

Bio-Cultural Diversity and Sustainable Development from the perspective of Indigenous Forest management

Expert Seminar on
Pluralism, Bio-Cultural Diversity and Sustainable Development,

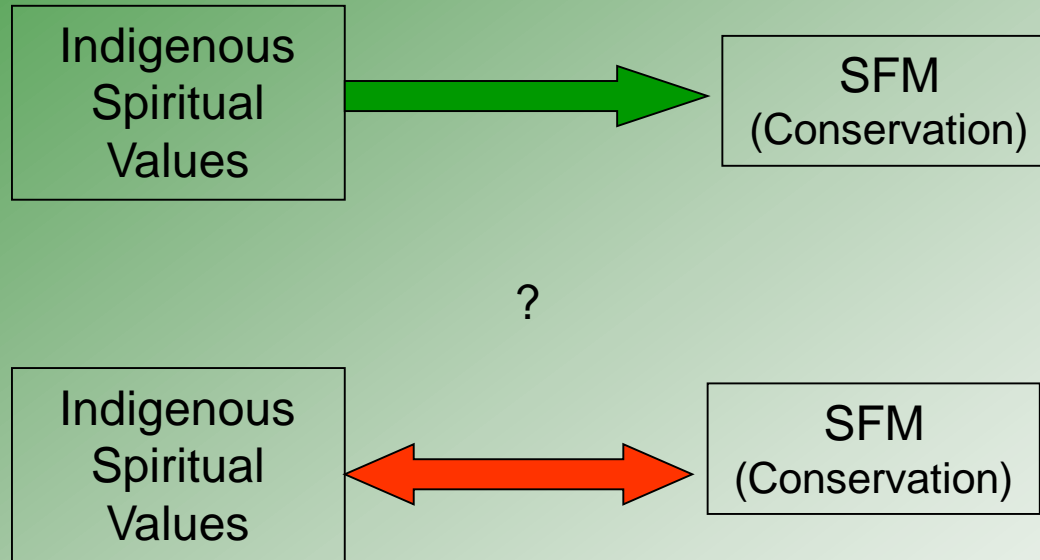
Utrecht, 14 December 2011

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Nature and Re-ligion

The Dichotomy



Snodgrass & Tiedje (2008): Seven ways out!

Seven ways out (Snodgrass & Tiedje, 2008)

1. Tremendous diversity *across* indigenous societies
2. Animistic worldviews & behaviour are not (the same as) conservation thought & action
3. Tremendous diversity in cultural models *within* indigenous societies.
4. Individuals vary: how are cultural (widely shared) ideas linked with collective arrangements (agents, norms, power)?
5. How are collective arrangements embedded? → Institutions of IP for collective action
6. Interaction Indigenous Peoples with the national and global system
7. Distinguish levels of scale:
 - between thought and practice
 - between individual, communal, extra-communal levels

Framework for today:

- A. *'Accidental'* sustainable action
- B. *Mix* of sustainable and anti-sustainable action
- C. Interaction with 'national' sustainability policies: from *disconnection* (persisting individual eco-friendly beliefs – fading indigenous institutions)
 - levels:
 - grassroots
 - tribal / intermediate
 - national / federal
- D. ... to *re-connection*: new spiritual inspiration intentionally leading to environmental action

A. Spiritual values and 'conservation by accident'

Cases:

- (more or less) passive correlation between spiritual belief and ecology: Highlanders in Cambodia
- Active spiritual inspiration and correlation with ecological 'result': Yukuna & Tanimuka in Colombian Amazonia (Elisabeth Reichel 1992)
- Active spiritual inspiration but no correlation with ecological 'result' the Kantu' of Eastern Kalimantan (Michael Dove 1999)

A. Spiritual values and 'conservation by accident':

Yukuna & Tanimuka, Colombian Amazone

(Elisabeth Reichel 1992)

- Cosmovision: Connection with natural world 'owned' by spirits
 - Forest management: shifting cultivation, gathering, hunting, fishing
 - Negotiating with supranatural world on 'price to pay'
 - Shamans mediate by 'travelling in thought', rituals, myth
 - Maloca (dwellings & fields) represents cosmovision
- **Tremendous TEK, but what's the effect?**



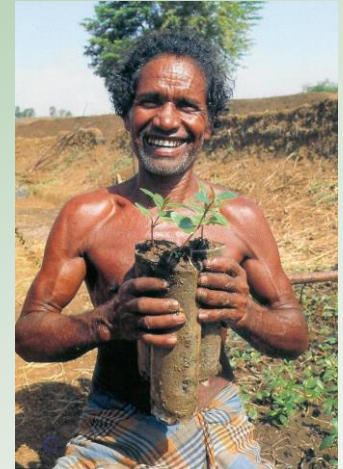
B. Spiritual values with ambiguous effects on conservation

Sacred Lands / Forests / Trees / Mountains etc.:

- Havens of biodiversity,
- or romanticised (Western) construct?

paradox: Sherpas Solukhumbu, Nepal:

- Sacred forests kept - but cut when need arises
- Rare species: the rarer, the more spiritually wanted



