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MASTER THESIS

**Biodiversity in German development cooperation after
the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework:
greater attention to the rights and contributions of
Indigenous Peoples and local communities?**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

30x30 goal	GBF goal to protect 30 percent of the planet's sea and land surface by 2030
AwZ	Ausschuss für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
EU	European Union
FPIC	Free, prior and informed consent
GBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
GSZs	Green sacrifice zones
ICCAs	Territories and areas conserved by Indigenous peoples and local communities
IIFB	International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILO-169	ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 (1989)
IP&LC	Indigenous Peoples and local communities
IP01 (...)	Interview partner 01
IPBES	Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
Ley N° 300	Framework Law of Mother Earth and Integral Development for Living Well
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PA(s)	Protected area(s)
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
NBSAPs	National Biodiversity Strategies and Actions Plans
TK	Traditional or Indigenous knowledge
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)

Abstract

The biodiversity crisis of rapid species extinction is met with conservation measures on a global scale. The current thesis examines the case of German development cooperation as the biggest financier of biodiversity conservation in the Global South, focusing on the involvement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IP&LC) in the planning and implementation of biodiversity projects in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. Based on interviews with practitioners in German development cooperation and the protocol of a Bundestag hearing it is worked out how German conservation approaches often (still) follow a logic of ecological modernisation. On the other hand, the involvement of IP&LC is gaining salience. By applying a post-colonial political ecology perspective, it is shown that on the implementation level German development actors are aware of the importance of integrating the rights, worldviews and contributions of IP&LC into conservation. However, when it comes to policymaking, IP&LC are often still excluded due to structural obstacles. This bears the risk that IP&LC are merely included for the implementation of Western-designed conservation projects. Conversely, there is a chance that the growing awareness for IP&LC will translate into more participatory conservation that places human well-being at the centre.

Key words: biodiversity; conservation; Indigenous Peoples; local communities; development cooperation; green grabbing; Indigenous rights; political ecology; ecological modernisation; Vivir Bien

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. RESEARCH QUESTION AND CASE SELECTION

The biodiversity crisis of rapid mass extinction is increasingly moving onto political agendas. In the shadow of CO₂-centred climate change discourses, one million species face extinction. With that, biodiversity is diminishing at least ten to one hundred times faster than on average during the last ten million years. The decline in ecosystem, animal, plant, and genetic diversity has severe implications for human livelihoods, as ‘nature’s contributions to people’ or ‘ecosystem services’ such as clean air or fertile soil, are at stake (IPBES 2019:XVI; BMZ 2024).

To tackle the biodiversity crisis, in December 2022 the 196 member states of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) agreed on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and its landmark goal to protect 30 percent of the planet’s sea and land surface by 2030 (30x30 goal)¹. The GBF’s 23 targets are interspersed with references to the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IP&LC)², whose resource and land use practices are likely to be impacted by increased conservation efforts. Against the backdrop of vast land dispossessions of IP&LC for conservation in the past, the co-chair of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (IIFB), Lakpa Nuri Sherpa, warned that whilst the GBF was just a document, “what really matters is what happens on the ground” (Bixcul & Ferris 2022:08:31-09:42).

¹ So far 100,000 protected areas cover around 15% of the planet’s terrestrial surface (Boyer (2022:135).

² I use the term ‘IP&LC’ as is customary in the context of international biodiversity conservation. ‘IP’ is only used when sources explicitly mention IP, but not LC. I will elaborate on this decision in chapter 2.1.

This is where the current study comes in. It seeks to examine the strategies and policies applied by German development cooperation actors regarding the inclusion or exclusion of IP&LC' concerns (rights, worldviews, contributions...) in biodiversity projects. Thereby, my work ties in with the paradoxical position of IP&LC as *'guardians' of biodiversity* and as *victims of land grabbing in the name of conservation*. It aims at uncovering whether or how this paradoxical position is revealed in ambivalent approaches of German development cooperation by contrasting approaches to conservation in line with the Indigenous concept 'Vivir Bien' with such that follow the paradigm of top-down ecological modernisation. With that, my research question reads: *How are the rights, worldviews and contributions of IP&LC considered in German development cooperation approaches to biodiversity conservation?*

The case of German development cooperation is highly relevant, as development cooperation actors (states, NGOs, churches, foundations, International Organisations) have become major players in biodiversity conservation in the Global South (Drutschinin *et al.* 2015:5; Brörken *et al.* 2022:115). Accordingly, in low- and lower-middle-income countries official development assistance (ODA) accounts for 80 percent of funding for conservation (Waldron *et al.* 2013; IPBES 2019:918). The German state as the 'largest international donor for an intact natural environment in developing and emerging countries' (BMUV & BMZ 2022) will contribute 1.5 billion euros annually to international conservation from 2025, with figures having risen continuously over the last two decades (BMZ 2022a:6–7). German development cooperation actors therefore have great influence on shaping biodiversity projects in the Global South.

1.2. THE PUZZLE: IP&LC AS GUARDIANS OF NATURE AND VICTIMS OF GREEN GRABBING

Biodiversity loss is a global phenomenon. And yet, what stands out is that 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity is found on lands owned, used, or managed by Indigenous Peoples (IP). This is particularly remarkable considering that IP only care for around a quarter of the planet's terrestrial surface and account for approximately five percent of the world's population (Sobrevila 2008:5; Garnett *et al.* 2018; Trewin, Morgan-Bulled & Cooper 2021:61). In line with that, the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES 2019:33) recognises that "lands of indigenous peoples are becoming islands of biological and cultural diversity surrounded by areas in which nature has further deteriorated". Therefore, IP&LC are regularly considered or consider themselves the best 'guardians' of biodiversity.

However, the more recent appreciation of the long-known link between cultural and biological diversity (Nietschmann 1992) stands in stark contrast to newspaper articles and scientific studies that continue to uncover cases of land dispossessions and human rights violations against IP&LC *in the name of conservation* (see for example: Kaiser & Dammers 2024). Green grabbing, defined as "the appropriation of land and resources for environmental ends" (Fairhead, Leach & Scoones 2012:238), thereby reflects an epistemological nature-culture divide

predominant in Western thinking that considers nature and human civilisation as two antipodes (Fatheuer 2011:22; Coscieme *et al.* 2020:40). Accordingly, to protect nature from 'human destruction', fences would have to be drawn around newly created national parks whilst locking out the land's former human inhabitants (Adams & Hutton 2007:152–153).

As will be demonstrated, this paradigm persists under the guise of ecological modernisation, the predominant approach to environmental protection. Ecological modernisation endeavours to harmonise capitalist expansion with environmental sustainability through technical or financial solutions, efficiency measures, legislative reforms, or securitisation. It thereby exhibits a (post-)colonial dimension, as environmental problems arising in the Global North are often attempted to be solved in the Global South (Alkhalili, Dajani & Mahmoud 2023:3).

In contrast, many IP&LC conceive of nature as a complex entanglement of relationships and consider humans part of it. As accordingly the survival of every species (including humans) depends on everything around them, IP&LC are often more conscious of human-nature relations and determined to maintain a healthy environment for themselves and for future generations (Steinhauer 2002:72; Louis 2007:133–134; Coscieme *et al.* 2020:39; Reyes-García *et al.* 2022:86). In the study at hand, I will contrast Indigenous conservation approaches to ecological modernisation by falling back on 'Vivir Bien', a holistic Indigenous concept from the Andes.

1.3. PROCEDURE AND STRUCTURE

The research at hand picks up the paradoxical position of IP&LC as 'guardians' of biodiversity and as victims of green grabbing in the name of conservation. Based on expert interviews with practitioners working for German development cooperation and conservation organisations, their policies and concrete experiences are analysed regarding the exclusion or inclusion of IP&LC' concerns in biodiversity projects. Thereby, conservation approaches are coded two-sidedly, detecting policies that follow ecological modernisation ideology versus such that could be derived from Vivir Bien and/or align more closely with Indigenous ideas of nature and conservation. The same is done with the protocol of a public hearing in the German parliament (Bundestag), which is used as a second data source. In line with the region of origin of Vivir Bien, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru form the regional focus of this work.

The article begins with reflections on the role of IP&LC in conservation. Moreover, links between development cooperation, conservation, and green grabbing round off the background section. In the theory chapter, core ideas of post-colonial political ecology are introduced to serve as a theoretical 'meta-perspective' to this article, through which the dialectical conservation approaches of ecological modernisation and Vivir Bien are presented. Then, the methodological part elaborates on expert interviews and lays out qualitative content analysis as a four-step process. In the subsequent chapters, the results are analysed and discussed.

1.4. POSITIONALITY AND LIMITATIONS

I acknowledge that I am a white male researcher studying at a European university. Therefore, it is neither my intention nor my aspiration to speak for any IP&LC organisation, group or individual. I am aware that my research is conducted within a Western scientific context and limited to one particular perspective. This is namely a German view on actors in German development cooperation and their experiences regarding the exclusion or inclusion of IP&LC' concerns in biodiversity projects co-financed or co-implemented by German institutions. With that, I do not look at the 'recipient' side of German development cooperation as I do not interview affected IP&LC. Hence, the claim to validity of my research results will have to be limited accordingly.

2. BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. REFLECTIONS ON 'IP&LC'

Since the term "Indigenous Peoples and local communities" is contested, a closer examination is important. Originally, the CBD as the United Nations (UN) convention dealing with biodiversity loss used the term "indigenous local communities". Then, in 2014, it integrated "Indigenous Peoples" as a distinct group in the term. Supporters of the amendment argued that the acknowledgment of IP as "peoples" was essential to affirm their rights as anchored in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) from 2007 (Zheng 2023:278–280).

Yet, the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Affairs has stated that the conflation of IP with LC was still "unacceptable" as it undermines the uniqueness of IP identities and may lead to a dilution of their rights (UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2022:16). Conversely, scholars argue that the inclusion of LC in the context of conservation is important for three reasons: First, different historical or political contexts hinder homogenised claims to indigeneity and prevent certain groups from obtaining their rights. Second, without the protection of Indigenous status, LC are sometimes even more marginalised than IP (West, Igoe & Brockington 2006:259). And third, the concept of indigeneity is not helpful in some regions where land disputes between different ethnic groups are less clear-cut (Adams & Hutton 2007:163).

Whereas a universal definition for IP has been rejected by the UN due to the diversity of IP worldwide, self-identification by individuals and their acceptance by a community have been set as paramount criteria (IPBES 2019:27–28). Other characteristics common to many IP include but are not restricted to a "historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies", a "strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources", "distinct social, economic or political systems", and "distinct language, culture and beliefs". IP often "form non-dominant groups of society" and "resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities" (UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2006). The distinctive status and rights of IP have been explicitly affirmed by the UNDRIP from

2007 or the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 from 1989 (Swartz 2019). This is an important difference in comparison to LC.

As with IP, there is no universal definition for LC either. Paramount criterion is self-identification as LC, yet not as Indigenous. Moreover, LC exhibit features in terms of social, cultural, and economic conditions that set them apart from other parts of society. They usually have culturally constitutive relations to their lands and resources. Due to their diversity, the list of further criteria is broad and non-exhaustive (CBD 2011:12–13; DiGiano, Stickler & David 2020:2).

Lastly, 'Indigenous Peoples and local communities' is widely used in the conservation context, including by actors who self-identify as Indigenous. Whereas the term is not intended to look over differences between IP and LC, "it is used largely to denote that there are commonalities and shared concerns for IP and LC that are important to be represented in international forums" (IPBES 2019:27). As with IP and LC individually, no clear-cut definition of the umbrella term exists. It is obvious however, that the term continues to be contested due to its contingency, context-dependency, and associated attributions.

In my thesis I still go ahead with the term 'Indigenous Peoples and local communities' as this seems to me like the most sensible compromise. Following DiGiano *et al.* (2020), I will not use the merged abbreviation 'IPLC' as in the bulk of literature but instead 'IP&LC' so as to not make the distinction within invisible. My use of this term does not imply reference to a specific group, a specific way of life, or a specific worldview (Schmitt & Müller 2022:80). On the contrary, the term encompasses the diversity of different peoples that self-identify as either IP or LC but share experiences of marginalisation alongside post-colonial power relations.

2.2. IP&LC AS ENVIRONMENTAL 'GUARDIANS'

In the context of conservation, IP(&LC) are often referred to as environmental 'guardians', on whose lands 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity is found. Moreover, Indigenous territories overlap with 40 percent of all terrestrial protected areas (PAs) and ecologically intact landscapes (Sobrevila 2008:5; Garnett *et al.* 2018; Trewin *et al.* 2021:61). Whilst a homogenisation of conservation abilities of IP&LC must be treated with caution, it is argued that, overall, IP&LC "conceptualizations of nature sustain and manifest the CBD's 2050 vision of 'Living in Harmony with Nature'" (Reyes-García *et al.* 2022:84).

The holistic worldviews of many IP&LC, who understand themselves as part of nature and emphasise close interdependence with the 'natural world', and their perspectives that attribute social, cultural and spiritual values to nature beyond mere utility, are commonly listed as reasons for the harmonious relationships between many IP&LC and their surroundings (Steinhauer 2002:72; Reyes-García *et al.* 2022:86). Moreover, such ontologies are the base of

Indigenous or traditional knowledge (TK)³, which is intertwined with aesthetic, meaningful and religious values. TK has been acquired through daily experiences of IP&LC with their surrounding resources and territory and passed on over generations. Its strong linkage to unique local places makes it very context-specific and therefore valuable for understanding local nature and establishing conservation measures (Steinhauer 2002:73–74; Louis 2007:134). IP&LC have therefore long advocated for the role of TK in conservation to be more acknowledged and for the mainstreaming of biocultural approaches that grasp conservation as interplay of natural and cultural restoration (Ferris & Shulbaeva 2022:16:55-19:02; Noebel & Fuchs 2023:4).

2.3. CONSERVATION IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND THE GBF

The representation of IP&LC' harmonious relationships with nature in opposition to the Western nature-culture divide inherent in capitalist thinking harbours the risk of romanticisation. Adams & Hutton (2007:162) pick up at this point and question the presumed common interests between IP&LC wanting to retain their biodiverse land and (Western) conservationists aiming to acquire territories for conservation. Where IP&LC members are not recognised as equals but racially romanticised as “non-Western primitive ‘other’ [or] the ‘ecologically noble savage’ living in harmony with nature” (ibid.), strategic coalitions between IP&LC and Western development actors are doomed to fail. In line with that, the ‘wish’ of IP&LC to be at eye level with Western conservationists might have been mistaken by development cooperation actors, as “the political challenge of conservation is increasingly being framed in terms of the environmental claims of the rich vs the subsistence needs of the poor” (Adams & Hutton 2007:165). The latter thereby also include IP, who account for around six percent of the world population, but for 19 per cent of people living in poverty (BMZ 2022b).

Development (cooperation) as “the effort to improve human well-being” (Drutschinin *et al.* 2015:9) has hereby come to aspire synergies between conservation and poverty reduction in the Global South, as IP&LC are considered most dependent on intact ecosystems. This is due to IP&LC' daily use of natural resources and due to the lack of alternatives to local resource use (ibid.). In this regard, ecosystem services play a central role through the provision of daily goods, the regulation of climate, diseases or water contamination, cultural benefits such as spiritual, recreational or educational, and support services such as soil fertility (World Resources Institute 2003:57).

Conversely, IP&LC frequently face challenges in safeguarding these ecosystem services due to weak rights and tenure systems, insufficient resources, and limited economic prospects. Therefore, authors argue that strengthening rights, enhancing equity, and involving TK are crucial for making strides in human well-being through conservation (Roe, Seddon & Elliott

³ I use ‘traditional’ and ‘Indigenous’ knowledge interchangeably.

2019:3). Furthermore, the fair participation of IP&LC in decision-making, the equitable sharing of costs, benefits and responsibilities, as well as accountability and grievance mechanisms are indispensable for successful and inclusive conservation (Bernstein *et al.* 2021:3).

The GBF sets a good example in this respect. Amongst others, the adoption of a whole-of-society and a human-rights-based approach, the acknowledgment of different worldviews and values, the establishment of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) as well as the proliferation of references to TK (CBD 2022) mark significant advancements for the concerns of IP&LC in comparison to the preceding Aichi Biodiversity Targets of 2010. However, at the same time, the GBF leaves room for the partial reproduction of the aforementioned paradoxical ambivalences by also promoting conservation measures that have been detrimental to IP&LC rights. An example is the endorsement of biodiversity offsets and other neoliberal financial tools in GBF Target 19. This paves the way for increased pressure on IP&LC territories, where the enclosure and commodification of nature is economically efficient for investors but destructive to livelihoods of IP&LC (Global Forest Coalition 2022).

2.4. THE FINANCIALISATION OF CONSERVATION

The call for more financial investments into biodiversity expressed also in the GBF has attracted international capital, best exemplified by an investment banker's announcement to 'enlist Wall Street in the fight for nature' (Hahn 2023). Scholars argue that such investments embody a neoliberal system of accumulation. Drawing on Harvey's (2003) argument that capitalism finds itself in a continual crisis of having to generate more value as an explanation, it is reasoned that nature has increasingly become subject to financialisation. Thereby, financial tools like payment for ecosystem services or biodiversity offsets generate new value, transform 'deserted' landscapes into new commodities and enable financial actors to amass these newly created assets. However, these tools require areas set aside for the preservation of biodiversity and uninhabited by humans, which is why there is a connection to PAs and green grabbing (Corson & MacDonald 2012:268–269; Thakholi 2016:21–22).

