photo: Harri Kettunen.

Best Practices?

Besides the aforementioned cooperation and co-administration, a more effective networking between different local communities (and not only between different governmental agencies) would open up a new avenue for sharing ideas, initiatives, and practices. At the local level, we have seen that the knowledge of sustainable use of the natural ecosystem is well-received in some communities. Although the dissemination of best practices is a slow process, strengthening networks and promoting grassroots-level cooperation would undoubtedly empower people in rural communities. Furthermore, networking between different *Indigenous* communities for the preservation of biological and cultural diversity is of utmost importance due to the depth of knowledge within the communities. To do this, we can go beyond the borders of the research area and learn from the practices and strategies of other projects and communities, such as the African Biodiversity Network that focuses, among other things, on biodiversity protection, Indigenous knowledge, and social and ecological problems in Africa.⁴⁹



Figure 5.9: Sucely Melisa To Cholotio, Ajto’ooneel Ixq Cooperative, San Juan La Laguna, Guatemala. Photo: Antonio Cuxil.

Moreover, enhancing the spread of local knowledge beyond the local borders, promoting education and awareness, and providing tools for teachers—from elementary schools up to higher learning—can nurture biocultural diversity in the communities. A good example of local Indigenous ingenuity of combining fair-trade economics, local culture, and tourism is the “bottom-up” approach of the Tz’utujil village of San Juan la Laguna on the shore of Lake Atitlán in the Sololá Department of the southwestern Guatemalan highlands. The village, unlike most neighboring towns in the area, is almost free of waste. The elders of the village teach the young to appreciate nature, recycle, and not to litter. They also have a rule: “If you cut down a tree, plant two in its place.” The village has several fair-trade cooperatives and naïve art galleries that not only sell local farmers’ and artisans’ products, but also educate the local community, as well as visitors, on Indigenous plants and their use, beekeeping, and traditional backstrap weaving using local organic color sources (Figure 5.9).

All in all, the Indigenous idea of human beings being inseparable from nature⁵⁰ is closely connected with the interrelatedness of people and biodiversity. Bringing in the knowledge, perspectives, cultural mindset, and worldview of the Indigenous people to the discussion of conservation, preservation, and management of national parks and other protected natural places are practices that should be further encouraged. Similarly, the sustainable use of natural resources is an issue that ought to be discussed from a governmental level all the way to that of local communities. Deforestation and other threats to the environment will undoubtedly have long-lasting negative repercussions for biodiversity and for the people living in the area.

Concluding Remarks

Co-administration of national and nature parks by Indigenous people and the government is a forward-looking strategy: part of the revenue is used for community needs, and the nearby population will continue to protect the parks and participate in contributing ideas in order to improve the management and preservation of the parks. Yet, there remain issues that need to be resolved, such as insufficient funding for the preservation of the parks, population growth and spread to(ward) the protected areas, social and economic inequality, accelerating spread of monoculture, and the overall low interest in preserving nature. However, we believe that a balanced national and international cooperation among governments, local authorities, non-governmental organizations, and local communities is the key to successfully protecting the environment. Furthermore, there are ways to improve the panorama by promoting education and awareness. Nurturing local and/or Indigenous knowledge and its diffusion in schools can lead to a generational shift and long-lasting enhanced learning and awareness. While this ties in with the slow rate of dissemination, it will ultimately lead to more long-term, sustainable, and self-sustaining change.

Notes

- ¹ Myers et al., “Biodiversity Hotspots,” 853–58.
- ² Standing Bear, “Indian Wisdom,” 201–06.
- ³ SIGAP, *Dirección de Desarrollo del Sistema Guatemalteco de Áreas Protegidas*.
- ⁴ Meerman, “Belize Protected Areas Policy”; Meerman, “National Protected Areas Policy”; Meerman and Wilson, “Belize National Protected Areas System Plan”; Salas and Shal, “National Protected Areas System Plan.”
- ⁵ CONANP, 2020.
- ⁶ Carrera de la Torre, *Plan de desarrollo regional fronterizo trinacional Trifinio*; MARN, “Parque Nacional Montecristo”; Plan Trifinio, *Reserva de Biosfera Trifinio Fraternidad*.
- ⁷ NICH, “Archaeological Sites and Parks.”
- ⁸ IHAH, 2020.
- ⁹ INAH, “Misión y visión.”
- ¹⁰ Young, “Belize’s Ecosystems,” 29. See also Peuramaki-Brown and Morton, Chapter 4, this volume.
- ¹¹ Nicolás Vásquez, “Legal Protection,” 277.
- ¹² CONAP, “Política de Administración Conjunta.” See also, e.g., Chajón Aguilar et al., *Plan de Desarrollo Turístico*.
- ¹³ OECD, *Environmental Taxation*.
- ¹⁴ Gibson and Lehoucq, “Local Politics,” 28–49.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 29, 32, 42.
- ¹⁶ Selva Maya, “Strengthening Trinational Cooperation.”
- ¹⁷ Selva Maya, “Planning Workshop,” 3.
- ¹⁸ Selva Maya, “Intercambio de experiencias México.”
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ Selva Maya, “Intercambio de experiencias proyecto Ambiente y Paz.”
- ²¹ Devine et al., “Drug Trafficking”; Pearce, “Parks vs. People.”
- ²² Paullier, “¿Quiénes son los ‘narcoganaderos’?”
- ²³ Davis and Sauls, *Evaluating Forest Fire*, 1, 10.
- ²⁴ Hernández Flores, “Comunidad en la Selva Maya.”
- ²⁵ Maffi, “Introduction”; Maffi, “Introduction: On the Interdependence.”
- ²⁶ Belay, Edwards, and Gebeyehu, “Culture as an Expression,” 10–14.
- ²⁷ Bérard and Marchenay, “Local Products.”
- ²⁸ Kingston et al., “Indigenous Knowledge,” 196–200.
- ²⁹ Maathai, “Nobel Lecture.”

- ³⁰ Maffi, “Introduction,” 4.
- ³¹ Pereira Martins, Pereira Martins, and Figueiredo, “Ten Actions.”
- ³² Gómez Durán, “Deforestación.”
- ³³ Quammen, “Opinion.”
- ³⁴ IUCN, “Red List.”
- ³⁵ Selva Maya, “Endorsement.”
- ³⁶ Conkling, *Appletons’ Guide to Mexico*, 334.
- ³⁷ INE, “Poblacion menu.”
- ³⁸ INE, “Estadísticas ambientales.”
- ³⁹ Dionisio, “Conservación y desarrollo,” 55–56.
- ⁴⁰ Ozer, “Phenolic Compositions.”
- ⁴¹ WWF Mexico, “#DaleChamba.”
- ⁴² Defined by The International Ecotourism Society as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education.” TIES, “What Is Ecotourism?”
- ⁴³ Giampiccoli and Saayman, “Community-Based Tourism,” 16; Richards and Hall, “Community,” 1–13. Giampiccoli and Saayman state that community-based tourism “is about social justice, empowerment, equity of benefits, redistributive measures, ownership of tourism sector and holistic community development” and that it “arose to offset the negative impacts of conventional or mass tourism ... such as leakages and falling of local control of natural resources.” Giampiccoli and Saayman, “Community-Based Tourism,” 1–2.
- ⁴⁴ Benítez and Alexander, “Elementos de Evaluación”; Camargo and Vázquez-Maguirre, “Humanism, Dignity and Indigenous Justice.”
- ⁴⁵ Beatley and Edwards, “Mexico’s ‘Mayan Train.’”
- ⁴⁶ INGUAT, *Boletín estadístico anual 2019*.
- ⁴⁷ Giampiccoli and Saayman, “Community-Based Tourism”; Richards and Hall, “Community.”
- ⁴⁸ Mitchell and Muckosy, “Misguided Quest,” 1.
- ⁴⁹ *African Biodiversity Network*.
- ⁵⁰ In Mayan languages, as in many other Indigenous languages worldwide, there is no (traditional) word for “nature” (see also Guttorm, Chapter 8, this volume). The lack of such terminology stems from the fact that the division between human beings and the environment they live in and the division between populated and unpopulated areas, has not historically or culturally been as separated as it is in the modern world. While there is no traditional word for “nature” in Mayan languages, some languages use neologisms that are translated

as “nature” in dictionaries or use descriptive terms. Examples include “face of the earth” as in K’iche’ *uwach uleew*, or use of the dichotomy “town” vs. “forest” or “wilderness,” as in Yukatek *kàah* “town” vs. *k’áax* “forest.” Furthermore, we should remember that all languages and societies are in constant motion. There can be no universal concept or terminology for “nature” in the world’s numerous languages and cultures, including Indigenous ones.

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CHAPTER 6

Amazonia Beyond Borders

Indigenous Land Protection for an Indigenous Group in Voluntary Isolation

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Manxineru people¹

During the COVID-19 pandemic, several Amazonian Indigenous peoples reminded others that their history has fundamentally been shaped by different epidemics resulting in considerable population losses, grief, and intergenerational trauma. The new diseases introduced not only significantly impacted Indigenous peoples at the time of colonization, but also in recent decades numerous Indigenous groups have suffered disproportionately, as many individuals within the group lost their lives. In the 1990s, for instance, new diseases brought by missionaries killed one-third

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of the Zoé people. In the 1980s, one-fifth of the Yanomami people died when new roads and goldminers brought diseases causing a health catastrophe.² These are only some recent examples. At the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak in the Amazon, Indigenous representatives pointed out in virtual discussion events that now non-Indigenous peoples can also experience what it means to face a situation where one lacks immunity to a new disease and suffers a consequent sense of great loss. There are also emotional effects on the memory on account of large and rapid mortality rates of relatives and friends. These issues are at the core of the Amazonian Indigenous people's historical memory of contact, along with memories of physical dominance, slavery, and massacres.³

Furthermore, in the COVID-19 pandemic, several Indigenous peoples in Brazil became even more vulnerable, because growing invasions of their territories intensified the circulation of the lethal virus. The most vulnerable have been Indigenous peoples in so-called voluntary isolation, meaning those who until today have decided not to engage with Brazilian society more generally and have instead chosen to live their lives in traditional ways. As a result, these Indigenous groups have little immunological resistance to new diseases, even regular flu. Their land protection is, therefore, crucial to protecting the lives of these peoples. In this chapter, we discuss such land protection efforts by the Manxineru (Manchineru/Manchineri) people in Brazilian Amazonia in relation to their neighboring people in voluntary isolation. These people are internationally known as the Mashco-Piro, but the Manxineru call them the *Yine Hosha Hajene*, which in their language means literally "the Real People who live in the forest." They also use the term *nomolene*, our kin. In Portuguese, the term *Povo desconfiado* (Suspicious People) is used, as the Manxineru think that their kin in voluntary isolation have decided not to trust strangers, are suspicious of others, and are wary. The global COVID-19 situation may certainly give the dominant society a better understanding concerning the trauma and fear that the *Yine Hosha Hajene* have in relation to people in the dominant society, but also to other Indigenous groups.

The *Yine Hoshá Hajene* live and move on both sides of the Brazilian–Peruvian border, and seasonally inhabit the reserve that was officially demarcated for the Manxineru, namely the Mamodate. This Indigenous reserve is situated in the state of Acre, Brazil, and shares a border with Peru. The Brazilian–Peruvian border area in its full length is exceptionally rich in biodiversity.⁴ In the state of Acre alone, cultural diversity is high as there are approximately 20 Indigenous peoples, including four Indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation, speaking languages of the Arawak, Arawá, and Pano language families. Overall, this area is very rich biologically, culturally, and linguistically—issues which have been shown to be closely interlinked. The state hosts various types of protected areas, such as ecological reserves, national state parks, reserves for traditional extractivist activities, and Indigenous reserves.

Indigenous territories and nature protected areas on the Peru–Brazil border area are threatened by private economic actions and public policies, which promote infrastructure projects, such as the construction of roads, the exploitation of natural resources, and large-scale cattle ranching and agriculture. Besides state-led highway construction, smaller roads are constantly opened, causing more deforestation and enabling access for illegal mining prospectors and loggers. These interfere physically, but also in the form of pollution, decreasing the game animals and fish, and bringing new diseases.

These extractive industries cause several risks to the Manxineru in Brazil, where they number some 900 persons, but especially to their kin living in voluntary isolation, the *Yine Hoshá Hajene*, with an estimated population of 600 people. Thus, the Manxineru have taken strong action in land protection as a go-between with other Indigenous groups and the authorities of the dominant society. Their own land management practices have also been crucial in this effort. Conservation biologists and ecologists, among others, have recently debated the strengths and weaknesses of different conservation practices, ranging from those that exclude humans (leading to the establishment of the first national parks) to those

that permit human actions in different ways.⁵ In conservation and sustainability studies, so-called social-ecological approaches seek to embed actions within complex systems of social values and stewardship.⁶ The goal is to explain how people actually act in conservation so that measures may be developed that will benefit both ecosystems and human communities. Biodiversity conservation is about understanding social systems that dictate what kinds of human–environment interactions exist in social–ecological systems. In other words, they draw from the idea that there is no conservation without people. From this perspective, community-based conservation efforts that engage with Indigenous knowledge (local or traditional ecological knowledge) have been used in monitoring and assessment, and have engaged complementarily with Western scientific environmental variables and indicators.⁷

Yet, the achievement of a synergy between Indigenous knowledges, Western scientific knowledges, as well as other knowledges is often considered challenging because of the incommensurability of these categories, the different terminologies, practices, and norms used, as well as different kinds of generalizations to be derived from place-based Indigenous ways of knowing.⁸ Furthermore, interests, power relations, political concerns, and values also play a crucial role in achieving impactful dialogue.⁹ Scholars who have contributed to social epistemological literature and have pointed out that diversity of perspectives can be epistemologically valuable have also noted that there are often factors that are not purely epistemological, but rather based on the interests of people.¹⁰ These can create ignorance toward certain perspectives and ways of knowing. Racism, discrimination, suppression, and the “invisibility” of Indigenous peoples have meant that large Indigenous populations continue to be marginalized in Latin America. Such factors have hindered the recognition of their territorial rights, and have limited their access to schooling and health services, among other things.¹¹

In this chapter, we will discuss the Manxineru methods to overcome these situations when economic activities in the proximity of their demarcated lands have increased. This chapter

engages with Indigenous, human ecology, and sustainability studies. Our argument is that politics and economic interests have to be taken into account at the regional, federal, and state levels. Although land protection actions have been carried out in an Indigenous community-based effort, and knowledge synergy has been encouraged and is taking place at the local level, complex political structures at the state level and international economic interests that exploit the Amazonian rainforest can impede transformative actions.

Our research methods have been to co-live with the Manxineru and participate in different research projects related to the revitalization of local biocultural interaction and heritage. The second author is Manxineru and from a young age he has been one of his community's spokespersons. Trained as a teacher, he has worked in his territory, continued his studies in linguistics at university, and has participated in regional, national, and international events, as well as worked in Indigenous organizations and in a governmental office. The first author is a non-Indigenous person, who has carried out research with the Manxineru since 2003. Her field research in the Manxineru territory took place in different periods from 2004 to 2008, and she has interacted with the community since then. She also works with another Arawak-speaking people, the Apurinã, and has collaborated in the region with local Indigenous and non-governmental organizations.

In this chapter, we first present the history of the Yine people (including the "Piro," Manxineru, and *Yine Hosha Hajene*) in Southwestern Amazonia, and then look at how the Manxineru have organized themselves in the protection of their lands. We then discuss how the Amazonian forest protects not only human lives, but social systems, or rather assemblages of land, forests, waters, animals, and local human dwellers. For the Manxineru, their efforts to protect and guarantee a peaceful land for their kin in voluntary isolation is connected with an understanding of the healthy relations of the human–environment assemblage. Finally, we will show how besides the synergy of knowledges, different interests and politics play a principal role in Manxineru land protection and in its (un)success.

The *Yine* Lands in the Southwestern Amazonia

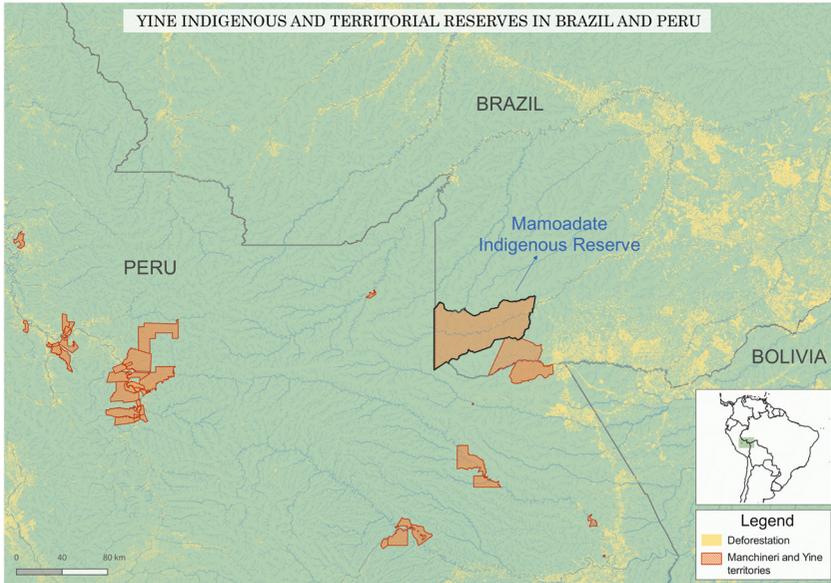
Southwestern Amazonia has been inhabited by the *Yine* people, especially along the Urubamba, Madre dos Dios, and Yaco Rivers, since time immemorial. The *Yine* were divided into several smaller groups, such as the *Manxineru*, whose languages belong to the Arawakan language family. For a long time, the *Yine* were referred to by their colonial name, *Piro*. The *Manxineru* in Brazil are closely related to the *Yine* (*Piro*) in the Peruvian Amazon, where they number some 5,000–7,000 persons. They all call themselves *Yinerune*, “the real humans.” Most *Manxineru* and *Yine* speak their native language, as well as Portuguese or Spanish respectively.¹²

From the colonizers, the Spanish made first contact with the *Yine* in what is now known as Peru by the 17th century, but the Yaco River, the home of the *Manxineru*, was colonized later than other parts of Amazonia. At the end of the 19th century, Southwestern Amazonia became a major source for rubber production for global markets. A large number of rubber traders exploited the land for this valuable raw material, and forced Indigenous peoples to work for them. The Indigenous groups tried to escape, but those who were captured or chose contact as their method of survival were enslaved and forced to collect and produce rubber. The *Yine* people, and their subgroup *Manxineru* in contemporary Brazil, were among the latter group. Consequently, their social organization and socio-cultural ceremonies and practices collapsed due to the new economic activities they were forced to engage in. Many of their neighboring groups died in massacres and in slavery. Thus, historical documents from the Purus River basin registered several Indigenous groups that no longer exist. The rubber boom also brought many non-Indigenous rubber tappers to the region. All this radically changed what the first explorers in the 17th century and archaeological evidence witnessed, namely sophisticated and extensive Indigenous settlements and even early precolonial urbanity in the Northwestern Amazon.

The *Yine Hosha Hajene* (*Mascho-Piro*) are one of the groups that escaped the rubber extraction business, which altered the life of various Indigenous groups. It is currently thought that they were

one of the Yine groups, but continued in isolation, changing their lifestyle. The Manxineru, Yine, and *Yine Hosha Hajene* speak a mutually understandable language, as shown by a few contacts, and their material cultures are in some aspects similar. Among these groups, the *Yine Hosha Hajene* have remained in isolation until today. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the Brazilian state agency responsible for Indigenous population was established (SPI, Indian Protection Service), and it had differing strategies toward Indigenous people, varying from assimilation to attracting them to safer contact for their protection.¹³ For the groups in contact with the dominant society, it took hundreds of years before the Indigenous peoples could gain their human rights, and in Southwestern Amazonia the first Indigenous protected areas were established only in the 1970s. Among them is the Mamoodate reserve, which covers 313,646 hectares. It is located on the banks of the upper Yaco River and belongs to the municipalities of Assis Brasil and Sena Madureira in the state of Acre. It is demarcated for the Manxineru and Jaminawa, for whom this territory was allotted in 1986. Altogether the population of Manxineru and Jaminawa is 1,210 inhabitants and 205 families in the Mamoodate. Currently, the Manxineru population lives in 12 villages, Extrema village being the last one when accessing the reserve from down river. Today, Manxinerus also live in Seringal Guanabara and Cabeceira do rio Acre Indigenous reserves, as well as in urban areas. Map 6.1. shows the contemporary official Yine territories in Brazil and Peru, excluding the places inhabited by the Yine Hosha Hajene, which are shown in the frontier area in Map 6.2.

The *Yine Hosha Hajene* occupy the upriver areas of the reserve, close to the Peruvian border. They are officially known as an Indigenous people in voluntary isolation (*índios isolados*), which is a special category in the Brazilian state's current Indigenous agency FUNAI's classification (Fundação Nacional do Índio, under the Ministry of Justice). This indicates that in Amazonia there are groups who until today have not been officially "contacted." FUNAI also uses the category of recently contacted groups (*recém contatados*) for those who have some contacts with national Indigenous society or have changed considerably some aspects of their



Map 6.1: The Yine (including Manxineru) territories in Brazil and Peru. Map adopted by authors from sources by the Funai and Peruvian Minister of Culture.

communities because of contact. Indigenous motives for isolation are diverse, and can be understood in a historical framework. The reasons can be previous epidemics, sicknesses, and slavery (such as in the rubber boom), which dramatically transformed the life of Indigenous people and for some groups resulted in making the decision to live isolated from others.¹⁴ The peoples in voluntary isolation have hardly any contact with other Indigenous or non-Indigenous groups, but may have changed considerably because of the altering neighboring society and the changing environment. Their kinship systems are diverse, and are often based on marriages of cross-cousins. For these peoples, protected areas of different kinds are fundamental, and they may use a broad area for their economic activities, fishing, and hunting. Many of them are mobile beyond the national borders.

The actions that threaten Indigenous peoples in the area are designed and led by the state and by enterprises, but also by missionaries, tourists, and so forth. For a long time, public policies have promoted the exploitation of natural resources, such as timber

and petroleum, and the establishment of larger infrastructure projects. Southwestern Amazonia was hugely impacted by the construction of the Pacific Highway. It was a massive trans-governmental project to pave a road from Brazil through the Southwestern Amazon to the Pacific, enabling the transportation of beef, and has significantly increased the agri-business and cattle ranching in the region. The paved highway (called the BR-317 on the Brazilian side) from Rio Branco (the capital of Acre state) to Assis Brasil (the border municipality) is now deforested in its full length and hosts numerous cattle ranches. Although it does not reach the Mamoadate reserve, and passes it by a distance of approximately 80 km, it hugely affects regional ecosystems and biocultural diversity. Furthermore, several new roads have been built in the region, and one such recent project was a road opened to connect the municipality of Iñapari to Puerto Esperanza in the Peruvian territory, near the Yaco River headwaters. This impacted the Mamoadate, among other Indigenous territories and protected areas.

As mentioned, diseases and viruses caused by the dominant society have for a long time been an invisible but real threat to the Indigenous peoples. For Indigenous people in voluntary isolation, common ailments, such as flu and diarrhea, can be lethal. The Manxineru are occasionally vaccinated, but Indigenous groups in voluntary isolation are extremely vulnerable to infectious diseases, which can rapidly and brutally lead to the groups' extinction. This situation cannot be separated from the overall suppression and prejudice toward the original inhabitants of the land and their invisibility in state politics. In recent years, the political climate has become even worse in this respect, despite Indigenous peoples' ecological knowledge and contribution to the world's biodiversity. There is not only the continuous presence of illegal activities, but also of religious movements, such as Pentecostal churches, which often consider traditional Indigenous rituals, healing techniques, and stories related to non-humans as destructive for a person's positive development. Additionally, economic actions supported by the state are in addition to these pressures. These issues affect local knowledge and its production in diverse ways.

Forest Lives and Active Stewardship

Indigenous knowledge is typically about generations of practices, skills, experiences, innovations, and ways of knowing transmitted, regenerated, and updated across generations. It includes social interactions and diverse cultural, environmental, economic, and spiritual aspects. It is embedded in languages, stories, songs, craft-work, dances, and ceremonies, as well as many other material and immaterial expressions.¹⁵ Traditional ecological knowledge refers in particular to knowledge about managing land, stewardship methods, and interacting with different living beings.¹⁶ Because of historical relations with the land as well as their views on the future lives of their children, Indigenous perspectives can differ from other local perspectives in certain regions. The rich biocultural diversity in the Mamoadate is indeed linked to the Manxineru's stewardship, management practices, comprehension of forest lives, and emotional aspects linked to these issues. In order to guarantee healthy relations in human–environment assemblage, the key practices have focused on strengthening the social interactions and collaborations of different actors and remanaging traditional forest resource use in specific territorial areas.

