Giving voice to humans and non-humans: inclusion and justice in use of natural resources.

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Background

Problem

- Ongoing transitions / transformations towards low carbon economies frequently result in 'decarbonisation conflicts', e.g. increased / altered land use.

- These suffer from a lack of inclusive <u>conflict mediation</u>.

- Most approaches to conflict resolution remain anthropocentric, viewing the role of nature and non-human actors as passive and simply 'setting the stage', rather than as active participants

Solutions

- We approach conflict resolution across disciplinary boundaries, moving beyond anthropocentric understandings.

- We consider, understand and include non-human actors in complex conflict processes and their resolution.

- Those affected by decisions require voice and justice (UN ICHR) – we include wild systems in this need for voice.
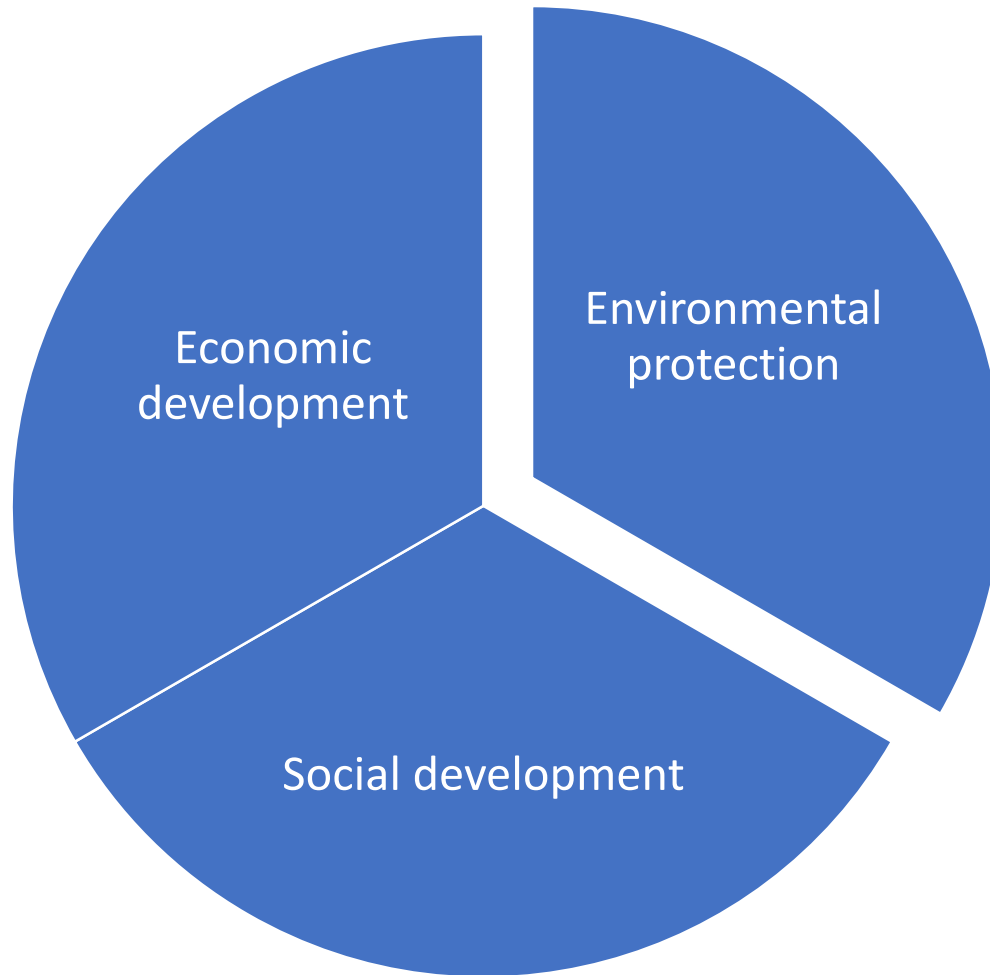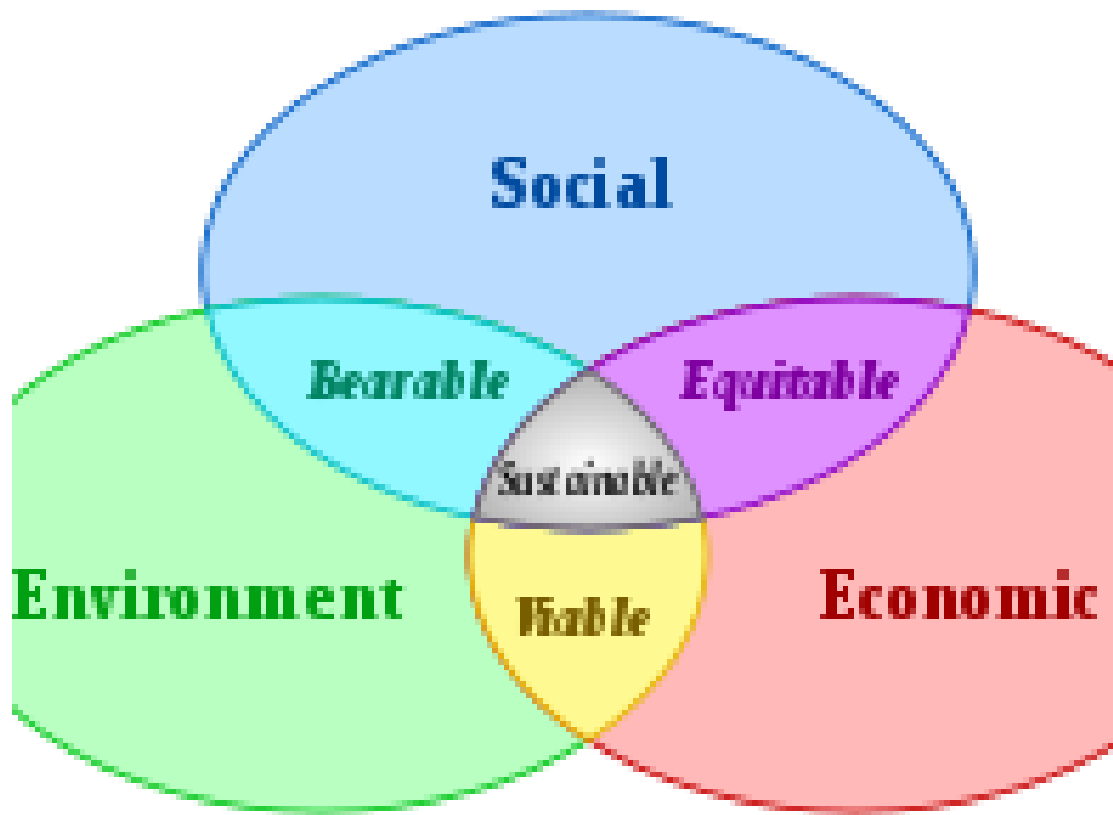
Perspectives on Environmental Justice