As Fairhead *et al.* (2012:241–242) elaborate, nature is thereby doubly valued for its use and for its repair. Consequently, nature is no longer valued solely according to its utility (resources and their conservation), but also according to the costs for restoring it. Therewith, a rationale is established where economic growth based on the exploitation of nature sets the stage for additional growth within the "economy of repair". This means that nature destroyed in one place can be offset by restoration elsewhere, diverting the attention "from the consumption and production processes that generate the environmental damage in the first place" (Leach 2012). Commodifying nature to preserve it whilst serving the capitalist system – it is because of this development, that Backhouse (2019:122) puts the economic valuation of nature for its protection centre stage to her explanation of green grabbing.

2.5. GREEN GRABBING FOR CONSERVATION

Defined as “the appropriation of land and resources for environmental ends” (Fairhead *et al.* 2012:238), green grabbing describes the commodification of natural resources for their protection, leading to expropriation and displacement of IP&LC (Backhouse 2019:122). In this process, land, resources or the rights to use them are transferred “from local control to more powerful outsiders” (Holmes 2014:561).

Green grabbing can be triggered by the establishment of private or state-owned PAs and (corresponding) market-based approaches that presuppose a deserted environment for the creation of tradable natural goods (Backhouse 2019:122). It is executed through different kinds of structures, with varying degrees of legality, and by participation of different kinds of actors such as local elites (Thakholi 2016:21). For example, Bersaglio & Cleaver (2018) show how green grabbing is advanced through the unconsciously enacted reshaping of communal institutions for land use. In other cases, IP&LC do not lose the ownership or access to their lands, but authority over certain resource uses (Fairhead *et al.* 2012:239).

Green grabbing is closely linked to the ‘economy of repair’ or ‘green economy’, which sets resource reallocation in motion in the first place through the imperative of environmental protection (Backhouse 2019:122). Therewith, the globally legitimised consensus to fight the biodiversity crisis lends weight to green credentials and measures to protect the environment. These credentials are supported by narratives of ‘empty, underutilised or degraded’ lands and of IP&LC allegedly harming the environment through their traditional practices, e.g., through slash-and-burn (Leach 2012; Thakholi 2016:23–24). At the same time, attention is directed onto the most biodiverse regions in the Global South, where conservation efforts are cheapest but yield the highest returns in terms of biodiversity, e.g., in rainforest regions. “This crucially depends upon and reinforces inequalities between poorer and wealthier landholders, between urban and rural areas, and between the global South and North” (Fairhead *et al.* 2012:245).

2.6. FROM FORTRESS PROTECTION TO TERRITORIES OF LIFE

Within the discourse of green grabbing, much has been written on ‘fortress protection’. Originating from colonial times, fortress protection often results in the displacement of humans, as it involves the establishment of fenced-off PAs through the enclosure of ecologically rich areas. This is done to prevent ‘poaching’, to sell safari tourists an image of ‘unspoilt’ nature, and to safeguard ‘untouched’ nature from degradation. (Benjaminsen & Bryceson 2012:338; Schindwein 2023:7). Fortress protection builds on the nature-culture divide in Western thinking, which leads to the assumption that conservation is most effective where fences exclude human intruders (Robbins 2012:178). This often comes with the securitisation of conservation and human rights abuses on the part of militarised park rangers (Schindwein 2023).

Although fortress protection still appears to exist in some regions, starting in the 1980s a global shift from top-down to more participatory approaches to conservation has taken place due to sustained pressure from human rights organisations. Following the win-win narrative for nature and development, IP&LC have consequently been more included in conservation and lured by alleged new income. However, outcomes of community-based conservation have been ambiguous due to low revenues, unequal benefit-sharing and arising dependencies on donor funding or tourist streams (Benjaminsen & Bryceson 2012:338–339; Green & Adams 2015:99). This led to some states taking back control over conservation or subordinating it to the neoliberal market. Accordingly, biodiversity conservation has been increasingly funded through the commodification of nature, which has been accompanied by the privatisation and deregulation of conservation (Vaccaro, Beltran & Paquet 2013:256).

Nowadays, 'conservation *with* IP&LC' has been complemented by 'conservation *by* IP&LC'. Referring to their acclaimed role as best guardians of biodiversity versus their experience of human rights violations, IP&LC have continuously lobbied for their territories to be recognised as conservation areas on their own terms. Thereby, IP&LC have capitalised on policy successes at the CBD "to reject the historical role of PAs in dispossession and rather use PAs to make visible their traditional practices, protect ancestral territories, and resist dispossession by state and corporate interests" (Paul, Roth & Sein Twa 2023:272).

Known as 'territories and areas conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities' or 'territories of life', ICCAs represent a chance for IP&LC to gain recognition for their ancestral lands and to advance self-determination. Showing diversity in their configurations, defining characteristics of ICCAs are the close connection between a territory and IP&LC, functioning governance structures enforced by the respective community, and the contribution to nature conservation *and* community well-being (ICCA Consortium 2016). As made clear by the CBD Secretariat's and by the IIFB's interpretation of the relevant paragraph, Indigenous and traditional territories shall be included as a separate pillar in the achievement of the 30x30 target (30x30 Solutions 2023), hence reflecting the increased recognition for protecting cultural and biological diversity together. Whilst conservation approaches without, with, and by IP&LC continue to exist next to each other, the trend goes away from the former and towards the latter.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Having introduced the reader to a wider background to my research, post-colonial political ecology is now introduced as a theoretical lens. It will serve as a meta-analysis perspective and later moderate the dynamics between two competing approaches to conservation that derive from ecological modernisation and *Vivir Bien*.

3.1. POST-COLONIAL POLITICAL ECOLOGY PERSPECTIVES ON CONSERVATION

Political ecology is not to be mistaken for a fixed theory or method, but rather a research frame or meta perspective on environmental change and nature-society relations (Wissen 2014:16). Its post-colonial branch examines how colonial processes, structures, and concepts continue to influence formerly colonised and colonising countries (Schmitt & Müller 2022:80).

Economic and political power: Environmental change and its management are political. They produce winners and losers along post-colonial power relations.

Political ecologists pursue a power-analytical approach and understand the environment and environmental change as product of society-nature relations based on structures of (global) inequalities. Starting from these inequalities, political ecology perspectives reject the idea that environmental problems, resource conflicts, and environmental protection measures are natural events and without alternative. Instead, political ecology literature shows how they are intertwined with societal circumstances rooted in the capitalist model of overproduction, overconsumption, socialisation of environmental costs, and regulation of resource access. Social costs of environmental change are thereby imposed on the less powerful, amplifying environmental struggles along class, poverty, race, gender, and North-South relations. With that, political ecology reveals the political character of environmental issues and highlights power and domination as central analysis categories (Wissen 2014:17; Bauriedl 2016:342–344).

Hence, political ecology stands in contrast to and centrally criticises dominant apolitical approaches to environmental change (such as ecological modernisation) that conceal the *different* impacts of varying social groups on the environment and vice versa. Instead of hiding behind a claimed apolitical ‘objectivity of disinterest’ (Robbins 2012:13), political ecology is explicitly normative. It acknowledges that environmental change restructures human-nature relationships on intimate, material, and political levels and moves the mechanisms and structures that lead to an uneven distribution of environmental consequences to centre stage: As with climate change, it is those who are least responsible for species extinction who bear the crisis’ highest costs (Wissen 2014:17; Sultana 2022:10).

In line with that, environmental burdens resulting from destructive human behaviour (in the Global North) are shifted onto people and spaces lacking sufficient political or economic means to oppose such actions (in the Global South) (Robbins 2012:87). Thus, political ecology exposes the naturalisation and depoliticisation of environmental problems alongside poverty and vulnerability. It aims at ‘denaturalising’ social and environmental circumstances as contingent and dependent on power relations and demystifies the neoliberal inevitability. Just like the destruction of nature, conservation thereby transforms from an apolitical technical issue into a powerful political-economic strategy that relies on inequalities between those who destroy and those who repair (Robbins 2012:99; Bauriedl 2016:344). These inequalities presuppose and

run along the lines of racial oppression and hierarchical power dynamics which originate in colonialism and extend far into the post-colonial world (Quijano 2000b:533; Sultana 2022:4). Therefore, instead of taking the inevitability of certain conservation measures for granted, political ecology asks to whom the benefits belong, by whom decisions are made and at whose costs (Adams & Hutton 2007:148).

Materiality: Environmental degradation is a consequence of material contradictions inherent in capitalism, which are sought to be 'fixed' within the same capitalist system.

Political ecology perspectives assess how dominant (capitalist) conservation strategies apply certain images of nature to maintain existing power and nature relations that serve specific interests. An important starting point for political ecology is the critique of the ecological modernisation paradigm, on which I will elaborate in the next sub-chapter (Backhouse 2022:484; Boyer 2022:139). As a background for ecological modernisation however, capitalism builds on nature as resource and constitutively depends on its destruction or commodification. Accordingly, nature as a separate entity can be precisely controlled for the benefit of society, whilst the materiality of nature is assumed to be arbitrarily changeable. In this view, degraded nature is conceived like an object that can be repaired (Adams & Hutton 2007:153; Wissen 2014:21; Bauriedl 2016:346; Boyer 2022:136–137).

Political ecologists criticise how negative socio-ecological consequences originating from the material contradictions of the capitalist growth paradigm (natural resources are not endlessly available) are instead presented as results of the incompleteness of capitalism (e.g., environmental costs are not yet fully integrated into the market) or misapplied technologies. From the eco-modernist perspective, it is therefore not contradictory that the established capitalist nations position themselves as leaders in technical environmental protection, despite being disproportionately responsible for the environmental crises (Sullivan 2017:228; Backhouse 2022:484). Likewise, the same ideas underlying the destruction of nature are utilised to restore it, while overlooking the crises' root causes anchored in capitalism itself (Alkhalili *et al.* 2023:2).

Returning to Fairhead *et al.* (2012) and the 'double valuation of nature' it is argued that such capitalist conservation not only serves to reconcile nature with capitalism, but also produces more growth through the 'economy of repair' of nature. Political ecologists have countered this one-sided benefit-maximising understanding of nature and given room to a more complex materiality of nature that forms the basis for our society and integrates different worldviews and non-economic values of nature (Boyer 2022:139).

Cultural power: Dominant knowledge is constructed. It influences responses to the biodiversity crisis which stabilise post-colonial power relations.

As a certain materiality of nature is constructed, so is knowledge. Political ecology perspectives pursue a realist approach towards knowledge and discourses in which the nature of the

environmental crises is not ontologically presupposed but socially constructed (Sullivan 2017:223). For example, political ecologists point out how (Western) discourses define the biodiversity crisis as a crisis of humankind. Hereby, 'issues of environmental protection are essentialised and addressed over issues of human inequality and asymmetric power relations' (Alkhalili *et al.* 2023:2). This narrative manipulates a problem of unequal resource control that should be tackled by strengthening local land rights as a global problem of all humankind to be fixed by global experts. With that, differentiated responsibilities for the biodiversity crisis alongside a 500-year-old history of colonisation are simply ignored (Wissen 2014:17,21; Schmitt & Müller 2022:85).

Hence, the constructed 'truth' about 'our common crisis' stabilises existing power relations and can lead to further marginalisation of IP&LC. As a form of 'cultural power', (ecological) knowledge derived from specific worldviews and ethics thus influences responses to the biodiversity crisis. These solutions distribute advantages and disadvantages according to a group's status in the global power matrix and simultaneously suppress alternative Indigenous solutions (Wissen 2014:20–21; Sullivan 2017:224–225; Müller & Schmitt 2022:326).

Without denying scientific (ecological) knowledge, political ecology criticises dominant ecological modernisation approaches for depoliticising and thereby concealing the constructedness of 'scientific' knowledge and the global power structures that permeate it. This invisibilisation obscures the 'coloniality of power' (Quijano 2000b) which emerged with the European conquest of the Americas, and which has shaped the self-images of colonisers and colonised as well as knowledge production in the capitalist centres and peripheries. The coloniality of power is reflected in the establishment of racist hierarchies that structure power relations along colonial axes (Backhouse 2022:484).

Othering: Hierarchical binaries and othering justify the inclusion of territories into the global conservation agenda as well as the exclusion of the 'other' from their land.

Based on the Cartesian divide between body and spirit that established a worldview of binaries, unidirectional hierarchies between primitive and civilised, between traditional and scientific, between backward non-Europe and modern Europe (...) have been used as justification mechanisms for oppressing all those who were not European, white, and heterosexual men (Quijano 2000a:221; Backhouse 2022:485). Simultaneously, nature became an antipode to society, which later transformed into the modernisation idea according to which also nature and growth could be 'decoupled' from each other (Sullivan 2017:231).

Furthermore, nature itself was divided into untouched 'Eden' in the political-economic periphery, i.e. the Global South, and degraded nature in the political-economic centre. Henceforth, 'pristine' nature on lands that were perceived free of humans (*terra nullius*) through the colonial gaze were predestined to be protected for the sake of nature itself (Robbins 2012:180; Schmitt

& Müller 2022:82–83). With that, hierarchical binaries have helped legitimise the domination over non-European humans and natures whilst offering a solution to capitalism’s environmental crises through decoupling growth from nature.

The construction of such binaries is inextricably linked to the concept of ‘othering’, which Said (2003:111) describes as “disregarding, essentialising, [and] denuding the humanity of another culture, people, or geographical region”. With that, the other is also acquitted of their rights and depicted as unable to grasp and cope with the environmental crises. Instead, the other becomes an object of mystery that is reduced to their shortcomings, making the speaking subject and their culture appear powerful and advanced (Robbins 2012:68; Andreucci & Zografos 2022:2).

In the conservation context, othering serves domination of mainstream development or financial institutions over non-Western conservation through inclusion and exclusion processes. On the one hand, ‘experts’ construct the ‘other’, their territories, and their TK as underdeveloped, environmentally irrational, and therefore in need of improvement. Therewith, the other is *included* into the sphere of state control and international conservation governance, which is presented to ‘help’ the deficient other achieve sustainable resource use. Colonial structures that link marginalisation and environmental degradation are thereby deliberately ignored. This further hides the fact that some ecosystems (usually belonging to the other) are given a higher conservation value and therefore are seen as particularly valuable for conservation (Neumann 1997:575; El Berr 2007:106–107; Escobar 2012; Andreucci & Zografos 2022:2–3).

On the other hand, uneven valuation through othering is the basis for neoliberal conservation and green grabbing, as the other, marginalised as they are, can be exploited or their lands taken away from them (Dempsey & Collard 2017:36). With that, othering *excludes* the other from their lands, their rights and the solutions sought to species extinction. This goes hand in hand with an impending romanticisation of the other that takes a racist exoticisation of IP&LC (e.g., the colonial image of the ‘noble savage or today’s ‘guardian of the forest’⁴) as an opportunity to exclude them from modernity and deny them the ability to act on an equal footing. Therefore, othering legitimises ‘superior’ Western conservation for the global ‘greater good’ and the sacrifice IP&LC in the Global South have to make by giving way to ‘green’ projects that threaten their livelihoods (Andreucci & Zografos 2022:2,9; Schmitt & Müller 2022:83).

Space and green sacrifice zones: Areas in the Global South are ‘sacrificed’ for the global greater good and the maintenance of consumption patterns in the Global North.

In this sense, political ecologists have introduced the term ‘green sacrifice zones’ (GSZs) to describe areas where externalised negative socio-ecological impacts are borne for

⁴ Some IP&LC have of course adopted images of ‘guardians’ or ‘stewards’ to use them for their own interests. However, external attributions should be viewed with suspicion (see: El Berr (2007:99–100).

environmental mitigation. GSZs are “sites of climate injustice” where repression against the local population is justified by the higher goals to protect the climate or biodiversity (Ó’Briain 2024:462). In terms of conservation, the sacrifice thus consists of restrictions on resource or land access for IP&LC in favour of globally legitimised conservation.

As space is socially constructed, it benefits some and disadvantages others. Thus, it is also socially negotiated “who will bear the social, environmental, health, and economic costs of decarbonizing economies” (Zografos & Robbins 2020:543), or who will ‘sacrifice’ their lands and livelihoods for biodiversity conservation. Thereby, processes of othering define biodiverse places inhabited by people who “count a little bit less” (Dempsey & Collard 2017:36) and on whom the “burdens of human demands on nature (and the poor) are shifted” (Apostolopoulou & Adams 2017:41). This is in line with the economic imperative to seek the restoration of nature where it costs least and leads to a spatial decoupling of benefits in the Global North and costs in the Global South: to maintain capitalist consumption patterns in the Global North vis-à-vis a healthy environment, ecosystems and ‘biodiversity hotspots’ in the Global South are being conserved. The (social) costs of conservation are transferred into GSZs located in the Global South whilst the authorship of the problem is ignored (Fairhead *et al.* 2012:245; Wissen 2014:27; Bauriedl 2016:342).

Moreover, these inequalities are reinforced along a global-local divide. As “global discourses of extinction bear directly on local issues of rights and human welfare” (Adams & Hutton 2007:165) and as dominant environmental approaches “put the global before the local, the modern before the traditional, the occupier before the occupied, and the economic before everything else” (Alkhalili *et al.* 2023:5), IP&LC are under pressure of the global consensus to conserve nature. Notwithstanding the fact that benefits accrue globally and costs incur locally, IP&LC who oppose conservation measures are presented as politically backwards for not supporting the honourable task of conservation (Adams & Hutton 2007:161; Zografos 2022:46). This goes as far as to where conservation shows “readiness to dispossess in the name of a ‘greater cause’” (Le Billon 2021:879), closing the circle to green grabbing.

The relocation of sacrifice zones to the Global South or to peripheric areas centrally builds on a logic of aggregates, in which it is technically irrelevant which localities are sacrificed as long as together they reach an overriding aggregate threshold. In line with an arbitrarily changeable *materiality* of nature, substitutability is assumed between different ecosystems or species. This opens up “a possibility of generating 'no net loss' of 'biodiversity', even though they exist by virtue of a measurable loss of individuals of species” (Sullivan 2017:229–230). The same flawed aggregate logic is inherent in and hence leads over to ecological modernisation.

