



Understanding and Resolving Conflict Between Local Communities and Conservation Authorities in Colombia

K. DE POURCQ^{a,b}, E. THOMAS^c, B. ARTS^d, A. VRANCKX^a, T. LÉON-SICARD^b and P. VAN DAMME^{a,e,*}

^a Ghent University, Belgium

^b Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá D.C., Colombia

^c Bioversity International, Lima, Peru

^d Wageningen University, The Netherlands

^e Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Czech Republic

Summary. — Conflicts between indigenous and local communities, on the one hand, and national protected area administrations on the other are pervasive. A better understanding of these park-people conflicts would assist in suitable policy changes to constructively address them while concurrently pursuing conservation and livelihood goals. We interviewed 601 people living inside or along the borders of fifteen Colombian NPAs to identify five main categories of park-people conflicts. Based on interviews with 128 community leaders and 76 institutional-level respondents -mainly park officers- we discuss the five principal factors underlying the identified conflicts and present a conflict framework relating the dominant sources to the most prominent conflict manifestations. Finally, we detail five strategies toward conflict prevention. While simultaneous interventions at multiple levels would be ideal or preferred, our analysis suggests that the incidence of park-people conflicts in Colombia can be substantially lowered through (i) making the environmental legislative body more socially inclusive; and (ii) adequately empowering NPA administrations. We expect our findings to be valuable for managing conflict contexts in protected areas in other tropical countries. Further research is necessary to determine the most effective interventions for both conflict resolution and meeting conservation goals.

© 2017 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Key words — protected areas, conflict, indigenous and local communities, environmental policy, Colombia

1. INTRODUCTION

Global biodiversity loss and degradation of natural habitats are exceedingly linked to increasing demographic pressures, mounting rural poverty, unsustainable extraction and use of natural resources, and (violent) conflicts (Carey, Dudley, & Stolton, 2000; Chape, Harrison, Spalding, & Lysenko, 2005; Chape, Spalding, & Jenkins, 2008; Nolte, 2015; Stolton *et al.*, 2003; Worboys, Winkler, & Lockwood, 2006). The detrimental impact of humans on conservation areas across the world has led to implementation of exclusionary conservation policies. These policies exclude people from conservation areas in order to achieve better environmental protection. As a result, natural resource-related conflicts (NRRCs) between local communities and protected area authorities have surged in numbers (De Pourcq *et al.*, 2015). NRRCs are related to a variety of causal factors, including:

- (i) forced displacement (Adams *et al.*, 2004; Agrawal & Redford, 2009; Brockington, Igoe, & Schmidt-Soltau, 2006; Kabra, 2009; Lele, Wilshusen, Brockington, Seidler, & Bawa, 2010; Lustig & Kingsbury, 2006; Peters, 1999; Schmidt-Soltau, 2009);
- (ii) social exclusion (Brockington & Schmidt-soltau, 2004; Brondo & Bown, 2011; Kelly, 2011; Lele *et al.*, 2010; Torri, 2011; Vedeld, Jumane, Wapalila, & Songorwa, 2012);
- (iii) deficient community participation processes (Brondo & Bown, 2011; Lele *et al.*, 2010);
- (iv) denial of ancestral territorial rights (Brondo & Bown, 2011; Cisneros & Mcbreen, 2010; Peters, 1999);
- (v) restrictions on community resource use priorities (Cisneros & Mcbreen, 2010; Lele *et al.*, 2010; Peters, 1999; Torri,

2011; Vedeld *et al.*, 2012; West, Igoe, & Brockington, 2006).

- (vi) negative impacts of conservation measures on community resources (Brockington & Schmidt-soltau, 2004; Brockington *et al.*, 2006); and
- (vii) impoverishment accompanying all of the above (Adams *et al.*, 2004; Brockington *et al.*, 2006; Vedeld *et al.*, 2012; West *et al.*, 2006).

A better understanding of the nature and dynamics of NRRCs is essential for developing appropriate, innovative policies that can address them in constructive ways, while at the same time contribute to achieving both biodiversity and livelihood goals (Campbell *et al.*, 2001; Cisneros & Mcbreen, 2010). Local people are usually regarded as part of the problem and as not contributing to the solution. However, this view is increasingly recognized as ineffective when working toward the prevention and resolution of conflicts. Considering local people simply as culprits is a presupposition that fails to understand conflicts within their respective historical, political, ecological, and economical contexts. Furthermore, it misses

* Research was financed by a grant of the Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad (VLIR-UOS) to Kobe De Pourcq. *Supplementary funding was provided by the CGIAR Fund Donors and the CGIAR research program on Forests Trees and Agroforestry and Conservation International, Colombian headquarters.* We are indebted to all institutions and people who have contributed to the realization of this research. Particularly the excellent cooperation with the staff of the Colombian NPA Administration is highly appreciated. Special thanks are due to all inhabitants and respondents of the participating NPAs. We are grateful to Alisha Heidenreich, Asher Lederman and Soetkin De Pourcq for helpful editing. Final revision accepted: December 18, 2016.

the opportunity to develop participatory approaches to conflict resolution, which build on local people's perspectives about the genesis and manifestation of conflicts (Le Billon, 2001; Peluso & Watts, 2001).