- Different dimensions of justice (between countries, within societies, within groups)

- Fair and equitable treatment and involvement of all affected people in environmental policies and planning

- Indigenous people and "rights to use resources" for sustainable livelihoods (SULi IUCN group)

➢ ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (1989)

➢ UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)

- Marginalised groups (women's and girl's voices, excluded cultural minorities)

Photo @M Klailova

Perspectives on Sustainability

Social

Environment

Economic

Bearable

Equitable

Sustainable

Viable

New forms of development

- Blue economies (marine ecosystems as tools for sustainable development)

- Green economies (reducing ecological risks, sustainable systems, valuing ecosystem services and "natural capital")

Transitions to zero carbon economies

- Beneficiaries?
- Costs?

"Ecosystems" as stakeholders in transitions to low carbon economies and social development

Photo by Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership

Stakeholders at the decision-making table…

- Conservation NGOs (big and small – each with specific agenda and donor base)

- Corporate interests (economic / utilitarian values and greenwash)

- Political interests (short-term electoral gain)

All of these are invested in sustaining current financial / economic models.

Photo @Harvey Croze

The paradigm of "conflict"

- Crop damage, resources lost, human injury or death

- Intangible costs (freedom of movement etc)

- Compensation mechanisms: the population becomes risk-averse with regard to wildlife

Conflicts of interest between stakeholders

- Typically between consumers/ producers and those promoting protection of species

- Globally ubiquitous, potentially thought to be a problem without solution.