3.2. ECOLOGICAL MODERNISATION AS DOMINANT ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY APPROACH

Ecological modernisation is commonly classified as “a prominent neoliberal theory” (York & Rosa 2003:273) or “the dominant environmental policy approach” (Jänicke & Jörgens 2023:70). It encircles the idea that ‘green’ technological innovations, market mechanisms, and innovative legislation can ‘decouple’ economic growth from environmental degradation by facilitating environmentally friendly and eco-efficient resource use (ibid.: 69-70).

Thereby, political and economic institutions and the competitive pressures of the market are accorded great importance in steering the modernisation process, whereas societal adaptation is neglected. As “no one has to give up anything” (Igoe & Croucher 2007:552) and gentle modifications of the current system replace the spectre of ‘radical’ environmental reforms, ecological modernisation represents a win-win scenario for capitalism and nature that is politically highly feasible. Henceforth, ecological modernisation pursues the utilitarian exploitation of nature for the benefit of human society while at the same time preserving the minimum necessary (as in ‘efficient’) natural basis for the maintenance of this capitalist exploitation (van Koppen 2003:307-308; York & Rosa 2003:274; Jänicke & Jörgens 2023:69–70).

In accord with that, ecological modernisation implies that adjusting the prices for capitalist production by internalising the hitherto externalised environmental costs can solve the ecological crises (Robbins 2012:18; Sullivan 2017:228). What Dempsey & Collard (2017:39) call “liberation by calculation” hereby embodies “the belief that ‘all things – in principle – can be mastered through calculation’ (Max Weber)” (Fatheuer 2011:22): Since nature is regarded as a separate entity to humans and humans are the lawmakers of nature, the image of precisely adjustable nature sets the stage for calculative technologies and market instruments that harbour ‘wasted potentials’ caught between utilisation and protection of nature (Sullivan 2017:228; Le Billon 2021:868; Boyer 2022:136). Accordingly, environmental degradation in the form of ‘lost environmental time’ can be ‘turned back’ through the emergence of new or future Western technologies (Robbins 2012:18; Boyer 2022:137).

Since such seemingly *apolitical* approaches to the environmental crises (deliberately) conceal social struggles and systems of power and domination enshrined in them, *political* ecology literature has long focused on the critique of ecological modernisation. Herein, it is shown how ecological modernisation relies on post-colonial dichotomies, othering and GSZs whilst reproducing environmental injustices inherent in capitalism (Wissen 2014:16; Backhouse 2022:483–484; Alkhalili *et al.* 2023:3). Thereby, following on from the aggregate logic described in the sub-chapter above, offsetting mechanisms function as a central tool of ecological modernisation. They operate through the calculation of an efficient balance between nature degradation and conservation, as well as the subsequent trading of healthy ecosystems in the

Global South versus environmental destruction pursued by capitalist production in the Global North (Sullivan 2017:230).

With that, ecological modernisation perpetuates existing global inequalities and diverts attention from the underlying causes to biodiversity loss that are rooted in fossil capitalism, the idea of endless economic growth and resource over-exploitation. Instead of resolute reduction of environmentally destructive behaviour, 'no-net-loss'-approaches run the danger of merely moving ecological damage "across space and time" and opening the floodgates for green-washing (Apostolopoulou & Adams 2017:40; Sultana 2022:5; Alkhalili *et al.* 2023:3). In fact, Boyer (2022:137) points out that in order to keep the system running, offsetting presupposes and thereby contributes to the further destruction of biodiversity. Furthermore, offsetting weakens the cause of conservation by divorcing it from the very environmental and social struggles fighting against further biodiversity loss. This goes as far as to where IP&LC are perceived a threat to eco-modernist conservation and the valuation of nature (Dempsey & Collard 2017:36; Le Billon 2021:880).

Lastly, ecological modernisation theory is closely aligned with classical modernisation theory which regards Western society as the highest level of development. In line with that, ecological modernisation contributes to a devaluation of non-Western understandings of nature and non-Western ecological knowledge (Backhouse 2022:484; Müller & Schmitt 2022:326). An example is the concept of 'ecosystem services' that may entail neoliberal conservation strategies "which are blind to complex and diverse local societal nature relations [...], thereby threatening the very social preconditions which have sustained the ecosystems to be protected" (Wissen 2014:18). Here, actors like the IPBES have recently tried to counteract by employing more pluralistic notions such as 'nature's contributions to people', which encompasses utilitarian and relational human-nature conceptions (Bormpoudakis 2019:546; IPBES 2019:IV).

Yet, as Escobar (2006:8) observes, the offer of equality by the powerful still carries the risk for imposed assimilation of the subaltern. Against this background, IP&LC have brought their own alternatives to ecological modernisation to the fore, including the Andean concept of *Vivir Bien*.

3.3. VIVIR BIEN AS INDIGENOUS COUNTERMODEL TO ECOLOGICAL MODERNISATION

As a holistic belief system or cosmivision enshrining collective well-being beyond the purely economic and a balanced relationship with nature, *Vivir Bien* or *Buen Vivir* is a 'concept under construction' that feeds on its plurality and exposes Western modernisation as one ontology among many (Gudynas 2011a:1, 11, 2011b:447; Zimmerer 2015:316). The concept's plurality refers to multiculturalism and ecosystem diversity and is viewed through an ecological lens that highlights the principles of reciprocity and relationality in human and non-human relations (Merino 2016:272–273; Fatigato 2023:9). *Vivir Bien* in its use today influences and is inspired by

academia, social movements and politics, which leads Gudynas (2011b:444) to speak of “an umbrella of a set of different positions”.

Vivir Bien emerged as a concept in the context of a larger challenge of Western development thinking and as part of ongoing decolonial efforts to strengthen cultural identities. Indigenous understandings of Vivir Bien have existed for hundreds of years before entering the development debate and encompass, among others, the Quechua concept *sumak kawsay* (Ecuador) and the Aymara concept *suma qamaña* (Bolivia). Nowadays, Vivir Bien is being taken up by other IP&LC across the region, including in the Amazon, as a means of political claim-making and as an endeavour integrating experiences of struggle and visions for change (Gudynas 2011b:442–443; Merino 2016:276–277; Fatigato 2023:9).

As a vision and as a social practice, Vivir Bien is rooted in the idea of living in harmony with oneself, with other humans and with nature. A respectful relationship with nature, which is seen as part of a wider social community, thereby serves as a base for all further political and economic structures (Widenhorn 2014:382; van Norren 2020:443). With that, the Western nature-culture divide is replaced by a “unity of life” (Fatheuer 2011:22), in which the non-human sphere is seen as alive and as a being rather than as an exploitable resource. Nature as being becomes a subject of rights which interlock with human rights along the ways in which nature and culture are intertwined (Acosta 2009:221). In line with nature’s intrinsic value, IP&LC (specifically in Bolivia) further refer to *Pachamama* or Mother Earth as the ‘Earth-related mother of the world and being’ (Fatheuer 2011:21), a holistic concept that has been taken up by the government and is also mentioned six times in the text of the GBF.

Vivir Bien thus challenges merely utilitarian Western conceptions of nature that lead to environmental degradation. In line with that, it also abandons the capitalist conservation model and rejects the predominance of economic value over all other kinds of valuation (aesthetic, spiritual, cultural, ecological...), the accompanying commodification of nature as well as the Western urge to control and subjugate nature in order to turn it into a means to the end of (economic) development (Gudynas 2011b:445; Widenhorn 2014:383; van Norren 2020:444–445).

Instead, Vivir Bien confronts the linear development idea of modernisation with Indigenous conceptions of time, where transformation continuously occurs in recurring cycles. Without a beginning and an end point, the very idea of (under)development is consequently dismissed, as are its strategies of instrumental fixing. This opens up possibilities for an alternative development paradigm that allows for pluralism of ideas and values beyond the material. A developmental horizon of Buen Vivir does hereby not project an adjustment of Western development thinking, but proposes development as a qualitative improvement in diverse forms (Acosta 2009:219–220; Gudynas 2011b:445; Widenhorn 2014:383; Fatigato 2023:10).

To realise such development, Vivir Bien-related scholars envision a plural or solidarity economy based on the validity of extensive human rights and rights of nature, in which values such as knowledge or cultural appreciation, ethical or spiritual values in the human-nature relationship, and ecological integrity assume equal value to material goods. Since capital accumulation is reaching its ecological limits, an economy sought by Vivir Bien builds on solidarity and raises collective human and environmental well-being above economic targets. In this way, benefits focus on local needs instead of those of global markets (Acosta 2009:219–221; Gudynas 2011b:446; van Norren 2020:443). Furthermore, Vivir Bien acknowledges Indigenous nations (plurinationality) and promotes Indigenous self-governance, the protection of Indigenous territories, Indigenous self-development, FPIC, and the state's corresponding institutional reorganisation (van Norren 2020:444).

Vivir Bien stands out as a concept in that it has not only been mobilised by Indigenous movements, but also by states and their environmental agendas. In Ecuador, Buen Vivir has become a central objective of the country's constitution, which is enshrined in the form of several rights, including rights of nature. In Bolivia, the constitution anchors Vivir Bien as an ethical principle, yet does not go as far with the rights of nature (Fatheuer 2011:16–17; Gudynas 2011b:443). However, the subsequent 'Law of the Rights of Mother Earth' (Ley N° 071) from 2010 defines seven specific rights Mother Earth is entitled to. Moreover, the 'Framework Law of Mother Earth and Integral Development for Living Well' (Ley N° 300) from 2012 aims to put these rights of Mother Earth into practice and adopts as a context a set of 17 principles that reflect the core ideas of Vivir Bien (Valle Velasco 2013:18–24; Muñoz 2023).

Notwithstanding contradictions between the legal frameworks and their factual (non-)implementation by the government arising from Bolivia's dependency on extractive money and its embeddedness in the global world economy, the country's vision of challenging predominant nature-society relations through Vivir Bien is of great importance and opens the door to further discussions about how to protect biodiversity. As an attempt to integrate Indigenous concepts into the state (Fatheuer 2011:19,29; Merino 2016:276), the 17 principles enshrined in Ley N° 300 can serve to pragmatically operationalise a (constructed) Indigenous vision for conservation in contrast to the prevailing ecological modernisation paradigm, a task to which I turn now.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS AS A FOUR-STEP PROCESS

To answer the research question, I conducted a qualitative content analysis as developed by Mayring (2015). Consisting of techniques for systematically dissecting communication, qualitative content analysis adheres to a structured and theory-driven approach following established guidelines. This enables intersubjective traceability and guarantees sound social

sciences standards. With that, the method helps to draw conclusions about communication within a wider context that goes beyond the textual (ibid.: 12-13).

Here, the selected communication is to be analysed in terms of a leaning towards conservation policies that could be derived from *Vivir Bien* and align more closely with Indigenous ideas of conservation vis-à-vis such that follow ecological modernisation. This diametrical dichotomy is based on the juxtaposition of the two approaches in chapter 3 and shall capture the inclusion or exclusion of IP&LC rights, worldviews and contributions in German biodiversity policies.

In practice, I followed a four-step process. First, I operationalised the two competing environmental conservation approaches of ecological modernisation and *Vivir Bien*. Thereby, I deductively created six superordinate categories for each approach. Second, I derived an interview guideline from the operationalised concepts which served as the basis for conducting eight expert interviews. As a second data source, I selected the protocol of a public hearing organised by the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Development (AwZ 2023)⁵ of the Bundestag on the topic of biodiversity conservation after the GBF and its implications for German development cooperation. Third, I transcribed the interview material and inductively coded it, as well as the hearing protocol. In doing so, I classified the inductive codes from the examination material into the previously defined deductive superordinate categories. The three steps are described below and set the stage for analysing the results in chapter 5 and 6 (fourth step).

4.2. OPERATIONALISATION OF ECOLOGICAL MODERNISATION AND VIVIR BIEN

For the operationalisation of *Vivir Bien* and ecological modernisation, I initially drew on extensive literature outlined in Chapter 3. This proved to be sufficient for the operationalisation of ecological modernisation. However, a confrontation with *Vivir Bien* is not possible straightforwardly. Despite *Vivir Bien* being an emancipatory countermodel to development and ecological modernisation for some, it is still a plural concept encompassing many different understandings of many different IP.

Yet, as my research framework is grounded in the Western research tradition, I was required to operationalise *Vivir Bien*. For that reason, I fell back on *Vivir Bien* as a 'governance framework' (Widenhorn 2014) and followed Ballón Ossio (2020), who in their dissertation drew on the 17 principles of the Bolivian 'Framework Law of Mother Earth and Integral Development for Living Well' (Ley N° 300) as the basis for their operationalisation of *Vivir Bien*. This does of course not mean that *Vivir Bien* as defined in the Bolivian Ley N° 300 is superior to any other interpretation of the concept, but rather that it is one of the most concrete ways in which *Vivir Bien* has been adopted into a political concept.⁶ It is therefore strongly emphasised that the

⁵ Ausschuss für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung.

⁶ The factual (non-)implementation of the *Vivir Bien* approach in Bolivia is irrelevant for this thesis and does not affect my operationalisation, which only relies on the law itself.

recourse to Ley N° 300 for my operationalisation of Vivir Bien must be seen as a pragmatic decision. I am aware that the resulting categorisation of Vivir Bien can at most be seen as a common denominator of a diverse set of Vivir Bien conceptions compiled and filtered by a former government of Bolivia and by myself.

Having said this, I developed a dichotomous category system resulting from a back and forth between conservation approaches following Vivir Bien and ecological modernisation. As mentioned, whilst the operationalisation of ecological modernisation was achievable based on the relevant literature, my operationalisation of Vivir Bien in regard to conservation leans on the 17 principles guiding Ley N° 300 (English version: Valle Velasco 2013:18–24) and on the subsequent operationalisation by Ballón Ossio (2020:46). My category system (Table 3, appendix) allows the origins of my respective Vivir Bien categories to be traced and consists of six dichotomous category pairs equipped with descriptions and coding examples.

The first category pair contrasts Indigenous worldviews and views on nature (*1.1 Nature-culture unification*) with the nature-culture divide inherent in Western thinking (*1.2 Nature-culture divide*). Secondly, the socioeconomic systemic assumptions underlying conservation approaches were coded with the categories *2.1 Plural Economy* and *2.2 Capitalism*. Next, approaches to the use and protection of nature are divided into *3.1 Non-Commodification* and *3.2 Commodification*. The fourth category pair with a focus on knowledge distinguishes between *4.1 Trad. Knowledge & practices* and *4.2 Science & technology*. Moreover, the categories *5.1 Bottom-up* and *5.2 Top-down* revolve around the degree of participation of IP&LC. Lastly, the categories *6.1 Conservation = social justice* and *6.2 Conservation > Social Justice* complete the category system.

4.3. DATA COLLECTION: EIGHT EXPERT INTERVIEWS AND BUNDESTAG HEARING

Based on the established category system, I designed an interview guideline (Table 2) for the realisation of guideline-based expert interviews. The guideline enabled the collection of similar information in each interview, while leaving freedom on the form, sequence, and specific contents of the questions asked. With that, the not commonly available expert knowledge of the interviewees was queried (Gläser & Laudel 2004:138–139; Helfferich 2011:163). The interview questions revolved around the project cycle of biodiversity projects in German development cooperation (project idea, planning, implementation, financing, evaluation, grievance) and tackled topics related to the involvement and rights of IP&LC.

In total, I conducted eight expert interviews with practitioners in German development cooperation. The interviews had a length of 29 to 55 minutes each, were realised in German language and transcribed in a way that the anonymity of the individuals and institutions was preserved. As this work focusses empirically on the countries of Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru

due to the geographical origin of Vivir Bien in the Andes and the high number of IP in the region, the interview partners were selected accordingly. Hereby, two interview partners were currently based in partner countries (Bolivia/IP04 and Peru/IP06), and six interviewees worked from Germany. Among the latter, three interview partners worked particularly with one or more of the states mentioned above (IP01, IP05, IP07), two persons worked in global programmes including one or more of the selected states (IP02, IP08), and only one interviewee had long-standing experience mainly in other world regions (IP03). Particularly for the last person, I ensured that passages referring to specific experiences with non-Latin American countries were omitted from the coding.

Further interviewee selection criteria were the distinction between state and non-state institutions and the organisations' primary focus (conservation, development, IP rights). Four interview partners worked for governmental development institutions (IP02, IP04, IP06, IP08), three for environmental NGOs (IP01, IP03, IP07) and one for a (German) Indigenous rights NGO (IP05). While the analysis does not specifically differentiate between state and non-state actors, it was guaranteed that a broad spectrum of German development cooperation actors was covered. An anonymised overview of the interviews can be found in the appendix (Table 1).

Due to my research focus, it is intended that all my interview partners worked for German institutions. This naturally limits the scope of validity of my findings. Moreover, as my interviews were conducted with a clear focus on IP&LC inclusion in conservation which could not be completely concealed, social desirability and self-expectations of the interviewees must be considered. These usually tend to influence responses by casting a favourable light on the institution's own activities. To identify possible ambivalences between aspiration and reality I included IP05 as a corrective on the part of Indigenous rights organisations.

Furthermore, by including the protocol of the AwZ (2023) hearing in my analysis, I contrast the interviews conducted specifically on the topic of IP&LC inclusion with a broader German conservation debate. With that, it will be revealed how IP&LC inclusion is framed when the topic is not specific to IP&LC. The 150-minute AwZ hearing took place in the legislative setting of the Bundestag. Hereby, experts were invited to present and discuss their views on the topics of conservation, the GBF, and its implementation with stakeholders in the Global South.