In the Manxineru's thinking, the *Yine Hosha Hajene* are not separate from their human–environmental history, in which ideas of interaction, reciprocity, relatedness, and dependency are crucial.¹⁷ The richness of non-human lives in the ancestral territory cannot be separated from interlinkages between humans and non-humans, including water “that all living beings drink,” as their elders say. The Manxineru are not conservationists, but they protect and care about the healthy relations of animals and trees that they also treat as their kin. In this human–environment assemblage, the relationships are manifested in hunting practices, slash-and-burn agriculture, forest resource use, and gathering economies, and they significantly protect the land. The Yaco River is a large biocultural landscape; it is the result of a long history of human lives, dwelling, and movement, but also different lifeforms, especially animals, and plants that have their own life and are entangled with humans and their management practices.

In fact, there is strong evidence that shows how the actions and domestication processes of species by Amazonian Indigenous populations have contributed to diversifying the lands.¹⁸

Context is central in Manxineru's knowledge-making practices, including with whom and in which place knowing occurs.¹⁹ This relational epistemology, the idea that knowledge is produced in relations, is closely linked to ideas of relational being, in which beings come to exist through relations. The onto-epistemology and practices of knowing of the Manxineru are founded on relations. In this way, they learn to be and "read" the forest. From a young age, many Manxineru children have learned to observe the movements of entities, recognize their presence, and trace them.

It is crucial to note that the Indigenous reserves have the richest forest cover, and that satellite images can show their difference even to the neighboring protected nature areas. Traditional extractivist reserves, known as Resex, in the Acre state are important places to preserve forest areas and are ecologically diverse. Recent studies have shown, however, that increasing cattle ranching and deforestation activities are taking place inside these areas.²⁰ The interests and environmental values of Indigenous communities are different, as shown by the way they protect their lands despite a lack of governmental resources for monitoring and protecting the land. However, in the face of the environmental destruction caused by development megaprojects and large-scale extractive activities, the resilience of Indigenous communities has been severely tested.

The Importance of the Protected Space Mosaic for the *Yine Hosha Hajene*

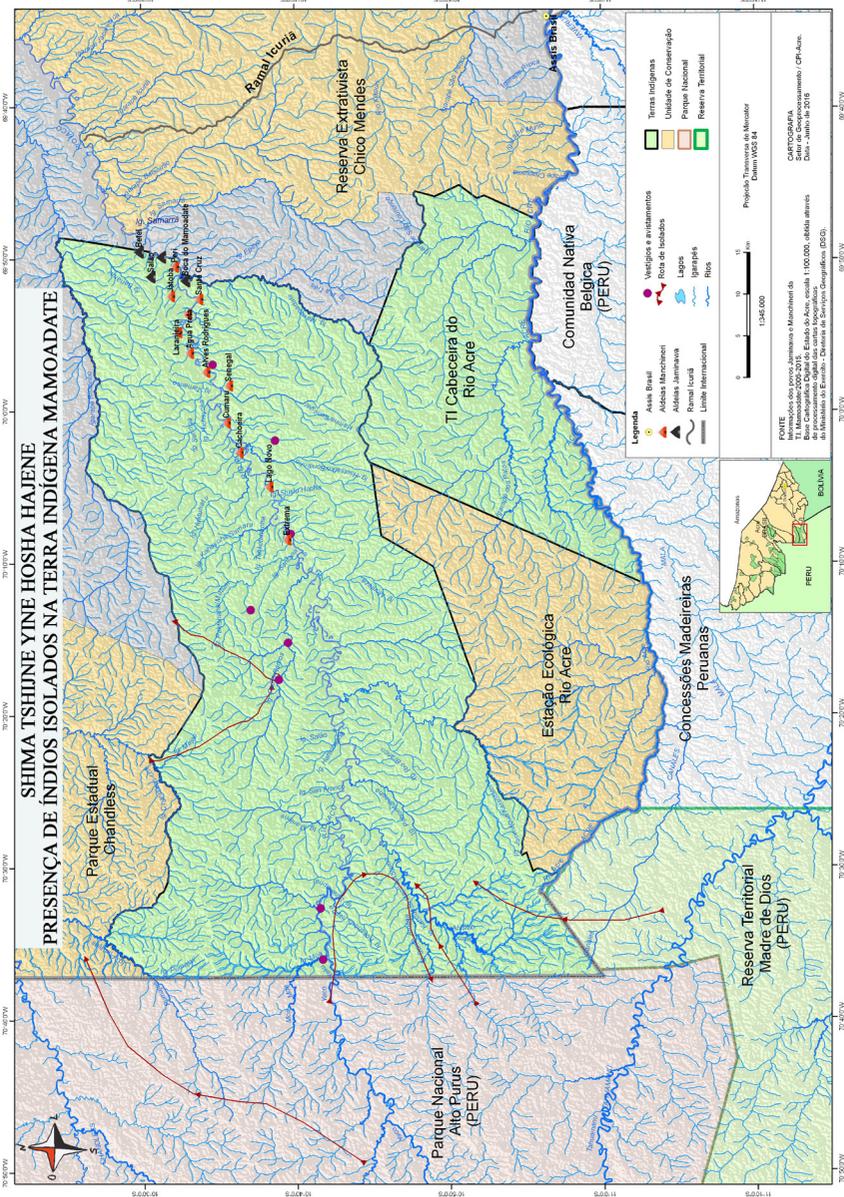
The *Yine Hosha Hajene* currently live in the Mamoadate Indigenous reserve, the Cabeceira do rio Acre Indigenous reserve, the Ecological Reserve of Acre River, the Chandless State Park in the Brazilian State of Acre, and, on the Peruvian side, the Madre de Dios territorial reserve, as well as the Upper Purus National Park (Thauamano, Las Piedras, and the Upper Madre de Dios River). On the Brazilian side, they live by the headwaters of the Yaco River and its tributaries, the Abismo, the Marilene, the Capi-

vara, and the Paulo Ramos. For a long period of time, this area has offered a significant living place for the *Yine Hosha Hajene*, as well as for numerous game animals, fish, and other living beings that contribute to the environmental diversity in the region.

The *Yine Hosha Hajene* travel into this large area according to the seasonal availability of different forest resources, and they are divided into smaller groups. In the rainy and summer season, their paths change according to the supply of palm fruits, turtle eggs, and so forth. The freshness and health of the Purus River waters and its tributaries are crucial for all living beings in the area. Yet, increasing lethal threats for the *Yine Hosha Hajene*, such as the activities of loggers, mining, and drug traffickers, as well as road construction projects, have changed their traditional trekking paths. This has resulted in them coming closer to other Indigenous communities since 2013, especially with the Peruvian *Yine* communities, but recently also on the Brazilian side with the Manxineru communities. On the Brazilian side, the *Yine Hosha Hajene* currently have three different trekking routes (marked with red lines in the map) that allow their circulation in the area and the movements to the Mamoadate reserve (the light green area in the center of the map) as shown in Map 6.2.

All the *Yine Hosha Hajene*'s movements to the Mamoadate occur through the neighboring protected spaces of nature and Indigenous territories. However, illegal activities are increasing in this area, regardless of whether or not the land is a protected area, and on the Peruvian side, a large area is already parceled out to logging and mining activities. In Map 6.2, the town of Assis Brasil can also be located, through which the new paved Pacific Highway passes. All these changes to the regional ecological systems have brought physical threats to Indigenous peoples.

During the last few years, the *Yine Hosha Hajene* in the Mamoadate reserve have come closer to the Manxineru villages, especially by using a new path through to the Brazilian Chandless State Park. This new path has even led them to the Paulo Ramos tributary in the upper reaches of the Yaco, which is about 3 hours from the last Manxineru village, Extrema (after that, the Yaco River continues to its headwaters in Peru). Some 10 years ago, their closer presence was observed by Extrema villagers when the Manxineru were



Map 6.2: Yine Hoshajene's movements in the Mamoodate Indigenous reserve. Source: CPI-ACRE, Artur et al., "Yine Manxinerune Hoshajene," 44.

disturbed to find signs of *Yine Hoshá Hajene* occupancy so close to their village. This unusual proximity revealed that the *Yine Hoshá Hajene* had no place to go, and that their territory was threatened. This new area can be seen in the cluster of three purple dots on Map 6.2 (vestiges of the *Yine Hoshá Hajene* identified) northwest from Extrema village (the first in the line of 12 red huts, which are the Manxineru villages along the Yaco River). Manxineru who go hunting and fishing in the upriver area have sometimes been aware of the seasonal presence of the *Yine Hoshá Hajene* by the wide paths, little huts made of palm leaves, and the bones of game animals that have been eaten. In recent years, the *Yine Hoshá Hajene* have settled only within an approximately 90-minute walking distance from Extrema, in “Tabocão,” on the other side of the Yaco. They come to this area through the Cabeceira do rio Acre Indigenous reserve, and since the end of 2020, their presence is edging increasingly closer to Extrema village, currently only a 1-hour walking distance away.

As can be seen in Map 6.2, the Mamoodate territory is bordered by areas that are not protected and are already highly deforested. The *Yine Hoshá Hajene* have reacted to the changes, and according to the Manxineru, are in a constant state of urgency in looking for a place to live with their families. On the Peruvian side, the *Yine Hoshá Hajene* have appeared several times on the beaches, and even asked the Monte Salvado community for bananas. These sightings suggest that they are experiencing increasing pressure from logging and other economic forces. As a result, the *Yine Hoshá Hajene* are experiencing difficulties in finding a peaceful place to live and in securing sufficient food from the forests. There have already been violent conflicts and attacks between them and non-Indigenous peoples, and even between Indigenous peoples, in which some people in Peru have been killed. The last incident occurred in Puerto Nuevo along the Piedras River in April 2020, when a Yine man who was fishing was killed by the *Yine Hoshá Hajene*. It was later determined that drug traffickers, who had moved into the border area, had in fact killed a *Yine Hoshá Hajene*. The *Yine Hoshá Hajene* had mistakenly thought that the Yine man was responsible, and had consequently sought revenge for the loss of their community member.

All of these pressures on their traditional ways of life have influenced territorial management, and the decisions by the Indigenous groups in the region have aimed at securing a safer land for living, hunting, fishing, and gathering. Because the pressure of illegal activity affects the territory of isolated Indigenous groups, the Manxineru have increasingly sought partnerships with civil society organizations, the Indigenous movement, and international organizations that defend the rights of Indigenous peoples. By these methods, they have managed to co-exist with groups with differing interests and values that oppose and ignore Indigenous social–ecological systems and biocultural heritage.

Manxineru’s Commitment to Managing Ancestral Lands

Mamoadate land is a relatively large territory, and thus it is difficult to monitor by land or river. On the Brazilian side, when entering the Mamoadate by the Yaco River, there is not even a sign demarcating Indigenous territory, as is the case in some other territories. Neither the limits of the reserve nor the demarcation of the territory have been clarified since 1986, but this is also common with many other Indigenous territories in Brazil. The governmental representatives have claimed that this is expensive: the cost of tools, equipment, gasoline, boats, and outboard motors is high. Difficulties in monitoring a large territory can lessen the self-organization of Indigenous communities. Self-organization at the moment of change has been recognized as one of the main issues in resilient human–environment systems, and requires co-managed actions.²¹

One of the key actions in land protection has been a new territorial use plan: leaving a separate part of the territory to the *Yine Hoshá Hajene*, so that they can feel safer and have more abundant and diverse forest resources. There is an agreement among the Manxineru and Jaminawa inhabitants of the Mamoadate reserve that the *Yine Hoshá Hajene* can use the land from the upper parts of the Yaco River, namely the Abismo tributary and beyond up to the Peruvian border, and this is also included in their official

territorial management plan.²² The plan was prepared in collaboration with governmental and non-governmental organizations.

When the Manxineru and Jaminawa reserved the most peaceful lands and forest resources for the *Yine Hoshá Hajene*, they also created resources for themselves and for their future generations. The Manxineru had not made use of the headwaters of the Yaco River for some time. However, they consider the headwaters to be an important source of life, and this was also discussed in their territorial plan. The headwater tributaries of the territory also remind them of their ancestors who lived and hid there at the time of colonization, which also affects the continued human–environment interlinkages. All the tributaries have Manxineru names, and as they are the places of ancestors, they can in some sense be regarded as sacred places. The headwater areas are also rich in biodiversity. Studies have shown how sacred forests often increase biodiversity, as is evident in Tibet, where the biodiversity in such places is much more prominent than is usually the case.²³

Officially, FUNAI's Ethno-Environmental Protection Front of the Envira River (*Frente de Proteção Etnoambiental Envira*) is responsible for monitoring and protecting the Indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation in the state of Acre. Their movements are observed from aerial images, but also from observation points in the forest areas. In the Mamoadate there is, however, no such infrastructure, but the Manxineru have been active in reporting the signs of the *Yine Hoshá Hajene* in their territory to FUNAI officials. For decades, the presence of the *Yine Hoshá Hajene* has been known by the Manxineru, but their traces are appearing closer to Extrema village, and this has been of concern to the Manxineru. The Manxineru know that if one accidentally comes too close to the *Yine Hoshá Hajene*, they might feel threatened, and this might result in violent attacks. FUNAI has carried out a few expeditions along the Yaco River, but in the last few years the Manxineru have tried to press the authorities to establish a land protection system in their lands. Whether any action is taken depends on FUNAI's federal office in Brasília.

While developmentalist projects in the area continue to threaten Indigenous peoples' initiatives, Manxineru land management practices have aimed at guaranteeing that the *Yine Hoshá Hajene* can

feel safe from epidemics and from people who violate their territorial borders. Their contribution by way of their livelihoods to the healthy relations of the human–environment assemblage is crucial, such as their hunting practices, forest resource use, gathering economies, and slash-and-burn agriculture. These practices are based on ideas of reciprocity and interdependence with non-human subjectivities. Manxineru values and stewardship structures in their land conservation efforts have kept the resilience of their social-ecological system high. Emotional issues are also involved. In our previous work, which addressed the Manxineru’s motivations for the protection of their kin in voluntary isolation, we highlighted the role of the Manxineru’s agonizing memory of contact with the dominant society.²⁴ That contact altered Manxineru history, and many other Yine subgroups no longer exist. For the Manxineru, their kin in voluntary isolation represent the time of their ancestors before settler-colonization, the time before their own knowledge and language became fragile and suppressed. The *Yine Hoshá Hajene* are regarded as preserving richer environmental knowledge and maintaining the Yine language more strongly than the Manxineru themselves have been able to do during their oppressed relations with the dominant society. This notion was expressed in the report written by the second author for an Indigenist non-governmental organization on the presence of the *Yine Hoshá Hajene* in his territory:

When contact started with the Manxineru people, much of our ancestors’ traditional knowledge became frozen, because of the time of escaping from and the eventual working for the rubber patrons. At that time, we had to abandon our traditional festivities, medicine, craftwork, ceramics, foods, social organization, and so on. Even if we still have the knowledge, it became weak. Our kin still living in the forest still have a possibility to practice these things, but they spend their energies on escaping and they don’t have time.

Today their attempts to escape make them nomads, as they escape from their enemies, and look for a place to maintain their culture and knowledge. For this reason, we Manxineru think of the future of these kin, and we don’t want to happen to them what happened to the Manxineru. The slavery work under rubber patrons was suppression of our people by the dominant society. So [we hope

that] our kin in voluntary isolation can have the possibility of maintaining their knowledge and preserving it for future generations.

The Manxineru have taken an active initiative in the discussions with different actors, such as the Brazilian state and international, governmental, and non-governmental organizations, as well as other Indigenous communities in the region. Besides the support of FUNAI, they have been active in creating a dialogue with non-governmental organizations with whom they had collaborated before, such as the Comissão Pró-Índio (Pro-Indian Commission [CPI]) and the Indigenist work center CTI, asking for co-organized actions. Community workshops were organized to discuss the *Yine Hoshá Hajene's* situation, challenges, and possible solutions. Also involved in this partnership were the Rainforest Foundation Norway (RFN), who financed some actions, through their programs on biodiversity conservation. Community workshops also mobilized Indigenous inhabitants, both Manxineru and Jaminaawa, and allowed their experienced knowledge holders to give advice and make decisions. The information was collected and placed on the maps, and new management of the land co-planned.

The community workshops became a space for Indigenous leaders to express their ideas, and some of them created novel cross-border encounters with Peruvian and Brazilian institutions and the leaders of regional Indigenous organizations. The work aimed at creating a new policy for the protection of the *Yine Hoshá Hajene*, as well as exchanges to report on these people. In addition to the workshops with Indigenous representatives, the Manxineru people constantly carry out monitoring and evaluations in their territory in order to obtain information about the movements of the *Yine Hoshá Hajene*. They have also carried out expeditions together with Indigenist organizations to obtain more information on activities in their territory.

The vulnerability of isolated Indigenous peoples in the Acre-Peru border area has also been debated by government agencies and civil society in binational meetings. In these meetings, the responsible organization of the Brazilian state has been FUNAI, while since 2013 it has on the Peruvian side been the Ministry



Figure 6.1: Community workshops organized with the Comissão Pró-Índio in 2016 to map the vestiges and paths of the *Yine Hoshá Hajene* living in voluntary isolation. Photo: CPI-Acre.



Figure 6.2: Testing a GPS in a community workshop for the monitoring of the *Yine Hoshá Hajene* vestiges' locations. Photo: CPI-Acre.

of Culture. In relation to the Mascho-Piro, the Native Federation of the Madre de Dios River and Tributaries (FENAMAD, *Federación Nativa de Madre de Dios y Afluentes*) has been the most active. On the Brazilian side, the Secretary of the Environment also became more active about the Mascho-Piro in the nature protected areas, although in practice state-level policies have been sparsely implemented. For many years, the nation-state representatives, at both federal and state levels, showed their support for and interest in Indigenous peoples and their knowledge, and some further positive actions were taken. In the last few years, this has changed, and the acknowledgement of Indigenous knowledge is rarely mentioned.

However, as a result of regional and international articulation, an integrated protected area was created for the *Yine Hosha Hajene*, uniting several demarcated Indigenous territories and nature conservation areas on both sides of the Brazilian–Peruvian border region. In local-level discussions, local actors made innovative initiatives, among others the establishment of the so-called Territorial Passageway for Isolated Indigenous groups (*Corredor Territorial de Povos Indígenas Isolados*). It was designed for different protected spaces of nature on the Brazilian–Peruvian border area, namely (besides the Indigenous territories in Brazil and Peru), the Ecological Reserve of Acre River and the Chandless State Park in the Brazilian State of Acre, and on the Peruvian side, the Madre de Dios territorial reserve and the Upper Purus National Park.²⁵ The mosaic of the different conservation and Indigenous areas allows a safer space for mobile Indigenous people in voluntary isolation, such as the *Yine Hosha Hajene*, as well as transnational governance models for conservation. Even if this Territorial Passageway exists largely only in theory, the initiative did bring together the representatives of the state-organized Indigenous reserves, the nature protection areas, and the traditional extraction reserves in the region. The mosaic also included ecosystems of plants and migrating animals.

As the Manxineru and the Yine have detailed observation and knowledge of the area, they are the key agents in land management and protection activities. Their knowledge and understanding are reflected in their management practices, local ecosystems, and institutions. Furthermore, they have strong leaders and their

own communication and organization systems. Social-ecological collectives and their self-organization at moments of change are crucial for resilience and survival, and thus for further sustainability.²⁶ As Berkes has noted, self-organization capabilities can also deal with several institutions and, if they sustain self-organization, they act as a social control mechanism—for instance, in assisting when there are gaps in knowledge.

Along with the establishment of national and international alliances, the Manxineru and Yine spokespeople traveled to different events in order to share information about the situation. All of this shows their capacity to respond to crises. Connections between Indigenous communities and Indigenous organizations are critical for the governance of land protection actions and management beyond the borders. The second author has been the main Manxineru spokesperson to travel to discuss the situation of the *Yine Hoshá Hajene* with the Yine relatives living in their communities on the Peruvian side; among other places, he has also traveled to the Monte Salgado community by the Piedras River.

Our case shows that eventual co-planning was drawn from the different views and knowledge of different actors. In the Acre state, community approaches based on human–environment collectives had already been established for some time, and its local non-governmental institutions and several individual governmental authorities have experience in engaging with local and Indigenous knowledge in their projects, such as in the so-called ethno-mapping efforts. The regional alliance built can also be understood from a historical perspective, because the state of Acre has a long history of environmentalist and Indigenist movement by the Peoples of the Forest. Since the 1970s, this alliance promoted the sustainable use of forest areas, which led to the founding of reserves where people extracted resources in sustainable ways. Their activities since that time have been weakening due to state political changes, but in relation to some issues the alliances are still being rebuilt, as some organizations continue to share similar interests with Indigenous peoples.

On the one hand, the Manxineru's regional commitment to protect the lands drew from Indigenous knowledge, produced

intergenerationally and collectively. On the other, the governance models established were not created only by Indigenous communities, but in the network of non-governmental organizations and government sectors. Overall, the challenge was not the commensurability of Indigenous knowledge with other knowledges,²⁷ although that has been one problem between the Manxineru and some individual state authorities,²⁸ but that the decisive structures of nation-states have rarely implemented monitoring and protecting activities in the region. Despite the linkages between several actors toward the protection of Southwestern Amazonian biocultural landscapes, governmental institutions have not integrally implemented international Indigenous and human rights laws and constitutions. This may well lead to genocide, as some researchers have noted.²⁹

Several arguments have been made concerning the benefits of integrating different knowledges and their difficulties,³⁰ but here we see that many other issues are involved. These are linked to state politics and the dominant society's overall economic interests to exploit natural resources beyond sustainable limits, as shown by forest deforestation and how patchy forest coverage has become. The Manxineru's values and knowledge are at the core of their politics. They also advanced the interlinkages between humans and the environment in spiritual practices, and in their schooling systems. Even if these matters are challenging to express for people with different epistemological thought and knowledge-making practices, the Manxineru have recently made efforts to pronounce these issues publicly. The second author has worked hard to train himself to be a spokesperson for his people on Indigenous rights issues and education, which has taken him to national and international events. The Manxineru environment assemblage was even addressed on two occasions in his presentations at the UN headquarters. The first one was at the UN Expert Mechanism for Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) event in Geneva in July 2018, and the second was in New York at the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous issues (UNPFII) in April 2019. The first author also participated in both of these events as an academic expert (as a speaker and workshop organizer on cultural heritage). In the 18th UNPFII Session in the UN headquarters,

the second (Manxineru) author wrote his presentation for Item 14, the Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Chair of the Mechanism of Experts on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, shown below:

Madam President,

I'm Lucas Artur Manchineri.

In reference to the traditional knowledge of the Indigenous Peoples, I, a representative of the Manxineru people, take this opportunity to declare the following:

For the Manxineru people, “nature” automatically builds itself constantly, and this movement has been going on for millennia. Living beings on the earth have life like any human. In the traditional knowledge of the Manxineru people, the land gives life to all the living beings that inhabit it and it always generates other lives. Forests too have their own lives—and there is the language of the land, trees, waters and animals.

Today, all these living beings and knowledge are being affected by humans with their deforestation and contamination of waters and the land.

In the governance of the Manxineru people, before contact with non-Indigenous people, the highest authority is the one who had full control of the community and social organization, which is reflected today in the way the Manxineru organize themselves. Authority was conferred on leaders and spiritual knowledge-holders, such as shamans.

Therefore, we the Manxineru people declare to the Brazilian State:

1. That traditional Indigenous knowledge is recognized as a valuable science that we can use for millennia and we want the Brazilian Ministry of Education to recognize these values of our collective.
2. That the laws of the state are implemented according to the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
3. That the necessary actions are implemented for a specific and differentiated education.

4. That the Brazilian state recognizes and strengthens the traditional knowledge of Indigenous peoples.

Thank you, Madam President.

