

Tiedekunta-Fakultet-Faculty Faculty of Social Sciences		Laitos-Institution-Department Department of Political Science	
Tekijä-Författare-Author Munive, Alexander			
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Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract 1. INTRODUCTION At 500 meters above sea level in the Colombian mountain of Sierra Nevada, the Santa Marta sign reads: 'We take care of biodiversity'. Children painted the phrase with picturesque colours at a rural training centre. This ecological centre is financed by international donors through a local environmental NGO. There, a German ornithologist is carrying out a survey on the species of migratory birds in the Sierra Nevada. Just a couple of kilometres away from the training centre, plantations of coca extend as far as the eye can see. The parents of the children who drew the banner are involved in the cultivation of illegal crops and have systematically logged primary forest. In the same region, Wiwas indigenous people struggle to maintain their territory and culture. The State presence in the zone is weak. In fact, the only tangible service provided by the government is the rural school teacher who works two hours away from the training centre. These are some of the actors that one can find in biologically rich zones. It is obviously not an exhaustive list, but reflects the multiplicity of actors present in a tropical rainforest. This great variety of world perceptions and livelihoods motivated me to research the conservation of nature; namely, biodiversity. Conservation of biodiversity is a contested activity. Very often, it implies intervention from outsiders who prescribe solutions for biodiversity conservation. Depending on the created images of the Other - sometimes to foment 'better' use of natural resources and at other times just to support existing practices - many governments, but also donors such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, and other multilateral organizations, finance projects to conserve, research and find uses for biodiversity. During the last decades, these types of projects have mainly been implemented in biodiversity-rich zones. These interventions have created new social and institutional settings that are continuously being negotiated and modified by stakeholders. Environmental management has been transforming the way relationships between actors are understood and exercised. Practices introduced have effects on the way nature is governed and consequently destroyed or conserved. Prescriptions on how to tackle with the collapse of nature - using the apocalyptic description of the northern conservationist - have been prone to adaptation and changes. In the 70s, 80s and 90s, trends followed by practitioners and communities focused on what became to be known as the democratisation of natural resource management. Communities which were thought to be homogenous, strong and locally bound were 'empowered' to be the lords and masters of nature.			
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