The experts invited were Jörg Rocholl from the European School of Management and Technology Berlin (on the proposal of FDP), Magdalene Trapp from the German environmental organisation NABU (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen), David Niyonsaba from the Ugandan conservation NGO Prime Biodiversity Conservation (SPD), Christof Schenck from the German environmental NGO Zoologische Gesellschaft Frankfurt (CDU/CSU) and Jocelyne S Sze, a PhD researcher from the University of Sheffield (Die Linke). The hearing was divided into opening

statements by the experts and several rounds in which they answered questions from the parliamentarians.

4.4. CODING PROCESS OF THE SELECTED EXAMINATION MATERIAL

As a final step before analysing the results, I inductively coded the transcribed interviews and the AwZ protocol using MaxQDA software. I coded all text passages except for those that explicitly referred to geographical areas outside my research interest and such that only contained explanations of the GBF or were generally off topic. Moreover, in the hearing protocol I coded the statements and responses by the experts following the same rules. I also coded relevant statements and questions by politicians of all democratic parties (AfD excluded). This contributes to an understanding of the ongoing debate among German legislators.

Altogether, I coded 575 text passages and created 141 specific codes, which I classified from the examination material into the previously defined deductive superordinate categories derived from ecological modernisation and *Vivir Bien*. A table of the code system as my inductive output can be found in the appendix (Table 4). It will help to systematically analyse the extensive selection of texts.

5. ANALYSIS

The subsequent chapter analyses the selected material in view of the research question. It is subdivided according to the featured analysis categories (Table 3&4) and is followed by an overall discussion of the collated findings.

5.1. WORLDVIEW: NATURE-CULTURE UNIFICATION VS. NATURE-CULTURE DIVIDE

To start with the first category pair, 25 text sections were coded with *1.1 Nature-culture unification* (interviews: 17; AwZ: 8) and twelve passages with the category *1.2 Nature-culture divide* (interviews: 10; AwZ: 2).

In the AwZ hearing, Sze emphasised the link between cultural and biological diversity and pointed to better biological outcomes in areas managed by IP&LC. In response to questions by Gerschau (FDP) and Gesenhues (Bündnis90/Die Grünen) on exactly the puzzle presented in this thesis (IP&LC as best conservationists versus their insufficient land rights in some countries), Sze further stressed that conservation projects in which IP&LC enjoy strong land rights and decision-making authority (generally more common in South America) are more successful. According to Sze, an important reason for this are intrinsic incentives that arise when IP&LC can look after their own land, on which they are directly dependent.

However, IP01 stated that promising studies revealing, for example, a link between the number of languages spoken and the degree of biological diversity, are still relegated to a niche

existence. This aligns with their statement that Indigenous concepts such as *Buen Vivir* are very hard to grasp from a Western perspective, as self-study cannot replace growing up in these ways of thinking. Hence, IP05 stressed the importance of learning from IP&LC and their views on nature, especially as Western relationships with nature are disrupted by the capitalist mindset. Correspondingly, IP02 pointed out that IP&LC often criticise the ‘capitalisation or commercialisation of nature’, as it goes against their worldviews. Instead of seeing nature as a mere source of income, IP&LC often rely on medicinal products or protein sources directly from nature and therefore pay attention to a respectful relationship with it (IP04).

Thereby, nature is not necessarily seen as a friend (or an enemy) by many IP with whom IP05 has been in contact with. Instead, in their worldviews, humans are part of nature, something that accordingly does not fit in with the Western dualistic friend-or-foe scheme. Consequently, it is logical that Indigenous visions of conservation are holistic in that they embrace all-encompassing approaches that value the perceived interconnections between various elements of nature, and which stand in contrast to sectoral approaches pursued by Western conservation organisations (IP06, IP08). These fundamentally different perceptions of human-nature relations can stand in the way of cooperation and lead to IP&LC not considering (German) support for conservation to be helpful (IP02). Moreover, they can threaten livelihoods of IP&LC when parks and IP&LC are played off against each other (IP06) and when people are evicted (Sze).

To prevent such negative outcomes of conservation, the respondents endorsed a better mutual understanding of each other’s worldviews and conservation practices, enhanced communication, and generally closer relationships between (German) conservationists and IP&LC. Most importantly, IP05 underlined the need to create dialogue free of prejudice and judgement. Such dialogue needs to survive difficult situations by continuously seeking for balanced solutions, repeatedly reviewing measures and goals as well as by accepting misunderstandings that naturally happen. In line with that, IP05 warned of romanticising IP&LC as ‘environmental guardians’ and subsequent disappointment if ‘too many trees are felled’. Instead, IP05 called for a better understanding of TK systems that have preserved nature over generations, but which may no longer work as well in a monetarised conservation context. This was also endorsed by IP06, who said that their organisation needed to adapt their approaches to Indigenous worldviews. According to IP07, conservation is thereby on the right track, but must continue to be critically scrutinised to improve the inclusion of IP&LC.

5.2. ECONOMY: PLURAL ECONOMY VS. CAPITALISM

Concerning the socioeconomic setting in which conservation is to take place, *2.1 Plural Economy* was applied 30 times (interviews: 3; AwZ: 27) and *2.2 Capitalism* was used 63 times (interviews: 35; AwZ: 28).

The preponderance of the AwZ hearing in category 2.1 can be explained by the committee's institutional environment, in which the experts appealed to the politicians to tackle the root causes of biodiversity loss in Germany (19 codings), something that did not fit into the interviews with a specific focus on IP&LC involvement. In the AwZ hearing, all three German experts pointed out that Germany needs to lead by example in the implementation of the GBF, with reference to the country's ecological footprint (Schenck) and international credibility (Rocholl).

In recollection of the GBF targets, the experts brought forward demands for Germany to fulfil at home – namely to cut down environmentally harmful subsidies (Schenck, Trapp), to half pesticide use by 2030, to restore 30 percent of degraded ecosystems by 2030, and to stronger regulate the sectors most responsible for biodiversity loss (Trapp). In line with that, Trapp criticised the silence about responsible sectors for the biodiversity crisis in the German discourse and the political unwillingness to initiate a public debate on lowering the country's high consumption level. Niyonsaba endorsed the latter point from a Global South perspective.

In response to the experts' call for a sector-specific biodiversity law (Trapp, Schenck), Bündnis 90/Die Grünen politician Gesenhues referred to the European Union's (EU) then planned Nature Restoration Law as a blueprint for national legislation. From today's perspective, this law is allegoric of the high political hurdles in European conservation, as it was only adopted in a significantly diluted form and following a long-drawn-out stalemate and unparalleled political mudslinging. Initially, it could not be passed as planned in the EU's legislative period up to June 2024 due to political resistance by the conservative European People's Party (led by the German Manfred Weber) and several EU member states (Deutsche Stiftung Meeresschutz 2024; Kelnberger 2024). This reveals how the same conservative actors who publicly support the global biodiversity goals are voting against increased restoration efforts in the EU (O'Carroll & Greenfield 2023). Thereby, conservative politicians pursue a 'not-in-my-backyard' policy and shift responsibility for conservation to 'biodiversity hotspots' in the Global South.

Accordingly, Rocholl emphasised that the biodiverse areas particularly worth protecting are situated in the Global South. Therefore, the other codings under category 2.1 referred to an invoked responsibility of the financially prosperous Global North for conservation in the Global South. Here, Niyonsaba pointed out that 'the painful decisions have to be made by the Global South', where smallholder farmers need to be convinced to abandon agricultural practices. Him and the three German experts therefore agreed on Germany's responsibility as a rich industrialised country to increase its financial contributions to (at least) appropriately pay for the Global South's conservation work. This however goes into the direction of the biggest danger perceived by IP05, namely that the Global North will continue polluting the environment whilst 'freezing' the rest of the world on the demand for conservation.

This concern is partly validated by the fact that sustainable economic alternatives, as brought forward by Vivir Bien approaches through suggestions of a solidarity-based economy, were neither mentioned in the interviews nor in the Bundestag hearing. Instead, answers to the biodiversity crisis were sought within the existing capitalist system. As the best example of how alternative non-capitalist conservation approaches were devoured by capitalism, IP01 mentioned the case of the Yasuní national park in Ecuador. Accordingly, year-long discussions around the international community compensating Ecuador for leaving oil in the ground of the megadiverse park were halted by the refusal of the former German minister for development Dirk Niebel (FDP) to pay into a compensating fund.

More than ten years later, in 2023, the Ecuadorian people have voted that the oil should remain in the ground. According to IP01, this represents a great step for biodiversity and the pursuit of a concrete Buen Vivir example. Yet, the international financial compensation once aimed for is not part of the bargain anymore. As Ecuador finds itself in a difficult economic situation, the shortfall in money from oil sales or international compensation hits the country hard. Therefore, IP01 concludes that Germany as part of a Western community of states fails to embrace alternative conservation approaches: „Das ist für mich ein klassisches Beispiel, wo sozusagen die internationale Gemeinschaft versagt hat, die Länder selber eine Verantwortung tragen und hier aber deutlich mehr Geld fließen müsste und nicht immer nur über die Strukturen der internationalen Zusammenarbeit oder der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit“ (IP01). As such, this example stands in stark contrast to the responsibility of the Global North invoked by the experts of the AwZ hearing and reveals Western double standards.

In line with that, it became clear in the interviews that German conservation projects often (still) follow a Western development logic: „Also ganz grundsätzlich glaube ich, ist es schon so, dass da auch sozusagen die Projekte natürlich mit so einer westlichen Entwicklungslogik irgendwie aufgebaut sind und es größtenteils auch einfach, ja, deutsche Europäer sind, die diese Projekte planen und sozusagen für die verantwortlich sind“ (IP02). This can lead to IP&LC having to adapt to Western standards to participate in German conservation programmes.

Hereby, some of the interviewees stated they support IP&LC with formalisation processes, as the non-existence of a bank account, insufficient accounting knowledge and administrative capacities, the lack of a tax identification number and technical means such as laptops, as well as a lack of knowledge on how to hand in project proposals, were identified as obstacles to IP&LC involvement in German conservation projects (IP02, IP05, IP06). Moreover, the same interviewees called out the problem of IP&LC organisations not receiving funds when they do not meet certain turnover thresholds (IP05), when they do not have certain audits, or when they are not formally recognised (IP02). This is why some projects foster the creation of bigger Indigenous alliances in which the individual communities can pool their capacities and

overcome the named hurdles (IP06). At the same time, this means that smaller IP&LC organisations are often excluded from conservation funding in the first place.

Herein lies a fundamental dilemma of development cooperation and international conservation, as IP02 explains: On the one hand, IP&LC living in remote regions do not have the possibility to issue invoices (...) for the services or goods received or produced. On the other hand, the German government has a legitimate interest in ensuring that German taxpayers' money is channelled in the right directions (non-state actors are a bit more flexible in this regard). Thus, a rethinking is required in terms of how funding modalities can be adapted to better support conservation efforts of IP&LC while also ensuring the earmarked use of the money. Here, it should however be mentioned that the spending of funds by German implementing organisations is not automatically more efficient, as this means that lots of money is lost in administration and spent on staff, consultants, workshops, etc. (IP03, IP05, Schenck).

Nevertheless, to be eligible to receive direct payments (something that IP&LC often demand), IP&LC continue to endeavour finding ways of guaranteeing audit-proof transactions (IP06). Since IP05 referred to the 'embarrassing' situation of claiming direct payments on behalf of IP&LC and then being confronted with the fact that many IP&LC do not have an account, communication is thereby of utmost importance. This is also important for preventing the danger of cultural assimilation of IP&LC through forcing them into the logic of conservation projects. Accordingly, IP02 critically reported of an encounter with an Indigenous representative who stated that they were now 'experts in indicators and monitoring, as this was their new way to claim their rights'. This development cannot be the solution to the dilemma raised above (IP02), which shows why it is important to critically monitor the development of IP&LC involvement in Western conservation.

Considering that IP&LC also have their own conservation approaches, IP01 admitted repeatedly reflecting on whether their conservation organisation's work in the Global South was necessary at all and whether it was not possible to make themselves superfluous, leave, and transfer options to IP&LC on site. "Die Realität ist aber nun mal, dass wir finanziell vielmehr Möglichkeiten haben und dadurch eine Verantwortung tragen. Und wir können uns aus dieser Verantwortung verdammt noch mal nicht rausschleichen. Das geht nicht und deswegen müssen wir was machen" (IP01). Thus, IP01 stated that a better understanding for IP&LC should be continuously sought to at least spend the money responsibly (ibid.).

To conclude this sub-chapter and to return to the superordinate systemic level, the AwZ hearing proves insightful in that it reveals a strong belief in ecological modernisation and neoliberal conservation among FDP (and CDU/CSU) politicians and the experts invited by them. In response to a question by Stefinger (CDU/CSU), Rocholl stated that economic growth was in general not in conflict with biodiversity conservation. Consequently, it was mentioned no less

than ten times that to protect biodiversity, external environmental costs needed to be internalised into the capitalist equation (Rocholl 8x, Hoffmann/FDP, Schenck). Accordingly, this would also automatically result from the fact that the pressure on companies to act in an environmentally friendly manner is constantly growing, for example due to consumer decisions (Rocholl). Considering the extent of the biological crisis and its causes anchored in capitalist production and consumption patterns, it is remarkable that no counter-designs to this neoliberal conservation concept were addressed during the hearing. As a single voice, only Sze in her additional written statement dared to “address the underlying and major driver of biodiversity loss – neoliberal capitalism and its relentless pursuit of economic growth” (Sze 2023:6).

5.3. CONSERVATION: NON-COMMODIFICATION VS. COMMODIFICATION

The next category pair ties in with these conflicting views on the role of capitalism in conservation and elaborates on different modes of conservation. Here, *3.1 Non-commodification (and resilient nature)* received 76 codings (interviews: 63; AwZ: 13) and *3.2 Commodification (and ‘engineered’ nature)* was coded 47 times (interviews: 20; AwZ: 27).

To begin with, IP08 from a governmental development organisation introduced three fields of biodiversity engagement in German development cooperation: conservation through protected areas (PAs), promotion of sustainable use, and restoration of biodiversity. Accordingly, Germany financially supports more than 1,000 PAs in more than 70 partner countries (IP08). Whilst PAs still count as the most important approach against biodiversity loss (Sze), several interviewees stressed that a rethink away from fortress protection has been taking place.

In this context, IP02 named the colonial history of PAs as well human rights abuses associated to PAs as reasons for a rethink in German conservation approaches. Moreover, international debates about the rights of IP&LC living in and around parks as well as the realisation that conflicts with the local population disrupt conservation have further contributed to the change in approaches (IP06, IP07). However, IP06 explained that, for example, in the Peruvian conservation agency, this paradigm shift only took place around five years ago. Accordingly, efforts are now being made to manage buffer zones at the edges of the parks in a way that secures livelihoods, for example by allowing sustainable agriculture in certain zones (IP06, IP07). Hereby, it was mentioned how IP&LC strongly depend on nature (IP08, Schenck). For example, IP07 described how an Indigenous community's overexploitation of turtle eggs nearly led to the species' local extinction. A regulatory program in cooperation with the community helped recover the population, allowing sustainable egg collection as a long-term protein source. Similar precautionary examples were reported from Bolivia, where IP&LC prioritised the long-term benefits of natural water regulation and soil fertility over short-term profits (IP04).

Therefore, IP03 critically noted that IP&LC would also be worse off without PAs, as the forests (...) would have disappeared long ago without them. This would mean that there would no longer even be the possibility of distributing the resources, whether fairly or unfairly or in a possibly brighter future. Without coming to the defence of fortress conservation, IP03 further argued that leaving nature unprotected would not serve the interests of the poorest, but those that have the means to exploit the forests (...) in a larger style. In line with that, Schenck stated that he did not perceive PAs as the main problem for IP&LC. Rather, in South America mining, infrastructure projects, or agrarian reforms were the biggest threats to IP&LC and their lands.

And yet, it also comes across in statements by Niyonsaba and IP03 that area-based conservation naturally brings along difficult discussions and decisions on de-intensifying or ceasing land use, which are often difficult to mediate. In line with that, IP05 criticised that calculated area targets such as the 30x30 goal are not suitable for doing justice to local conditions. Bringing up an example from Peru, IP05 explained how a community was threatened by zoning concepts for a PA because the dependence on shifting cultivation was not taken into account when calculating the community's land requirements.

To jump to a second conservation approach, almost all respondents spoke about (some of) their projects focussing on the promotion of sustainable sources of income and the creation of environmentally friendly value chains. As IP04 explained, regulations for forest conservation were weak in Bolivia, which is why there was a rush for forest areas by investors who aimed to convert them into agricultural land. Thus, the only way to protect these forests and their biodiversity was to utilise them. Hence, IP04' project helped IP&LC develop small-scale businesses around sustainable forest products (e.g., nuts, palm oil, resin), providing advice, covering acquisition costs, and offering commercial training. Similarly, IP06 reported on a project that established a regional brand. This guaranteed environmental standards certified and monitored by a conservation authority and simultaneously generated higher revenues for the producers.

Coming to speak of tourism-related projects, Schenck criticised that such projects often did not reach their potential as they did not absorb local labour. Conversely, IP07 talked about a success case in the Peruvian Manú region, where a community received training and opened a sustainable luxury lodge that provides them with an alternative income. More generally, IP07 called on their organisation to do more in the field of sustainable use, something that was also demanded by other actors. Particularly IP02 emphasised, that their organisation wanted to focus on financing opportunities on a local level rather than on bigger-scale financing schemes.

In accordance with this, a sceptical stance towards (international) offsetting schemes and financial instruments such as biodiversity credits is apparent in parts of the examination material. For example, IP01 and IP07 stated that their organisations were rather critical of

biodiversity credits. Moreover, IP02 and IP03 claimed that biodiversity credits were little tested and fraught with risks known from carbon-offsetting REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) projects. Concretely, greenwashing was identified as the biggest risk of such schemes. This was discussed both by the AwZ as well by the interviewees (IP01, IP03, IP05, IP07), who fear that such schemes just move environmental damage around.