Lucas Artur Brasil Manchineri had first been chosen to be on the OHCHR Indigenous trainee program, and his trip to New York was financed by a non-governmental organization. During the period passed in the UN offices, he showed how in the Amazonian view humans and non-humans constitute a collective. However, it is necessary to point out that politics is an important issue here. Even at the international level, some nation-states worked more closely with the Indigenous representatives of the countries, and organized a meeting with their Indigenous delegations in these high-level meetings. Brazil did not offer such an encounter, but rather in its speeches talked about turning Indigenous territories into productive agricultural lands, and announced statistics about the crops produced.

Lucas has also noted in his speeches that many people blame governments, but they should instead look at big entrepreneurs and agribusinesses that ignore sustainable land use. Despite the difficulties, the Manxineru continue to take action, and at the end of 2020 they constructed a post to monitor the movements of the *Yine Hoshá Hajene* moving ever closer to their settlements and established a group who were to be the responsible monitoring experts of the community. Among other things, these experts are knowledgeable in interpreting the movements and sounds of animals, such as birds, that signal the presence of people, and thus the community can be informed about the *Yine Hoshá Hajene's* movements.

Meanwhile, the Manxineru are searching for new knowledge to decide where to establish their hunting and planting areas, harvest their natural medicines, and find methods for protecting their sacred trees. They continue to learn from animals and plants, as they have since ancestral times, and continue to speak their own language. Their leaders say that in this effort and in their sustainable forest stewardship practices, they produce

both intergenerational ecological and intergenerational scientific knowledge. In fact, the Manxineru's enduring ecological knowledge was evident during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. They were largely self-sufficient in their territory, where they maintained social distancing. Yet, despite their deep ecological knowledge of their territory, they could not prevent the spread of the virus. Fortunately, in combating COVID-19, their ancestral knowledge of medicinal plants became noteworthy and effective.

The Future of the Indigenous Protected Areas in Brazil

The established actions for the *Yine Hosha Hajene* land protection showed the synergy of knowledges, interaction, and co-management. These were initiated by the Manxineru and Yine communities, who drew crucial attention to the increasing pressure of outsiders' economic activities on their lands, as they had detailed knowledge about what was happening on their lands. Eventually, Indigenous ideas, perspectives, and governance models have strengthened the mosaic of different conservation and Indigenous areas, beyond their borders. Interlinkages between different governmental and non-governmental institutions have been noted as crucial for effective communication and organization of actions.³¹

Yet, Indigenous knowledge and the contribution of Indigenous peoples to sustainability and biocultural diversity systems remained unrecognized at the highest political levels. Hence, the case of the Manxineru and the protection of their lands with governmental and non-governmental organizations showed how, despite engaging with knowledges coming from different sources and traditions and creating synergy,³² land protection is denied by political state decision-makers at implementation levels. Along with others, the Manxineru have been disappointed that even the satellite telephone and very high frequency (VHF) radio system, the only ways to communicate from Extrema village, are rarely fixed by the state, and thus the Manxineru have difficulty in

practicing agency in the land and life protection of their kin in voluntary isolation.

As has been argued, politics is the key for sustainability transformations.³³ In our case, land protection efforts of the Manxineru and Yine in Peru considered humans and the land in interaction. They gained the attention of the state and non-governmental actors, but transformative actions did not take place in practice because of the highest state leaders in government and the interests of economic exploitation aimed at immediate material profit-making. These agents have complex structures and especially the state can work differently at different levels.³⁴ Besides discussions on Indigenous knowledge in Indigenous Studies and social-ecological systems by ecologists, further studies are required in social epistemological approaches to pinpoint the best practices for the inclusion of Indigenous peoples and their knowledges at both state and federal levels. Indigenous traditional governance structures that include non-human actors could then become recognized in an integrated way by all governmental agencies, not only by its individual officers, as well as in political decision-making beyond national borders.

Agricultural industry and cattle ranching are occupying ever-more land in the proximity of the areas where the Yine, Manxineru, and *Yine Hosha Hajene* live. Their area is becoming increasingly surrounded by large-scale extractivist projects, with favorable connections to governmental authorities, and therefore their agency is limited. During the presidency of Jair Bolsonaro, illegal actions in Indigenous territories have been even more encouraged in Brazil, and increasing gold mining with its intoxicants and deforestation are causing brutal ecological disasters. This can irreversibly change the planet's climate. This is a vital issue for those actors who work to strengthen traditional and Indigenous knowledge and biocultural diversity in the Amazon.

Advancing social learning is elemental for better governance, and eventually to improve resilience capacity.³⁵ However, ignorance about and suppression of the Amazonian Indigenous population continues in multiple ways. Among others, in the COVID-19

situation, Indigenous organizations made strong claims that they had been ignored in the preventive actions. Furthermore, in April 2020, the governmental agency, FUNAI, gave new guidelines that all Indigenous lands that were waiting to be demarcated (over 200 territories) would be privatized and opened for exploitation. This was despite the global recognition that health and eco-catastrophes are closely interrelated. The future will show to what extent the lessons we have learned from our current health and environmental crises will be remembered.

Notes

- ¹ We would like to thank the Academy of Finland and the Faculty of Arts of the University of Helsinki for the funding, CPI-Acre for the long-term collaboration, and the editors of this volume for their comments and language editing.
- ² Shepard, “A Década do Contato,” 556.
- ³ Albert and Ramos, *Pacificando o branco*.
- ⁴ See IPBES, *Global Assessment Report*.
- ⁵ Dowie, *Conservation Refugees*; Ostrom, “General Framework,” 420.
- ⁶ Berkes, Colding, and Folke, “Introduction.”
- ⁷ Berkes, *Sacred Ecology*, 198–202; Frey and Berkes, “Partnerships and Community-Based Conservation,” 26–46.
- ⁸ See also Briggs, “Indigenous Knowledge,” 231–43.
- ⁹ Laidler, “Inuit and Scientific Perspectives,” 407–44; Patterson et al., “Exploring the Governance,” 1–16; Tengö et al., “Connecting Diverse Knowledge Systems,” 579–91.
- ¹⁰ Alcoff, “Race and Gender,” 304–12; Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*.
- ¹¹ Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Design*.
- ¹² For more on the Manxineru in Brazil and Yine in Peru, see Opas, “Different But the Same”; Virtanen, *Indigenous Youth*.
- ¹³ Shepard and Torres, “Os povos isolados,” 182–88.
- ¹⁴ FUNAI, “Povos Indígenas Isolados e de Recente Contato.”
- ¹⁵ Chilisa, *Indigenous Research Methodologies*, 99; UN Human Rights Council, “Promotion and Protection,” 15.
- ¹⁶ Berkes, *Sacred Ecology*, 7.
- ¹⁷ See, e.g., Fernández-Llamazares and Virtanen, “Game Masters,” 21–27; Surralles and Hierro, *Land Within*; Virtanen, “Ancestors Times,” 330–39.

- ¹⁸ E.g. Pärssinen et al., “Domestication in Motion.”
- ¹⁹ Virtanen, *Indigenous Youth*.
- ²⁰ Kröger, “Deforestation,” 464–82; Vadjunec et al., “Landuse/Land-Cover Change,” 249–74.
- ²¹ Berkes, “Environmental Governance,” 6; Ostrom, “General Framework.”
- ²² Almeida et al., *Gestão Territorial e Ambiental*, 66.
- ²³ Salic et al., “Tibetan Sacred Sites,” 693–706; see also Gulliford, *Sacred Objects and Sacred Places*.
- ²⁴ Manchinieri, Virtanen, and Ochoa, “Yine Manxinerune Hosha Hajene,” 48–49.
- ²⁵ Melo Silva and Ochoa, “Povos indígenas,” 157–61.
- ²⁶ Berkes, “Environmental Governance,” 6.
- ²⁷ Patterson et al., “Exploring the Governance,” 1–16; Ross et al., *Indigenous Peoples*.
- ²⁸ Virtanen and Honkasalo, “New Practices,” 63–90.
- ²⁹ Shepard and Torres, “Os povos isolados,” 189.
- ³⁰ Briggs, “Indigenous Knowledge,” 231–43.
- ³¹ Tsosie, “Climate Change,” 239–57.
- ³² Tengö et al., “Connecting Diverse Knowledge Systems,” 579–91.
- ³³ Patterson et al., “Exploring the Governance,” 1–16.
- ³⁴ See also Christensen and Laegreid, “Fragmented State.”
- ³⁵ Berkes, “Environmental Governance,” 1232.

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PART III

**Re-Indigenizing Knowledge
and Nature**

CHAPTER 7

Blackfeet Discourses about Dwelling-in-Place Our Homeland, a National Park

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Since the beginning, according to Blackfeet elders, the universe has been made of particles of energy, and fields of force that combine into various forms which we might call “the land” or “mother earth,” including the “wind,” “tree,” “bear,” or “human.” These energies and forces are deemed irreducible as they include both spiritual and material qualities. All that is, and has been, or will be, according to this view is a result of this enduring energy and these formative forces. Our role as people is to listen to, learn from, and become attuned to the world as such. In doing so, if done well, we can continually enhance the ways we dwell in our world.

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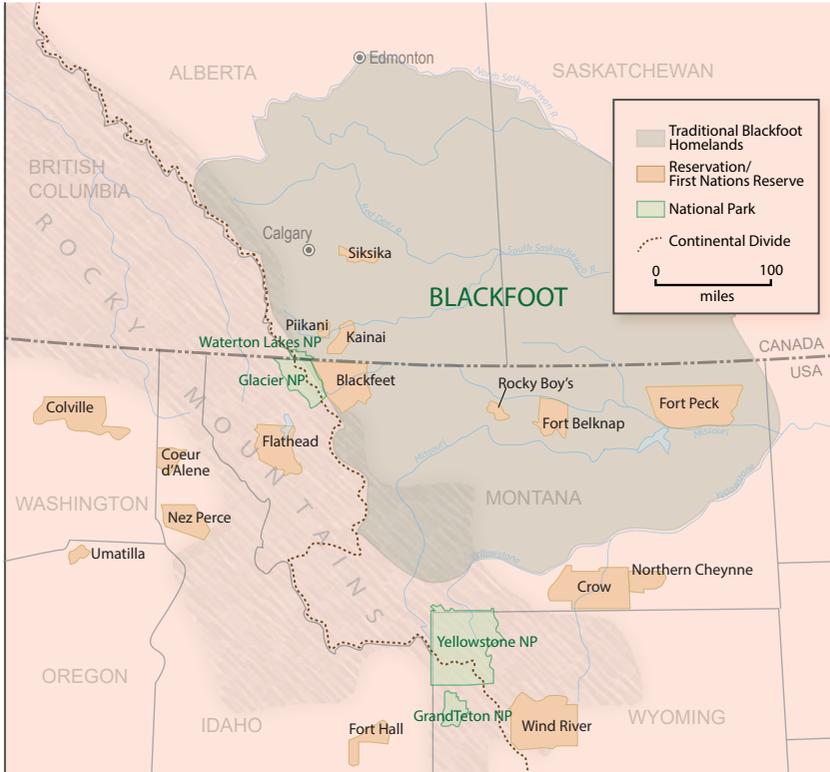
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Figure 7.1: Interpretive Site about Blackfeet (*Amskapi Piikuni*). Photo: Donal Carbaugh.

The paragraph above is an effort to place in short linguistic form, in prose, a complex truth which has been spoken to me at times by Blackfeet speakers.¹ The thoughts that follow focus on snippets of discourse which I have heard over the decades for the most part from speakers with whom I have spent time. Each speaks about a dwelling-place, the homeland of Blackfeet (*Amskapi Piikuni*) people. Each speaker has special standing to so comment as their remarks are a product not only of English, but also of the Blackfoot language. Each also is knowledgeable in living “two different kinds of life”—what in Blackfeet discourse can be called “contemporary ways” and “traditional ways,” with the latter being deeply able to address many dynamics in today’s world. Each also has lived not only away from but mostly within traditional Blackfeet territory.

The main purpose of this chapter is to present to readers the spoken words of these Blackfeet people who have discussed their



Map 7.1: Original Blackfeet Territory. Map: Heli Rekiranta.

homeland, its landscape, and all that it entails. In the process, the chapter seeks to help readers hear in those words a Blackfeet way of speaking about their land, to introduce some of the cultural meanings of Blackfeet in that way of speaking about it, and to offer an understanding of this way as a communal touchstone which is anchored in the discourse Blackfeet participants produce as they speak about their homeland.

Background

Blackfeet people have lived on the northern great plains of the North American continent since their beginning; see Map 7.1.

Prior to and during the 1700s, Blackfeet people moved freely on the plains, up, down, and into the Rocky Mountain front, this being the area lightly shaded in Map 7.1. (The far left of the shaded area illustrates the Continental Divide of the Rocky Mountains.) In 1818, a border between Canada and the United States was established along the 49th parallel, a border which would become significant to Blackfeet people. The border would dissect what is known as the Blackfoot Confederacy, placing three of the Blackfoot bands, the *Kainai*, *Siksika*, and *Aapatohsi Piikuni* onto reserves, and others on a reservation known as the Blackfeet (or *Amskapi Piikuni* in the Blackfoot language). This is the largest geographic reservation of the Confederacy, the largest section of dark shading in Map 7.1.

In 1910, some of this landscape was declared by Canada and the United States to be “the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park,” the larger portion in the United States being called simply Glacier National Park. Glacier National Park is immediately to the west of the Blackfeet Nation and was, of course, part of the aboriginal Blackfeet homeland depicted in Map 7.1.

An earlier essay contrasted place-names, stories, and other topographical nomenclature used by Blackfeet people who referred to this landscape as their “homeland” or, at times, as their “reservation,” the latter a small parcel—relative to the Blackfeet homeland—being so declared by the US Government for the Blackfeet. These earlier studies analyzed in detail some of the contrasting ways in which Blackfeet (as “homeland”) and non-native people (as a “park”) have conceived of and evaluated this landscape.²

The cross-cultural comparisons alluded to, in the following, include not only the language participants use to discuss the land, but, moreover, practices people use in order to get to know that landscape itself. One such prominent Blackfeet form used to access knowledge involves “listening,” which I (DC) have studied in detail over the decades. This means of learning about nature is in its first instance principally a non-linguistic practice.³ The practice involves a kind of deep attentiveness through which one may



Figure 7.2: The Museum of the Plains Indian, Ean Grimshaw. Photo: Donal Carbaugh.

gain insights about one's surroundings, become attuned to the forces and energies which enliven the land, and then eventually one might learn better what should be said and/or done about it.⁴

The Blackfeet voices introduced below are focused, then, on this landscape and tutored in this way of learning about and living with it. (These are not typically the voices most people hear when tourists visit “the Park.”)

The Approach

The theory and methodology used in this chapter is elaborated on in detail elsewhere.⁵ The idea is that the ways we use language derive radically from our patterns of local use and meaning. And so, we need a way of analyzing that language as such, as particular to place and people, which we call “cultural discourse analysis.” Of particular concern in this chapter is putting Blackfeet peoples’

spoken words carefully onto the page, in order to capture some of their oral qualities. The form of quoting the speakers thus attends very carefully to the ways in which speakers use their words. This is an effort to capture elements of intonation and pausing, thus line breaks occur typically when a speaker pauses; the effort also draws attention to parallel structures such that word repetitions or linguistic emphases are noticed at the beginning of lines. The lines of speaking are also broken into stanzas which draw attention to major themes, or rhetorical emphases, only some of which are commented on below.

This approach to the speakers' ways of speaking honors what has been called the ethno-poetics or the cultural aesthetics of sound we now hear in the ways verbal commentary is produced and interpreted. (Further comments on the approach are available and interested readers are encouraged to consult those.⁶) Cultural discourse analyses of these oral texts also draw attention, in part, to cultural propositions speakers are formulating, to points they are making in their communication. The intent is to stay as close as possible in the initial analyses to speakers' words and their meanings, to honor what is being said by them, to hear the participants' voices, and to be able eventually to interpret their meanings in what is being spoken. This is crucially important in cross-cultural encounters when ways of speaking may sound unintelligible, one to another. This, we know, is a risk in the types of verbal commentary we consider below.

Here, to begin, is a preview of what follows; this is an effort to orient readers to some of the major themes of Blackfeet communication in the speakers' words. These are formulated here briefly in the form of cultural propositions—as these made by and familiar to Blackfeet:

The landscape is our backbone;

It is where earth touches the sky;

Sometimes, while there, spirits do show up;

This is where our prayers are gathered;

We honor this by communicating with nature every day;

Our traditions are profoundly important;
 Our traditional ways honor our landscape, nature's ways.

Lea Whitford and Earl Old Person: The Landscape Is Our Backbone

Lea Whitford is a prominent member of Blackfeet Nation having served as a faculty member at Blackfeet Community College and as a member of the Montana House of Representatives. Her comments which follow appeared in a Montana TV documentary about Blackfeet people. Her views are often sought and in what follows she emphasizes a particular form of land-based education. The last few lines which echo hers are spoken by Honorary Blackfeet Chief Earl Old Person:

Lea Whitford:

- 1 I think it's important to share with our families and our children, the values, our histories
- 2 because that helps them ground themselves in their identity
- 3 and that's going to be WAY more important than anything materialistic
- 4 that they could pick up and have
- 5 My favorite thing is just being able to roam all over Blackfoot territory
- 6 look at the landscape from uh native perspectives that can ok
- 7 my ancestors were here
- 8 like to see what the landscape has as far as stories
- 9 and what it can tell us as people today
- 10 Earl Old Person: Our land base is something that
- 11 we want to retain, to keep
- 12 because our land base is the backbone of our reservation

In the first four lines, we can hear Ms. Whitford emphasize the importance of educating children in traditional Blackfeet “values” and “history.” This “grounds themselves in their identity” (line 2) which is more important than any “materialistic” possessions that money can buy. The most favored, priceless thing to her is “Blackfeet territory” and “the landscape” because “my ancestors were here” (lines 5–7). This land evokes deep “stories” (line 8); there is much “it can tell us as people today” (line 9). Chief Old Person adds: “our land base is the backbone of our reservation” (line 12).



Figure 7.3: Chief Mountain. Photo: Wikimedia Commons / National Park Service. No protection is claimed in original US Government works.

Rising Wolf: Where Earth Touches the Sky

While at the University of Montana, I heard about Rising Wolf from a woman who knew him well. She knew I was trying to learn about Blackfeet views of the world and suggested I get together with Rising Wolf, who kindly agreed to meet with me. I had been talking to Rising Wolf about the ways in which he, as a Blackfeet man, thought about our society today. He enjoyed using the metaphor of moving between places as a “time capsule” with today’s “contemporary” world being troubled and off-track morally, but through his “traditional ways” he could live anew by practicing today an ancient wisdom. He had talked in some detail about ways in which money can lead to the corruption of our peoples, about the difficulty of young people being educated in a traditional way, and how movement between the reservation and off-reservation places can lead to confusion. At that point in our conversation, with a smile, he

circled back to the reservation, his homeland, with detailed thoughts about its landscape. I asked him: “When you’re [on your homeland], and you look across the plains, you look up to the mountains and glaciers, what do you see? What do you feel?” He said this:

- 1 What I always look at is
 2 I see where earth touches the sky
 3 and I like to look at it in the evenings
 4 where you can actually say
 5 in that point in time
 6 you can walk from one space to another
- 7 and to me, a lot of that is reality and factual
 8 and a lot of it’s a dream to me ...
- 9 you can see the purple flowers, goin’ over the hills, and goin’ up to a light blue,
 10 and then you can see the white or the snow, on the mountains,
 11 and then right above that you get the light blue again
 12 and it shades back into the purple sky right above you
- 13 now, that’s where the sky is touching the earth,
 14 and it’s just a perfect blend of color, of shades of color.
- 15 and so I get this feeling that I’m standing in heaven
 16 at the same time I’m standin’ on earth because
 17 I look up and the same place I’m standing
 18 I see the same colors, the same thing
 19 I see the purple right above me, the dark blue, the light blue,
 20 and the white mountains
 21 and then the light blue coming back and the purple right underneath it
 22 and it’s just part of the earth itself, heaven and earth
 23 just bein’ part of that for that one particular moment
 24 even if it takes a second just to realize that
- 25 It’s just a regenerating feeling. It’s a—all of a sudden
 26 I keep going back to the time capsule ‘cause you feel like
 27 you’re the only one on earth for that split second.
 28 that you’re the only one there



Figure 7.4: Blackfeet Lodges and Rocky Mountain Front. Photo: Donal Carbaugh.

Knowing how easily this misalignment can happen, a malformed being out of space whose timing is off, Rising Wolf moved on to recount one type of remedy: a search for proper help.

Rising Wolf: The Spirits Did Show Up

I had asked Rising Wolf about the phrase, “time capsule,” which he had used to discuss being stuck in today’s world without the proper or traditional benefits of one’s homeland. He responded in the following way, but note that “time” here is bent, such that ancient lessons, when living today, can bring one to life anew, thereby redressing a misaligned being-in-the-world. For what one can find is an ancient wisdom which is grounded in the past yet also being brought into the present today; in the process this can regenerate life, leading to a renewal of alignment with the world, becoming better attuned to its material and spiritual energies. The landscape offers as much if only we open ourselves to it; it is indeed full of necessary insights and, if you are careful, as Rising Wolf is, you may learn from that too. As he said of one such experience:

1 In fact, one time I woke up in the middle of sweet grass.
 2 It was so beautiful
 3 Well, I sat there and
 4 I realized it was sweet grass and
 5 I just (.) started grabbin' it by handfuls and
 6 I thought, well,
 7 I'll wait
 8 see what else is here
 9 and I just started checkin' around

10 And the spirits did show up
 11 I just laid on that sweet grass
 12 and hung onto it
 13 and just started prayin'
 14 And tell them to take pity on me

15 Nowadays, I say
 16 I'm a little confused so
 17 You gotta watch my mind
 18 It might wander off and
 19 Think about something else

20 But my heart's going to hang on and
 21 Hope nothing but the good happens
 22 Because there has to be a balance

There are several remarkable aspects Rising Wolf recounts here about his relationship with the landscape. Note (on lines 1 and 4) that the experience involves a shift from one sort of orientation or consciousness to another as Rising Wolf “woke up” and “realized” where he was. This is a stance of humility, acknowledging that one is not the ultimate willful source of such things as these moments arise as a part of a powerful mystery. They happen, you can work to create circumstances where they may happen, but you cannot will such things to happen to you. The element of mystery is important.

Note also the situating device included (on line 1). Rising Wolf says he found himself “in the middle of sweet grass.” This is a



Figure 7.5: Blackfeet Artist Jay Laber’s Blackfeet Warriors. Photo: Donal Carbaugh.

physical place that is beautiful and pleasant (lines 2–5); this is also a cultural scene, which invokes a sacred plant often burned in ceremonies, while also invoking a sacred place, the Sweet Grass Hills, which is the site of historical encampments and sacred ceremonies, a place where prayers are known to gather. One well-known Blackfeet origin story says this place is the place where life began. And so it is a place where the sweet grass, nature’s incense, grows and sacred rituals are practiced.

Notice how Rising Wolf draws our attention to his way of acting in this beautiful, sacred landscape. His acts involve watching, listening, and feeling (such as “grabbin’ it” on line 5), accompanied by a keen anticipation of what might be there (such as “wait, see, checkin’ around” on lines 7–9).

Then we find the “spirits did show up” (on line 10). He recounts his humbling presence before them, asking them for “pity” (line 14), confessing that he is “confused” (line 16) and that his “mind

wanders” (line 18). Admitting frailty and fault, nonetheless, his “heart’s going to hang on and hope nothing but the good happens” (lines 20–21).

A “balance” (line 22) in life is indeed not only possible, but preferred and restored. This goes deep by balancing several dimensions, including the spiritual and material, as active in the traditional and contemporary worlds. When the “spirits show up,” a renewal of balance can come as the landscape speaks, if only we can ably listen as Rising Wolf does here.

Curly Bear: Where Our Prayers Are Gathered

As Chief Earl Old Person mentioned above, and as Rising Wolf illustrates, the mountain landscape in Blackfeet country is conceived of as “the backbone of the world.” This place, largely conceived (see Map 7.1) includes the birthplace of the Blackfeet people, is a sustaining force of material–spiritual life, provides insights when one is troubled, and is a constant source of education, as well as utter beauty. Indeed, the land holds in place all of this. In the words of a Blackfeet kinfolk, the western Apache, “wisdom sits in places.”⁸ This is a well-known feature of traditional Blackfeet life.