BUT

- Valuing the ecosystem or animal "services"

- "Stewardship" fee / generating income from animals

- Give wildlife or forests value (financial gains from proximity to animals)

Creating a context of tolerance

But what about voices for elements of the ecosystems?

© Vicki Fishlock/ ATE

# Cycles of conservation conflicts are driven by "voice"

Lee, P.C.: in C M Hill, A D Webber, N E C Priston (ed.), *Understanding Conflicts About Wildlife: A Biosocial Approach*, Berghahn Books (2017)

Needs…

- to give voice to all actors within an ecosystem, including the nonhuman world.

- To move biodiversity from its role as a **subject** whose life processes are managed (by conservation bodies, international treaties or states) to that of a **political actor beyond a conventional focus on sentience and consciousness** in their own rights.

Managing ecological risks
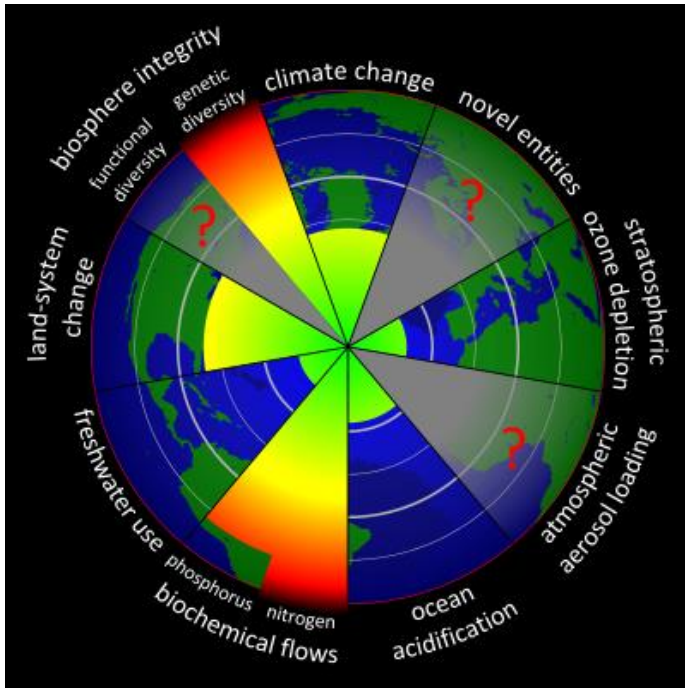
- Famine / Flood (climate chaos)
- Soil degradation and loss
- Pollinator & recycling species loss
- Toxic and persisting substances (plastic, pesticides, oil spills....)
- Invasive species and diseases

Managing livelihood risks (rural women's perspective from Costa et al. 2016)

Factor	Severity index	Incidence index	Risk index
Famine	1.14	0.8	0.7
Health	1.46	0.28	0.2
Money	1.65	0.28	0.13
Water	1.42	0.13	0.09
Other*	1.60	0.11	0.07
Housing	1.38	0.09	0.06

* Transportation, roads, schools, etc.

Managing, Enabling…

The non-human voice as an equal stakeholder via representatives in discourse on risk and revenue sharing.

Finding inclusive procedural justice mechanisms to include this voice.

Redefining Procedural justice

- "Conventional" procedural justice mechanisms: right to information, transparency, right to participation, access to remedies, compensation;

- Sustainability solutions that are emergent rather than imposed;

- Benefits must be those desired by residents of the community and respect the non-human needs;

- Mechanisms to ensure equitable distribution of benefits (gender, education, controlling corruption);

- Tackle asymmetric power relations (state vs individual) where community priorities = development needs; state priorities = revenue (and possibly "conservation").

Conflict mediation: Our conclusions

Interdisciplinary approaches: addressing historical institutional problems with justice and representation.

Inclusion of all actors – recognition of the missing wild voice.

Developing processes to enable diverse voice in conflict mediation processes.

With thanks

- The people and elephants of Amboseli, Kenya

- All our colleagues in the Conflict and Cooperation Research Group, and the Behaviour and Evolution Research Group, University of Stirling

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- To WK Lindsay for hammering home the importance of idea of elephants as stakeholders.