Regarding IP&LC, it was criticised that funds generated from credit schemes do not reach IP&LC but are lost to intermediaries (IP07). Moreover, it was argued that the monetarisation of conservation threatens Indigenous conservation concepts (IP05) and is against Indigenous worldviews (IP02). Furthermore, IP03 pointed out that tools such as biodiversity credits are a threat to (land) rights of IP&LC, on which IP08 also agreed. The latter stated that their organisation was aware of these risks, but that it still considered the opportunities of the concept to be great. Furthermore, several respondents emphasised that such financial instruments harbour the risk of uninformed decisions by IP&LC, which can have negative impacts on them for decades.

According to IP01 and IP05, this is due to a lack of transparency and explanation brought forward to IP&LC, who are often unaware of the financial, legal, or practical implications of signing such overcomplicated contracts. Schenck (2023:9) thereby stated that IP&LC in South America are particularly disadvantaged, as they usually have to sign contracts with a term of more than 60 years. This could also result in larger sums of money flowing into remote and money-free communities, entailing culturally destructive consequences (ibid., IP05). To better inform IP&LC on the negative effects outlined above, IP01 said that their organisation offers to bring IP&LC together with experts when a need is identified in the communities. This is particularly important because, as IP05 elaborated, IP&LC *are* part of the capitalist world and often *do* want their fair share from (monetarised) conservation projects. Accordingly, even though that might contradict a romanticised view of IP&LC, the participation in schemes like REDD+ is at times simply the only possibility for (economically poor) IP&LC to get their part of the cake.

This reality should not be ignored, especially since (in theory) such offsetting schemes can involve higher benefits for IP&LC than they could expect from conventional conservation projects (IP03, IP04). Hereby, IP04 emphasised the importance of the concrete benefit-sharing mechanisms' design. Accordingly, a good mechanism could ensure that the funds are actually passed on to IP&LC. Moreover, the partners for such projects should be chosen with care to avoid false solutions: Whereas many IP&LC, according to IP04, have a strong intrinsic interest in conserving nature due to their focus on living in harmony with nature, other actors might only be interested in the money, which bears the risk that they do not take care of the conserved areas or re-utilise them as soon as possible. If it therefore would be possible to support

the first-mentioned group through credit schemes, this accordingly would represent a win-win opportunity.

Additionally, IP08 stressed the early involvement of IP&LC organisations in the development of emerging biodiversity credit systems as an important factor in their success for nature and people. Therefore, their organisation financially supports, for example, an IP&LC advisory panel to the Biodiversity Credit Alliance, an association of NGOs working on the concept. Moreover, also IP02 confirmed that their organisation works on REDD-like schemes “mit den Indigenen Organisationen, die sich halt gesagt haben: ‚okay, wenn das jetzt sozusagen der Weg ist, da noch irgendwelche Projekte durchzuführen, lassen wir uns darauf ein“.

Altogether, the interviews indicated a pragmatic attitude towards market-based conservation schemes. Nevertheless, the risks of such schemes for IP&LC and nature were also known to the interviewees (also due to vast experiences made with REDD+, IP08). As IP02 and IP05 noted, some IP&LC have however recognised and accepted the reality in which they are dependent on the capitalist conservation model to be rewarded for their conservation efforts. While a criticism of the system can certainly be derived from this, it also shows that many German development practitioners have come to terms with the commercialisation of nature.

This also takes account of the fact that, according to the dominant narrative, the scope of the biodiversity crisis at this point requires financial contributions that far exceed the current level and that cannot be absorbed by state spending (IP03, IP08, Gesenhues/Bündnis90/Die Grünen, Hoffmann/FDP, Niyonsaba/SPD, Rocholl, Schenck, Trapp). Accordingly, new ways of procuring biodiversity funding from the private sector and philanthropists would be needed to close the biodiversity finance gap of 700 billion dollars per year (CBD 2022). Hereby, one of the biggest current obstacles is that biodiversity and conservation cannot be measured as simply as climate change (IP08, Rocholl). Since the eco-modernist conservation approach is based on the calculation of conservation needs for sustaining ecosystem services and the conforming financial rewards, this currently still poses a major problem to market-based conservation approaches (Rocholl, Schenck) and shows why non-financialised Indigenous conservation approaches are needed more than ever.

5.4. KNOWLEDGE: TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE & PRACTICES VS. SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Regarding knowledge, 25 text sections were coded with *4.1 Trad. knowledge & practices* (interviews: 22; AwZ: 3) and 14 passages with *4.2 Science & technology* (interviews: 5; AwZ: 9).

IP01 perceived that the awareness for TK in conservation is growing. This was also confirmed by statements of other respondents and by cross-party attention to TK in the AwZ hearing (FDP, Die Linke, SPD). Furthermore, IP01 made clear that for them the inclusion of TK also means abandoning the dichotomy between ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ indicators. For example,

IP01 explained how IP&LC hunt by the lunar calendar and respect the reproductive cycles of the hunted animals. Like that, the balance of nature is effectively maintained, even if no 'scientific' indicators are applied. Hence, organisations would search for ways to combine their own conservation approaches with those of IP&LC. This implies further abandoning tight European method- and indicator-based requirements to make room for Indigenous ways of conservation. With that, IP01 argued in favour of plural project structures that value all kinds of approaches, enable the understanding of IP&LC ideas, and explain Western approaches to IP&LC. This is supported by Indigenous voices, who demand to 'simplify conservation' and not overly 'burden communities for they have their own monitoring systems' (Selibas 2022).

Moreover, IP02 stated that it had to be recognised that knowledge is passed on in several ways, e.g., through art or orally. Therefore, one central challenge is to 'revive' TK that is often not recorded in writing (IP03). For example, in their project that centrally focuses on intergenerational knowledge transfer, the organisation of IP01 finances 'ceremonial rooms' in which TK can be passed on from generation to generation. This not only opens perspectives for youth to establish sustainable sources of income, but it also contributes to healthy ecosystems. Similarly, other organisations support knowledge transfer between different IP&LC (IP02). „Also das Rad muss nicht immer neu erfunden werden, ja, das ist eigentlich der Punkt. Und deswegen ist es natürlich sehr wichtig zu wissen, so was gab es denn schon mal vorher“ (IP06).

Whereas these are all positive examples of how TK is integrated in German-backed conservation, IP02 also critically assessed that the appreciation of TK by many big organisations has often mainly taken place on a discursive level. Accordingly, the practical realisation remains a challenge. In line with that, IP05 believed that TK and Western scientific knowledge are hardly combined. When they are, this accordingly often resulted in scientific knowledge trumping local TK or in TK only being punctually involved. In their example of the Yaguas national park, years of (multidisciplinary) research had preceded the park's establishment. According to IP05, when the scientists came to their findings and predicted drastic forest loss, existing TK was allegedly not taken into consideration anymore, as the pressure to act was so high that the possibility to turn away from the park idea was already eliminated. Conversely, a positive example of how technological innovations can complement traditional practices came from IP07. Referring to the 'Chakras', a traditional cultivation method in Southern Colombia, they explained how modern GPS data can help measure biodiversity and calculate the yields.

Yet, when again looking at the AwZ hearing and the broader German conservation debate, it is apparent that eco-modernist approaches dominate the conservation debate. Whether it is satellite monitoring of payment for ecosystem schemes, financial innovations such as the Legacy Landscapes Fund that combines public and private assets, or the promotion of all kinds of sciences without a mention of Indigenous ways of knowing – the focus on technical, financial,

and scientific solutions only seems to leave a niche place to TK. This harbours the danger that TK is only included as a useful resource in conservation when it fits in well, whereas knowledge for IP&LC often has a much broader and holistic meaning (Widenhorn 2014:381–382). Nevertheless, it can be argued that the awareness for the inclusion of TK in conservation seems to be growing. Ignoring TK for conservation seems to be no option anymore.

5.5. PARTICIPATION: BOTTOM-UP VS. TOP-DOWN

Next, 5.1 *Bottom-up* was applied on 123 text sections (interviews: 105; AwZ: 18) and 5.2 *Top-down* was coded 87 times (interviews: 79; AwZ: 8). The two categories obtained by far the most codings since the interview guideline had a strong focus on IP&LC participation.

Hence, this sub-chapter deals with the *current state* of IP&LC participation during all phases (idea, planning, implementation, grievance) of German-backed conservation projects. In addition, IP02 questioned how seriously IP&LC participation is taken: „Aber ich glaube so ein bisschen wie es so ein Greenwashing gibt, gibt es jetzt halt auch viele Umwelt-NGOs, die jetzt dann halt auch IP&LC mit reinnehmen, ohne dass sie sozusagen eine langjährige und fundierte Expertise dazu haben. Sondern einfach so zu sagen: ‚Das ist jetzt der neue Trend, dann machen wir das auch‘. Und ich glaube, man muss schon gut hinschauen, was sind sozusagen, ja, wo ist es sozusagen strukturell verankert und wo wird es einfach nur noch so mitgenommen.“ This calls for an examination of the *genuineness* of IP&LC participation.

To begin with, IP04 stated that most conservation projects in development cooperation initially arise from international commitments made by the German government to protect the climate or biodiversity. To honour those financial commitments, the responsible ministries channel funds into developing countries. Thereby, the financial and thematic needs and opportunities for cooperation are clarified from the outset in bilateral government consultations (IP04, IP08). This is done in cooperation with the German implementing organisations, which suggest projects that can be counted towards the respective obligations and from which the ministries can select proposals (IP04). Moreover, the ministries invite tenders for the financing of biodiversity projects in developing countries, for which also non-state actors can apply. The latter then assess their expertise on the defined topic and apply (together with partner organisations) if the project falls within their area of competence (IP01, IP03, IP04, IP07). In addition, some non-state actors also have their own funds (IP07). Lastly, IP08 also pointed to multilateral biodiversity cooperation under the guise of UN organisations or international conservation funds.

According to IP04, German implementing organisations and NGOs coordinate their measures with different actors in the partner countries. This involves collaboration with state partner organisations such as park authorities or ministries, who are involved in the selection of municipalities for conservation projects (IP04), advised on how to implement the GBF (IP02, IP08),

or supported in capacity building (IP06). Furthermore, German organisations seek cooperation with the national authorities responsible for Indigenous territories (IP07) and state organisations in general to sensitise them specifically to the rights of IP&LC and corresponding international standards (IP02). In line with that, IP08 stated that the rights of IP&LC are regularly raised in government consultations. Accordingly, it can happen that commitments are initially withheld until the partner state agrees to fulfil certain conditions.

Conversely, national contexts in which the relationship between the state and IP&LC is conflictive complicate the conservation work of German organisations (IP02). This is also confirmed by IP01, who pointed out that their trusting cooperation with IP&LC fundamentally depended on national governments and named the Bolsonaro legislature as a negative example. Referring to Bolivia, IP04 further remarked that Bolivia has a Plurinational Authority for Mother Earth, which is supposed to promote an inclusive *Vivir Bien* approach to conservation but is not equipped with an implementation structure. Instead, the national forestry authority supports the conversion of forests into agricultural land to stimulate the economy. This shows how even in well-meaning partner countries, political visions and reality diverge.

Next to state partners, other respondents reported of collaborations with different Indigenous associations or councils that operate on the international, regional, or national level (IP01, IP02, IP05, IP07). Thereby, playing the different levels is not easy, as disagreements naturally occur (IP01), change of leadership or corruption scandals come in the way (IP02), IP&LC elites do not necessarily speak in the interest of their communities (IP03), or traditional decision-making structures vary. Particularly the latter three reasons, IP05 emphasised, can easily lead to conflict when decisions by IP&LC representatives do not represent the will of the community. It is therefore essential to pursue a whole-of-society approach that goes beyond the mere participation of IP&LC representatives and includes youth, women, or local NGOs (IP02).

Hereby, a universally applied instrument for IP&LC participation in conservation projects is FPIC, which is enshrined as a right in the UNDRIP but interpreted differently in each country (IP01). “Dann wird in diese Region gegangen und gesagt: ‚Hey, es gibt die Option, dass wir weiter zusammenarbeiten können. Wir sehen die und die Möglichkeiten, welche Möglichkeiten seht ihr, welche Notwendigkeiten sehr ihr, welche Bedarfe habt ihr, hat sich was verschoben vom letzten Jahr auf dieses Jahr?‘“ (IP01). With that, the organisations aim to capture different perspectives of IP&LC (IP03) and inform them on options for conservation (IP05). All of this is seen as a condition for the projects to later turn out beneficial for nature and humans alike (IP08), an assessment that was also shared by multiple participants at the AwZ hearing.

Generally, German actors support IP&LC through advisory, financial, and political support. According to IP01, due to growing awareness of the link between cultural and biological diversity, their and other conservation organisations nowadays specifically approach IP&LC to support

them conserve their territories. Hereby, cooperation is often of technical or advisory nature when IP&LC are assisted in organisational or structural development (IP03). Yet, IP02 made clear that the boundaries to direct financial support are blurred. Accordingly, more and more programmes are being implemented by IP&LC, who are also increasingly being prepared by donors to participate in low-threshold local subsidy tenders. Conversely, IP05 criticised that to date little opportunities existed for IP&LC to directly apply for funding, which leads to accusations from IP&LC that the funds get stuck in the administration of intermediary organisations. Regarding this, IP06 stated that their organisation did not issue direct payments to IP&LC yet. However, they expected direct payments to IP&LC to gain in importance in the coming years and announced a pilot project that will provide direct financial support to IP&LC in the Andes.

On a more political level, IP08 reported that their organisation actively promotes participatory governance structures of PAs. Furthermore, their organisation also supports the inclusion of ICCAs into databases for the fulfilment of the 30x30 goal. With that, Indigenous territories can contribute to the global conservation goal, which serves the legal security of IP&LC' territorial rights. Similarly, IP01' organisation assists in the recognition processes of Indigenous territories in Colombia. In connection with the GBF and the National Biodiversity Strategies and Actions Plans (NBSAPs) that every country must revise by October 2024, several respondents emphasised the importance of early IP&LC involvement (IP02, IP06, IP08). Therefore, organisations facilitated workshops for IP&LC to inform them about the GBF (IP06, IP07) or to assist them drafting demands for national revision processes. The hereby developed policy proposals by IP&LC were then incorporated into the overall NBSAP process (IP02, IP08).

Whereas most examples so far have related to projects initiated by development cooperation actors, it conversely also happens that conservation projects are explicitly rooted in the initiative of IP&LC (IP07). For example, IP04 explained how their organisation could punctually support individuals who did not belong to the project community but who approached their organisation with similar ideas through a small project fund from the German embassy. Nevertheless, it seems that most processes described by IP04 were not initiated by IP&LC, but by other German and Bolivian actors involved in conservation. Thus, the impression arises that IP&LC-initiated projects are rather an exception than the rule.

Consistent with that, IP02 believed that IP&LC are still more likely to be seen for the implementation of conservation projects, while they are not considered at the political level. This seems to also be implicitly confirmed by IP01, who said that it was very important to involve the local population 'as soon as a project has taken the first or the second hurdle'. Thereby, one reason for the 'late' involvement of IP&LC lies in the structure of bilateral development cooperation: The uncertainty of not knowing whether a project will be approved brings conservation organisations in a dilemma with the aspiration to early involvement. Schenck (2023:5)

also stated that the lengthy approval processes can lead to frustration and disappointed expectations of IP&LC. Therefore, Sze criticised: „Oft sind Konsultationen oder die Unterrichtung der Gemeinden einer der letzten Schritte, denn es ist klar, dass die Projekte durchgeführt werden, weil man das Geld dafür gesichert hat und alle Gründe für den Erfolg der Projekte dargelegt hat, bevor man überhaupt mit der Gemeinde gesprochen hat. Ich bin der Meinung, dass dies geändert werden muss“ (AwZ 2023:23).

Important factors to achieve this appear to be long-established networks between IP&LC and German organisations, which can facilitate more integrative project planning and allow insights into the needs of IP&LC. Accordingly, IP01, IP06 and IP07 confirmed that in most cases, their organisations have long-standing relationships with the IP&LC they work with. Such trustful strategic partnerships need to be maintained independent of concrete projects (IP01). To achieve this, the organisation of IP01 relies on its country offices. These are staffed entirely by local employees who develop the project ideas. In contrast, although IP02 mentioned a Quechua employee in Peru, they also criticised that in their organisation it is mainly Germans who are responsible for the projects. Accordingly, there are relatively few Indigenous employees in their organisation, even though intercultural mediation would be needed more.

The need for cultural sensitivity is exemplified by situations in which conflicts arise due to an overlooked self-image of IP as peoples and not as civil society (IP02), something that corresponds with FPIC being an ‘incredibly Western-centred approach’ (IP01). Another source of misunderstandings that can potentially lead to conflicts are different ideas of participation. Drawing on a nine-stage model of participation, IP05 explained how IP&LC often claim the highest level of participation, self-organisation, according to which they can carry out projects on their own responsibility. Although supporting that claim as an Indigenous rights advocate, IP05 admitted that this is not easy to achieve in a bilateral or multilateral context.

Accordingly, nowadays most conservation projects at least reach stage four – consultations in which IP&LC can voice their opinions. Beyond that, further participation in the implementation and decision-making process ‘remains open’ and dependent on the specific project, which is where problems arise. As IP05 stated, many organisations were proud of their good relationships with IP&LC and FPIC protocols and then reacted with incomprehension when someone accused them of not involving IP&LC. Yet, understandings of participation might differ between conservationists (who think they follow a participatory approach) and IP&LC (who aim for self-organisation) and thus cause irritation or conflict.