Over the years, Curly Bear, a Cultural Director of the Blackfeet and longtime teacher of mine, had taken me to places that were important to Blackfeet people. He would periodically stop, listen, reflect, and then move onward. He would occasionally remind me to so listen. As he was sitting in his encampment in Writing-on-the-stone Provincial Park, across the national border from the Sweet Grass Hills, he looked over the landscape and uttered these words:

The Sweet Grass Hills is where we believe all our prayers are gathered before they go up to the creator ... As I sit looking at the Sweet Grass Hills, I realize there is a oneness. They support each other, and I can feel that connection as I sit here. (He hears a chorus of coyotes that began howling at sunset.) Indians believe the

coyotes are spirits that guard sacred places, so we always welcome them. But there are powerful spirits in this place.⁹

Rising Wolf: Communicating with Nature Every Day

The powerful spirits in this place may occasionally show themselves. The traditional practice described by Rising Wolf cannot make spirits come, but can build the opportunity for such revelatory potential to occur of its own power. This is especially helpful when one is out of sorts or in need of aid. One way of opening oneself to this sort of help is to “just listen,” to be attentive to nature in order to understand what the land offers as a response to one’s plight. A proper stance is learning the spiritual power of the landscape or environment of which one has been blessed to be a small part. Some terms used to describe this complex process by Blackfeet are “listen,” but also when emphasizing a spiritual dimension, “dream,” “ceremony,” “prayer,” and “smudge.” Rising Wolf stresses the nature of this process and its everyday importance:

- 1 When you’re trying to communicate
- 2 with what nature’s tryin’ to offer you, around you

- 3 In our prayers
- 4 we ask the water
- 5 we ask the fire
- 6 we ask the air and
- 7 we ask the earth to help us
- 8 we go from the smudge
- 9 which is the smoke that goes and carries our prayers to the spiritual world

- 10 we go to there
- 11 we ask for the knowledge of the universe
- 12 we ask for the help of mother earth
- 13 for the food that she gives us
- 14 we give thanks and
- 15 ask for more help

16 we ask the water for everything that is given us
 17 we thank it

 18 and in this way
 19 in this direction
 20 we try to do that every day
 21 Every day, I mean
 22 in the morning when the sun rises
 23 We pray to the sun for lettin' us
 24 Thank it for lettin' us see it one more time
 25 and when it sets and the moon rises
 26 We thank the moon in the same way
 27 For lettin' us see it one more time

Rising Wolf provides this as an elaborate description of what can be done when one needs to address one's shortcomings, or is seeking help, and as a result can learn from the natural-spiritual world. During a practice of "prayer," he asks "water, fire, air, earth" for "help" (lines 4–7). Or in a "smudge," the link to the spiritual world can become reflectively pronounced as "the knowledge of the universe"; when it becomes so, one honors the sustenance provided by "mother earth" and gives "thanks" for that (lines 8–17).

Rising Wolf emphasizes that this sort of humility is crucial to exercise "in this way, in this direction, every day" (lines 18–20). Doing so is to thank the land, the sun, the moon, the wind, the water, and all of creation for what is offered, for sustaining life and for learning to live better. In summary, Rising Wolf reminds us about what comes out of this practice (as in line 2 below) is knowledge, connection to one's world, goodness, and joy:

1 If you think of nature every day, and pray to it every day
 2 things like that will happen more often

 3 But if you don't
 4 then the old money gods will be with you most of the time

5 and it probably will never happen
 6 it probably will never happen
 7 because there's just too many gods there [laughs]

8 That's what I was saying with practice
 9 the more practice you do
 10 the more you stay with your beliefs
 11 and your understanding of yourself
 12 and you don't confuse the two
 13 then the stronger you get in understanding what's around you
 14 and the easier you're susceptible to seein' and understanding things
 15 and communicating
 16 touchin' and tastin' and smelling
 17 where you can go into a dream
 18 and you can wake up
 19 and wished you were back in that dream [laughs]
 20 Y'know
 21 because it was so real
 22 and the enjoyment of it

Smokey Rides at the Door: The Importance of Our Traditions

Smokey Rides at the Door, a Blackfeet tribal member and traditionalist, has practiced the traditional ways described above during his long life. He worries that the contemporary ways mentioned above—with their emphases on money, consumerism, and ecological violation—will not allow for learning the sort of knowledge practiced by these Blackfeet people:

1 Western civilization is beginning to realize that by taking and taking and taking
 2 our diminishment of the earth is drawing near.
 3 Our glaciers are drying up
 ...
 11 We can continue to learn from our traditions, acting from them.
 12 We will see the regeneration of Mother Earth and the people that are living on it.
 13 That's why Indian people are so important.
 14 We haven't ventured very far from that understanding of our connection to Mother Earth.¹⁰



Figure 7.6: Many Glacier area. Photo: Donal Carbaugh.

William Big Bull: The Traditional Way, the Natural Way¹¹

William Big Bull is a member of the Blackfoot confederacy who, like Lea Whitford, Earl Old Person, Rising Wolf, Curly Bear,

Smokey Rides at the Door, and many others, finds deep value today in practicing the land-based ways of living and learning seamlessly alluded to by these people. These ways, when done regularly, help keep one attuned to the land, the homeland of Blackfeet people, as a material–spiritual place. William Big Bull emphasizes the importance of listening to nature; he summarizes this view and a variety of profoundly important points for us:

1 In the traditional way, *kanistitopi*
 2 the way you understand it
 3 and how yourself
 4 when you present yourself and
 5 I've said twice about that *kiyayo* [bear]
 6 about that bear because it's around us every day
 7 but isn't only
 8 it's thousands of animals
 9 small ones, big ones
 10 the ones that live in the earth every day
 11 the ones that sleep and rest through the winter
 12 you know come back alive in the springtime
 13 the ones we don't see
 14 Everything around us in the natural way

15 Again there is a way of living with it
 16 And our people did that for thousands and thousands of years.

17 So did your people, you know this is an important thing
 18 association is important

19 But at the same time now
 20 we've become intertwined in our lives and
 21 we come to places like this to spend some time to teach a little bit of our knowledge
 22 I guess the whole idea is *kiyatakiopstoko*
 23 to wake you up
 24 to use the knowledge
 25 just simply wake you up
 26 you don't become a servant to it
 27 you don't own it
 28 but the thing about it is
 29 is if you don't listen
 30 it might own you

31 That's the natural world
 32 and I have this saying
 33 you know nature takes care of us
 34 nature takes care of itself
 35 that's the way of the world
 36 and today because we're expecting everybody else
 37 governments and everybody else around us
 38 complain to them they'll take care of it for us.

39 The world that we need to take care of
 40 we all have to take care of it
 41 because we have families
 42 we have a future every day
 43 you think of your future
 44 you don't just think
 45 because you woke up today that's it
 46 and that connection
 47 how we have to live together
 48 and use that knowledge today
 49 in the traditional language that we're working with
 50 and teaching ways
 51 to preserve it in their minds
 52 and to make it resonant in their minds
 53 so they hear it every day

By Way of Concluding: A Note on Indigeneity

William Big Bull's words here (as the others above) address how "our [indigenous] people" understand the land, nature, and a particular way of living with it. He reminds us that "your people" or the rest of us also knew this way of living. He leads us, today, back to some ways we may have lost, to waking us up to those ways in order to live more attuned to the land, nature, spirits, and the places we know. Big Bull's act here may be characterized as a move to "re-indigeneity," to learning new ways of living in a traditional way, to listening better to the knowledge which is before us in the natural world.¹² His words also offer a way of speaking about our world, a way not typically found in many parks or natures' classrooms. Surely, we can add this way to others, becoming more educated not only about our histories, but better equipped in sustainable and mindful ways of living today.



Figure 7.7: Blackfeet Buffalo. Photo: Donal Carbaugh.

We began by emphasizing that this knowledge is at its base full of forces and energies which recombine into (at times) physical forms. As the Blackfoot scholar Leroy Little Bear has put it: “In Aboriginal philosophy, existence consists of energy. All things are animate, imbued with spirit, and in constant motion. In this realm of energy and spirit, interrelationships between all entities are of paramount importance, space is a more important referent than time.”¹³ Those entities involve connections among all of us and our places. As we struggle to know our landscapes, our histories, as we productively use this sort of knowledge, we can take better care of ourselves, our families, our world. Certainly from our places, in these ways, we can live better, if we just listen and learn.

Notes

¹ For recent monographs about this, see Blackfeet and/or Blackfoot authors Bastien, *Blackfoot Ways of Knowing*; Gone, “So I Can Be Like a Whiteman,” 369–400; Holy White Mountain, “Silence Itself,” 109–14; Howe, *Retelling Trickster*; LaPier, *Invisible Reality*; Little Bear, “World Views Colliding”; Wagner, “Among My People.”

- ² See Carbaugh and Rudnick, “Which Place, What Story?” 167–84.
- ³ See Howe, *Retelling Trickster*, especially 3–29.
- ⁴ Several essays have explored multiple facets and features in this form of listening. See Carbaugh, “*Just Listen*”; Carbaugh, “Two Different Ways of Knowing,” 34–49; Carbaugh, “Quoting ‘the Environment,’” 63–73; Carbaugh, *Cultures in Conversation*; Carbaugh, “I Speak the Language,” 319–34; Carbaugh, “People Will Come,” 103–27; Carbaugh and Grimshaw, “Two Different Kinds of Life.”
- ⁵ For a recent treatment, see Carbaugh and Cerulli, “Cultural Discourse Analysis,” 1–9. For a programmatic essay, see Carbaugh, “Cultural Discourse Analysis,” 167–82. For a special focus on studying discourses of dwelling, see Carbaugh and Cerulli, “Cultural Discourses of Dwelling,” 4–23. A recent article explicates the theory relative to others: see Scollo, “Cultural Approaches to Discourse Analysis,” 1–32. A recent book of research which utilizes the approach is also available: see Scollo and Milburn, *Global Communication*. An expansive and growing bibliography of literature is available from the authors.
- ⁶ See Webster and Kroskrity, “Introducing Ethnopoetics,” 1–11. An excellent earlier example of ethnopoetic transcription appears in Cerulli, “Ma’iingan Is Our Brother,” 247–60.
- ⁷ This prominent Blackfeet discourse contrasts, via a cyclical symbolic form, “the contemporary world” with “the traditional ways”; it is analyzed in detail elsewhere, including its abstract qualities, web of meanings, and larger cultural spheres from whence it comes and to which it contrasts. See Carbaugh and Grimshaw, “Two Different Kinds of Life,” 21–36.
- ⁸ Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*.
- ⁹ Reported in the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*, September 20, 1998, 1.
- ¹⁰ The quote is from *Smokey Rides at the Door*, quoted in Thompson, Kootenai Culture Committee & Pikunni Traditional Association, *People before the Park*, 202–03.
- ¹¹ The following words were spoken in Glacier National Park on July 3, 2018 by William Big Bull. They were recorded by Eean Grimshaw as part of his doctoral dissertation research on Blackfeet ways of speaking with special attention to the Native America Speaks program at Glacier.
- ¹² William Big Bull is not alone in the view that we can all, Blackfeet and non-Blackfeet alike, benefit from listening in this way. See, e.g.,

the similar public remarks made by Blackfeet Joe McKay among others in Carbaugh and Grimshaw, “Two Different Kinds of Life.” For a helpful and detailed essay on this usage of “re-indigenization,” see Andersson, “Re-Indigenizing National Parks,” 65–83.

¹³ See Little Bear, “World Views Colliding.”

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CHAPTER 8

Becoming Earth

Rethinking and (Re-)Connecting with the Earth, Sámi Lands, and Relations

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Looming, or Introduction

The fell Bárši looms out of the early morning fog in the picture. The fell has also given name to the small village where my father comes from. Bárši is located in Sámi land, 25 kilometers north of Karigasniemi toward Utsjoki, in Deanuleahki, Teno River valley, on the border between Finland and Norway, on the Finnish side. Deatnu, Teno River itself, is hardly visible in the picture, especially if you don't recognize the river boats. (See Figure 8.1.)

I use the picture as an introduction to this autoethnographic text on Earth, Sámi lands, and relations, as well as on learning

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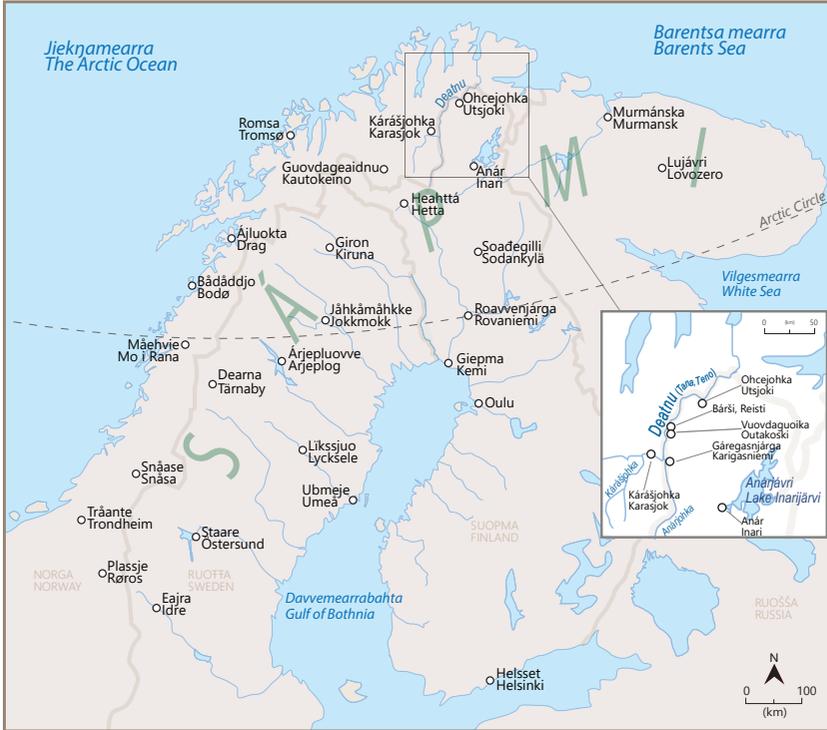
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Figure 8.1: Bárši, a fell in Vuovdaguoika/Outakoski in the Finnish side of Sámi land. Photo: Hanna Ellen Guttorm.

North Sámi concepts concerning land and “nature.” We do not always see clearly, it is like not-knowing, not-seeing, not-understanding what is happening in the world, with the Earth, in the climate, and now in this currently specific time with the novel coronavirus—with the life of viruses. We don’t always understand what is happening even with our nearest relations and societies. There are different kinds of smog, and we can lose the connection and the clear vision. We have to learn to live with uncertainty and not-knowing. In those Sámi societies where people are living connected to the environment and the weather conditions, uncertainty and humbleness are acquainted: “Will the lake give fish? Is this intended? Perhaps, or perhaps not. Will the conditions for moving a herd be favorable? Very often not. Is it safe to travel? Possibly not.”¹

This picture illustrates my path of coming to know these places, as well as concepts, which once, and for a very long time, were very well known to my father. As I have shared elsewhere,² I was born in Southern Finland, and did not learn Sámi, even though we visited my father’s home areas every summer. Still, I never spoke the language and never learnt to fish or drive or even row a boat in the heavy and fast-flowing river. I think we never even went to pick cloudberries or lingonberries—maybe we never were in the Teno River valley during that late time of the summer, or maybe we kids could not handle the swarms of mosquitos. So, the landscapes in Sápmi are still partly only looming for me, beckoning me to arrive. I’m longing to learn these places with my heart



Map 8.1: Deanuleahki, Teno river valley, in Sápmi, along the Finnish–Norwegian border. Map: Heli Rekiranta.

and soul. Happily, I am now moving on that path as I have learnt to speak Northern Sámi and have been able to spend longer times in Sápmi (see Map 8.1).³

Indigenous people are known as having close and sustainable connections with the Land/Earth in the areas they inhabit. But I did not learn of these connections in my childhood and youth. School and society more generally taught me to value progress, “democracy,” and scientific reasoning—the shiny sides of modernity as Vanessa de Oliveira Andreotti and others have described them.⁴ And my worldview, hard as it is to admit, was also based on coloniality, anthropocentrism, capitalocentrism, and Eurocentrism. Coloniality has remained a central concern for non-Western epistemologies, including Indigenous ways of knowing and living, but during the long history of modernity and enlightenment

also our bodies, feelings, and so-called femininities, in us all, have been colonized. In addition, we have colonized the land, truly taken more from the Earth than we need in order to build up what we now understand as welfare. Here, we Sámi people are participating too on multiple levels, as we are living in between different worlds, spaces, and identities, as Sámi, as Finns, as members of a European welfare state.

So, in this emergent autoethnographic (re)search and (re)writing, I'm seeking both to rethink and to (re)vitalize my/our connection with⁵ the Earth. To reconnect, in the meaning of recognizing the connection that we have always already had. Western civilization, globalization, colonization, and "a historically specific fantasy of mastery over the self, the earth, and all its creatures"⁶ have enabled the construction of this world, where the climate is changing and humans and non-humans are suffering because of pollution and growth-based thinking. We do have plenty or actually we are overwhelmed with the knowledge of climate change and global warming and of the need to cut down our carbon dioxide emissions. Common or individual changes are nevertheless not highly convincing. We know, but we don't know with our hearts, our bodies, and our bones. We have lost the true feeling or meaning of being connected. We have lost a sense of responsibility.

Instead of talking about conceptualizations of "nature," I'm using more the concepts "land" and "earth," both with small and capital initials. In multiple Indigenous languages, there is no word for nature, nor for culture. The concept of "nature" has a Cartesian genealogy, but has become self-evident in the current world, creating a distinction between human and non-human others as though human beings and their ways of life were not "nature." "The implication is that animals are natural whereas people are not. An undifferentiated mass of people lies outside nature and disturbs nature's 'essential and natural mechanism[s]' by fishing too much or by shooting mergansers."⁷

Though, based on my own experiences as well as what I've seen, I agree with Jarno Valkonen and Sanna Valkonen, who write that

the representation of the relationship of Sámi people with nature as something that would have remained unchanged for thousands of years is a mythical conceptualization and a part of performatively constructed identities.⁸ Few Sámi people still live in truly close connection with nature. More than 60 percent of the Sámi people in Finland live outside the Sámi homeland area and some 5 percent practice reindeer herding, which no doubt can be seen as preserving traditional ecological knowledge. At the same time, as, for example, Klemetti Näkkäljärvi states, reindeer herding has also changed.⁹ It has been motorized, privatized, and capitalized. Sanna Valkonen writes: “in the current society, nature has been mostly destroyed by the aids and appliances provided by modern society and technology.”¹⁰

There is though knowledge both in the language and in the relational practices. As Bagele Chilisa once said in a research seminar at Sámi allaskuvla, Sámi University of Applied Sciences in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino, every Indigenous person has a book within them, or at least a story to write. She also emphasized the Indigenous language and its ability to carry knowledge on that certain philosophy and worldview.¹¹ In this chapter, I follow this advice and dive into some Sámi concepts around land(s) and the entity known in English as “nature.” Through rethinking land(s), I also both recognize the longing for the land(s) and the search for ways to reconnect with them. This reconnection happens with different guides and travel companions with whom I have had the opportunity to talk and walk. After thinking with Sámi concepts, I will share different mystories, not histories or his-stories, stories by the colonizers, but my-stories, our stories, stories from the people I’ve talked with in my revitalizing journeys in Sámi land.

My-Stories and Autoethnography as an Onto-Epistemological Encounter

Mystories and autoethnography as a methodological choice are connected to my onto-epistemological¹² conviction and will to create space for research that comes from and is based on the entangled

experiences of the researcher him-/herself. Every researcher encounters in her/his life paths and movements a multiplicity of different materialities, discourses, practices, policies, assumptions, discussions, events, and both material and immaterial spaces. These modalities can make these researchers think, without a specific need to go somewhere else—of other spaces, locations, or groups of people—in order to find an interesting/tricky/not-yet-known phenomenon. That kind of research is surely needed to create understanding between different spaces, locations, and peoples. But one should also recognize that in one life, even in one mind, a pluriverse exists. De la Cadena and Blaser see pluriverse, the world of many worlds as “heterogeneous worldings coming together as a political ecology of practices, negotiating their difficult being together in heterogeneity.”¹³ I think that in already one life these different worlds meet. This onto-epistemological understanding of mine is based both on Indigenous theorizations and methodologies,¹⁴ which challenge a human-centric and supposedly rational view of the world by acknowledging the agency of other-than-human beings. This approach is also inspired by multiple post theories (post-structuralism, post-humanism, postcolonialism, feminism, new materialism, and even quantum physics), which challenge Western dichotomist thinking, such as nature-culture, human-animal, reason-emotion/affectivity, theory-lived experience. New materialist and post-humanist thinkers have been theorizing Earth-based subjectivity¹⁵ and inter- or actually intra-relatedness and the ethics of being,¹⁶ which also have been self-evident in multiple Indigenous relational ontologies¹⁷ for ages, already before humanism, even if they have not been conceptualized in that way. That is why Indigenous theorizations could actually also be called pre-humanist.

Admittedly, post theories have been the theoretical background of my thinking and research for a much longer time,¹⁸ whereas with Indigenous thinking I’ve acquainted myself more only during the last five years. Both post theories and Indigenous conceptualizations challenge the human and rationality centeredness of most Western thinking. The main difference may be that while



Figure 8.2: Teno River in Bárši. Collage and larger image: Hanna Guttorm. Smaller image: Taina Kontio.

post theories are also challenging the idea and basis of a stable identity, most Indigenous theories build on identity and in that way on some kind of strategic essentialism. There are tendencies and pressures toward Indigenous cultural purity, and in these essentializing discussions both culture and identity can be seen as rather unchanging attributes.¹⁹

All this has anyway opened up for me spaces for recognizing multiple affects in connection to making research and for challenging the norms of scientific writing, including writing that is openly unfinished, and unraveling the assumptions of “research” with, for example, Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre and Anne Reinertsen.²⁰ With my co-researchers, we have become convinced that stories can carry knowledge and create empathy and understanding in our research writing.²¹

With the picture in Figure 8.2, I want to illustrate how I see myself as naked in the river, naked in the flow of the Teno River, naked in between the encounters with the land and with human and non-human others. Naked in my humbleness, naked in my lack of experience. With all this I then think, write, and talk. And even though I normally want to enjoy the flow of the energy and drift smoothly with the current and not against it, the flow in Teno

is so strong that in order to hold my place, I have to lay against the flow in low water. Against the flow, it is also possible to see and document the things and beings which pass; things and phenomena which flow by me and past me. This is like in my research: I don't merely float and drift with the stream, but stay still and document what happens around me. I have neither a rowing boat nor a motor boat by which I could move from place to place. Nor do I have a fishing or spinning rod with which to catch a fish. Nor a hook with which to get what I would need. Instead, I travel around telling about my task and listening to stories the people I meet have to tell.

Indigenous research most often starts by positioning the researcher.²² In Sámi language, the names follow relationality to grand (grand) parents, from one or both parental sides. This is done as far as needed in order to specify the line of the family, as, for example, Guttorm is a large Sámi family, spread widely in the Finnish and Norwegian sides of Sápmi. In this way, I can be called Luhkkar Jovsset Sámmol Sámmol Hanna, which shows that my father was the great grandson of Luhkkar, one of the early catechists in the Teno River valley. The name can also be related to the location of a certain family. Thus, in the Teno River valley, I more often use the name Báršši Sámmol Hanna, which identifies me through my father as “away from”²³ the village, Báršši—where he was born, and where some relatives still live.

Most preferably, I would like to see and identify myself as an Earthling, a being or a living being on the Earth. This would mean taking the Earthlingness of us, or in this case of myself, seriously. In Earthlingness, ethnicity plays no role.

Sámi Concepts on Nature, Land, and Some Related Words

To learn one's father's mother tongue, North Sámi, as an adult has been a gift. To learn an Indigenous language, in my case Northern Sámi, has meant opening one's eyes and understanding. I have learnt another system of thinking and I am wary of assuming

cultural equivalents through translation as in that way Indigenous ways of thinking can easily get lost, as so often happens in quick and clean practices of translating.²⁵ I have wanted to slow down with the words and concepts, and I have fallen in love with this process. In the next section, I share some findings.

“Nature” and “Land”

For me, the concept *luondu*, used nowadays also in the meaning of “nature,” was easy to learn, as it is so near to the Finnish word *luonto*. However, according to Norwegian Sámi understanding, it is in fact a mistranslation.²⁶ Østmo and Law even state that “there is no word for ‘nature’ in Sámi.”²⁷ *Luondu* is an old Sámi word, which has earlier been used in the meaning of the nature or character of some people, animals, or plants. In everyday Sámi language use, it has nevertheless established its place as a word for “nature”; in Finland, it has been taken into the named meaning,²⁸ and it is used in multiple webpages and projects as well.²⁹ The concept of “nature” has become part of everyday Sámi, and an interesting question would be: How much does it change Sámi material practices? Does the word create a division between nature and culture that was not there earlier?

