

Galvin, M. & T. Haller (eds.) 2008. *People, Protected Areas and Global Change: Participatory Conservation in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe. Perspectives of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South, University of Bern 3*. Bern: Geographica Bernensia, 560 pages. [ISBN: 978-3-905835-06-9]

The present 560 page volume is the result of three years' work at the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South at the University of Berne. It is part of a series of recent publications that approach the topic of large protected areas (national parks, biosphere reserves, nature parks, conservation areas, world heritage sites) from diverse angles (biodiversity, acceptance, tourism etc.). Large protected areas are also the focus of attention in the fields of conservation and development as well as with several academic disciplines (biology, landscape preservation, geography, forestry, ethnology etc.). There are substantive reasons for this, e.g. issues of process protection (allowing wilderness) vs classic conservation (preservation of cultural landscapes) or perspectives of regional development in areas that represent blank spaces in terms of use. In addition, large protected areas have – at least quantitatively – enjoyed tremendous success in recent decades. After the 1992 Conference of Rio and the Convention on Biodiversity agreed there, the number of large protected areas has grown enormously. This is partly the result of a policy of detente and of a thaw in the East-West conflict and does not mean that it does not include a fair number of so-called “paper parks”. In 1992 about 9% of the ice-free land surface of our planet was predominantly dedicated to conservation. In 2008 this acreage had risen to 12%, spread across well over 100 000 individual areas. This severely limits other options for adding value through human actions, on a total area that roughly matches the globally available area for agricultural use, not counting extensive pastures.

This begs the question “What are large protected areas for?” Or, put more concisely, what is the cost-benefit ratio of preserving (natural) landscapes with their characteristic fauna and flora? But costs and benefits are not spread evenly in terms of space. As a rule, the resident population at the edge of a park must carry the cost by refraining from certain uses but also by enduring damage caused by game, etc., and tends to disapprove of the reserves. Bearing this situation in mind, the central question of the book reads, “Does public participation increase the effectiveness of protected area management and what are the ecological, social and economic benefits?”

A total of 31 authors concerned with this topic within the NCCR North-South program are exploring this question using thirteen case studies. The areas studied in detail in these investigations were not chosen to give a representative sample of the current global situation, but arose in the context of the work on

the project. Global coverage is good, both in terms of regional distribution of the cases and in terms of the geographical, biotic, cultural history, (plus in many cases the essential colonial history) economic, societal and administrative framework. Four articles present Latin America, five cases map the situation in sub-Saharan Africa and three articles deal with Asia. Only “down under” is missing from the collection and Europe looks like an afterthought, with the very young Swiss case of “Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn” as World Heritage Site. Which might have been the reason it was tagged on to Asia in the third part of the book (which would have necessitated geographical arguments otherwise). This means that the focus is clearly on developing countries and on the two terms that currently dominate debates about protected area management, i.e. governance (in the sense of relations of authority and power) and participation (ranging from the local population being informed to them fully controlling the large protected area) (for the terminology see e.g. Borrini-Feyerabend et al. 2004). As is well known, there has been a paradigm shift in protected area management within the last three decades, from exclusive to integrative conservation management. The present book takes its cue from this paradigm shift and acts as the pivot of a comparative scientific analysis of the case studies. For the people involved it is a matter of important considerations, such as access to natural resources and the strategic focus of the respective protected area administration in terms of whether participation should be “collaborative, co-management or community-based”. Actor groups, their constellation and particularly their spatial embeddedness in terms of a political ecology (“place based” or “non-place based-actors”) play an important role here (see also Blaikie 2006, among others) as does the justly made statement, “Conservation is then often used differently at the on-stage (i.e. official) and off-stage (i.e. based on hidden agenda) level, illustrating the basic interests of actors” (p. 22).

The thirteen detailed studies follow a uniform pattern in an effort to present best practices by juxtaposition.

In each case they present the

- a. ecology, history, demography;
- b. level of resources, local sources of income, institutional construction of the reserve;
- c. governance and participation;
- d. discourse analysis and
- e. conclusion.

In addition, the authors set themselves the extremely ambitious aim of adding a three-dimensional cost-benefit analysis along the lines of sustainability, which juxtaposes the pros and cons of designating protected areas within those regions in economic, ecological and political terms. For the first two dimensions, the authors are using the expert “view from above”, which might be called a fairly coarse view. All the same, each team of authors succeeds in positioning their case study in the scatter diagram (Figure 2, p. 24 and pp.