→ take a contextualised, multi-levelled, historic, unsentimental view (Nugteren, 2005)

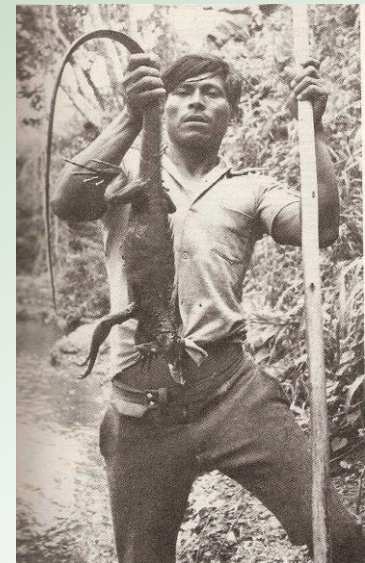
C. Disconnection

Mayangni (Sumu) Nicaragua:

- Animism faded since 1840 christianisation
- TEK, Sacred places & Spirited trees
- Commercial logging: labourers
- 1990s: Autonomy
- 2004 and on: SFM and certification: slow progress

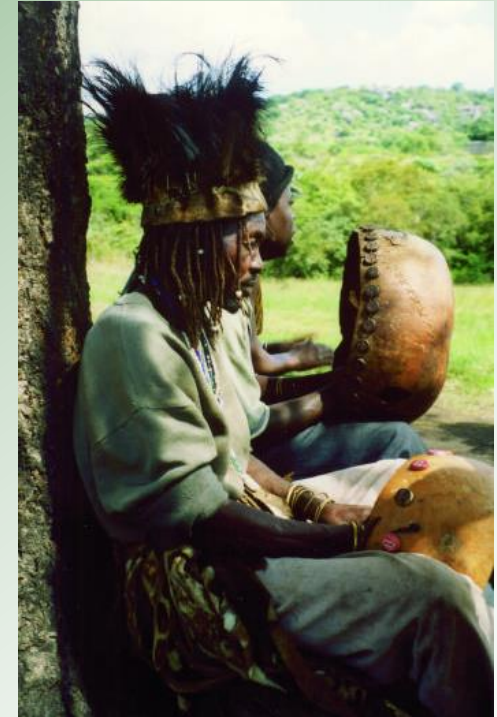
(WWF, GTZ, URACCAN, government)

→ ***'secularization' of indigenous forest management?***



D. Reconnection

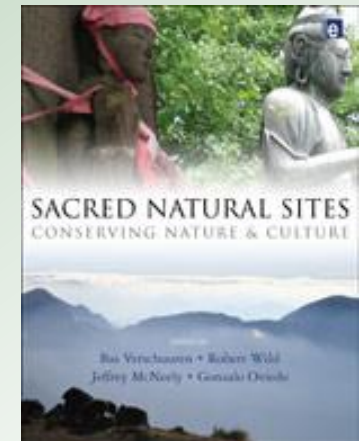
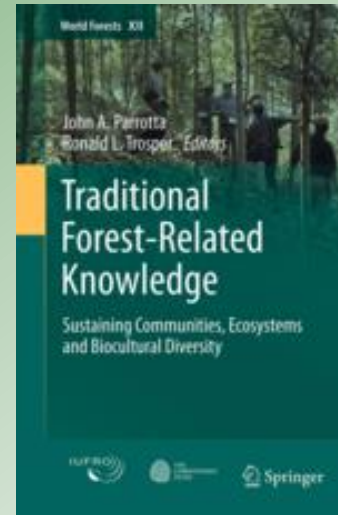
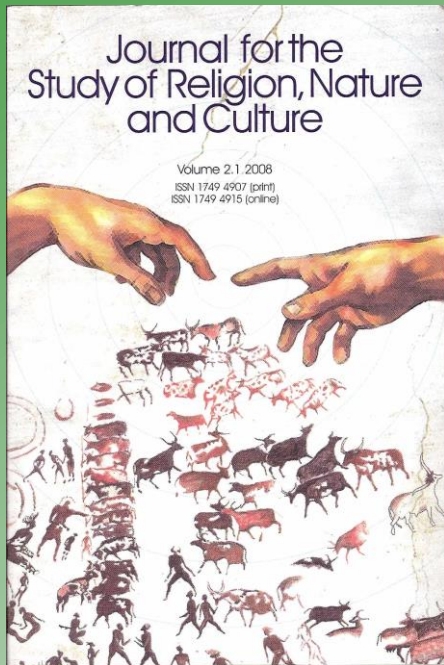
- Zimbabwe:
 - African Earthkeepers movement (Daneels 2001):
 - Tree planting and land restoration as a God-given task
 - through spirit mediums & oracle of Supreme Being
 - based on Chimurenga liberation war
 - Synergy of African indigenous religion and African Christianity



Statements

- Take a contextualised, multi-levelled, historic, unsentimental view on TEK and IFM
- How to articulate spiritual values in (indigenous, sustainable) forest management?

Hopeful International Initiatives



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THANK YOU!