Whereas “nature,” *luondu*, is a complicated word in Sámi, “land” and “Earth” are not. *Eana* means the planet Earth, land, soil, and ground, as well as state. *Eana* is thus a holistic concept. It is also closely related to the word *eadni* for “mother,” as is the case in several other Indigenous languages. *Eana*, in plural *eatnamat*, is also related to *eatnu*, a current or a flow³⁰—the flow of life in our Earth, as in the mother, the creator of life. In Sámi thinking, the Earth is our mother and the Sun our father.

The Multiplicity of Sámi Concepts for Different Areas

As the Sámi have not used the word *luondu* in the sense of making a distinction between nature and culture, or a difference between realities and values,³¹ and also “environment,” *biras*, came later,

the surrounding environments and areas have been called by different, more specific names. Here, I present some Sámi words for different “tracts” or “areas,” in the plural form. *Duovdagat* are local areas. When Klemetti Näkkäljärvi investigates the memory of a certain area (*duovddamuitu*) and the skill connected to that (*duovddamáhtu*), in his case reindeer herding area, he uses the word *duovdda*, the singular form of *duovdagat*.³² *Duovdda* is thus connected to the local people and the accumulated knowledge on how to manage and read the signs in the forest or fell as well as signs of animals. I can’t resist pondering the connection between the verb *dovdat*, to know, and these locally known areas, even though there is that one “u” dropped from the current verb. This “knowing” is more than about knowledge—Jelena Porsanger uses this example: “*Mun diedán, gii son lea, muhto in dovda su*. I know who he or she is, but I don’t know him [i.e. personally].”³³ I think *duovdagat* is connected to this kind of relatedness, whereas another word *guovllut* is a wider and more often used concept for areas, lands, or landscapes. It is also used when the beauty of a certain area is praised: “*Čáppa guovlu*,” beautiful surroundings. The verb *guovlat* also means to peep or peek.

Some Sámi concepts of the areas are related to the length of stay and connected to verbs or movement. The word *orohagat* comes from the verb *orrut*, to inhabit, live, or stay, and is connected to spaces where one, or a reindeer herd, stays more or less permanently. Also, the summer or winter herding areas are called *orohagat* and could thus be translated as habitats. *Johtolagat*, then, are areas where the herd or people go or migrate through, and that word comes from the verb *johtit*, to travel or to leave. One more word for a certain kind of “area” is *geainnodagat*, which is connected to the word *geaidnu*, “a road” or “a route.” *Geainnodagat* are then areas to move along or move through.

There are also two different words for “a place”: *báiki* can mean any place, a beautiful place, a place to meet or fish or hunt or stay, and so on. *Báiki* becomes *sádji* when one finds a good *báiki* to stay longer, to make it temporarily one’s own *sádji* for a longer or shorter time, especially during reindeer herding. Mikkel Nils Sara

explains what makes a place *sádji*: it is a place where one can lay down, have a reindeer fence, set up *goahti*, a hut, and have a fire, and the border of the *sádji* can be crossed.³⁴

Meahcci and Ruoktu

There are hundreds of different words in the Sámi languages for different fells, rivers, and other waters, as well as, for example, for snow and salmon. In this chapter, I see it as relevant to mention *meahcci*, which has often been translated as an uninhabited area or wilderness. This, however, is a mistranslation, and to my surprise it still exists in Giellatekno dictionaries. In Finnish, the word is easily connotated with “metsä,” “forest,” and this is how I also understood the meaning at the beginning of my Sámi language learning. Solveig Joks, Liv Østmo, and John Law have recently published a thorough and outstanding exploration of the colonial mistranslating of the word *meahcci*, or in plural *meahcit*,³⁵ which they verbalize, meaning to act in a set of lived and worked taskscapes, activity spaces, or places-times-tasks. They investigate the highly variable *meahcci* practices and *meahcci* as “a creative collection of practical places and relations.”³⁶ Different productive activities are practices at different times and in different places and areas, and they are connected to potentially productive relations and encounters with lively and powerful beings.³⁷ *Meahcit* can thus be all kinds of different fells, forests, and bogs, in some areas also lakes and rivers where people go in order to hunt, gather, move, or fish. Regarding the task to do, *meahcit* then become *muorjemeahcci* (places to go and gather berries), in some areas even *guollemeahcci* (places to go fishing). Thus, *meahcci* is like a border crossing concept between land and water. Most often, there is a reason to go to *meahcci*. Some Sámi people say that Sámi do not go to *meahcci* without a specific practical reason, but I think this is changing in the Sámi communities. The recreational aspect of *meahcci* is becoming increasingly important as people are working in different indoor occupations.

As a pair for *meahcci*, I want to tackle the word *ruoktu*, which is mainly translated as “home.” It certainly does mean “home,” but for Sámi it still carries the memory of movement in it. Many Sámi people, especially those living among the reindeer herds, have moved to permanent houses only in the 1960s. Before that, they lived in huts (*goahti*) and moved with the herd to winter and summer *orohagat*, where they created *sádji* for the *goahti* and a fireplace, as well as a reindeer fence. The *sádji* hence became a temporary home, *ruoktu*. The word *ruoktut*, then, means both coming back to some *sádji* and coming or going home. *Ruovttoluotta*, which comes from the words *ruoktu*³⁸ and *luodda*³⁹ (path or track), also means coming back (home), or, actually, following the tracks or path of/to/toward home, when translating directly. This makes me think that *ruoktut* and *ruovttuluotta* are old words for arriving back from the *meahcci*, arriving back from the practical tasks, arriving back to *orrunsádji*, *sádji* to stay, rest, and cook between the tasks in *meahcci*. This moving site, *ruoktu*, is also being located in the *meahcci* itself. The feeling of movement and creating home wherever one migrates is still present in Nils-Aslak Valkeapää’s poem *Ruoktu lea mu váimmus ja dat vuolga mu mielde* (My home is in my heart and it migrates with me).

Other (Still) Living Concepts

One further word, *ealli*, which means both “animal” and “living or alive,” is worth discussing. *Eallit* (the plural form) are those who live, also a person can be *ealli*, living, and the environment also lives, *ealli biras*. Thus, animals, environments, and human beings are relationally dependent, and there is reciprocity and respect between them all. The relation with land is based on humility, *vuollegašvuohhta*, which is visible in multiple practices. There are some ideas which many Sámi people still share, namely, asking for permission to stay or to create *sádji* for a hut and through that honoring the subterranean. The gifts of nature, *luonddoáttaldagat*, should only be harvested to the extent that

they are needed.⁴⁰ So, for example, if you still have berries from last year in the early autumn when it is time to gather new berries, you have taken too much. My former student, Aura Pieski,⁴¹ found Anishinaabe researcher, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, and with her I also got inspired to harvest not only to the extent that I need but to the extent that I get and to be grateful for that.

Humility is also visible in words connected with hunting and fishing: the word *bivdit*, for example, means both to plead, ask, or request, and to hunt, fish, or snare.⁴² When you ultimately get something, you are blessed, *sivdniduvvon*, and you are expected to be grateful for the gift.⁴³ Ethical and respectful relationality and reciprocity is put into practice in using everything from the animal you receive, and leaving the places in *meahcci* as they were.⁴⁴ It also means recognizing and respecting the fact that every animal, *ealli*, has a soul or spirit, as well as emotions, values, goals, and conscious ways of acting, communicating, and caring. Lands are perceived as living entities and are active in relation to humans and animals.⁴⁵ In reindeer herding, this respect nowadays meets with difficulties, as acts and regulations have made it impossible to follow the multiple ancient habits of respecting nature and non-human beings, such as not counting the reindeers or ptarmigans as a sign of respect for them.⁴⁶

The way in which Western (Norwegian, Finnish, English) concepts infiltrate Sámi communities and their materialities needs to be looked at thoroughly, even though it may not be stopped. In addition to Solveig Joks, Liv Østmo, and John Law, among others Mikkel Nils Sara and Jelena Porsanger have also commendably done that.⁴⁷ Sara shows how the concept (and practices) of reindeer herding have changed from *siiddastallan*, having a *siida*, to *boazodoallu*, reindeer herding, because of Norwegian reindeer herding acts and their influence on practices. *Siiddastallan* was earlier a holistic concept and practice for having or living in a *siida*, which aimed at the well-being of the whole *siida*. The idea of collective responsibility, social and ecological sustainabil-

ity, and sustainable relations between people, animals, and the environment changed after and through the governmental regulations and privatization.⁴⁸

Mystories of Longing for Lands and Relations

In this section, I'll share some mystories based on the stories, thoughts, and experiences of a couple of Sámi elders with whom I have been able to walk and talk or sit and talk, as well as my own stories. These stories are full of longing for times gone by, but also for times and possibilities which are now different.

I

Piera, *mu eahkki*, the older-brother-of-my-father,
my 88-year-old uncle,
has been by my side, sharing stories and hospitality.

Piera took me to the cloudberry bog, *luopmanjeaggi*,
It may have been the very last time he went picking cloudberrries,
It was already hard for him with his aching knees,
But he wanted to go and wanted to take me with him.

He told stories about his younger brother
filling the buckets quickly.
We took time to rest and time to move and pick.

Not every cloudberry is ripe enough to pick,
There is often one ready to pick and many which aren't yet,
In this way there's enough for everybody
Today, yesterday, tomorrow,
maybe still next week for someone to pick them,
I'm only taking what I get.

While stepping from tussock to tussock joking
"Is your bucket already full?"
"Oh, yes, it's running over already."
"Yes, I see, I also left a big portion for the bear over there."

...

Some of my cousins, living next to those areas,
have not gone to cloudberry bogs in more than 20 years.

II

Petteri, an old Sámi reindeer herder,
told and memorized softly and longingly
About the old reindeer herding times in the 50s,
Promised me that I can tell his stories as “heard from around,”
but not with his name.

I named him after my brother Petteri,
as he is my brother-in-community.

I heard how Petteri and others were skiing after the reindeer,
How there were no fences, but only skis.
Reindeer must be herded all the time,
so that they don't stray into other reindeer herding areas.

How the fells were full of lichen,
“Unfortunately we didn't have instruments to document it.”
The whiteness of the fells, how white they really were,
The height of the lichen, how high they really grew,
“Unfortunately we didn't have any instruments to document it.”

And how reindeer were eating lichen,
And how demanding and discriminating
the reindeers were with the lichen,

Also in the winter they dug through the snow,
everyone for themselves.
Even though there would have been lichen
dug by someone else on the snow,
it did not meet the requirements of eatable lichen
for any reindeer.
And nowadays, the reindeer eat every black small—and dry—
piece on the surface of the snow.

And if you needed to feed a reindeer,
you were not allowed to touch the lichen

with your hand—no no, it didn't work at all,
 the reindeer would only turn their noses up,
 You had to wear gloves, or not to touch at all.

And the meat!—In the old days,
 reindeer had fat and the meat was delicious and mellow,
 Now the only organic meat is the calf in its first autumn.

But, still, "I don't want to criticize the current practices,
 there are challenges enough."

III

One old fisherman, he'd been following the river all his life,
 Going every morning down to the river
 To see the river, to see the salmon,
 to see the possibilities for fishing, asking, tricking today,
 To observe the young salmon, baby salmon,
 swimming and playing on the shoal.

"For many years I have not even seen any fingerlings,
 Pushing the boat out as a child, I remember
 the water around the boat being black with fingerlings.

The predators and saboteurs are many,
 seals, mergansers, sea trout,
 They can all have their insides
 full of fingerlings and young salmon,
 In Finland it's forbidden to kill a seal,
 Even though it's actually lost from its natural habitat,
 lost and as if caged in the river,
 Emptying the waters of salmon,
 and if not eating them all, frightening them,
 Then we have to call the people at the Norwegian side
 so they can kill it.

Humans are not destroying the salmon, but the autumn flood is—
 Salmon are spawning on the shoal and if the water is high then,
 The flood freezes up and the spawn is in the ice too and dies.

And, the tourists destroy,
 they fish just there where salmon are spawning,
 at the heads of the rapids,
 The salmon don't spawn at all then,
 The fact is that the salmon look for a place to spawn
 already during swimming upstream,
 Then they return downstream even 20 kilometers,
 And when they see the fishing lines and paddle boots,
 they don't stay there at all,

Also, the fish study destroys,
 In the old days when there was no research done there were fish.”

IV

*Dat eai leat munnje
 duovdagat,
 muhto áhččan ruoktoguovllut
 Ráhkistan dáid
 Váillehan dáid dovdat
 Diehtit ii leat doarvái*

They're not *duovdagat* to me,
 But the home *guovllut* of my
 father,
 I love them,
 I long for them to *dovdat*, know
 (through personal and inherited
 experience)
 To know, *diehtit*, is not enough.

*Mo sáhttet dáid guođđit
 Dáid duottariid, dáid oidnosiid,
 dáid váriid ja bálgaid
 Dáid oidnosiid etnui
 Ja manin in nuorra
 rávesolmmožin ollen deike
 In máltán guođđit ustibiiddán
 ja ealliman
 In lean šáddan dovdat
 gullevašvuoda
 dáid eatnamiidda,
 in goit dán gillii
 Ja guolastit, bivdit,
 dan in oahppan ollege*

How could you leave them?
 These fells, these landscapes,
 These hills and paths,
 These sceneries by the river?
 And why didn't I take time
 to come here as a young adult?
 I couldn't help staying
 with my friends and life,
 I hadn't come to experience
 belonging
 to these lands,
 not to this language either,
 And fishing, hunting,
 those I didn't learn at all.

V

Giitu, Irja
Don leat mu ofelaš, mu elder
Maid duinna lean beassan
duoddarii,
Joknameahccái,
Sieidibáikái
Suttésádjagii
Ja oahppasmuvvat
min olbmuiquin

Thank you, Irja,
 You are my guide, my elder,
 With you I have got back to the
 fells and hills,
 To lingonberry *meahcit*,
 To *siedi* places,
 To Sulaoja spring,
 And to learn to know our people.

Becoming Earth: Reconnecting (/) Belonging to the Earth

What to think about and with all of this? Where to go, where to take you, my reader? Yes, there are complicated and huge phenomena, which make me think. Or grasp at thinking. There are multiple changes going on in Sámi societies, in fact in the whole world. During this previously unimaginable phase of global lockdown on account of the coronavirus, it is easy to think of capitalism, globalization, and Western civilization as a set of entangled viruses that have also spread throughout the world.

Sámi poet Nils-Aslak Valkeapää was worried in his last poetry anthology (*Eanni, Eannazan*) about the self-sufficient and superior human, which concerns especially Western civilization and capitalism, but whose fruits Indigenous people are also enjoying, even though these fruits are depleting the environment. “If they [Indigenous people] don’t stop, remember their history, their myths, and beliefs and turn towards a more ecological direction, they too are on the way to destruction.”⁴⁹ One example of this carefree enjoying is one “silver performance” and the reaction it got at the Sámi art festival Márkomeannu a couple of years ago: artist sisters Sara Marielle Gaup Beaska and Risten Anine Gaup wanted to pay attention to the current Sámi way of life and

overconsumption and had dressed themselves from top to toe in silver, in *riskkut*,⁵⁰ and other silver jewelry. They hoped to evoke horrified reactions, but to their great disappointment, very many came to them with very positive and praising comments.⁵¹

In addition to colonization, assimilation, legalization, capitalization, motorization, and privatization, global warming is also transforming the conditions of life in the Arctic quicker and more significantly than in other areas. The worry related to climate change and its implications for Indigenous societies is often directed toward the possibilities of maintaining the socio-cultural life and the traditional livelihoods of the specific community. Losing cultural identity is often represented as a serious consequence.⁵² It is nevertheless interesting to ask: How does the meaning of traditional ecological knowledge change if or when it turns from a nomadic necessity, ecological responsibility, and reciprocal respect to strengthening cultural identity?

Tere Vadén writes that where climate change and the change needed in our ways of life are concerned, we are not missing facts or indicators, but the knowledge and structure of knowledge that would holistically affect our ways of living.⁵³ Western ways of life do not include that kind of knowledge that would maintain ecological sustainability. We have lost or forgotten the foundations of our own life: we don't recognize the world as it is. In addition, we are destroying our own material and spiritual foundations. Vadén calls the material and spiritual conditions of relational life—like what is life, why are we living at all—the knowledge of origins. These conditions are resilient as “many changes are possible, but not all the changes, simultaneously as one single change can make some other changes necessary.”⁵⁴ That is, the conditions both change and remain, repeating rhythmically, renewing the life as holistic and over-generational knowledge. This kind of knowledge of origins often remains in Indigenous societies. I think this may be still alive in some Sámi communities, but not in all the Sápmi. Somewhere and sometime, I have heard those stories of humility and reciprocal respect, but on the Finnish side of Sápmi not everything that I have seen or heard happening in and outside of my

cherished Sámi society makes me feel comfortable. The spiritual practices in Sápmi also vary a great deal.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, I have been very inspired by Shawn Wilson's thought that he shared in the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry 2016 in Champaign–Urbana. He said he sees neoliberalism as an over-generational trauma of losing the connection to and with the land. We have built up a system of welfare and progress in which we have got lost. We have forgotten our connectedness, our relationality, our belonging to and with the Earth. We have forgotten our dependence on the Earth. Who is this “we,” the reader might ask. I think John Mohawk, a late Seneca Indian thinker, partly answers this when he speaks about re-indigenization:

I think that when we talk about re-indigenization we need a much larger, bigger umbrella to understand it. It's not necessarily about the Indigenous people of a specific place; *it's about re-indigenizing the peoples of the planet to the planet*. It's about us looking at the whole thing in the broadest of possible ways.⁵⁶

The 500 years of colonization, the exploitation of life on earth, and the extinction of peoples, animals, and plants is not a feature of modern life in some parts of the world, though in many places (neo)colonization is still continuing. Re-indigenization would then mean bringing back the biodiversity of both human and non-human cultures. As Cajete, Mohawk, and Rivera point out, “re-indigenization means that we're looking at a vision of the world in a postconquest, postmodernist, post-progressive era. Once we see that, we can come to ways to make that real.”⁵⁷

Isabelle Stengers takes this even further:

With the privatized commons, what was destroyed was practical know-how, along with collective ways of acting, thinking, feeling and living. The democratic individual, the one who says, “It's my right ...” is the one who takes great pride in an “autonomy” which, in fact, hands back to the State the responsibility for

“thinking through” the consequences. A strange liberty is not to have to think further than one’s own immediate interests.⁵⁸

So, she continues, resistance can only exist alongside

“reclaiming”—recuperating, healing, becoming capable once again of linking with what we have been separated from. This recuperation process always begins with the jolting realization that we are well and truly sick, and have been for a long time, so long that we no longer recognize what we are lacking, and think of our sickness, and whatever sustains it, as “normal.”⁵⁹

There is valuable environmental knowledge embedded in Indigenous languages and practices, but I think it is still partly hidden. We are about to lose it if we don’t recognize that we Sámi people also need to take responsibility and—difficult but necessary to state—not only ask for rights and resources. We are all in this together. Isabelle Stengers continues:

Slowing down means becoming capable of learning again, becoming acquainted with things again, reweaving the bounds of interdependency. It means thinking and imagining, and in the process creating relationships with others that are not those of capture. It means, therefore, creating among us and with others the kind of relation that works for sick people, people who need each other in order to learn—with others, from others, thanks to others—what a life worth living demands, and the knowledges that are worth being cultivated.⁶⁰

So, how to turn back to ecological responsibility and reciprocal respect? In my autoethnographic research, I have seen that it takes time to get to know the land, to get to know it personally, in one’s bones and heart. Like Aslak Paltto said recently, it’s a totally different world to live in the *meahcci*, and it is a privilege to have learned that as a child.⁶¹ To recreate oneself in the forest or to be astonished by the sceneries is something else, perhaps to be worried about the knowledge of the climate change as well. But to

know the land, to know the Earth, to become Earth, to become an Earthling, to know that, that takes time.

Becoming an Earthling

An Earth,
 The Earth,
 this is our planet,
 this planet with water and ground, land in different structures,
 colors, shapes,
 this land constructed and changed by us humans,
 this land covered with different materials,
 this land covered,
 covered with and under these buildings, these roads, these corridors, those all,
 Still staying,
 still always there standing, no,
 moving, circling in the Milky Way,
 this Earth, this third planet from the Sun.

It's not Europe, America, Africa, Asia,
 it's not South and North, South and Arctic,
 and it is,
 we name it so,
 we name this covering of the Earth with our socio-culturally constructed names,
 which are so true, which become so true,
 which divide lands, divide us and those from each other with the naming,
 They became so true that we almost think,
 so true that we almost forget
 that it (THIS) is a One,
 one Earth,
 our Earth,
 our moving star,
 our breathing star,
 with which we breath,
 with which we move and become.

“We say that the Sun arises”⁶²
 But no,

we rotate, and we move around the Sun
 all the time,
 This is not divided
 in itself.

Slowing down the way we think,
 Slowing down the answers that we have,
 Slowing down the need to know,
 Searching for words,
 Searching for sustainable words.

We still have this beautiful land,
 we still have these clean rivers and lakes,
 these green forests,
 especially here in Sámi and Suomi land,
 We are all responsible in saving those.

What if we were Earth-centered with our human
 and more-than-human others,
 what if we cared for the Earth
 and breathed through and with the Earth,
 and loved the Earth and our more-than-human-others,
 as well as our more-than-human(ist)-human-others
 more than we do.⁶³

Notes

- ¹ Østmo and Law, “Mis/translation,” 354.
- ² Guttorm, “Flying Beyond,” 47–52.
- ³ The Sámi people are the only recognized Indigenous people of Europe, inhabiting the specific areas of Northern Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Russia, called *Sápmi* in Northern Sámi. Sámi people do not face extreme poverty or high levels of violence, like many Indigenous peoples in the world, but have experienced different kinds of colonization and discrimination. The number of Sámi varies in different countries and according to different references. Sámi are said to be most numerous in Norway (around 50,000) and the least in Finland (some 10,000). In Sweden, there are some 20,000. Nine Sámi languages are still spoken today. When I talk about the area called Sápmi, I use the Sámi name. When I wish to refer to the lands and landscapes there, I use the concept Sámi lands.