543-544), which manages to create a truly convincing frame for the two axes of sustainable (regional) development and participation (in its various forms). Tables 1 (pp. 514-515) and 2 (pp. 518-519) and the carto diagram (pp. 524-525) provide a substantial synopsis of the findings from the thirteen case studies. A central result in our opinion reads: "There are no real economic benefits from the various participatory approaches because these approaches fail to mitigate structural social and political injustices. The projects often do not empower local people and fail to close the skill gaps that prevent local people from benefiting from new activities such as tourism; but this does not mean that PAs do not generate any benefits for local people. In some cases small development benefits arise from an integrated approach" (pp. 509-510). Of particular interest for future and further research is the call for distinguishing three lines of argument within existing conservation strategies (p. 508): „the first favours bottom-up or stakeholder-driven political participation. Actors within a community must be able to decide on actions to be taken. [...]. A second line of argument favours projects integrating conservation and development schemes. In this vision, poverty is the cause of pressure on conserved areas. [...]. The third line reflects political economy/ecology and discursive approaches looking at the historical formation of protected areas to identify actors and aims". Without any doubt this book is well worth reading. For colleagues working in the field the conclusion in Chapter 14, written by the two editors, is an absolute must. The individual case studies too hold your attention and present a kaleidoscope of different situations pertaining to our theme. Layout and production of the book are near-perfect. As in any good work you can raise minor criticisms such as:

- Lumping African colonial history together as done on page 513, among others, is not unproblematic. After all, unlike the British, the Germans used to grant the locals in what is today Tanzania a reduced hunting licence to ensure food security.
- Figure 2 (p. 368), which shows the ethnic distribution of the population of the Nepalese Kangchenjunga Conservation Area, has a nominal scale level that means that the implementation of its graphical representation in different shades of blue is incorrect.
- It would have been desirable to find, either in the Introduction or at the start of Part IV, i.e. the Conclusion, a commented overview of the various categories of protected areas and their widely differing objectives (cf. IUCN 2008). This would have allowed the editors to shed a bit more light on the difficult debate (not just from a constructivist point of view) on the conservation of natural spaces (i.e. process protection and wilderness development) and the preservation of the countryside as cultural landscape.

Hubert Job

Mose, I. (ed.) 2007. *Protected Areas and Regional Development in Europe: Towards a New Model for the 21st Century*. Ashgate, 250 pages. [ISBN-10: 075464801X]

For this book more than a dozen scientists from Austria, Switzerland, Germany, the UK, France and Finland put together case studies of selected European protected areas (PAs) in an effort to present the interdependency between such areas and regional development in their vicinity. The authors were driven by a perceived paradigm shift away from strictly defined "special areas" protected essentially by excluding almost any human use, and towards the approach largely accepted today of protection through use.

This paradigm shift is presented in the first chapter of the theory part of the book, which also contains a very good overview of the historical development of area protection in Europe.

The second chapter of this first part contains important questions about possible partnerships and conflicts between conservation and regional development. It would have been good to integrate the new IUCN PA categorization here, as the authors refer to it in this chapter anyway.

The second part of the book presents eleven case studies of PAs in Switzerland, Slovakia, Austria, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Scotland and Finland. For each of these cases the authors report thoroughly and competently on how PAs contribute to regional development as well as on potential and already virulent conflicts. Experiences, problems, opportunities and prospects are put forward in concrete individual cases, which is particularly useful. I would like to stress that the authors of the individual chapters emphasize different aspects of their chosen PA. This means that the individual presentations do not lend themselves to direct comparisons, which might be a disadvantage for some readers. On the other hand, such freedom for the authors prevents repetition from creeping in to these chapters. Readers who work in or near a PA will consider this an advantage, as it increases the variety of the information they obtain here. The rich report of highly diverse experiences of the interaction between PAs and regional development will surely encourage some of the experts to take a fresh look at "their" PA and the experiences with their region.

The third and last part of the book provides a successful synthesis that includes a discussion of the seven questions on the theme of the book which draws on the case studies presented.

For the future I would suggest inviting more colleagues from Eastern Europe to get involved in similar book projects. The framework conditions there often differ considerably from the situation in Western Europe but are every bit as interesting.

A final remark: I would have wished for a basic homogeneity in the illustrations throughout the book and, where possible, an overview of more recent literature on the topic.

Frauke Fischer