To prevent such misunderstandings, IP05 underlined the importance of involving ethnologists and mediating institutions. This was also addressed by IP06, who explained how their organisation can help mediate between a Western/international sectoral view on conservation and Indigenous holistic views in Peru to reconcile the two in policy documents. Furthermore,

enhanced communication can be achieved by using culturally sensitive wording or by simply translating legal contracts from Spanish into Indigenous languages (IP01, IP05).

Language barriers must also be considered when establishing grievance mechanisms. Next to geographical hurdles (e.g., remoteness), these are considered central obstacles that prevent IP&LC from gaining access to such mechanisms. Whereas such problems were not given the highest priority in the past, it is now of great importance that complaints are taken seriously and mediated by a neutral arbitrator (IP01). The issue was therefore also addressed by Diaby (SPD), Gerschau (FDP) and Sze in the AwZ hearing. Concretely, IP01 stated that it was important that organisations establish grievance mechanisms right at the start of conservation projects. Moreover, the local population needs to be informed appropriately and encouraged to actually use the mechanism in case of upcoming problems. Furthermore, it was said that IP&LC had the right to withdraw their approval at any time, which had to be accepted without reservation (IP01, IP07) and, according to IP01, was not unusual due to changing priorities.

Lastly, the introduction of the sub-chapter also brought up the genuineness of IP&LC participation. Coming back to the nine stages of participation, IP05 hereby attested that ‘many, many projects’ have surpassed the first stage, ‘alibi participation’, which can be understood as part of a response to the allegation made by IP02 at the beginning of the sub-chapter. However, despite considerable awareness for IP&LC participation, challenges regarding *genuine* IP&LC participation repeatedly shone through. Especially in the initial phases of conservation projects and in policy development, significant gaps were identified in achieving IP&LC involvement at eye level. Moreover, Schenck (2023:5) mentioned that consultations to obtain the opinions of IP&LC often do not lead to any improvements. This causes frustration among IP&LC as they understandably ask why they had been consulted in the first place and gives credit to IP02’ concern, according to which IP&LC are sometimes only involved to tick a box.

Hence, it is to be welcomed that respondents spoke about ongoing critical reflection processes within their organisations (IP01, IP02, IP07, IP08). Particularly IP01 went into detail on this and stated that their organisation scrutinised how to be more inclusive and participatory. Questions on their sources of money, communication and the collaboration with IP&LC needed to be continuously posed to find ways on how to hand over responsibility and on how to integrate pluralistic values. Correspondingly, IP02 mentioned similar procedures in their organisation and IP08 reported on an internal process on how to do justice to the term ‘IP&LC’ (see: chapter 2.1). Such processes, IP01 proclaimed, are necessary for every conservation organisation.

5.6. SOCIAL JUSTICE: CONSERVATION = SOCIAL JUSTICE VS. CONSERVATION > SOCIAL JUSTICE

Regarding the impact of conservation on livelihoods and rights of IP&LC and on social justice, 38 passages were coded with *6.1 Conservation = social justice* (interviews: 27; AwZ: 11) and 35 sections fell under the category *6.2 Conservation > social justice* (interviews: 30; AwZ: 5).

Following on from the previous sub-chapter, IP08 made clear that their organisation understands IP&LC participation as an ongoing process that goes beyond concrete projects and involves advocacy for internationally recognised rights of IP&LC. Frameworks like the GBF, ILO Convention 169 or UNDRIP can thereby serve as an effective reference point to which IP&LC or advocacy organisations can refer to in order to urge governments to respect their rights (IP02, IP03). Along with this comes perhaps the greatest opportunity for IP&LC from the GBF, which is rooted in the strong emphasis on IP&LC rights in the 30x30 target (IP08). Accordingly, with the GBF chances increase that IP&LC can use conservation to stabilise and formalise their land rights. Although this depends on respective governments (IP07, IP08) and Sze showed scepticism whether the GBF will have positive impacts on IP&LC on the ground, she at least acknowledged growing recognition for IP&LC' contributions to conservation.

Nonetheless, it is primarily also up to German organisations to ensure that human rights are respected in conservation implemented or funded by them. Whilst German organisations generally (should) regard human rights as a basis, IP01 and IP08 agree in that their organisations aim for creating benefits from conservation for IP&LC that go beyond the mere prevention of harm. If implemented inclusively, conservation can generate win-win situations for nature and people, something that the organisation of IP08 always aims for. From a different perspective, this vision touches the core foundations of every conservation organisation (IP01). The latter interviewee thereby reported of one of their projects, which centrally aims at improving the living conditions in an area encompassing 70 Indigenous territories. Here, conservation is thought of the other way: If people are doing well, nature is doing well too (IP01). In this regard, IP05 recognised conservationists' growing aspiration to give something back to the people.

Simultaneously, IP08 admitted that particularly PAs were fraught with human rights risks, which is why it was important to scrutinise their organisations' own engagement and to work towards minimising such risks. For this purpose, environmental and social impact assessments are carried out during project planning. If risks are detected, mitigation measures are contractually stipulated (IP08). However, IP01 and IP02 identified time pressure exerted by donor regulations as an impending factor for inclusive and rights-based conservation. Accordingly, projects previously had to be realised within five years, whereas today they must be realised within three. The lack of time prevents organisations from using more accessible indicators or integrating updated human rights concepts into the FPIC process (IP02).

Moreover, regional assessments that would normally require in-depth analyses, have to be done superficially. This can have severe consequences, as IP01 illustrated in a fictional example that entails the establishment of a new supply chain project in collaboration with an Indigenous community: If the analysis cannot be done properly and overlooks the fact that the community was forced to mine the raw material in question under Spanish colonial rule, this can lead to trauma or at least a difficult start to the relationship. However, despite the 'extreme' demands on time management, IP01 was optimistic that their organisation can improve data on the project regions that will make it easier for follow-up projects.

Furthermore, the mentioned human rights risks around PAs bring zoning concepts back into focus, which according to IP07 allow enough space for IP&LC to hunt or fish but in the example of IP05 did not consider enough area for customary shifting cultivation. According to the latter, the increasing scarcity of land also brings IP&LC to flee from their homes and move into cities. Aggravating factors mentioned in this sense were population growth (IP03, IP04, Schenck), armed groups and illegal activities such as gold mining or drug trafficking, that bring along negative phenomena such as alcoholism or human trafficking and complicate conservation (IP03, IP06, IP07).

Regarding population growth, Schenck emphasised the small ecological footprint of the people living in the concerned areas. Although he acknowledged that lowering population growth in those regions would therefore not 'solve the world's problems', he still carried on highlighting the importance of investing in poverty reduction and the 'empowerment and education of women' *to lower population growth for the protection of nature in the Global South*. While such neo-Malthusian demands must be discussed elsewhere in sight of the high consumption level *in the Global North*, the thereof derived demand for inaccessible core PAs in the Global South is questionable. One must ask why particularly the poorest people should give up their land, especially if, according to Schenck, they have 'benefited little' from PAs to date.

Even though Schenck also calls for more investments in the affected rural areas, further questions arise through his praise for his organisation's cooperation with IP&LC: "Seit 30 Jahren bin ich im Globalen Süden an sehr entlegenen Orten unterwegs, und unsere Zusammenarbeit mit der lokalen Bevölkerung und den staatlichen Behörden läuft in den Schutzgebieten und um die Schutzgebiete herum außerordentlich gut. [...] *Ich glaube, die Diskussion mit Schwerpunkt im Globalen Norden ist falsch*" (AwZ 2023:24, emphasis added). This is a strong assertion, which leaves open why then people living in and around PAs have 'benefitted little' from PAs (Schenck) and why, according to IP05, their Indigenous rights organisations' ideas have not been met with enthusiasm by conservation organisations. Regarding the literature and the interviews discussed, the quote by Schenck shows in particular that the debate about the relationship between conservation and the rights of IP&LC is not 'false', but as important as ever.

6. DISCUSSION

Having outlined the results of the current work, it becomes clear that German development and conservation actors are (very) aware of the importance of integrating the rights, worldviews and contributions of IP&LC into conservation. Both in the interviews and – to a lesser extent – in the AwZ hearing, a broad range of stakeholders had profound knowledge of and opinions on the integration of IP&LC in conservation. However, whilst it also shone through that IP&LC are increasingly considered in implementation of conservation projects, their political access to policymaking appears to be inadequate. Especially in the initial project phases, the current study identified several obstacles for IP&LC involvement. This brings back important questions about political power and unequal structures in environmental change processes.

Structurally, Western standards for formalisation, accounting, turnover thresholds, or monitoring rule out project partners which do not meet them. Even though non-state actors were said to be more flexible in this regard, it is perceivable that IP&LC are often involved under the condition that they follow the logic of Western development projects and can, for example, guarantee audit-proof transactions or apply Western indicators. This carries the risk of imposed assimilation (Escobar 2006:8).

Regarding decision-making, the bilateral or multilateral context in which German-backed conservation projects are initiated and funded represents a barrier for early IP&LC involvement. Whilst conservation projects or their central guardrails are often negotiated between donor (Germany) and recipient state before approaching IP&LC on the implementation level, German non-state actors also depend on project approval by a funding ministry before being able to forward waterproof project ideas to IP&LC. With that, Germany as the biggest biodiversity donor state has a strong say in the agenda setting of conservation in the Global South, despite having contributed disproportionately to the ecological crises. This risks environmental protection measures designed in the Global North overruling problems of human inequality and imbalanced power dynamics (Wissen 2014:21; Alkhalili *et al.* 2023:2). Furthermore, as the case of the Buen Vivir approach for protecting the Yasuní national park shows, Germany has been rather unwilling to support approaches outside its own conservation ideas.

Conversely, the unwillingness to accommodate non-Western conservation approaches is met with well-intended support for IP&LC in order for them to benefit from commercialised conservation projects. This cannot be criticised per se as this would harbour the risk of IP&LC romanticisation and ignore the fact that IP&LC are part of the capitalist world and thus want their fair share from (monetarised) conservation projects. However, the fact that the commercialisation of nature is against the worldview of many IP&LC and against the vision of Vivir Bien, reveals a central dilemma. To get their part of the cake, participation in monetarised conservation and offsetting projects is at times simply the only option. This pushes IP&LC into an economic

development model which can have culturally destructive consequences, and which can jeopardise the Vivir Bien vision of development as qualitative improvements in plural dimensions.

This is especially problematic when the Global North simultaneously fails to fulfil its own domestic commitments to conservation. Therefore, multiple actors in the AwZ hearing urged Germany to lead by example and tackle the root causes of biodiversity loss. Yet, as environmentally harmful subsidies continue and as the long-drawn-out stalemate and political mudslinging over the significantly weakened EU's Nature Restoration Law have shown, conservative political actors still (try to) evade responsibility for conservation. Meanwhile, those opponents of European conservation focus on biodiversity hotspots in the Global South. This reinforces global inequalities, as global conservation goals are unilaterally passed on to the Global South.

In line with that, it is emblematic of the German discourse that the ecological modernisation paradigm of decoupling sustained economic growth from environmental degradation was barely called into question. Although the high German consumption pattern (Trapp, Niyonsaba) and economic growth (Sze) were named root causes for biodiversity loss, significantly more voices brought up solutions that reconcile growth with nature (internalising external costs). This also implies an understanding of nature as external to humans and arbitrarily changeable, in which the most efficient balance between the needs of nature and society can be calculated. Thus, on a systemic level capitalism is presupposed as the economic framework in which conservation takes place. Alternative visions to capitalist approaches to the biodiversity crisis were absent from the AwZ discourse. Hence, Vivir Bien approaches like giving rights to nature do not play a great role in German conservation. This is also due to a lack of understanding of Indigenous concepts, something that is however increasingly sought by some interviewees.

Going back from the structural to the implementation level, the awareness for the inclusion of worldviews, rights and contributions of IP&LC into conservation approaches was clearly detectable in the interviews. In this sense, respondents reported of advisory, financial and political collaboration with IP&LC. Thereby, sustainable use has become a prominent conservation approach next to PAs, that are increasingly (co-)managed with or by IP&LC. Moreover, the Indigenous demand for direct payments for the conservation work of IP&LC is predicted to gain in importance. This promises to be one way of handing over responsibility to IP&LC for their own conservation projects and to address perceptible hurdles for IP&LC to access funding.

On the way there, some interviewees reported of long-standing relationships with IP&LC, which facilitate dialogue and early project involvement. Hereby, cultural sensitivity is fostered through the recruitment of local or Indigenous staff, which works well in some organisations but could be improved in others. In line with that, it became clear that communication must continuously be enhanced, and misunderstandings need to be accepted as something that occurs naturally. Nevertheless, attention must be paid when it comes to different

understandings of participation, as Indigenous visions of self-governance might differ greatly from participation foreseen in FPIC processes and thus might lead to exasperation.

Whereas it became clear that most conservation projects have surpassed alibi participation as the lowest stage of involvement and consultations are usually performed by default, conflicts arise due to mismatching ideas of decision-making and the actual degree of project ownership. Hereby, it was warned of conservation organisations only involving IP&LC to tick a box or consultations taking place without any tangible consequences. Similarly, the opinion was raised that appreciation for TK in many organisations merely takes place on a discursive level, whereas the practical implementation of traditional methods remains a challenge. However, there were also positive examples of respondents actively supporting the preservation, transfer or equal application of TK (alongside Western science) as central components of their projects.

It can therefore be reasoned that the inclusion of IP&LC and their knowledge is gaining attention and that the trend goes towards more and better inclusion of IP&LC' concerns in German-backed conservation. Yet, the practical implications of the growing awareness as well as the structural anchoring must be called into question and cannot be answered conclusively from the existing interview material. Especially when further examining the AwZ hearing, it becomes clear that in the broader German conservation debate IP&LC involvement only constitutes one topic among many, which leaves open whether IP&LC are structurally considered or whether their involvement is rather seen as just another indicator to be fulfilled. This point is further underlined by the dominance of ecological modernisation approaches shining through in the AwZ hearing, which can pose a threat to the rights of IP&LC.

This leads to the conclusion that IP&LC are considered more in conservation, but within the still predominant ecological modernisation setting. Herein lies another extension of how capitalism internalises external factors: similar to internalising external environmental costs, IP&LC and their worldviews, rights and contributions are considered more within dominant conservation approaches that follow the logic of ecological modernisation. As this implies that root causes originating in the Global North are being neglected at the expense of the Global South on which conservation pressure is increased, and as this further implies that IP&LC are pushed towards formalisation and market-based conservation approaches, it is questionable if such well-meaning attempts of involving IP&LC in conservation will sustainably benefit them. On the other hand, there is a chance that the growing awareness for IP&LC will continue to increasingly translate into more participatory conservation, which considers the needs of people at the core of a healthy nature, and which helps IP&LC formalise their land rights.

In this sense, it is a good sign that the awareness among German development and conservation practitioners for the inclusion of IP&LC' concerns was clearly perceivable in the interviews. Particularly in view of the increasing financialisation of conservation and the new area

targets formulated in the GBF, the interviewees were also sensitised to human rights risks. While this is an important precondition for inclusive conservation, it is now a question of whether German development cooperation can listen more to the concerns of IP&LC, whether it is willing to allow more Indigenous conservation alternatives to Western capitalist approaches, and whether it is ready to hand over more responsibility to IP&LC. Only then can the rights of IP&LC be better safeguarded, only then can the inclusion of IP&LC be structurally anchored, and only then can we speak of an alternative to eco-modernist conservation that benefits nature *and* people. Lastly, only then can the paradoxical position of IP&LC as guardians of biodiversity and as victims of green grabbing raised in the introduction be fully resolved.

7. CONCLUSION

The current thesis assessed how the rights, worldviews and contributions of IP&LC are considered in German development cooperation approaches to biodiversity conservation. Based on the analysis of interviews with practitioners in German development cooperation and a Bundestag hearing, it was worked out how IP&LC have gained considerable awareness. While IP&LC still face obstacles when it comes to their participation in policymaking, their inclusion in the implementation of biodiversity measures seems to improve. Yet, at the same time, German conservation approaches often (still) follow a logic of ecological modernisation. This bears potential for conflict, as Indigenous approaches to nature are not merely utilitarian and oppose commercialisation. Nevertheless, there is also a big opportunity that the awareness for IP&LC in conservation will increasingly translate into more participatory conservation that places human well-being at the centre of conservation and overcomes a supposed nature-culture divide.

Even if this would represent a departure from the Western way of seeing nature, more systemic changes seem to be necessary in view of the ongoing biodiversity crisis, which requires real alternatives to the capitalist growth and to the eco-modernist conservation model. Accordingly, the current thesis introduced *Vivir Bien* as a heterogeneous concept rooted in plural Indigenous cosmologies that provide “reservoirs of alternative rationalities” (Escobar 1992:41). *Vivir Bien* thereby considers “alternatives not as an instrumental fixing of current strategies, but as a replacement of the very idea of development” (Gudynas 2011b:445).

Applied to the context of conservation, this means seeking *alternatives to eco-modernist conservation* by trusting Indigenous conservation models instead of finding *alternative ways of eco-modernist conservation* that merely modify the current conservation regime and create false promises of technological efficiency and financial innovations. To find *alternatives to eco-modernist conservation*, German development cooperation should therefore increasingly trust and promote alternative Indigenous conservation approaches and give IP&LC more control over conservation. One way to achieve this is by supporting IP&LC in the formalisation of their

land rights and the establishment of ICCAs. The examined interviews outlined paths into this direction. Yet, the AwZ hearing made clear that in order to retain its international credibility, Germany must also fulfil its domestic commitments in the fight against biodiversity loss and tackle root causes anchored in capitalist production and consumption patterns.