- ⁴ Andreotti et al., “Mapping Interpretations,” 23–24.
- ⁵ I use the preposition “with” in order to emphasize the reciprocity and interconnectedness of the relation.
- ⁶ Frost, *Biocultural Creatures*, 1.
- ⁷ Joks and Law, “Sámi Salmon, State Salmon,” 163.
- ⁸ Valkonen and Valkonen, “Contesting the Nature Relations,” 27–36.
- ⁹ Näkkäläjärvi, *Jauristunturin poropaimentolaisuus*.
- ¹⁰ Valkonen, *Poliittinen saamelaisuus*, 19.
- ¹¹ Chilisa, “Indigenous Research Methodologies.” See also Chilisa, *Indigenous Research Methodologies*.
- ¹² “Onto-epistemological” is a much-used concept especially in new materialism as highlighting that the theories and understandings of being (ontology) are connected to the understanding and theories of knowing (epistemology). Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfways*, actually adds also ethics into the concept, and uses the term “onto-ethico-epistemological,” which is worthwhile in Indigenous studies as well.
- ¹³ De la Cadena and Blaser, *World of Many Worlds*, 4.
- ¹⁴ See, e.g., Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*; Kuokkanen, *Boaris dego eana*; Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony*.
- ¹⁵ Braidotti, *Posthuman*; Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory*.
- ¹⁶ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfways*.
- ¹⁷ See Helander-Renvall, “Animism,” 44–56; Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*; Kuokkanen, *Restructuring Relations*.
- ¹⁸ See Guttorm, “Assemblages and Swing-Arounds,” 353–64.
- ¹⁹ Harris, Carlson, and Poata-Smith, “Indigenous Identities,” 1–9; Sarivaara, “Emergent Sámi Identities,” 357–404.
- ²⁰ Reinertsen, “Minor Research,” 623–27; St. Pierre, “Posts Continue,” 646–57.
- ²¹ Guttorm et al., “Decolonized Research-Storying,” 115–45; Guttorm, Kantonen, and Kramvig, “Pluriversal Stories,” 149–72.
- ²² See, e.g., Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony*.
- ²³ When a Sámi meets another Sámi whom s/he does not know previously, they ask each other “*Gos don leat eret?*” which can be directly translated as “Where are you *away* from?” Where are you being missed, where have you left from?
- ²⁴ Porsanger, *Bassejoga čáhci*, 53–54.
- ²⁵ Guttorm, “Healaidan,” 57–75.
- ²⁶ Østmo and Law, “Mis/translation,” 354.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*

- ²⁸ Näkkäljärvi, *Jauristunturin poropaimentolaisuus*.
- ²⁹ See, e.g., “Čáhci, luondu ja olbmot”; “Valkonen and Valkonen, *Viidon Siedit*.”
- ³⁰ *Deatnu*, then, means in Sámi a big and heavy flow. In the Finnish or English name *Teno*, that meaning is no longer present.
- ³¹ See, e.g., Østmo and Law, “Mis/translation,” 354.
- ³² Näkkäljärvi, “Duovddamuitu sámi boazodoalus,” 43–45.
- ³³ Porsanger, *Bassejoga čáhci*, 36.
- ³⁴ “Luonddunamahusat boazodoalus,” a lecture by Mikkel Nils Sara on nature terms in reindeer herding.
- ³⁵ The plural for *meahcci* is not often used in Sámi, whereas *meahcci* is everywhere. The authors (see next footnote), however, tend to use the plural form *meahcit* in English-language contexts to refer to different locations where people carry out different actions.
- ³⁶ Joks, Østmo and Law, “Verbing *Meahcci*,” 307.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 307–08.
- ³⁸ The accusative and genitive form of *ruoktu* is *ruovttu*, and in Sámi compound words the last vowel of the first word in many cases changes, i.e. “u” changes to “o.”
- ³⁹ *Luotta*, again, is a genitive-accusative form of *luodda*.
- ⁴⁰ Here is one example where the word *luondu*, nature, is used widely.
- ⁴¹ Pieski, “Gulahallat eatnamiin ja čáziin.”
- ⁴² See also, e.g., Joks, Østmo and Law, “Verbing *Meahcci*,” 308.
- ⁴³ See also Joks, “*Laksen trenger ro*”; Sjöberg, “Att leva i ständig väl-signelse.”
- ⁴⁴ Gaup, “Gullelašvuhta goahteeallima bokte.”
- ⁴⁵ Helander-Renvall, *Sámi Society Matters*.
- ⁴⁶ Buljo, “Vuoinnalašvuhta sámi biebmovieruin.”
- ⁴⁷ Sara, *Siida ja Siiddastallan*; Porsanger, *Bassejoga čáhci*.
- ⁴⁸ Sara, *Siida ja siiddastallan*.
- ⁴⁹ Sallamaa, “Maa—kaiken áiti,” 182.
- ⁵⁰ *Risku* is a certain kind of silver jewelry Sámi women use, e.g., for fastening their scarfs.
- ⁵¹ Näkkäljärvi, “Badjelmearastallamin.”
- ⁵² IPCC, *Climate Change and Land*.
- ⁵³ Vadén, “Alkuperäiskansaistuminen ja syntytieto,” 18–19.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.
- ⁵⁵ Porsanger, *Bassejoga čáhci*.
- ⁵⁶ Cajete, Mohawk, and Rivera, “Re-Indigenization Defined,” 259, cur-sive in the original.

- ⁵⁷ Ibid., 255.
- ⁵⁸ Stengers, *Another Science is Possible*, 69–70.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., 70.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ⁶¹ “Skogen kallar: Aslak Paltto & Magne Ove Varsi.”
- ⁶² With: Deleuze, *Negotiations 1970–1992*.
- ⁶³ Published partly also in Guttorm, “Coming Slowly to Writing with the Earth, as an Earthling.”

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Conclusion

CHAPTER 9

Replacing Rights with Indigenous Relationality to Reclaim Homelands

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Indigenous peoples have had and continue to have contested relations with protected spaces of nature. As is already well known, nation-states often carved out many of these spaces—including national parks, marine sanctuaries, national monuments, national wildernesses, and other public lands—from Indigenous homelands. These valued public spaces are a key component of settler colonialism, a continued and historical process that erases and replaces Indigenous peoples. While national parks may have initially begun in settler colonial countries, such as the United States, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, protected spaces have also been a component of globalization as countries eager to benefit from international tourists embraced parks in the 20th century

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while staking a claim as being modern nation-states that value conservation. The International Union for Conservation of Nature reports that globally protected areas now cover 14.87 percent of land and 7.4 percent of the ocean as of December 2018; the World Database of Protected Areas reports that, as of January 2020, 245 countries and territories have some form of protected areas.¹

Non-Natives often defined and continue to value these protected spaces as some form of “wilderness,” which is characterized as being untouched by human hands, thereby leaving no place for Native peoples in their own homelands.² Moreover, governments and park administrators, usually in the name of the common good, continue to prohibit or limit Native peoples from exercising their rights in these spaces. If a government accepts a role for Indigenous management of protected spaces, it is usually quite limited. When Native nations or governing bodies do participate in relevant management bodies, they often find that Western ecological approaches and values circumscribe Indigenous options and strategies.³ Representing a selection of global case studies from Aotearoa (New Zealand), Sápmi (Scandinavia), Central America, Brazil, and the US–Canada border along the Rocky Mountains, each chapter in this volume attests to the continued conflicts between protected spaces of nature and Indigenous peoples. Many of these tensions emerge from a Western rights framework that white settlers and elites have used to prioritize the rights of nature over Indigenous peoples.

Yet, these contributions also reveal the ongoing resilience of Native nations and Indigenous communities at pushing back against the loss of their homelands and rights in protected spaces. Settler colonial attempts to dispossess and erase Indigenous peoples from these spaces and other parts of their homelands, however, are neither totalizing nor complete. Native nations and Indigenous communities fight nation-states and governing bodies through the courts and in international forums. Some try to work within the system or directly with park administrators to gain a better position in management and conservation bodies or some concessions that allow them to access and share the benefits

from the tourism, biodiversity, or protected state of these spaces. Many pursue formal and informal education strategies in their own communities to maintain Indigenous knowledge and sustainable relations with these parts of their homelands from which they have been removed.⁴

This conclusion seeks to accomplish two tasks. One is to provide some historical context for the ways in which three problematic and closely related “white-settler social constructs”—wilderness, preservation, and the ecological Indian—came to shape the emergence and management of protected spaces of nature, particularly under a Western rights framework.⁵ In one way or another, the chapters in this volume all touch on these constructs and their consequences on Native peoples. The second task will make an argument about historical and continuing Indigenous relations with homelands. If a rights framework, in which white settlers and elites privilege the rights of nature over those of Native peoples, undergirds preservationist philosophies, a relationality framework offers an Indigenous-based counterpoint. Even when a rights framework is used to protect Native use and access to protected spaces, legal tools often focus on specific activities—such as hunting, fishing, whaling, and gathering, among others—failing to recognize Indigenous understandings of territory, jurisdiction, and sovereignty.⁶ The contributions in this volume uncover the realities of the myriad ways in which Indigenous communities and nations exercise self-determination through relationality to maintain their homelands within protected areas set aside by the state. Separately, each chapter relates highly localized case studies; however, together they address trans-local dimensions, linking specific peoples and places through histories dependent on continued relations with homelands.

The Rise of Preservationist Philosophy and the Constructs of Wilderness and the Ecological Indian

Many of the case studies in this volume illustrate that white-settler social constructs of wilderness, preservation, and the ecological

Indian continue to shape discussions about and management of protected spaces of nature. Government officials, non-governmental organizations, private citizens, tourists, and even Indigenous peoples in some cases have relied on the Western concepts of wilderness and preservation to justify the creation and maintenance of protected spaces, both historically and more recently. When considering Indigenous engagement in or use of today's parks, non-Natives often turn to the third problematic construct—the ecological Indian, which is closely imbricated with the concept of wilderness—to frame their narrow expectations of what Native peoples can bring to the use or management of protected spaces of nature. Moreover, concepts of wilderness, preservation, and the ecological Indian seem to have such durability and mutability because they emerged concomitantly alongside colonialism (settler colonial and otherwise), modern nation-states, and a Western rights framework. Together, they evolved to privilege the rights of nature—embodied by a wilderness unspoiled by humans and in need of preservation for use by white settlers and elites—over Native peoples. This has limited Indigenous agency and their ability to access, much less govern, homelands now claimed as protected spaces.

Historically, concepts of wilderness have transformed as they shaped non-Native experiences in North America and other places since the very beginning of colonial intrusions at the end of the 15th century. Even as they stole, traded for, or razed miles of Indian corn in the English colonies, for example, colonists seemed willfully blind to sophisticated Algonquian and Haudenosaunee techniques for cultivating and managing the land. They described the precolonial landscape as a wilderness, a vast landscape that Indians wasted and had only lightly populated. Yet, colonists and early American settlers found this wilderness that was full of wild animals and wild Indians frightening, something to be combated and subdued. These descriptions and conclusions justified a settler colonial mindset that fueled the erasure and removal of Native nations as US federal policies and settler actions resulted in most land and natural resources being developed and claimed

in some fashion as the nation expanded west through the 19th century. During the second half of that century, Romantic and Transcendentalist philosophies began to value this disappearing wilderness—even the supposedly vanishing Indian—arguing that the wilds of North America had played a valuable role in shaping the national character, especially that of white men, and could provide an antidote to enervating and emasculating urban life.⁷

As white Americans became increasingly concerned with vanishing wilderness across the country at the end of the 19th century, they debated the role of humans in nature—and neither side saw a place for Indigenous peoples. Conservationists like forester Gifford Pinchot advocated for scientific, rational planning for efficient development and “the use of the natural resources for the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time.”⁸ The “greatest number” did not include Indigenous peoples as conservation laws often targeted treaty-reserved hunting and fishing practices in Native homelands and waters both within and outside reservations.⁹ Preservationists, embodied by John Muir, the first president of the Sierra Club (founded in 1892), redefined wilderness as a place that should be untainted by human presence. In this idealized form of wilderness, historical Indigenous peoples had never managed or changed the landscape. More troubling for Muir and other preservationists, contemporary American Indian hunters and fishers—peoples he characterized as “dark and dirty”—actively threatened the dwindling tracts that needed preservation, so they needed to be removed. Muir’s preservationist philosophy was markedly racist, a legacy that today’s Sierra Club is only now beginning to confront.¹⁰

In the United States, the emergence of national parks, the iconic protected spaces of nature and spatialization of preservationist philosophy, came at the cost of Indigenous peoples and their homelands. In 1872, Congress created Yellowstone National Park in the American West, carving it out of the homelands of the Crow, Bannock, Shoshone, Salish, Nez Perce, and Northern Paiute nations. Ignoring the many ways in which Indigenous peoples utilized, shaped, and managed this environment—hunting,

cultivating camas, gathering medicinal herbs, cutting lodgepole pines, and ceremonial gatherings—Congress sought to preserve this place’s monumental wilderness splendor. The federal government would protect Yellowstone from development, such as mining and timber exploitation, and administer the park as an uninhabited wilderness preserve for the pleasure and recreation of citizens. By 1886, the US Army was administering Yellowstone. Already in the midst of waging war against Plains Indians who resisted further encroachments on their lands and resources, the Army eagerly embraced its new role of preserving the park’s animals, fish, and trees—part of the park’s wilderness splendor—from Native hunters and fishers, eventually banning Indians from the park entirely. In the decision for *Ward v. Race Horse* (1896), the US Supreme Court uncritically pointed to Yellowstone’s hunting restrictions on Indians as an example of the power of the nation-state to abrogate treaty rights unilaterally in order to regulate the hunting of game. Park administrators subsequently treated this as a legal sanction of Yellowstone’s Indian ban, despite the fact that it clearly infringed on Shoshone and Bannock hunting rights reserved in the 1868 Fort Bridger Treaty.¹¹ By the end of the 19th century, preservationist philosophy then had the protection of the courts and the nation’s military might, a formidable settler-colonial combination. The federal government replicated this pattern of Indigenous dispossession, what is noted as part of the oft-described “Yellowstone model,” in subsequent protected spaces of nature, most notably at Glacier and Yosemite National Parks.¹²

Preservationist discourse related to protected spaces of nature and Indigenous dispossession proved to be mutable as settler-colonial nations across the globe implemented the concept and created national parks. For instance, the establishment of Tongariro National Park on the North Island of New Zealand exemplifies this early mutability, specifically that it could be used to explain supposed Indigenous consent for protecting their homelands. Official narratives of the park’s founding claim that their first national park, Tongariro, emerged from cooperation between Māori and Pākehā (whites). According to popular belief, the impetus for

the park began in 1887 when Horonuku Te Heuheu, the Ngāti Tūwharetoa paramount chief, gifted the sacred volcanic peaks of Tongariro, Ngauruhoe, and Ruapehu to the government to create what he called a “tapu [ritual prohibition] place of the Crown” (a national park) in order to protect them from settler encroachment and development.¹³ When introducing the proposal for the park’s formal creation in 1894, MP John McKenzie argued: “The beauties of [Tongariro] would be preserved for all time to come for the benefit of the people of New Zealand.”¹⁴ Together, McKenzie’s words and Te Heuheu’s gift seemed to set an alternative model, one based on Indigenous consent, for preserving natural spaces.

But the creation and subsequent management of Tongariro proved to be based on a misappropriation of Te Heuheu’s “gift” and the prioritization of white upper- and middle-class priorities of preservation for recreation during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. First, Te Heuheu had not gifted the mountains to the Crown, at least in the Pākehā sense of a *gift*. The Māori chief had agreed to *tuku* the peaks into joint trusteeship, inviting the Queen to share the responsibility of safeguarding this sacred space, thereby forever guaranteeing Ngāti Tūwharetoa’s special relationship with this part of their homelands. Like many Indigenous concepts about being in relations with our homelands and other-than-humans, *tuku* does not translate easily into English. It is not a straightforward gift (i.e., transference of title with no strings attached), which is what Pākehā often gloss it as to their advantage. According to the investigators of a multiyear, complex Māori claim to the Waitangi Tribunal over violations related to Tongariro National Park, Te Heuheu “was seeking an arrangement that would bind the Crown into ensuring the land’s protection ... releasing the land so that it could be kept sacred for the people.”¹⁵ He was strengthening formal relations between himself and the Queen, between Ngāti Tūwharetoa and Pākehā. Instead, the Crown did not honor the partnership extended by Te Heuheu; it simply took title of the mountains for itself and established the national park—New Zealand’s first—without consulting the chief or other Māori

authorities, including people from other *iwi* (tribes) who also knew the mountains as parts of their homelands. Additionally, a clause in the 1894 bill left open the door for taking more Māori lands for the park with little to no compensation, a situation that led MP Hone Heke Ngapua (Northern Māori District) to declare this a “monstrous piece of legislation” during the debate.¹⁶ The 1922 Tongariro National Park Act entrenched the dual objectives of the park, prioritizing preservation and public use, both of which had come at the cost of Māori land owners. Despite the popular myth of pointing to New Zealand’s Tongariro National Park as “the first (and last) to reserve a national park in cooperation with its indigenous people,” preservationist philosophy privileging non-Native users dominated the creation and management of that country’s protected spaces of nature from the beginning.¹⁷

The further global proliferation of preservationist discourse cemented the connection between the establishment of national parks with Indigenous dispossession and erasure. For example, in 1885, Canadian Prime Minister John MacDonal set aside a small public park, Banff Hot Springs Reserve, that the Parliament of Canada expanded into the Rocky Mountains Park in 1887. By 1930, Parliament had enlarged the park’s boundaries and renamed it Banff. Numerous First Nations, including Ktunaxa, Cree, Niit-sitapiksi, and Siouan-speaking Stoney (Nakoda), regularly incorporated the landscapes of what became Banff National Park as important places in their larger homelands. Yet, shortly after creating the Rocky Mountain Park, the Canadian Government excluded them from the park so that they could not hunt game.¹⁸ In 1909, Sweden created nine national parks, including several in the far north in Sápmi, the homelands of the Indigenous Sámi peoples. These parks, along with others in neighboring Norway and Finland, followed the Yellowstone model, dispossessing Sámi peoples in the name of wilderness preservation.¹⁹ Upper- and middle-class white Americans, Canadians, and Swedes, among others, had come to see wilderness as a threatened resource in their countries, and they wanted it protected for white tourists, not Indigenous peoples.

As countries began creating the initial national parks, an act that they likely hoped would signal their modernity, contemporary versions of the ecological Indian—the third problematic concept seen in many of this volume’s case studies—emerged. Stereotypes of American Indians being connected to or a part of nature have been popular since the initial encounters between Europeans and Indigenous Americans. 16th-century artists created some of the earliest drawings of the peoples Europeans encountered in the Americas, and because they had not been on these voyages, they based their art on iconic Medieval traditions, specifically those of “wild men.”²⁰ Framed as the antithesis of Christians and inhabiting a zone between humans and creatures, wild men were aggressive and violent. They lacked the crudest knowledge of agriculture and technology, living in the wilds on what they happened to gather or kill. The supposed wild, uncivilized, and pagan state of Indigenous peoples justified their servitude and slavery. Some Europeans came to more positive conclusions about Indigenous Americans, comparing them to innocent, good-natured people from the Greek legend of the Golden Age, living “free with little labor in a blissful state of nature.”²¹ During the early years of the United States, white Americans sought to use this stereotype of the innocent, nature-bound Native of the antediluvian past to bolster their claims to an ancient republican past.²² Whether positively or negatively framed, these early stereotypes of Indians conveniently justified settler colonial expansion. Land could be taken from wild Indians who did not use it and deserved conquest at the hands of Christians; as one with nature, Indians—just like land—were available for improvement. Rooted in European imaginations rather than reality, these images shaped white expectations of Indigenous peoples and, for centuries, framed non-Native stereotypes of noble savages and Native authenticity as being tied to nature and confined to the past.

By the mid-19th century, white Americans had become concerned that the country’s wild places and Native peoples were vanishing, and they linked the fates of the two in ways that shaped the limited roles Indigenous peoples could occupy in protected

spaces of nature. In 1844, George Catlin, the renowned painter of the North American West, was the first to propose the idea of a national park, and he envisioned it as a space to save both the vanishing buffalo and Indians of the Great Plains:

And what a splendid contemplation too, when one ... imagines them [buffalo] as they *might* in future be seen (by some great protecting policy of government) preserved in their pristine beauty and wildness, in a *magnificent park*, where the world could see for ages to come, the native Indian in his classic attire, galloping his wild horse, with sinewy bow, and shield and lance, amid the fleeting herds of elks and buffaloes, What a beautiful and thrilling specimen for America to preserve and hold up to the view of her refined citizens and the world, in future ages! A *nation's Park*, containing man and beast, in all the wild and freshness of their nature's beauty!²³

Catlin's imagined park would preserve these "thrilling specimens" of the North American West, and Native peoples, frozen in their mid-19th-century "beauty," were literally part of this park's wilderness magnificence.

However, a generation later, as white Americans began creating national parks, they also believed that American Indians belonged on reservations, and they deployed the US Army to enforce this violently. In their minds, actual Indigenous peoples were out of place in these iconic protected spaces of nature—but preserved icons of American Indians of the past, complete with feathered headdresses and other expected accoutrements, did have a place in the parks: as park advertisements or as tourist draws themselves. For example, in the early 20th century, while the administrators of Glacier National Park were working hard to keep Blackfoot hunters out of the park and seeking to acquire more of the tribal nation's lands for the park, publicists of the Great Northern Railroad hired groups of Blackfeet to travel to East Coast cities to advertise the park. These publicists referred to them as the "Glacier Park Indians," just one of the many wilderness attractions white Americans could see, if they took a train to visit the park.²⁴ This marketing of

Indigenous peoples set the groundwork for the early-20th-century, romanticized version of the ecological Indian.

This same tension—between non-Native imaginations of the ecological Indian that was part of the park experience and actual Indigenous communities barred from the portions of their homelands taken by the park—unfolded transnationally in protected spaces of nature. For example, with the 1894 creation of Tongariro National Park, discussed earlier, Pākehā politicians and park managers “reframe[d] Māori’s complex and multifaceted relationships to landscape as a relationship to the ‘natural’ world” by promoting Tongariro’s ecological integrity and scientific, aesthetic, and conservation values.²⁵ Similarly, Native peoples in South Africa were removed or had their practices severely limited when the nation began creating national parks in the 1920s and 1930s. Those whom government officials allowed to remain, such as a small group of approximately 20 “Bushmen” in Gemsbok Kalahari Park in 1941, were seen as “part of fauna of the country” (and hence an attraction), but were no longer allowed to hunt with their dogs.²⁶ In 1934, Japan created eight national parks, including two—Daisetsuzan (the country’s largest) and Akan Mashu National Parks—in Hokkaido, the homeland of the Indigenous Ainu people. One scholar notes that “the early twentieth-century founders of Japan’s national parks confronted no removal of people because the Ainu in Hokkaido had already been sequestered in the early Meiji years [1870s and 1880s],” a popular assumption that nation-states make when they carved out protected spaces of nature from Indigenous homelands.²⁷ Yet, a sufficient number of Ainu peoples were evidently around in 1916 to create the Kawamura Kaneto Ainu Memorial Hall, the nation’s oldest Ainu museum, located just outside Daisetsuzan’s park boundaries. Today, advertisements for these national parks regularly tout Ainu presence and heritage as one reason to visit—tourists are encouraged to visit Kawamura Kaneto Ainu Memorial Hall, and the Kussharo Kotan Ainu Folklore Museum and the Akanko Ainu Kotan village in Akan Mashu.²⁸ Indigenous peoples were welcome, as long as they served the needs of the park and the visiting tourists.

After World War II, the intertwined constructs of wilderness, preservation, and the ecological Indian took on new life amid the rising popular and scientific interest in ecology and environmental causes. These interests helped justify preservationist creations of even more national parks and other protected spaces, particularly ones set aside for wilderness preservation. Many nations captured this increasing focus on wilderness preservation through legislative acts. For example, the 1952 National Parks Act in New Zealand focused on preserving the county's unique flora and fauna while giving the public access to parks, objectives that were not uncommonly at odds with each other. Concurrently, the county's largest national park, Fjordlands, which at the time was a public reserve, became part of the newly anointed park system. In 1977, the Reserves Act allowed the Department of Conservation to create reserves, including ones for wilderness preservation. Two years later, the New Zealand Forest Service, the Department of Lands and Survey, and the National Parks Authority agreed to manage wilderness areas in consultation with the Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand, reflecting the growing power of Pākehā upper- and middle-class users of protected spaces of nature. A new National Park Act (1980) reiterated the dual objectives of parks, but prioritized wilderness preservation, stating that the purpose of the act was to "[preserve] in perpetuity as national parks, for their intrinsic worth and for the benefit, use, and enjoyment of the public, areas of New Zealand that contain scenery of such distinctive quality, ecological systems, or natural features so beautiful, unique, or scientifically important that their preservation is in the national interest." The public would continue to have freedom of entry, but subject to "such conditions and restrictions as may be necessary for the preservation of the native plants and animals," with gazetted wilderness areas having even stricter protections. An influential poster published by the government in 1980 summarized the New Zealander wilderness philosophy of the time, defining wilderness areas "as those large tracts of land unaltered by the hand of man, remote from centres of population, and where man enters only on nature's terms."²⁹ This definition of

wilderness continued to efface Māori stewardship and management of their homelands.

More concerning, Māori rights or management of these spaces only appear twice and in very limited capacities in these acts. The National Parks Act 1952 acknowledged that the eight-member Tongariro National Park Board would have one Māori member, the paramount chief of Ngāti Tūwharetoa, as long as he was a lineal descendant of Te Heuheu. The Reserves Act 1977 had a brief section empowering the Minister of the Department of Conservation to grant Māori the right to take or kill birds, as long as the land of the reserve had been Māori land immediately before the creation of the reserve and that the prey was not already protected by the Wildlife Act 1953. Additionally, if the reserve contained a Māori burial ground, the Minister could grant the continuing interment of Indigenous remains. However, the act also granted the Minister the unilateral power to withdraw or modify these rights at any time. The scant mention of Indigenous rights in these acts reflected the limited state of Māori self-determination within New Zealand at the time.