Drawing on extensive interview data with local people from fifteen national parks in Colombia, this study begins by exhaustively characterizing park-people conflicts and the factors underlying their manifestations. Based on this characterization, together with an analysis of relevant Colombian policy measures, we then develop a conflict impairment framework. We use this framework to formulate a set of recommendations and a step-by-step approach aimed at preventing and mitigating the most salient identified conflicts.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEFINING CONFLICT

Leading scholars within conflict studies have long struggled to find an adequate method of conflict analysis, and there is currently no generally accepted school of thought. A conflict is traditionally defined as "a difference in goal, perception or interest" (Coser, 1957; Miller, Bartos, & Wehr, 2002; Pruitt, Rubin, & Kim, 2003). According to this classic view, differences should be addressed appropriately, as part of effective conflict management. This approach has been applied in many different contexts, including natural resource management. However, it is increasingly criticized for its limited usefulness for mitigating NRRCs, partly because it does not distinguish the actual conflict from its causal factors (Bude, Converse, Edmonds, & Fink, 2015; Yasmi, Schanz, & Salim, 2006a, 2006b).

Our research approaches the conflict concept through the more specific concept of "impairment". The impairment model defines conflict as a situation in which an actor perceives impairment from the behavior of another actor (Glasl, 1999). According to this approach, conflict consists of three distinctive features. First, the core of the conflict is attributed to two actor settings: the actions of one actor cause impairment in another actor's eyes, i.e., the "opponents" and the "proponents" (Marfo & Schanz, 2009; Yasmi *et al.*, 2006a). Second, the experience of an actor's behavior or action as impairment is the only defining element for conflict manifestation, thereby providing a single criterion to distinguish conflict from non-conflict situations (Glasl, 1999; Marfo & Schanz, 2009; Yasmi *et al.*, 2006a). Third, factors or conditions that lead to the impairments, should not be confused with the actual conflicts or actual experience of impairments. They are the sources of conflict or the sources of impairment. As stated above, the separation of conflict sources and conflict manifestations sets the classical and impairment approaches apart. The latter approach facilitates our study of both conflicts and their sources.

Previous research has shown that impairment plays a pivotal role not only in social conflict (Glasl, 1999), but also in NRRCs (Marfo & Schanz, 2009; Yasmi *et al.*, 2006a). Furthermore, the impairment approach takes into account the dynamic nature of NRRCs, whereby numbers and degree of impairments within each actor can increase or decrease. This is important and a more realistic approach for the NPA context, as the perception of impairment can change over time in response to the political context, demographic situation and availability of resources (Yasmi *et al.*, 2006a).

Other studies that used the impairment approach have analyzed conflict from a community perspective. These studies assume that the state and the local community are homogenous entities composed of stakeholders with the same experi-

ence of conflict (Marfo & Schanz, 2009; Yasmi *et al.*, 2006b). However, neither the state nor the respective communities are homogenous entities (De Pourcq *et al.*, 2015; De Pourcq, Thomas, & Van Damme, 2009; Leach, Mearns, & Scoones, 1999). There is evidence that individual community members have different perceptions of resource management (problems) and experience conflict differently (Leach *et al.*, 1999; Soneryd & Uggla, 2000). A better understanding of conflict and its mitigation requires acknowledgment of the different perceptions and experiences within a particular group or community. To address this knowledge gap, we will analyze perceptions of NRRCs, and its causal factors, at the level of individual respondents.

Nolte (2015) undertook an interesting study in Colombia, showing that current enforcement efforts are insufficient to deter priority threats for conservation. Throughout the paper, he gives a concise overview of many problems that the Colombian parks face, including poor management, lack of funding, ambiguous legal frameworks, unsafe working conditions for park staff, weaknesses in the enforcement regime and land tenure conflicts. Nolte's main conclusion is that enforcement strategies are unlikely to yield positive results for reducing priority threats in Colombia's natural parks unless accompanied by resolution of land tenure, clarification of use rights, improving patrolling strategies and protection of park guards. Our study complements Nolte's work by including the perspectives of central players, i.e., local park inhabitants, on those matters.

3. METHODS

(a) Research area and background

Colombia is a unique setting for studying NRRCs between local communities and protected area administrations for a number of reasons. First, this South American country is characterized by an exceptionally high level of biodiversity, much of which is located on protected land. In 2015, the country had 58 NPAs covering 11.27% of its continental and 1.48% of the marine territory, corresponding to a total area of 14,254,127 hectares (UAESPNN, 2015). Furthermore, a substantial number of people inhabit Colombia's NPAs. These comprise 93,681 people: 35,695 indigenous, 8,325 Afro-Colombians and 47,376 subsistence farmers of mixed ethnicity, often referred to as settlers or colonists (UAESPNN, 2012a, pers. comm.). Many more live along NPA borders, but exact figures are unavailable. These people's activities, such as agriculture, resource extraction and construction, infract NPA conservation goals (see also Nolte, 2015).

The inhabitation of parks and exploitation of their resources has led to a series of resource management conflicts between NPA administration and local communities. Some authors have discussed the negative effects that NPAs may have on local livelihoods in Colombia, such as displacement, social exclusion and impoverishment (Cuesta, 2008; Duran, 2009; Ojeda, 2012; UAESPNN, 2012c). However, the existing documentation is very case-specific making extrapolation difficult, and analysis on the sources of conflicts is inadequate and incomplete.

Here we focus on fifteen Colombian NPAs (Figure 1 and Table 1) with surface areas ranging from 1,000 to 1,000,000 hectares. These NPAs are home to various indigenous, Afro-Colombian and settler communities. They are situated in the country's main bio-cultural regions of the Amazon, Andes, and the Caribbean and Pacific Coasts. Some

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات