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**PARKS AND PEOPLE:
LIVELIHOOD ISSUES IN NATIONAL PARKS
MANAGEMENT IN THAILAND AND MADAGASCAR**

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Preface

UNRISD's work on the Social Dynamics of Deforestation in Developing Countries has involved carrying out case studies in Brazil, Central America, Nepal and Tanzania. In addition, some eight studies dealing with particular themes which cut across several countries and regions, and which have not yet been treated systematically in the literature, have been prepared by specialists. This paper represents one of these thematic studies. Its author is responsible for the co-ordination of the research programme within UNRISD.

The paper examines some of the interrelated socio-economic and environmental impacts of the management of national parks and protected areas in Madagascar and Thailand. These countries were chosen for field research due to their high rates of deforestation and ambitious government plans to create protected areas, as well as to the recent policy changes in which protected areas management activities are planned to integrate with socio-economic development in surrounding areas.

The paper suggests that, although in both countries the development of protected areas has made some contribution to the preservation of biodiversity and to the generation of foreign exchange earnings through tourism, the expansion of the network of protected areas, has frequently led to a critical impact on local livelihood systems, resulting in the increased vulnerability of certain groups of people. In many locations, local people have either been expelled from their settlements without being provided with alternative sources of employment or income, or restricted in their livelihood activities by the prohibition of grazing, hunting, fishing, food-gathering, and collection of wood and other forest products. The result is that some social groups - such as pastoral and tribal people, and poorer peasants - which traditionally relied upon these activities, are forced to endure not only economic hardships, but also difficult social and cultural adjustment processes.

The paper goes on to argue that the establishment of protected areas in these countries has often led to an increased level of deforestation as households losing land in and around the protected areas have tended to move to new locations and clear forests for settlements. Similarly, those who were unable to migrate to new locations were pressed to over-exploit those forest and land resources existing outside of the protected areas. One consequence of this situation is that often areas much larger than the protected area itself become degraded. Furthermore, the local people tend to see the protected areas as "lost village resources" and take little or no interest in their long-term management.

The paper also examines the local level impact of recent policy measures which attempt to combine park management activities with the socio-economic development in surrounding or "buffer zone" areas. The experience of both countries shows that the creation of a "buffer zone" has generally allowed the authorities of the protected areas to make claims over the common property resources of the villages. In addition, the development activities carried out in these areas were inadequate, sectoral and short-term, with richer more powerful social groups tending to benefit. The author argues that the idea of rural development in "buffer zone" areas has usually come from "above", with little or no participation of the local communities.

In the last section of the paper, the author asks to what extent developing countries should continue to designate extensive territories as strictly protected areas despite high population growth, landlessness and the rising demand for food, shelter and many basic needs. It is argued that, in attempting to bring larger areas under protected status, many of these areas remain unmanaged -

thereby fulfilling neither the conservation functions nor permitting local people to utilize the areas. Finally, the author points out that even where local people could benefit from the establishment of protected areas, such as in the collection of forest products, controlled hunting and fishing, bee-keeping, and through tourism and employment in park management activities, little attention has been given to maximizing these gains.

As yet there is little literature dealing with the local level socio-economic and environmental impacts of forest protection initiatives such as the establishment of national parks and reserves, or with how local communities can benefit from conservation measures. A deeper understanding of these issues, based on broader theoretical and empirical foundation, could facilitate the formulation of successful environment-related initiatives, and could improve the prospects for sustainable development. In the second phase of UNRISD's research programme on Environment, Sustainable Development and Social change, planned for 1992-1995, some of these issues will be investigated in greater depth.