In the United States, wilderness preservation notably gained congressional interest in efforts that culminated in passage of the Wilderness Act (1964), and white Americans shared the same ideas of wilderness with those expressed by Pākehā and others during the post-war era. The act defined wilderness as a sizeable area of at least 5,000 acres “where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” Moreover, a designated wilderness area will be “protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions,” while encouraging “outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.”³⁰ Like national parks, wilderness areas are supposed to meet the dual purposes of public access and nature preservation, with even more of an emphasis on the latter. Intersecting with the white environmental movement from the 1960s onward, Western notions of an unpeopled wilderness continued to erase Indigenous management of their homelands.³¹ Moreover, this kind of legislation in New Zealand

and the United States provided a legal foundation for providing nature, embodied as wilderness areas unspoiled by humans, with rights, a key tenet of later 20th-century preservationist philosophy that gained momentum internationally.

After World War II, international organizations also began to focus on protected spaces of nature, thereby providing an institutional platform for the further proliferation of preservationist philosophy. With support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Union for the Protection of Nature—later renamed the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)—was formed at a conference in Fontainebleau, France, in 1948. The new organization took a preservationist stance as it sought to address the loss of species and habitats, and its influence grew rapidly. Establishing more national parks and other protected spaces of nature was a key strategy of the IUCN, which by 1959 was annually tabulating the world's parks and reserves for the United Nations.³² During the 1962 Seattle World's Fair in Washington State, the organization convened the First World Conference on National Parks. President Kennedy's welcome letter to the conference delegates reflected the contemporaneous values of preserving nature through parks and reserves, as he declared that "permanent preservation of the outstanding scenic and scientific assets of every country, and of the magnificent and varied wildlife which can be so easily endangered by human activity, is imperative."³³ Unsurprisingly, several delegates spoke about the role of parks and reserves in helping the general public learn to value the preservation of the "pristine" state of nature through protected spaces.³⁴

Although there appeared to be not a single delegate representing any Native nations or Indigenous interests, speakers did occasionally address the perceived place of Indigenous peoples in these protected spaces of nature. Some statements presented Indigenous peoples as threats to the wildlife and ecological balance of the parks and reserves. For example, M. A. Badshah, a wildlife officer for India, warned of the dangers of "unscrupulous" local peoples whose "presence in the sanctuaries has been fraught with

danger to wildlife ... [from] their bows, arrows, and traps." Similarly, Jacques Verschuren, a Belgian conservation biologist who specialized in national parks in Africa, noted in his remarks that: "Every attempt in the national parks to maintain so-called primitive societies in proper balance with the environment has proved itself a failure, whether it was with certain pastoral peoples in East Africa or with the pygmies of the great equatorial forest." But others seemed to embrace the durable stereotype of the ecological Indian, usually in juxtaposition with the environmental harms caused by modern societies. For example, Maria Buchinger, an Argentinian forestry advisor, explained that "Indian tribes never fish or hunt more than necessary for their maintenance, they always respect young animals ... [unlike] modern man [who] cannot be considered part of the biotic circle; he brutally upsets the balance." John Pile, a public relations officer for the Natural Resources Board of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), echoed Buchinger's sentiment, supposing that "indigenous population[s] ... are naturalists by tradition" because "in many tribes, the very names given to the children reflect strong appreciation and awareness of the importance of nature."³⁵ Whether speaking positively or negatively about Native communities, these delegates presented Indigenous peoples as static primitives who had no place in the modern world, much less in park management.

The situation had not changed much ten years later for the Second World Conference on National Parks, which also marked the centenary of Yellowstone's founding. Both the US and Canadian delegations did include one or two park officials who did outreach with Native and First Nations, but the views about Indigenous peoples still remained exceptionally limiting. One British professor reminded delegates that some national parks or reserves, such as Xingú National Park (est. 1961) in Brazil, exist "for the protection of primitive Amerindian tribes." UNESCO ecologist Kai Curry-Lindahl argued that "primitive tribes" living outside park boundaries should be allowed to hunt, fish, and gather within the protected spaces because they "make use of the environment as collectors, scavengers, and hunters in exactly the same way as wild

animals; they utilize resources without destroying them. They are a natural part of the ecosystem.” Yet other delegates, like Argentinian Italo N. Constantino of the International Commission on National Parks, complained of “indigenes” whose practices “[detract] from the unspoiled nature of the national park and, consequently, from its *raison d’être*.” Venezuelan Alberto Bruzual explained that Indigenous peoples residing in parks should be resettled because “they are almost bound to develop activities incompatible with park philosophy and this creates conflicts of a political nature which interfere with the development of parks, by degrading the scientific, natural, and touristic values.”³⁶ In the minds of these delegates, Native peoples appeared either as part of the parks, just like the “wild animals,” or as a threat to the very existence of these protected spaces of nature. Their attitudes helped to codify preservationist philosophies and a style of “fortress conservation” that prioritized nature—and white park visitors—over Indigenous peoples.³⁷

While officials and representative of governments and non-governmental organizations convened high-profile international discussions about the state of preserving nature and wilderness, white environmentalists also grasped at the durable stereotype of the ecological Indian to add some authenticity to their claims. As historian Philip Deloria, Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux) argues, counterculture white environmentalists “played Indian” in their attempts to address the “postmodern crises of meaning,” in which they questioned the “existence of God, authenticity, and reality itself.”³⁸ Preferring icons such as the ecological Indian rather than actual Native individuals, whites—like their contemporaries attending the world conferences on national parks—turned to symbols of Indianness to root themselves authentically in the landscape that they felt was under assault by development and corporate interests. One popular touchstone was the supposed speech of the 19th-century Duwamish/Suquamish leader, Seeathl, more popularly known as Chief Seattle. On January 12, 1854, Seeathl addressed Washington Territory’s commissioner of Indian affairs and governor Isaac Stevens, likely positioning

his people to make the best of the upcoming treaty negotiations. Dr. Henry Smith, present at this event, took notes on Seathl's stirring speech, which had to be translated from Lushootseed, the chief's native tongue, into English, likely through Chinook jargon, a local trade language; more than 30 years later, Smith wrote an English-language version, which he published in a local newspaper. In the late 1960s, a white poet revised Smith's version, and then film studies scholar Ted Perry drew from this latest version for a screenplay he wrote for the Southern Baptist Convention; the organization went on to make the eco-friendly film *Home* (1972), crediting Chief Seattle for the speech written by Perry.³⁹

The 1972 Perry appropriation of Chief Seattle's speech made Seathl into a global icon of the ecological Indian of this era and shaped international expectations for Indigenous relations with nature. This is the version that included words that inspired white environmentalists: "How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us . . . The earth does not belong to man. Man belongs to the earth. This we know . . . What befalls the earth, befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself."⁴⁰ At the time, excerpts from the 1972 speech and even the entire text proliferated through print culture, films, music, and the radio and were especially popular in Europe. Seeking to add credibility to his own film script, Perry transformed Seathl into the model ecologist of the 1970s. This speech generalized Indigenous cultures according to Western stereotypes and importantly placed Native authenticity in the safety of the past. As Deloria notes, "Seattle's words erased contemporary social realities and the complicated, often violent history of Indian land loss. Instead, all people were one, bound by a universal web of blood connections and their relations to the earth."⁴¹ Chief Seattle embodied the ecological Indian in symbolic ways for a white public that had a seemingly "bottomless" appetite for environmentally correct Indians.⁴² Perniciously, the environmental movement then used (and continues to use) this form of the ecological Indian—supposedly authenticated by the words of a

respected American Indian historical figure—to chastise Native nations and Indigenous communities for failing to live up to the stereotype when they engage in practices that white environmentalists find troublesome.⁴³

By the last quarter of the 20th century, nation-states around the world had been drawing on the white-settler social constructs of wilderness, preservation, and the ecological Indian to create protected spaces of nature for more than a century. In the 21st century, this wilderness preservation ethos has even expanded to marine spaces, such as with New Caledonia's establishment of the National Park of the Coral Sea in 2014, as part of France's signature contribution to the Pacific Oceanscape.⁴⁴ Protected by laws enforced by the courts and military, these national parks and reserves often removed and continue to dispossess Indigenous peoples from their homelands, while simultaneously privileging white and middle- to upper-class users of these iconic tourist attractions. White settlers and elites in power prioritized the rights of nature (or, more accurately, their rights to enjoy nature) over those of Indigenous peoples. The largely white environmental movements of the 1970s and 1980s only appreciated symbolic Native ecologists, conveniently confined to the distant past, as authentic primitives whose values aligned with their own—real Indigenous peoples, however, threatened the natural sanctity of protected spaces. With the rise of international institutions, these white-settler social constructs proliferated across many parts of the world as growing numbers of nation-states sought to mark themselves as modern through their preservationist sensibilities, all at the cost of Indigenous peoples.

The Growing Influence of International Indigenous Rights

Although Native peoples had always resisted infringements on their sovereignty and dispossession from their homelands, from the 1960s onward, Indigenous leaders in settler colonial countries mobilized in very public ways to push for their rights. They

began by pushing for Indigenous rights, often tied to historic treaties signed with colonial and federal governments, within specific nation-states. Foundational movements from fish-ins in Washington State in the 1960s and 1970s, to the 1972 Tent Assembly outside Parliament House in Canberra, to the 1975 Māori Land March from Auckland to Wellington, among others, galvanized Indigenous activists to advocate for treaty rights and land rights. Iconic occupations and confrontations—the Indians of All Tribes at Alcatraz (US, 1969–1971); the American Indian Movement at the Bureau of Indian Affairs headquarters in Washington, DC, and at Wounded Knee, SD (US, 1972 and 1973); Ngāti Whātua at Takaparawhā (Bastion Point) of the Ōrākei block in Auckland (New Zealand, 1977–1978); Sámi and Folke-aksjonen (People’s Action) in Alta (Norway, 1970–1981); and Mohawks at Oka (Canada, 1990)—helped bring Indigenous concerns to white audiences. Key court cases, such as the *Calder Case* (Canada, 1973), *US v. Washington* (1974), and *Mabo v. Queensland (2)* (Australia, 1992), began to provide legal justifications for Indigenous rights in high-level, federal, and national courts. The activism and legal victories prodded governments to establish new mechanisms, such as the Waitangi Tribunal (New Zealand, 1975) and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Canada, 1991), for investigating Native claims.⁴⁵

The various national movements for Native rights took on global dimensions during the last quarter of the 20th century, especially with the inclusion of Indigenous activists from Latin America, Africa, and South Asia. Yet, global Indigenous identity and political formations have much older histories than just those of the post-war decades, illustrating how Indigenous rights movements have been simultaneously global and local.⁴⁶ As Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanna Betasamosake Simpson argues, “Indigenous internationalism” is defined by deeply historical relations between humans and other-than humans and among many Native nations, long before the expansion of European colonies.⁴⁷ By the 18th century, Native nations were regularly sending diplomats abroad to appeal directly to monarchs about colonial and

settler colonial encroachments on their lands and rights.⁴⁸ Intertribal international efforts grew in the 20th century, such as when the Society of American Indians sought unsuccessfully to participate in the 1919 Paris peace talks ending World War I and to be represented at the League of Nations.⁴⁹ At the urging of Native activists in North and South America, the United Nations held its first conference on Indigenous peoples, the International Non-Governmental Organization Conference on Discrimination against Indigenous Populations in the Americas, in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1977. Native delegates collectively authored the 13-point “Declaration of Principles for the Defense of the Indigenous Nations and Peoples of the Western Hemisphere,” which called for recognition of Indigenous nations, guarantee of Indigenous rights, respect for territorial claims and integrity, and environmental protection of their homelands, among other priorities.⁵⁰ Like a counterpoint to the internationalization of preservationist philosophy that blamed Indigenous peoples for spoiling national parks and reserves, Native activists argued that Western development and colonialism polluted the environments of their homelands.

The efforts of Indigenous activists continued to gain traction internationally, resulting in two critical developments for the protection of Indigenous rights. In 1989, the International Labour Organization adopted ILO Convention 169, the only legally binding international treaty on Indigenous peoples.⁵¹ This document affirmed the rights of Indigenous peoples to exercise control over their own institutions, ways of life, and economic development and to maintain their own identities, languages, and religions. Importantly, ILO Convention 169 articulated the requirement of consultation with Indigenous peoples as an obligation of nation-states. Over almost the next 20 years, Indigenous leaders worked to draft and then secure final state approval in 2007 for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).⁵² The declaration drew from many pre-existing international human rights standards, adapting them to Indigenous peoples. Reaffirmed in 2014, UNDRIP strengthened the consultation requirement from ILO Convention 169, framing it as free, prior, and informed

consent for issues affecting Indigenous peoples and their lands. In addition to drafting and negotiating for the passage of these transformational international documents, Indigenous leaders also worked with the United Nations to establish mechanisms for monitoring their rights. In 2001, the United Nations appointed the first Special Rapporteur on the human rights of Indigenous peoples. This official conducts high-profile country visits to prepare thematic reports. The following year, the United Nations first convened the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, which helps the organization's agencies implement the rights of Indigenous peoples. Finally, in 2007, it established the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which, like the Special Rapporteur, conducts thematic studies. Together, these mechanisms have evolved into dynamic tools for examining Indigenous rights concerns. Despite continuing challenges, particularly at the recognition of Indigenous self-determination, the "international space has been important for transnational mobilization and efforts to establish global norms on indigenous rights."⁵³

Indigenous internationalism sought to transform the way in which nation-states conceived of and managed national parks and other protected spaces of nature, specifically through the continued dispossession of Native peoples. Held in 1992, the Fourth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas included a workshop dedicated to Indigenous views of protected areas. Organized by the Dene Cultural Institute of Canada and chaired by Chief Bill Erasmus (Yellowknives Dene), this workshop aimed to "demonstrate how the knowledge held by local people can be applied to management problems, and how the perceptions of indigenous people can be incorporated within protected area management."⁵⁴ The formal recommendations emerging from this conference included a number shaped by Indigenous concerns, particularly those related to customary resource management practices, traditional land tenure systems, consultation, and marine areas.⁵⁵

While these recommendations represented a step in the right direction, the IUCN continued to advocate for management of

protected spaces of nature along Western ideas of wilderness, preservationist philosophy, and the ecological Indian stereotype, which together continued to exacerbate tensions with Native peoples. At the next gathering in 2003, about 150 Indigenous activists participated in the Fifth World Parks Congress, the first time that such a large number had attended. They offered a more pointed critique of the international organization, condemning past preservationist practices. Drawing from their strengthening international position on human rights and the increasingly important rhetoric on Indigenous consent—as articulated in ILO Convention 169 and being discussed in what eventually became UNDRIP—Native delegates pushed the IUCN to recognize and respect their rights, responsibilities, and conservation contributions. In the closing plenary statement of the Indigenous Peoples Ad Hoc Working Group, Otovalo Kichwa (Quechua) intellectual Luz María de la Torre reminded delegates that:

The declaration of protected areas on indigenous territories without our consent and engagement has resulted in our dispossession and resettlement, the violation of our rights, the displacement of our peoples, the loss of our sacred sites and the slow but continuous loss of our cultures, as well as impoverishment. It is thus difficult to talk about benefits for Indigenous Peoples when protected areas are being declared on our territories unilaterally. First we were dispossessed in the name of kings and emperors, later in the name of State development, and now in the name of conservation.⁵⁶

This resulted in one of the official outcomes being the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to promote the “restitution of indigenous peoples’ lands, territories and resources that have been taken over by protected areas without their free, prior informed consent, and for providing prompt and fair compensation, agreed upon in a fully transparent and culturally appropriate manner.”⁵⁷ In 2008, the IUCN endorsed UNDRIP, and during the 2016 World Conservation Congress they changed their governance structure, creating a new category of membership for

Indigenous Peoples' Organisations. The IUCN currently participates in the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, one of the key bodies for monitoring Indigenous rights. In their most recent statement to the Permanent Forum, the IUCN declared: "It is an absolute priority to address the situation of indigenous peoples in protected areas that do not recognize their rights and that create restrictions and hardship to inhabiting and user communities."⁵⁸ Along with numerous other initiatives supporting Indigenous environmental rights, this represents a substantial change from the 1970s rhetoric castigating Native peoples for spoiling national parks. Indigenous leaders and activists drove this change.

The Limits of the Western Rights Framework

Indigenous scholars and others have critiqued the ways in which the Western rights framework fails to protect Native nations or reflect Indigenous values.⁵⁹ Many of the case studies in this volume also highlight these shortcomings. Even with the substantial progress of Indigenous rights at nation and global levels, a rights framework continues to enable white settlers and elites to use a preservationist philosophy to protect nature at the expense of Native peoples. By privileging the rights of nature, those in power continue to situate Indigenous rights as inferior to those of white settlers and elites. As Brad Coombes demonstrates through the example of Te Urewera, one of four national parks in Aotearoa, New Zealand, that has or will be personified through legislation, bestowing person rights on national parks simply repackages the old preservationist "for the common good" argument (Chapter 2, this volume). It is more difficult for Māori, in this case, to secure rights to a newly embodied person than to fight the New Zealand Government for restoration of stolen land. Moreover, it writes Ngāi Tūhoe out of Te Urewera's history because the latter is now a new person. Similar rights of nature, whether they are defined specifically as people or as analogous to people, have appeared in a number of countries in the 21st century, including Ecuador, Bolivia, India, and local jurisdictions in the United States. Some of these, such as

those in Ecuador, Bolivia, New Zealand, and in some US cases, are assumed to be connected to or emerging from Indigenous activism and epistemologies.⁶⁰ For example, Christopher Finlayson, a New Zealand MP who helped negotiate the Whanganui River Settlement, lauds the 2017 government act conferring personhood on the Whanganui River as “using a novel legal theory that was in alignment with the ancient beliefs of the Māori who lived alongside the river.”⁶¹ Yet, Coombes reveals that this assumption must be questioned as those in power often deploy their understandings of Native epistemologies to frame the rights of nature. As he concludes, bestowing personhood rights on the Whanganui River and Te Urewera is another Western construct.

Similarly, Elsa Reimerson (Chapter 3, this volume) explains how reforms to the management of protected spaces usually affirm preservationist assumptions and values, often while simultaneously claiming to protect Indigenous rights. For example, the 2010 Norwegian reforms of protected area management gave Sámi new opportunities for influence and participation while failing to reconsider the preservationist discourses that underlay protected spaces themselves, thereby reinforcing asymmetrical power relations and colonial stereotypes. It seems like the 2010 Norwegian reforms, 2014 Te Urewera Act, and 2017 Whanganui River Claims Settlement Act (Te Awa Tupua) repackaged the old stereotype of the ecological Indian, while strengthening the hands of government elites to limit Sámi and Māori claims to their homelands. In other words, the ecological Indian continues to be a useful foil to distract from calls for Indigenous self-determination and decolonization.

While the national and global Indigenous rights movements have resulted in growing co-management strategies in some national parks and reserves, those in power still manage to protect or restore preservationist discourses at the expense of Native nations. As the two case studies from the Maya Region in Central America demonstrate, local Maya communities hope to profit from managing parks and reserves, benefiting financially from tourists and employment in the parks and for archaeological surveys.

In other contexts, Native peoples hope that co-management may restore treaty-reserved hunting, fishing, and gathering rights. Yet, Coombes and Reimerson warn that co-management agreements often impose a ceiling on Indigenous rights. Drawing on the right of the “common good,” preservationist values and practices prevail when Indigenous uses threaten Western-defined conservation goals. This results in entrenching the hierarchical and disproportionate power relations that co-management was supposed to replace. More insidiously, this kind of limited co-management tokenizes Indigenous participation and gives the new management approaches the validation of supposedly being aligned with Native priorities and values.

The Western rights framework also risks setting up a false equivalency. Meaghan Peuramaki-Brown and Shawn Morton argue for a collaborative co-management, inclusive of Indigenous communities, non-profits, government agencies, foreign researchers and archaeologists, and even tourists (Chapter 4, this volume). While the authors recognize the need to differentiate among rights-holders, stakeholders, and interest groups, the fact that many governments, including Belize (the site of their case study), claim that they hold the rights to protected spaces in the name of the people or the common good continues to efface the unique political status of Indigenous peoples in their homelands. Nor does this big-tent approach to co-management engage critically with the complicity of non-organizations, academics, and tourists at propping up unequal power relations. As Reimerson and Coombes convincingly argue, the participation of Indigenous peoples without the dismantling of power relations and repatriation of land perpetuates the problem (Chapters 3 and 2, respectively, this volume).

Together, the case studies in this volume show that under a Western rights framework, Indigenous protections are only as strong as the will of the government, despite the many gains made by Native activists in the last several decades. Pirjo Kristiina Virtanen and Lucas Artur Brasil Manchinieri’s example (in Chapter 6, this volume) of the Manxinerus’ efforts to protect the Yine Hosha Hajene, one of the isolated Indigenous peoples of the Amazon,

along the Brazil–Peru border demonstrates this. Recently, government officials and institutions have failed to implement or follow the international Indigenous and human rights laws and policies; this has only worsened under the current Bolsonaro administration of Brazil. The authors’ fears that these failures may lead to genocide are not overstated. With the limited protection offered by the rights framework to Native nations and Indigenous communities, a new approach is needed.

The Need for a Different Framework: Indigenous Relationality and Homelands

All of the chapters speak to a range of efforts Indigenous peoples have made to maintain relations with homelands now claimed by protected spaces of nature. Popular historical understandings tell an incomplete story, that these protected spaces dispossessed Native peoples and have done so for a long time. This creates a totalizing and problematic narrative that makes it difficult for non-Natives to understand that these areas remain important to tribal nations because they continue to be crucial parts of Indigenous homelands. Historically, Native peoples and communities shaped landscapes and waterscapes into homelands to provide a “good life” for themselves, and homelands remain essential for Indigenous nations today.⁶² In the past, homelands supported both subsistence and commercial uses, particularly in the exchange and sale of natural commodities to neighboring Indigenous communities and eventually non-Native newcomers, such as European explorers, traders, colonists, and settlers. Today’s Indigenous nations seek to continue developing homelands in ways to support their economies and cultures and in alignment with their specific values.

But homelands had a deeper meaning than just practical use of terrestrial and aquatic resources. Indigenous peoples were in relations with these places and the flora and fauna found there. At the risk of engaging too closely with sweeping generalizations, one commonality that many Indigenous epistemologies share is

an understanding that humans are not separate from nature—we are an integral part of nature. Kettunen and Cuxil explain that this core belief, shared by many of the Maya peoples with whom they work, would greatly benefit sustainability practices in the Maya Region, which is why local Indigenous communities should be co-managers in protected spaces (Chapter 5, this volume). Native societies articulated—and continue to express and maintain—these relations through specific practices that differed from one community and region to another. This should not be understood within the limited Western construct of the ecological Indian. As explained earlier, there are numerous problems with this dehumanizing stereotype, specifically in limiting the opportunities for real Indigenous peoples to manage relations with and practices relative to their homelands. Instead, we should see Indigenous relations with nature as specifically grounded in and anchored to homelands. These relations are historical and political, and remain relevant today.

Indigenous relationality and homelands offer a counterpoint to the dominant Western-oriented rights framework when it comes to understanding humanity's integral place in nature. The chapters in this volume suggest several important components of this different framework based on Indigenous epistemologies. These include the ways in which homelands shape identity; how Native societies use Indigenous knowledge to know and maintain their homelands; that Indigenous governance of homelands often focuses on environmental health; and that these relations and practices, even the homelands themselves, are adaptable.

Being in relations with homelands, inclusive of both terrestrial and marine spaces, occupies a foundational component of specific, placed-based Indigenous identities. For many Native societies, the homelands themselves are closely related to who they are as a distinct people. This is what Blackfeet elders express when they state that Glacier National Park is both the Backbone of the World—what they call *Mistakis*—and themselves (Carbaugh and Grimshaw, Chapter 7, this volume). Powerful spirits, such as Wind Maker, Cold Maker, Thunder, and Snow Shrinker (the Chinook

winds) lived in *Mistakis*, along with Napi, the trickster creator of the Blackfeet themselves, and Thunderbird, who gave them their first Medicine Pipe.⁶³ Similarly, the Manxineru of eastern Brazil describe the headwaters of the Yaco River, part of the reserve they manage, as the “source of life” and an important “place of ancestors” (Virtanen and Manchineri, Chapter 6, this volume). *Mistakis* and the Yaco River’s headwaters are places where the Blackfeet and Manxineru became a people. Sites like these remain important as elders seek to teach new generations about specific Indigenous identities. For example, the Maya villagers with whom Peuramaki-Brown and Morton work cite this as one of the reasons why they want access to and management over nearby protected spaces of nature—these locations continue to be important places of “being Maya” and remaining Maya for future generations (Chapter 4, this volume).