Whilst all of this requires “a theoretico-practical transformation of the notions of development, modernity and the economy” (Escobar 1992:22), preceding steps towards more inclusive conservation could involve the equal acceptance and promotion of plural conservation approaches (Fatheuer 2011:20). For this, it is important to listen, learn from each other, and seek balance in relationships (IP05). Since this message already seems to be widespread, conservation in German development cooperation seems to be on a promising way towards more inclusive conservation which, however, must be consistently pursued.

Lastly, as for this thesis interviews were only conducted with practitioners working for German organisations, the perspectives of IP&LC were not captured. Accordingly, the results must also be read against the background that they are mostly based on statements by German practitioners in development cooperation. Therefore, further studies could expand the field of respondents. This seems particularly important, as Indigenous rights organisations have raised concerns about further dispossessions in the shadow of the Montreal Agreement (Survival International 2022) and as the biodiversity crisis urgently requires solutions that reconcile biodiversity with human rights. That such solutions exist and are already applied in German development cooperation has been shown in this study.

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APPENDIX

Table 1: List of interview partners.

ID	Country of operation	Organisation & primary focus	Job position	Date & place of interview	Length of interview
IP01	Germany	non-state, environment	Project Manager South America	01.03.2024 Online	45 min
IP02	Germany	state, development	Biodiversity Advisor	22.03.2024 Online	42 min
IP03	Germany	non-state, environment	Project Lead	26.03.2024 Online	35 min
IP04	Bolivia	state, development	Project Lead Bolivia	27.03.2024 Online	55 min
IP05	Germany	non-state, Indigenous rights	Board Member	11.04.2024 Online	51 min
IP06	Peru	state, development	Head of Environment and Climate Peru	12.04.2024 Online	41 min
IP07	Germany	non-state, environment	Program Officer Colombia and Peru	19.04.2024 Online	47 min
IP08	Germany	state, development	Biodiversity Consultant	07.05.2024 Online	29 min

Table 2: Interview guideline.

Leitfragen	Detailfragen/Checkliste	Steuerung
<p>BLOCK I: VORSPANN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Begrüßung und kurze Vorstellung - Anonymisierung Aufnahme Datenschutzerklärung - Fragen? 		
<p>BLOCK II: EINSTIEG: Als Einstieg in das Interview erläutere ich Ihnen in aller Kürze noch einmal mein Forschungsinteresse.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FORSCHUNGSINTERESSE: Im Rahmen meiner Masterarbeit setze ich mich mit Biodiversitäts-Vorhaben in Projekten der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit auseinander. Ich beschäftige mich schon länger mit dem Thema und habe zuletzt etwa in einer Projektarbeit untersucht, wie die Rechte von IPL&C und deren Beiträge zum Biodiversitätsschutz im Montreal-Abkommen verankert sind. Nun interessiert mich in meiner Masterarbeit, wie der Schutz der Biodiversität in der Praxis der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit gestaltet wird. - EINSTIEGSFRAGE: (1) Erzählen Sie mir doch bitte kurz zum Anfang, in welchem Biodiversitätsprojekt Sie gerade arbeiten. 		
<p>BLOCK III: PROJEKTDURCHLAUF: Ich möchte gerne gleich mal an Ihrem Projekt [X] anknüpfen und mich mit meinen Fragen exemplarisch an einem Projektdurchlauf entlanghangeln.</p> <p>IDEE + PLANUNG: Am Anfang muss ja zunächst einmal ausgemacht werden, wo Handlungsbedarf besteht. Dann beginnt die Planung.</p> <p>(2) Berichten Sie mir doch bitte, wie die Idee zu diesem Projekt [X] entstanden ist.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> (2.1) Welche Akteure erkennen und entscheiden, wo es sich lohnt ein Biodiversitätsprojekt aufzubauen? <input type="checkbox"/> (2.2) Waren von Anfang an deutsche Partner- bzw. Durchführungsorganisationen beteiligt? <input type="checkbox"/> (2.3) Wie wird sichergestellt, dass IPL&C und lokale Regierungen schon bei der Auswahl der Projekte und bei der Planung mit einbezogen werden? <input type="checkbox"/> Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) <input type="checkbox"/> Beteiligungsformen (Bürgerräte, Interviews) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Whole-of-society approach (Frauen, Jugend,...) o Tradition. Entscheidungsstrukturen/Autoritäten? o Niederschwelligkeit? (Sprache, Ort) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hätten Sie dazu ein Beispiel? <input type="checkbox"/> Was sind in Ihrem Projekt Ursachen des Biodiversitätsrückgangs?

<p>FINANZIERUNG: Ein entscheidender Punkt ist auch die Finanzierung der Projekte. Deutschland geht als Vorbild voran und hat umfangreiche Zusagen (jährlich 1,5 Mrd. € ab 2025) für den internationalen Biodiversitätsschutz gemacht.</p> <p>(3) Es gibt ja diverse unterschiedliche Ansätze, dieses Geld in Naturschutzprojekte im Globalen Süden fließen zu lassen, etwa indem Durchführungsgesellschaften beauftragt werden oder über direkte Zahlungen an IP&L.C. Wie gestaltet sich das in Ihrem Projekt?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> (3.1) Fänden Sie es sinnvoll, wenn IP&L.C für ihre Biodiversitäts-Arbeit auch mehr direkte Zahlungen erhalten würden, die sie selbst verwalten könnten?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> IP&L.C als ‚beste Naturschützer‘</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Geld an IP&L.C vs. durch Durchführungsorganisationen verausgabt, wodurch IP&L.C indirekt profitieren sollen</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Kennen Sie ein Beispiel für einen solchen Konflikt?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Aber sicher haben die Akteure aus der Wirtschaft auch eigene Interessen?</p>
<p>FINANZINSTRUMENTE: Wir haben jetzt schon/noch nicht über Geldgeber aus der freien Wirtschaft gesprochen. Ein typisches Beispiel ist ja, über Zertifikate Geld für den Naturschutz zu generieren. Diese Ansätze werden aber zum Teil auch kritisiert: Einerseits bestehe die Gefahr von green washing und andererseits erhöhe sich die Gefahr von Landraub, da die Inwertsetzung der Natur für solche offset-Projekte eine menschenleere Natur voraussetze.</p> <p>(4) Wie bewerten Sie Chancen und Risiken von Finanzinstrumenten wie biodiversity credits oder green bonds?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> (4.1) Sehen Sie Konflikte zwischen marktbasieren Naturschutzansätzen und solchen, die in enger Zusammenarbeit mit IP&L.C abgestimmt werden?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (4.2) Ein prominentes Konzept sind mittlerweile nature-based solutions. Einige NGOs haben auch diese aus den eben angeführten Gründen (green washing & Landraub-Gefahr) kritisiert. Inwiefern halten Sie diese Sorgen für berechtigt?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Können Sie ein Beispiel aus Ihrem Projekt geben?</p>
<p>IMPLEMENTIERUNG: Wenn der Plan steht und die Finanzierung gesichert ist, geht es an die Umsetzung.</p> <p>(5) Wie sind IP&L.C in Ihrem Projekt [X] in der Durchführung der Naturschutzmaßnahmen involviert?</p> <p>[bzw. wenn nicht klar, ob: welche Akteure sind in der Durchführung der Naturschutzmaßnahmen involviert?]</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> (5.1) Inwieweit ergänzen sich traditionelles/lokales Wissen und unsere westlichen Naturschutzansätze in den Biodiversitäts-Projekten vor Ort?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> (5.2) Auch bei den Weltansichten gibt es ja Unterschiede hinsichtlich der Beziehung Mensch-Natur. In Lateinamerika ist z.B. das Konzept der ‚Mutter Erde‘ prominent. Inwiefern sind solch verschiedenen Blickweisen auf die Natur von Bedeutung?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Können Sie ein Beispiel aus Ihrem Projekt geben?</p>

BLOCK IV: LANDZUGANG: Ein zentraler Punkt ist auch der Zugang zu Land und Ressourcen für die lokale oder indigene Bevölkerung.

LANDZUGANG: Biodiversitäts-Projekte werden in der Regel ja auf Landflächen umgesetzt, die zuvor bereits auf irgendetweine Weise genutzt wurden.

(6) Wie wird der Zugang zu Land und natürlichen Ressourcen in Ihrem Projekt [X] gehandhabt?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (6.1) Wie wird sichergestellt, dass Lebensgrundlagen der lokalen Bevölkerung nicht beeinträchtigt werden?
<input type="checkbox"/> (6.2) In welcher Form sind auch Kompensationen für Land oder Ressourcennutzung von Bedeutung?
<input type="checkbox"/> Festungsnaturschutz trennt Menschen von Ressourcen
<input type="checkbox"/> CBD-Sekretariat: Indigenes Land in 30x30 einbezogen
<input type="checkbox"/> Nature-culture divide : Mensch als Teil der Natur? | <input type="checkbox"/> Im Montreal Abkommen wird z.B. „customary sustainable use“ hervorgehoben... |
|---|---|

BLOCK V: WIDERSTAND & BENEFITS: Vermutlich kommt es aber auch immer wieder zu **Uneinigigkeiten mit oder innerhalb der Bevölkerung.**

WIDERSTAND: Die Umsetzung von Naturschutzmaßnahmen ist nicht selten umstritten.

(7) Wie gehen Sie damit um, wenn Uneinigkeit über die Umsetzung von Naturschutzmaßnahmen besteht?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (7.1) Welche niedrigschwelligen Beschwerde-mechanismen gibt es für IP&LC in Ihren Projekten?
<input type="checkbox"/> Projektevaluierung | <input type="checkbox"/> Und dann?
<input type="checkbox"/> Wer hat das letzte Wort?
<input type="checkbox"/> War das früher anders? |
|--|--|

BENEFITS: Auf der anderen Seite geht Naturschutz ja im besten Fall mit weiteren positiven Entwicklungseffekten Hand in Hand.

(8) Wie wirkt sich Ihr Naturschutzprojekt [X] auf die Lebensbedingungen der IP&LC aus?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (8.1) Welche Verbesserungen wollen Sie für die Menschen ‚vor Ort‘ erreichen?
<input type="checkbox"/> (8.2) Können wir von einer win-win-Situation für die Arbeitsbekämpfung und den Naturschutz sprechen?
<input type="checkbox"/> (8.3) Könnten Sie in dem Zusammenhang noch auf den Stellenwert von ecosystem services eingehen? | |
|--|--|

BLOCK V: SCHLUSS: Wir kommen zum Ende.

- **ERGÄNZUNGEN? (9) Möchten Sie noch etwas ergänzen, das wir bisher noch nicht thematisiert haben?**
- **SNOWBALL:** Kennen Sie zufällig noch weitere Expert*innen, mit denen ich noch reden sollte?
- **DANK:** Falls Sie keine Fragen mehr haben, bleibt mir nur ‚Herzlichen Dank‘ zu sagen.

Table 3: Deductive frame: Coding guideline based on theoretical considerations derived from Ballón Ossio (2020), the Bolivian Ley N° 300, and extensive scientific literature.

BUEN VIVIR	WORLDVIEW	ECOLOG. MODERNISATION
<p>CODE 1.1 Nature-culture unification <i>Code 1.1 focuses on the ontological and epistemological harmony or unity of nature and culture and on its consequences for conservation. It subsumes what in the Western world would be declared 'moral' arguments for the conservation of nature that do not solely benefit human interests but consider rights and the intrinsic values of nature. These motivations are at odds with Western conservation approaches.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation for nature's sake - Intrinsic value - Nature's rights - Moral - Mother Earth, nature as being - Living in a harmonious, balanced, and dynamic relationship with nature - Complementarity between living beings and Mother Earth - Interdependence/interconnectedness/reciprocity nature – humans - Link cultural and biological diversity - Sacredness of nature - Challenges anthropocentric worldview <p>(Code 1.1 based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ley N° 300 (300), Principle 1: Compatibility and Complementarity of Rights, Obligations, and Duties - 300, Principle 12: Harmonious Relations - 300, Princ. 16: Complementarity and Equilibrium - 300, Definition 1: Mother Earth) 	<p>WORLDVIEW (view on nature & motivation for conservation)</p>	<p>CODE 1.2 Nature-culture divide <i>Code 1.2. picks up argumentation that presupposes a divide between nature and society. Here, nature is merely seen as an exploitable resource that can be used for the fulfilment of human and capitalist interests. In this approach, nature's intrinsic value is secondary at most.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation for human's sake - Exploitable - Nature's resources - Interest-based - Nature as exploitable resource - Humans exist in opposition to nature that needs to be mastered - Nature-culture dualism makes humans 'lawmakers of nature' - Provision of resources (for growth capitalism)

CODE 2.1**Plural Economy**

Code 2.1 applies to passages that 'promote the plurality of social and economic organisations in recognising the plurality of cultures and identities.' It involves economic alternatives to Western capitalism that are plural and pursue (community) well-being in a holistic (ecological, spiritual, economic, cultural, social, nutritional) way. Therefore, systemic approaches that can be seen as an alternative to Western unidirectional and purely economic development are coded under this category. Whereas further categories subsume concrete conservation measures derived from a plural economy approach, Code 2.1 is solely applied when the economic system is brought forward as a whole. In line with that, systemic root causes of the biodiversity crisis along global inequalities and anchored in the capitalist system are coded herein.

- **Goal is to reach basic economic, social, spiritual, environmental, cultural (...) needs: qualitative improvements instead of growth (buen decrecimiento)**
- **Integral development considering ecological, economic, cultural, spiritual values**
- Redefined notions of progress and prosperity beyond economic centration (cultural diversity, social justice, rich biodiversity, indigenous worldviews...)
- **Global inequalities: common but differentiated responsibilities**
- Critique of Western production and consumption as root causes of biodiversity loss

ECONOMY

(socioeconomic systemic context)

CODE 2.2**Capitalism**

Code 2.2. captures expressions of the central ecological modernisation idea that the destruction of nature and growth can be separated and thus the neoliberal capitalist system can be sustained. Hence, economic strategies within (refined) capitalism are coded under this category, as are economic ideas that promote development in a merely economic way with economic wealth as the sole indicator for progress. Whereas further categories subsume concrete capitalist conservation measures, Code 2.2 is solely applied when the economic system is brought forward as a whole. Moreover, hurdles stemming from Western project logic, or a general Western unidirectional development logic are coded here.

- **Growth as paramount goal**
- **Nature-growth divide possible**
- **Western economic development logic**
- **unidirectional economic development from traditional to modern based solely on economic indicators**
- **Integration into world economy**
- **Global inequalities reinforced**
- Capitalist market-based modes of consumption and production

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alternative modes of consumption and production - Non-market-based approaches - Well-being trumps consumption - Sustainable lifestyles and consumption - Recognition of different forms of social structures and forms of organisation - Local economies <p>(Code 2.1 based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 300, Princ. 3: <i>Integrality (integral development)</i> - 300, Princ. 15: <i>Plural Economy</i> - 300, Def. 3: <i>Integral Development for Vivir Bien</i> - <i>Ballón Ossio (BO), Nr. 4: Plural Economy for a plural society)</i> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Market-centred distribution of goods - Systemic administrative hurdles (e.g., organisations not formally recognised)
<p>CODE 3.1 Non-commodification (and resilient nature)</p> <p><i>Code 3.1 ties in with the understanding that nature and culture are inseparable and therefore nature cannot be sold off. Nature's functions, components, processes, and systems are not regarded as merely economic commodities but as gifts of Mother Earth. Due to interdependencies between nature and human activity, Code 3.1 subsumes approaches that allow for sustainable management, collective tenure, and indigenous or communitarian agriculture on a small-scale, precautionary, sustainable, and non-commercial level that fulfil the basic needs of local people whilst not harming nature. Central to this code are respect for land rights and the access to land.</i></p> <p><i>Furthermore, Code 3.1 is applied when conservation follows the principle of precaution. Instead of efficiently repairing what is degraded, a precautionary approach aims at preventing harm in the first place by assessing potential</i></p>	<p>CONSERVATION (using and protecting nature)</p>	<p>CODE 3.2 Commodification (and 'engineered' nature)</p> <p><i>Code 3.2. captures approaches that rely on the commodification of nature 'empty' of humans. Thereby, a focus is laid on the capitalist commodification of ecosystem services and on the idea that natural destruction caused by capitalist modes of production can be 'offset' by conserving a piece of land elsewhere. Commodification is not to be mixed up with sustainable resource use by local people to make a living, but concerns transactions involving (transnational) enterprises, governments, and bigger-scale (foreign) financial capital.</i></p> <p><i>In line with that, Code 3.2 encompasses passages that emphasise the need for efficient (as in Western) management of nature that is already under pressure. Based on calculated needs for restoration (e.g., 30x30 goal), nature is set aside and freed of humans to efficiently manage and control the restoration of ecosystems. Thereby it is secondary whether</i></p>

threats to biodiversity. This approach thereby also sets out to tackle direct causes of environmental degradation and promotes resilience of ecosystems. The precautionary approach is thereby closely linked to an understanding of Mother Nature's rights and intrinsic value, which values specific natures and does not assume interchangeability and replaceability (offsetting logic) between different ecosystems. Lastly, Code 3.1 captures remarks where homogenising tendencies of Western environmental discourse are challenged, and the plurality of conservation solutions adapted to place and culture are recognised.

- **Humans live from land**
- **IP land rights: integrity and unity of indigenous territories and land**
- Indigenous land and resource use
- **Sustainable, customary, and equitable use within ecological limits**
- **Non-commercial (subsistence) agriculture and resource use**
- Crop rotation, traditional crops, and agricultural diversification
- Local productive practices, sustainable territorial management
- Value of water and ecosystems for livelihoods
- **Risk of green washing**
- **Risk of affecting land rights**

- **Restoration and regeneration**
- **Precautionary approach**
- Precaution where there is incomplete knowledge or a probability of danger

one ecosystem is 'sacrificed' and another one restored in its place, as long as the net conservation benefit is positive. This unanimous approach threatens cultural diversity and heritage.