Dharam Ghai
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Glossary

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IUCN	The World Conservation Union
PCDA	Population and Community Development Association
PNUD	Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement
RFD	Royal Forestry Department
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFT	Wildlife Fund Thailand
WRI	World Resources Institute
WWF	World Wide Fund For Nature

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Abstract

This paper examines the forms of management of national parks in developing countries. Conscious of the current rate of deforestation, many developing countries are transforming much of their remaining forests into strictly protected areas such as national parks. The implications of this process for the survival imperatives of local people and the sustainable management of forests are discussed. Using case studies in Thailand and Madagascar, this paper demonstrates that the expansion of protected area networks has generally resulted in an increasing displacement of people and a disruption of their livelihoods, frequently accompanied by higher rates of deforestation. Since most protected areas are established for "conservation" purposes rather than for "sustained use", the "social benefits" occurring at the local level have tended to be exiguous. In recent years, although a growing number of plans for the implementation of parks aim to promote rural development activities, field observation suggests that these measures are introduced primarily to reduce tensions rather than to provide sustainable livelihood alternatives. There is an apparent lack of participation by the local people in the planning, management and benefit-sharing of national parks. This paper suggests that the present form of management of national parks results in greater "bureaucratic control" of forests, combined with the socio-economic decline for many social groups, rural dissension and, often, further environmental deterioration.

Introduction

National parks are one of the prominent forms of protected areas in developing countries. Other types of protected areas include nature reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, biosphere reserves, etc. (see page 2 for IUCN's classification of protected areas). The formal goal of establishing protected areas has been to preserve plants, animals and micro-organisms, although actual management procedures vary somewhat in different countries. For example, a wildlife sanctuary may be a stringently protected area in one country, whereas some level of resource use might be permitted in another. Likewise, some national parks may function as strict nature reserves where most human activities are prohibited, while others may remain partially accessible to local communities. One distinct feature of national parks is that tourism is encouraged in a majority of cases.

National parks and protected areas constitute substantial tracts of land area in developing countries. Since 1950, there has been a marked growth in the number of national parks and protected areas created (see table 1). Most of these were established in developing countries, especially in the tropics. An astonishing expansion took place in the 1970s, when over 1,300 new parks and forest reserves were created within a 10-year period. In the 1980s, although there was a slight decline in the number of protected areas that were established, overall there continued to be a strong upward trend. A combination of factors contributed to this rapid growth and these included rising international concern for deforestation and loss of biodiversity, the availability of foreign aid for nature conservation, and the possibility of generating foreign exchange earnings through tourism. Furthermore, in recent years, the ideology of nature conservation has become increasingly fashionable among many of the dominant social groups in developing countries.

The idea of establishing national parks came into being in the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century. The main aim of the parks was to preserve scenic beauty and natural wonders, and to meet the educational and recreational needs of the population. Accordingly, the

zoning of designated areas, surveillance and the provision of facilities for visitors were seen as the main issues in the management of parks (Hales, 1989).

The management objectives of different categories of protected areas

- **Scientific reserve/strict nature reserve**
To protect nature and maintain natural processes in an undisturbed state, with emphasis on scientific study, environmental monitoring and education, and maintenance of genetic resources in a dynamic and evolutionary state.
- **National park**
To protect relatively large natural and scenic areas of national or international significance for scientific, educational and recreational use.
- **Natural monument/natural landmark**
To preserve nationally significant natural features and maintain their unique characteristics.
- **Managed nature reserve/wildlife sanctuary**
To protect nationally significant species, groups of species, biotic communities or physical features of the environment when these require specific human manipulation for their perpetuation.
- **Protected landscapes**
To maintain nationally significant natural landscapes characteristic of the harmonious interaction of man and land while providing opportunities for public enjoyment through recreation and tourism within the normal life-style and economic activity of these areas.
- **Resource reserve**
To protect the natural resources for future use and prevent or contain development activities that could affect the resource pending the establishment of management objectives based on appropriate knowledge and planning.
- **Natural biotic area/anthropological reserve**
To allow societies to live in harmony with the environment, undisturbed by modern technology.
- **Multiple-use management area/managed resource area**
To sustain production of water, timber, wildlife, pasture and outdoor recreation. Conservation of nature oriented to supporting economic activities (although specific zones can also be designed

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