Native societies come to know and manage their homelands through Indigenous knowledge, also called traditional ecological knowledge.⁶⁴ Indigenous peoples develop, accumulate, and refine this kind of knowledge across many generations of place-based practices related to hunting, fishing, gathering, and cultivation. Blackfeet elder Rising Wolf reminds us that one method for gaining and maintaining Indigenous knowledge is through listening to the landscape (Carbaugh and Grimshaw, Chapter 7, this volume). Careful observations of lands, waters, and the other-than-human members of extended communities offer many lessons that help to sustain relations with homelands. Native practitioners apply Indigenous knowledge through practices and activities, such as the creation of culturally specific material objects and medicines from plants harvested from homelands. This explains why Ngāi Tūhoe sought the ability to gather flora in Te Urewera; these important usufruct rights were affirmed in the 2017 Urewera Board’s management plan (Coombes, Chapter 2, this volume). Dependent on material from homelands, Native arts, such as basketry and weaving, help to codify Indigenous knowledge and pass it on from one generation to another.⁶⁵ As Hanna Ellen Guttorm explores in Chapter 8 in this volume, language similarly

encodes Indigenous relationality with homelands, connecting peoples, places, knowledges, and practices. Traditional ecological knowledges are also central to the exercise of Indigenous governance over homelands.⁶⁶ Through organizations such as the International Union for Conservation of Nature and meetings like the 2010 Convention on Biological Diversity, Native activists have made this argument with some success, which has encouraged Norway, for example, to support Sámi co-management of protected spaces along the lines of traditional ecological knowledge (Reimerson, Chapter 3, this volume).

In exercising governance over their homelands, most Indigenous authorities seek to restore or maintain the health of the environment. Because Native peoples are in relations with their homelands and the other-than-human members who also share these same spaces, Indigenous authorities engage in numerous protocols to maintain these relations. For example, the various Coast Salish tribal nations of the Pacific Northwest observe the First Salmon Ceremony. Once the first salmon of the season is caught in the early spring, the fish is carefully handled, prepared, and shared among the community. Its bones are specially arranged on a cedar-bough raft and returned to the sea so that it will tell the Salmon People that this particular village had been “good to us, [so] let’s be good to them.”⁶⁷ Practices such as the First Salmon Ceremony reflect layers of Indigenous knowledge specific to salmon and the water. By respecting the Salmon People, keeping the rivers clean, and ensuring that plenty of fish return upriver to spawn, Coast Salish authorities—owners of specific fishing sites—are exercising governance, while taking an active role in responsibly managing the health of their homelands.

For most, if not all, Indigenous societies, ownership rights come with many reciprocal responsibilities that usually relate to maintaining the health of the environment. Among Māori authorities, these responsibilities are an important part of *rangatiratanga* (chieftainship).⁶⁸ As Coombes explains, Ngāi Tūhoe leaders pursued the restoration of Te Urewera so that they could once again exercise *rangatiratanga* over this important part of their homelands

(Chapter 2, this volume). While most Tūhoe favorably recognize that the new co-management arrangement helps to protect treasured and unique species, such as the *kererū* (native woodpigeon) and the iconic kiwi, they remain concerned that the governance rooted in the rights of nature may inhibit *rangatiratanga*. Similarly, in taking the lead for reserving a large portion of their homelands for the preservation of the related Yine Hoshā Hajene, Manxineru authorities see this as an important way to maintain healthy relations of the human–environment assemblage that is connected by interactions, reciprocity, relatedness, and dependency (Virtanen and Artur Brasil Manchineri, Chapter 6, this volume). Moreover, as Reimerson’s case study highlights, the Sámi Parliament continues to push the Norwegian Government for greater participation and inclusion in protected area governance so that management practices will safeguard their homelands, waters, and natural resources along Indigenous values and priorities (Chapter 3, this volume). Numerous studies beyond this volume have shown that recognizing and supporting Indigenous peoples’ rights to and epistemologies about their homelands and waters, along with benefit sharing, is critical to meeting conservation and biodiversity goals.⁶⁹

Finally, the case studies in this volume illustrate the many ways in which Native nations and Indigenous communities adapt to maintain relations with homelands, especially in the face of colonial and settler colonial expansion. Analyses of Indigenous relations with homelands can overstate the fixity of Native peoples.⁷⁰ But nearly all Indigenous communities exercised a high amount of purposeful mobility annually, such as in seasonal rounds, and across longer periods of time. Archaeological field studies of Northwest Coast winter villages in the North American West, for example, demonstrate that “people ... return[ed] to these older villages, sometimes after 10 years, 100 years, or even 1,000 years”—they did not always just stay in one winter village.⁷¹ As Peuramaki-Brown and Morton learned in their work in Central America, more than 40 years ago, some Mopan Maya families moved 100 kilometers into the Stann Creek District, alongside other settled Maya relations and a few Garifuna (Chapter 4, this volume). Within a decade, they were

making territorial claims and proposing “homelands” status for their villages. These Maya villages have also sought to share in the profits from ecotourism related to nearby reserves, representing another adaptation of their relations with homelands. Ngāi Tūhoe and Sámi peoples are trying new co-management strategies with governments in order to restore some measure of governance over their homelands that are currently defined as national parks and reserves (Coombes and Reimerson, Chapters 2 and 3 respectively, this volume). And when the state ultimately fails to manage protected spaces, such as is the case in Brazil, Indigenous peoples like the Manxineru step in to exercise their authority over these portions of their homelands (Virtanen and Artur Brasil Manchineri, Chapter 6, this volume). Manxineru leaders have worked collaboratively with non-governmental organizations, other Indigenous communities, and even foreign governments in their protection efforts. Toward the end of Chapter 8, Guttorm asks: “How does the meaning of traditional ecological knowledge change if or when it turns from a nomadic necessity, ecological responsibility, and reciprocal respect to strengthening cultural identity?” While it is probably more accurate to note that Sámi cultural identity has long been tied to their mobility, ecological responsibility, and reciprocal respect (these are not mutually exclusive), Guttorm is correct in noting that Indigenous knowledges and practices do adapt in response to many factors, including settler colonialism. Indeed, scholars of traditional ecological knowledge often note that Indigenous peoples adapt their knowledge systems and practices to meet the challenges of changing environmental, social, and political conditions.⁷²

. . .

As long as our understanding of humanity’s relationship with nature is defined by the mutable white-settler social constructs of wilderness, preservation, and the ecological Indian, Native nations and Indigenous communities will continue to have troubled relations with national parks and reserves. White settlers and other elites used, and continue to deploy, these constructs to

privilege their rights over those of Indigenous peoples. At best, the entire rights framework only offers limited protections for Native nations, denying them the opportunity to exercise self-determination over their homelands. This has become even more pressing as consortia of nation-states and non-governmental environmental organizations push to protect 30 percent or more of the planet for biodiversity by 2030.⁷³ As several of the chapters in this volume have revealed, current gains in co-management and participatory governance over protected spaces of nature remain limited as long as they are bound by a Western rights framework and premised on models that keep humans separate from nature. Despite these limitations, Indigenous peoples covered in this volume's case studies continue to maintain relations with the portions of homelands from which they have been dispossessed by national parks and reserves. Governance and management models based on historical and contemporary Indigenous relationality to homelands offer a foundation for moving forward in a new way.

Notes

- ¹ IUCN, *IUCN 70 Years*, 40; "January 2020 Update of the WDPA."
- ² Most other people of color have also been excluded from national parks and wilderness spaces, especially in settler colonial nations. For this in the US context, see Finney, *Black Faces, White Spaces*.
- ³ There is considerable literature across numerous disciplines about these issues. For an introduction, see Colchester, "Conservation Policy and Indigenous Peoples"; Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness"; Dowie, *Conservation Refugees*; Igoe, *Conservation and Globalization*; Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*; West, Igoe, and Brockington, "Parks and Peoples."
- ⁴ There are numerous case studies outlining how Indigenous peoples seek to overcome the problems of protected spaces of nature. For a range of these globally, and some of the continued challenges, see Berkes, Colding, and Folke, "Rediscovery"; Stevens, *Indigenous Peoples*; Stevens and De Lacy, *Conservation through Cultural Survival*.
- ⁵ I am extending environmental justice activist Dina Gilio-Whitaker's (Colville Confederated Tribes) argument that wilderness is a

- “white-settler social construct” to encompass all three of these problematic concepts. See Gilio-Whitaker, *As Long as Grass Grows*, 100.
- ⁶ For a concise discussion of the problems with the rights paradigm, see Hamilton, “Indigenous Legal Traditions,” 39–42.
- ⁷ Coleman, *Vicious*; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*; Marsh, *Man and Nature*; Merchant, *Columbia Guide*, 120–33; Taylor, “Wasty Ways”; Thoreau and Emerson, *Excursions*. For an introduction to settler colonialism, see Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism.” North America was not the only Indigenous space seen by colonists as a wilderness. Scholars have noted that “early Pakeha [white] settlers saw New Zealand as a wilderness: a landscape devoid of geographical meaning inhabited by a people without history ... a sort of intellectual terra nullius.” See Moorsom and White, *Crown Laws*, 8.
- ⁸ Pinchot, *Breaking New Ground*, 326.
- ⁹ Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature*; Reid, *Sea Is My Country*, 184–96 and 229–53; Warren, *The Hunter’s Game*.
- ¹⁰ Merchant, “Shades of Darkness,” 382–83 (“dark and dirty,” 382); Tompkins, “Sierra Club.”
- ¹¹ *Ward v. Race Horse*, 163 U.S. 504 (1896); Wilkins, “Indian Treaty Rights.”
- ¹² Frost and Laing, “From Yellowstone to Australia and New Zealand,” 65–67; Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature*, 81–146; Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*.
- ¹³ Hall and Shultis, “Railways, Tourism and Worthless Lands,” 65–67 (quote on 66).
- ¹⁴ 86 New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (September 17–October 24, 1894), 679.
- ¹⁵ Wai 1130, vol. 2, 446.
- ¹⁶ 86 New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (September 17–October 24, 1894), 679.
- ¹⁷ Hall and Shultis, “Railways, Tourism and Worthless Lands,” 66 (quote). Anthropologist Melissa Baird argues that “narratives surrounding the Gift of Tongariro silence the colonial histories of the Park.” See Baird, “Breath of the Mountain,” 327.
- ¹⁸ Binnema and Niemi, “Let the Line Be Drawn Now.”
- ¹⁹ Adams, “Beyond Yellowstone?”; Riseth, “Indigenous Perspective.”
- ²⁰ Colin, “The Wild Man.”
- ²¹ Greene, *Intellectual Construction of America*, 18. Enlightenment thinkers often turned to this stereotype to critique European society.

- See Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 72–80. For more on the stereotype of the Noble Savage, see Ellingson, *Myth of the Noble Savage*.
- ²² Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 50–51; Vance, *America's Rome*, 302–15.
- ²³ Catlin, *North American Indians*, 294–95. Emphases in original.
- ²⁴ Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*, 83. Similar use of the stereotype of the ecological Indian happened in other national parks, most notably in Yosemite. See Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*, 171–94. Yet, historian Cothran reminds us that Indigenous peoples often used these opportunities to meet their own priorities. See Cothran, “Working the Indian Field Days.”
- ²⁵ Baird, “Breath of the Mountain,” 328.
- ²⁶ Anthony, “Dual Nature of Parks,” 236; Volkman, “Hunter-Gatherer Myth,” 25 (quote).
- ²⁷ Havens, “Introduction,” 9.
- ²⁸ These Ainu attractions are prominently advertised, complete with photos of Ainu people today, on the Japan Travel website. See <https://www.japan.travel/national-parks/parks/akan-mashu/story/> and <https://www.japan.travel/japan-heritage/popular/172dba96-6ae7-4e5f-96bc-9be57c6e1403>.
- ²⁹ National Parks Act 1952 (1952 No. 54); Reserves Act 1977 (1977 No. 66); National Parks Act 1980 (1980 No. 66); “Appendix 1: A New Zealand Wilderness Philosophy,” in Cessford, *State of Wilderness in New Zealand*, 95 (“those large tracts of land”); Davies, “Planning in the New Zealand National Park”; Roche, “Time and Place for National Parks.”
- ³⁰ Wilderness Act of 1964, Pub. L. No. 88-577, 78 Stat. 890.
- ³¹ For more on the historical context of this era of environmentalism, see Merchant, *Columbia Guide*, 174–90.
- ³² For the history of the IUCN, see Brouder, “International Union.”
- ³³ Kennedy to the Delegates of the First World Conference on National Parks, June 23, 1963, in Adams, *First World Conference*.
- ³⁴ See, e.g., statements from Thai conservation scientist Boonsong Lekagul and executive secretary and general counsel of the US National Park Service, Anthony Wayne Smith. Adams, *First World Conference*, 131 and 175.
- ³⁵ Badshah, “National Parks,” 28; Buchinger, “Undisturbed Conditions,” 73; Pile, “Interpretation and Understanding,” 230; Verschuren, “Science and Nature Reserves,” 269, in Adams, *First World Conference on National Parks*.
- ³⁶ Richard, “National Parks in Wet Tropical Areas,” p. 222; Curry-Lindahl, “Projecting the Future in the Worldwide National Park

- Movement,” p. 92; Costantino, “Present Trends in Worldwide Development of National Parks,” p. 72; Bruzual comment on Joseph L. Fisher, “Population and Economic Pressures on National Parks,” p. 110 in Elliott, *Second World Conference on National Parks*.
- ³⁷ Brockington, *Fortress Conservation*. For a more complete overview of the international application of “fortress conservation,” see Brockington and Igoe, “Eviction for Conservation.”
- ³⁸ Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 156–57.
- ³⁹ Buerge, *Chief Seattle*, 125–26; Hilbert, “When Chief Seattle (Si AL) Spoke”; Kaiser, “Chief Seattle’s Speech(es)”; Krupat, “Chief Seattle’s Speech Revisited.” The Suquamish Tribal Nation has posted the version (closest to Smith’s original) they prefer on their website: <https://suquamish.nsn.us/home/about-us/chief-seattle-speech/>.
- ⁴⁰ Perry’s speech is excerpted in Kaiser, “Chief Seattle’s Speech(es),” 525–30.
- ⁴¹ Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 167.
- ⁴² Jones and Sawhill, “Just Too Good to Be True.”
- ⁴³ Ranco, “Ecological Indian.” Makah whaling illustrates this tendency. See Bowechop [Ledford], “Contemporary Makah Whaling”; Erikson, “A-Whaling We Will Go”; Reid, *Sea Is My Country*.
- ⁴⁴ New Caledonia is a special collectivity of France in the Pacific Ocean. A collaboration of 16 Pacific Island states and six territories, such as New Caledonia, the Pacific Oceanscape seeks to sustainably manage 40 million square kilometers of ocean. The Coral Sea Park concerns the Indigenous Kanak peoples of the region. Cambou, Gilbert, and Degremont, “Marine Protected Areas,” 191–211.
- ⁴⁵ The literature on Indigenous activism in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and beyond is large. For these moments discussed above, see Alfred, *Heeding the Voices*; Anderson, Binney, and Harris, *Tangata Whenua*, 416–53; Blansett, *Journey to Freedom*; Dalland, “Last Big Dam in Norway,” 41–56; Foster, Webber, and Raven, *Let Right Be Done*; Havemann, *Indigenous Peoples’ Rights*; Maddock, *Your Land Is Our Land*; Smith and Warrior, *Like a Hurricane*; Russell, *Recognizing Aboriginal Title*; Wilkinson, *Blood Struggle*; Wilkinson, *Messages from Frank’s Landing*.
- ⁴⁶ Brysk, *From Tribal Village to Global Village*.
- ⁴⁷ Simpson, *As We Have Always Done*, 55–70.
- ⁴⁸ Thrush, *Indigenous London*, 68–98.
- ⁴⁹ Estes, *Our History Is the Future*, 204. Estes identifies this as one of the first attempts at radical Indigenous internationalism in the 20th century.

- ⁵⁰ The declaration is reprinted in Cobb, *Say We Are Nations*, 172–75. Present at the conference, historian Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz identifies the declaration as “the fundamental political document of the international indigenous movement.” See Dunbar-Ortiz, “Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations,” 126. She also provides the full text of the declaration.
- ⁵¹ Yupsanis, “ILO Convention No. 169.” Text of the convention itself is available on the International Labour Organization’s website at https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169.
- ⁵² The United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand initially voted against UNDRIP before eventually supporting it. For an insightful overview of UNDRIP within the context of international Indigenous rights, see Lightfoot, *Global Indigenous Politics*. Appendix 2.4 contains the text of the declaration.
- ⁵³ Lennox and Short, *Handbook of Indigenous Peoples’ Rights*, 8. Anishinaabe political scientist Sheryl Lightfoot argues that Indigenous activists, through UNDRIP, have helped forge a new understanding of self-determination, one that is not bound to the Westphalian system of sovereign states. See Lightfoot, “Emerging International Rights Norms.”
- ⁵⁴ McNeely, *Parks for Life*, 85.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 25–54.
- ⁵⁶ As quoted in Stevens, “New Protected Area Paradigm,” 48.
- ⁵⁷ IUCN, “World Parks Congress Recommendation 5.24.” See also Brosius, “Indigenous Peoples and Protected Areas,” 610.
- ⁵⁸ IUCN, “Advancing Indigenous Peoples’ Rights,” 15. This document also outlines the governance change. As of 2017, there are 17 Indigenous Peoples’ Organization that are members of the IUCN: eight are in Central or South America, two are in South Asia (Bangladesh), four are in the United States or Canada, one is in Australia, and two are transnational (Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee, and the Inuit Circumpolar Council).
- ⁵⁹ See, e.g., Bargh, *Resistance*; Kuokkanen, “Achievements”; Champagne, “Rethinking Native Relations”; Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*; Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus*.
- ⁶⁰ Gordon, “Environmental Personhood.”
- ⁶¹ Finlayson, “A River Is Born,” 259.
- ⁶² As environmental historian Louis Warren argues, “all peoples change nature to achieve their notion of the good life.” See Warren, *American Environmental History*, 4.

- ⁶³ Environmental historian Mark Spence provides an overview of the spiritual importance of Glacier National Park to the Blackfoot Nation. See Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*, 73–74. Blackfoot oral histories speak of the historical and continued importance of Mistakis. For a representation, see Bullchild, *The Sun Came Down*; Grinnell, *Blackfoot Lodge Tales*, 135–74; Schultz, *Blackfoot Tales*; Wissler and Duvall, *Mythology of the Blackfoot Indians*.
- ⁶⁴ For a helpful introduction to TEK/Indigenous knowledges, see Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*; Menzies, *Traditional Ecological Knowledge*.
- ⁶⁵ Bunn-Marcuse and Jonaitis, *Unsettling Native Art Histories*; Wray, *Hands of a Weaver*.
- ⁶⁶ Whyte, “Indigenous Knowledges.”
- ⁶⁷ This is a brief summary of the ceremony as practiced in the Lummi Nation. For a more complete description, see Hillaire and Fields, *Rights Remembered*, 274–77 (quote 277).
- ⁶⁸ For a more complete discussion of *rangatiratanga*, especially as related to property rights and the environment, see Tomas, “Māori Concepts.”
- ⁶⁹ For an introduction to this and some successful case studies, see Garnett et al., “Spatial Overview”; Godden, “Evolving Governance,” 123–48; Jaireth and Smyth, *Innovative Governance*; Todd, “Fish Pluralities.”
- ⁷⁰ This is a more general problem in ethnographies and scholarship about Indigenous peoples. See Appadurai, “Putting Hierarchy in Its Place.”
- ⁷¹ Stein, *Exploring Coast Salish Prehistory*, 64.
- ⁷² Menzies and Butler, “Introduction,” 8; Whyte, “On the Role,” 3–5.
- ⁷³ For more information on what is known as the “30 × 30” push, see the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People website, <https://www.hacfornatureandpeople.org/>. For a critical response raised by more than 128 Indigenous rights groups and others, see Survival International, “NGO Concerns.”

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Epilogue

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This volume came together in the midst of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the spring and summer of 2020. As both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers and Indigenous practitioners working with diverse Indigenous communities, these extraordinary times have touched us all in deep and profound ways. For some contributors to this volume, the virus has struck close to home, and for each of us, the crisis has had more than just practical consequences for our work and lives. Tragically, the virus has taken a particular toll on Indigenous communities and other communities of color, a painful reminder that Indigenous peoples and other vulnerable populations too often dis-

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proportionately bear the costs and consequences of the dominant society's policy choices. The fact that these trends have been similar across the world is a stark reminder for many researchers of the importance of thinking globally about local issues, and for decision-makers about the need to synchronize policies and government actions on a more global scale.

The COVID pandemic saw many national parks and other protected spaces of nature close down, either partly or completely. In a surprisingly short period of time, rangers and other park employees in North America reported that wildlife was seen in abundance in parks from Yellowstone to Yosemite and beyond. It is difficult and even hazardous to draw definitive conclusions from fragmentary and anecdotal evidence, but perhaps there are lessons to be learned. Rather than treating our preserved spaces of nature as commodities, managing these delicate ecosystems might benefit from a more ecological approach and, for that, Indigenous knowledge and practices may be even more helpful than previously thought.

National Parks are constructed spaces of nature that are based on an ideal. But that idea is historically rooted in a legacy of dispossession and colonization. As a result, it remains highly controversial and raises a plethora of multifaceted questions. While national parks are perhaps the most striking example of this "constructed wilderness," the issues of dispossession, agency, and management are present also in various other nature protected spaces such as marine protected areas, nature preserves, and wilderness areas. Grappling with those legacies is an essential step toward bridging diverse cultural concepts of nature. If we are to forge a path forward toward a more just and equitable paradigm for managing these vital ecosystems, settler states and Indigenous people must develop mechanisms for resolving contentious questions of ownership, governance, and the rights of both human and non-human entities. Ultimately, this volume is a snapshot of a moment in this much larger and ongoing conversation. The authors may disagree on the implementation of specific policy or the best practices of governing Indigenous lands, but we agree on one fundamental

principle: Indigenous peoples have an inherent right to their homelands and their presence must be powerfully enforced.

We would like to conclude by acknowledging those individuals and institutions who made this volume possible and recognizing the context within which it was produced. As noted previously, this volume would not have materialized without the “Bridging Cultural Concepts of Nature: A Transnational Symposium on Indigenous Places and Protected Spaces of Nature” held at the University of Helsinki in September 2018. This event was made possible by the generous financial and administrative assistance of the University of Helsinki Futures Fund and Vice Rector Hanna Snellman; the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies and Drs. Hanne Appelquist (editor of the series for this publication) and Tuomas Forsberg; the Indigenous Studies Program; Helsinki University Humanities; the Department of Cultures at the University of Helsinki; and the Center of the Pacific Northwest at the University of Washington, Seattle. We also want to thank Heli Rekiranta for creating most of the maps for this volume. In addition to the authors included here, we are thankful for the insights of Roberta Cordero, Julianne Cordero-Lamb, John Janusek, Antti Korpisaari, Sami Lakomäki, Janine Ledford, Aslak Paltto, and Teresa Romero. John Janusek sadly passed away before this book project was launched, but we want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for his profound knowledge and understanding of the Andean cultures, especially Tiwanaku. The editors also want to express thanks to our many Indigenous friends who have generously shared their stories about the natural world and beyond.

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National parks and other preserved spaces of nature have become iconic symbols of nature protection around the world. Many of these areas are traditional and sacred territories for Indigenous peoples, yet their world-views have been marginalized in discourses of nature preservation and conservation. As a result, for generations of Indigenous peoples, these protected spaces of nature have meant dispossession, treaty violations of hunting and fishing rights, and the loss of sacred places.

Bridging Cultural Concepts of Nature brings together anthropologists and archaeologists, historians, linguists, policy specialists, communications scholars, and Indigenous experts to discuss differing views and presents a compelling case for the possibility of more productive discussions on the environment, sustainability, and nature protection. Drawing on case studies from Scandinavia to Latin America and from North America to New Zealand, the volume challenges the old paradigm where Indigenous peoples are not included in the conservation and protection of natural areas and instead calls for the incorporation of Indigenous voices into this debate.

This original and timely edited collection offers a global perspective on the social, cultural, economic, and environmental challenges facing Indigenous peoples and their governmental and NGO counterparts in the co-management of the planet's vital and precious preserved spaces of nature.

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