- **'Empty' lands as prerequisite for valuation**

- **Nature and ecosystem services as subjects to the market**
- Using nature's resources for economic prosperity
- Make ecosystem services more efficient/productive

- **Offsetting logic allowing capital to compensate for resource depletion and environmental destruction**
- **Financial instruments** (green bonds, biodiversity credits, payment for ecosystem services...)
- Engage business, financial sector, and capital for commodifying nature

- **Separate humans and nature, then efficiently conserve 'empty lands'**
- **Fortress protection, protected areas**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Precautionary use of water to avoid drought and ecosystem collapse - Tackling direct causes of biodiversity crisis: Reduce pollution, excess nutrients, and pesticide use, phase out harmful subsidies - Prevent threats to ecosystem diversity and integrity - Reduce natural habitat loss through deforestation - Critique of extractivism - Healthy planet, animals, and plants <p>(Code 3.1 based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 300, Princ. 2: No Commodification of the Environmental Function of Mother Earth - 300, Princ. 4: Precautionary - 300, Princ. 5: Guarantee of Restoration of Mother Earth - 300, Princ. 6: Guarantee of Regeneration of Mother Earth - 300, Princ. 8: Priority of Prevention - 300, Def. 10: Restoration - 300, Def. 11: Regeneration - 300, Def. 14: Use - BO, Nr. 1: No commodification of ecosystem services - BO, Nr. 2: Resilience of Nature - BO, Nr. 3: Precautionary approach) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economy of repair - Fixing the symptoms of the biodiversity crisis - Spatial planning (macro area targets) based on calculations (30x30) - Conservation where it is cheapest and yields the highest benefits in terms of biodiversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce risks to business and finance through conservation - Reduce human-wildlife interaction
<p>CODE 4.1 Trad. knowledge & practices Code 4.1 encompasses references to the equal integration of local, traditional, or indigenous knowledge and practices that contribute to conservation. Western science and technology are thereby neither strictly rejected nor ignored but complemented by</p>	<p>KNOWLEDGE</p>	<p>CODE 4.2 Science & technology Code 4.2 is used for the fixation on Western science and technologies in conservation approaches. Moreover, this code is applied when local, traditional, or indigenous knowledge and practices are either absent to a scientific evaluation of conservation</p>

localised knowledge tied to place and indigenous cultures.

- **Complementarity**
- **Local knowledge of place or regional climate**
- Nature with different concepts for different people
- Revalue, protect, and apply traditional, ancestral, collective, and individual knowledge of IP related to conservation and the use of biodiversity
- Traditional norms, practices, innovations, worldviews, understandings, value systems
- **Mother Earth centric actions**
- Ancestral knowledge on genetic resources
- Participative research
- **Technologies need to respect ecological limits & cultural values & empower IP&LC**
- Low-impact technologies to enhance sufficiency and resilience

(Code 4.1 based on:

- *300, Princ. 17: Dialogue of Knowledge*
- *BO, Nr. 8: Complementarity of knowledge)*

needs or presented as inferior to its Western equivalents.

- **Western science, data, and innovations as the only truthful way of knowing and progressing**
- **One-size-fits-all: Western approaches as the only way**
- Genetically modified plants and crops
- Exclusionary research
- **Technologies blind to places or cultures**
- **'Future' technologies as excuse for non-action**
- Technologies to increase efficiency
- Nature-based solutions

**CODE 5.1
Bottom-up**

Code 5.1 captures conservation approaches that are inclusive, participatory, and open towards affected IP and LC. Thereby, measures are coded that ensure the effective involvement of IP and LC in the whole process of a conservation project (problem definition, planning, implementation, evaluation). Moreover, instruments of democratic decision-making, democratic resource use regimes, indigenous self-determination, and the concept of free, prior, and informed consent fall under Code 5.1.

PARTICIPATION
(governance structure)

**CODE 5.2
Top-down**

Code 5.2 is to mirror top-down approaches to conservation that do not, or do not effectively involve IP and LC in the processes of problem analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation of biodiversity projects. The focus of this category is thus on non-democratic and non-inclusive decision-making and implementation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Democratic problem-identification, planning, decision-making and evaluation; participatory implementation - Free, prior, and informed consent - Grievance mechanisms - right to withdraw consent - Decentralised governance structures - Civil society cooperation, mobilising public support, educating people for nature conservation - Representation, focus on gender - Access to information, information sharing for participation - Accessibility and translation of communications - Participative control and monitoring - Collaboration between local governments and local land users - Whole-of-society approach including women, youth, and civil society - community-based - Indigenous conservation territories (might be connected to OECMs) - Community conservancies, community stewardship for nature, IP as best custodians - Direct payments and support to IP&LC <p>(Code 5.1 based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 300, Princ. 9: Plural Participation - BO, Nr. 5: Broad democratic participation) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation only desired for nodding off to gain acceptance - Local level not involved in decision-making and implementation - Centralised and hierarchical structures - Governments, Western ‘experts’, donors & financiers - Mainstreaming biodiversity into government policies - Political will at highest levels of government - Protected areas guarded from local community members and IP - Militarised park rangers to protect biodiversity - Securitisation and fences - Solely inter-state cooperation and support
<p>CODE 6.1 Conservation = social justice Code 6.1 looks at threats or damages to local livelihoods that arise in the context of nature conservation, resource dependency, and unequal access to environmental goods. Alongside these topics,</p>	<p>SOCIAL JUSTICE (human rights in conservation)</p>	<p>CODE 6.2 Conservation > social justice Code 6.2 captures phrases related to the social consequences and human rights violations in the context of green grabbing, where a global conservation agenda to counter the global biodiversity</p>

Code 6.1 focuses on the inclusion of people's vulnerabilities in conservation concepts. The central understanding here is that biodiversity protection cannot be traded off against the local population's needs and desires. In the focus are conflict resolution, access to justice, compensation, benefit-sharing, and mechanisms implemented to protect the most vulnerable groups of society, including future generations and indigenous communities. Broadly speaking, human- and indigenous-rights-based conservation.

- **Human rights, indigenous rights** (UNDRIP, ILO 169)
- **Intergenerational equity, historical responsibility**
- **Marginalised groups**
- **Ensure food security**
- **Risks for the poor**
- **Resilience of livelihoods** against degradation and climate change [(social) climate justice]
- **Access to justice**
- Indigenous legal systems
- **Fair and voluntary compensation (for land)**
- **Equitable benefit-sharing from natural resources and protection of intellectual property regarding ancestral knowledge**
- Respecting cultural integrity, promoting cultural revitalisation, community rights [land rights: 3.1]
- equal rights to land for *vulnerable* groups, e.g., women and girls [land rights in general: 3.1]

(Code 6.1 based on:

- *300, Princ. 7: Historical Responsibility*
- *300, Princ. 11: Solidarity among Human Beings*
- *300, Princ. 13: Social Justice*
- *300, Def. 13: Fair, Equitable and Solidary Society*
- *BO, Nr. 6: Social Justice)*

crisis overrides the needs and desires (e.g., cultural ties to land) of local populations. Whereas the insufficient (or non-) involvement of IP and LC in the problem analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation of conservation projects falls under Code 5.2, Code 6.2 is used for injustices that go beyond the inclusiveness of projects but feature all further human rights violations such as displacement, loss of access to resources, marginalisation, or even killings.

- **Opposite of 6.1, justice is not established, and vulnerable groups are not considered**
- **Global conservation trumps local livelihoods**
- FPIC or grievance mechanisms not established
- **Negative socio-cultural consequences of green grabbing/green sacrifice zones/offsetting projects for marginalised, dispossessed, and impoverished people**

Table 4: Inductive Output: Code system after the inductive coding process and the classification into the deductive superordinate categories. The presentation of the codes on two levels serves the purpose of clarity and is only partially content-related.

List of Codes	Frequency
Code system	575
1.1 Nature-culture unification	
	25
Link between cultural and biological diversity, especially where IP&LC have strong land rights	8
Indigenous conceptions (Buen Vivir) hard to grasp from Western perspective but need to be understood more	4
Dialogue and relationship between IP&LC and Western conservationists must be enhanced	
Organisations (need to) adapt their work to Indigenous nature conceptions and worldviews	2
Critique of conservation is important for its improvement	1
IP&LC value forest not merely for its economic use and criticise nature's commercialisation as against their worldviews	4
Humans as part of nature	1
Holistic view of IP&LC on conservation and development	1
Rights of nature as a way to strengthen conservation	1
1.2 Nature-culture divide	
	12
Sectoral view of Western organisations	3
Conception of a nature-culture divide leads to conflict	2
Conflicts between conservationists and IP&LC who reject Western interference in conservation	1
Lack of understanding of indigenous conservation approaches	3
Risk of romanticization of 'ecological guardians' and subsequent disappointment	2
Protection of Pachamama ends 'at the foot of the Andes'	1
2.1 Plural Economy	
	30
Financial capabilities of the Global North come with (moral) responsibility for conservation	11
Tackle root causes of biodiversity loss (in Germany)	19

2.2 Capitalism		63
EM: No conflict between economic growth and environmental protection		2
Internalising external costs of environmental degradation		10
Increased pressure on companies to consider biodiversity, e.g. through consumer decisions		1
Conservation projects follow Western development logic		2
Much money remains in structures of development cooperation (e.g., workshops, consultants...)		3
To participate in Western programmes, IP&LC have to adapt to Western patterns (e.g., formalisation, indicators)		7
IP&LC do not meet administrative requirements (e.g., bank account, not formally recognized) of Western projects		12
Traditional decision-making structures do not necessarily correspond with democracy (example Yaguas)		4
Sustainable income through commercialisation of natural products (e.g., public private partnerships)		2
Financial framework must enable financial incentives for sustainable use		1
Commercialisation of only one product in diverse environment cannot work		1
Western double standards in European versus global conservation and increased urgency due to degradation in Europe		9
Biodiversity crisis as 'our global crisis' (inherent in the whole development logic)		1
Most biodiverse and conservation-worthy areas are in Global South		3
Western states did not compensate for leaving oil in Yasuní National Park (Buen Vivir approach)		2
Recipient countries have problems understanding where the Western money should flow to		3
3.1 Non-commodification (and resilient nature)		76
Three conservation approaches: protected areas, restoration, sustainable use		5
Situations where survival of ecosystems and livelihoods is threatened justify precautionary conservation		8
Calculations (e.g., 30x30) not appropriate for complex socio-environmental contexts		2

Organisations have critical stance towards carbon or biodiversity credit schemes	5
Offsetting schemes harbour risk of greenwashing	9
Funds from credit schemes do not reach IP&LC but are lost to intermediaries	1
Commodification threatens Indigenous conservation concepts and livelihoods	2
Offsetting schemes harbour risk of affecting IP&LC rights	2
Offsetting schemes harbour risk of uninformed decisions with negative consequences for IP&LC for decades	5
Organisations advise and inform IP&LC about (negative) consequences of payment for ecosystem schemes	2
Access to legal remedies proves difficult	1
Organisations examine alternative financial incentives on the local level (instead of large-scale financing)	2
Conservation through alternative sustainable livelihoods and alternative sources of income	22
Conservation through tourism-related alternative incomes	3
Rethinking away from fortress conservation has been taking place	5
Bolivian government insisted on non-commodification of nature (no to REDD)	2
3.2 Commodification (and 'engineered' nature)	
47	
Nature as service provider through ecosystem services	5
Calculations as starting point for conservation, area targets, and concrete conservation measures	7
Scope of biodiversity crisis requires financial contributions from private and business sector	11
Biodiversity credits become more and more popular and can be fruitful if properly implemented with the right partners	6
Lots of experience regarding opportunities and risks of market-based approaches thanks to REDD+	1
Methodological challenges in determining biodiversity equivalences	6
Many actors approach IP&LC to establish payment for ecosystem schemes	1
In theory offsetting schemes can generate higher benefits for IP&LC	3
Organisations support early involvement of IP&LC in design of biodiversity credits	1

IP&LC are part of capitalist world and want fair share through REDD-like projects	1
Organisations work with IP&LC who are willing to get involved in REDD projects	2
Negotiations and different opinions on how to de-intensify or end land use	3
4.1 Trad. knowledge & practices	
	25
(Awareness for) inclusion of traditional knowledge is growing (also among doners)	5
Increasing inclusion of traditional knowledge as equal complement next to Western methods and indicators	6
Traditional methods or indicator are not 'scientific' but are effective in nature conservation	2
Support preservation of indigenous knowledge (for healthy ecosystems and livelihood perspectives)	5
Traditional knowledge often not easy to revive	2
Traditional knowledge sometimes needs to be adapted in regard to gender equality	1
Organisations support knowledge transfer between IP&LC	1
Bolivia has not yet implemented accreditation procedures for indigenous knowledge (Nagoya Protocol)	1
Companies refrain from using Indigenous knowledge if procedures are not defined	1
Indigenous knowledge prominent on discursive level, but often not in practice	1
4.2 Science & technology	
	14
Technological and market innovations for conservation	10
Dominant scientific findings trump Indigenous knowledge, which is only selectively included	4
5.1 Bottom-up	
	123
Organisations (must) reflect internally how to be more inclusive & participatory	7
Whole-of-government/whole-of-society approach	10
FPIC: Organisations go to IP&LC and discuss options, necessities and needs with them	19
Organisations support IP&LC and work directly with them, e.g. through technical or administrative support	9

Organisations support IP&LC through direct payments	2
Organisations support designation process of Indigenous territories where IP have responsibility	5
Organisations support fair representation of IP&LC in park management	2
GBF implementation: Organisations offer trainings, distribute information and accommodate participation of IP&LC	10
IP&LC approach organisations and ask for help or funding of their own ideas	5
Problems arise through different understandings of 'participation' (from information to self-organisation)	3
Country offices maintain long-standing relationships with IP&LC that enable close cooperation	7
Projects in new region require contact with IP&LC right from the start	1
Communication and comprehensible and culturally sensitive wording is crucial within FPIC process	9
Country offices staffed with local personnel	3
Translations of (legal) communication into local language/Spanish	1
Mediation between Western concepts and Indigenous worldviews	1
Organisations facilitate dialogue between IP&LC and state authorities (through existing platforms)	6
Organisations support IP&LC, e.g. by developing policy recommendations for better IP&LC inclusion	2
Organisations work with representatives of Indigenous communities organised in Indigenous councils	1
Organisations work with (inter)national or regional Indigenous associations on different levels	6
Difficulties arise due to unresolved responsibilities and disagreements among IP&LC	6
Organisations establish grievance mechanisms and inform IP&LC how to use them	3
Complaints within grievance mechanisms must be taken seriously and mediated by a neutral body	2
FPIC: IP&LC entitled to change priorities and end cooperation	3

5.2 Top-down		87
FPIC is Western-centred approach (and is interpreted differently in different countries)		3
"Indigenous washing": IP&LC only considered to 'tick a box'		1
Motivation: fulfilling international commitments in climate and biodiversity protection		4
Ministries invite tenders for projects and thereby set agenda, organisations apply		8
Projects arise from intergovernmental/multilateral negotiations between donor and recipient country		5
Organisations have own funds or can draw on donations		1
Multilateral cooperation on biodiversity (UN organisations, conservation funds)		1
States have to apply at UNESCO to obtain Biosphere Reserve status		3
Dependency on donor money leads to problems when flows are abruptly cut		4
IP&LC not (adequately) involved in the selection and planning process/political process		11
Tensions between early cooperation with IP&LC and uncertainty if projects are approved		2
Time pressure as challenge for picking up and forwarding ideas of IP&LC to ministries		1
Indigenous demand for self-organisation of conservation projects not met		2
Projects implemented by European staff, few local personnel		2
Conflicts about overlooked self-image of IP&LC as peoples and not as civil society		1
Organisations collaborate with national authorities (e.g., ministries, park authorities)		18
Organisations sensitise national authorities to the rights of IP&LC and make them a condition for collaboration		5
Organisations crucially depend on governments and their good will in establishing inclusive agendas		1
Conflicts between IP&LC and organisations are fuelled by conflictive national contexts		1
NBSAP Accelerator Partnerships		9

Grievance mechanisms have not been taken seriously enough in the past	1
Hurdles (e.g., geographical remoteness) within established grievance mechanisms	1
Political promises (e.g., Vivir Bien) and reality diverge in partner countries	2
6.1 Conservation = social justice	
38	
International conventions (UNDRIP, ILO169) have helped IP&LC claiming their rights	3
German development cooperation (needs to) lobby for social safeguards and IP&LC rights	2
Human rights as basis for conservationists' work	3
Organisations reflect on and want to come from 'do no harm' to 'do good'	3
Organisations (need to) assess and minimise human rights risks	5
Organisations (need to) work on improving knowledge on targeted regions	2
Collaboration between organisations and IP&LC is better than discussed in Global North	2
Conservation projects with overarching objective of improving IP&LC living conditions	10
Social/Health benefits through conservation projects (e.g., reducing mercury exposure)	2
Idea to give something back for conservation has emerged at least	1
GBF and conservation (PAs) can help IP&LC defend and claim their territories and (land) rights	4
GBF is good for IP&LC, but implementation matters as improvements in last 20 years were marginal	1
6.2 Conservation > social justice	
35	
Donor time pressure restricts FPIC, in-depth regional analyses or human rights consultations	4
Time component has become more flexible in recent years	2
Restrictions on access to land and resources for IP&LC	6
Restrictions on access to land and resources cause refugees	3
Jobs created through conservation are not enough to compensate for land use restrictions	2
Negative effects of conservation on women (e.g., gender-based violence)	2

Conservation organisations have not listened to IP&LC demands	2
Covid-19 related problems for IP&LC in conservation projects	2
Aggravating circumstances for conservation and IP&LC: population pressure, armed groups, education, elite capture, corruption	12