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Conservation Partnerships and Biodiversity Governance: Fulfilling Governance Functions through Interaction

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ABSTRACT

Over the last decades, new governance mechanisms such as partnerships have been increasingly accepted as instruments for sustainable development. This article contributes to an improved understanding of the contributions of partnerships, and their interactions with and consequences for intergovernmental regimes. It answers the question to what extent the roles of international intersectoral partnerships in biodiversity governance can be assessed using a positive, negative, or utilitarian qualification. To answer this question, the article develops and applies a methodology to analyze the governance functions that partnerships fulfill, and the institutional interaction (in terms of content, discourses, and rules) between the partnerships and intergovernmental regimes. Two case studies are analyzed: the Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP), and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), which works on biodiversity hotspots. Contrary to most partnerships, these conservation partnerships do not use the market as a steering mechanism for sustainable development, but focus on enhancing international policy processes. The article concludes that the partnerships reinvent biodiversity policy and politics, which is necessary to improve the effectiveness of the biodiversity governance system, and that they complement intergovernmental regimes, albeit with varying effectiveness. Recommendations are developed for governments to strategically enhance public–private interaction. Copyright © 2010 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd and ERP Environment.

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Introduction and Theoretical Context

Over the last decades (public-)private steering mechanisms, such as partnerships, have been increasingly accepted as instruments for sustainable development. Especially since the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, the number of partnerships has grown exponentially. This article aims to contribute to improving our understanding of the contributions of these (public-)private steering mechanisms, and their interactions with and consequences for intergovernmental regimes. The analysis concentrates on international intersectoral partnerships (strategic alliances between governments, market actors, and/or civil society groups) in international biodiversity governance. Two partnerships that focus on the conservation of a specific type of biodiversity are researched: the Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP), and the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), which works on biodiversity hotspots. Both partnerships were introduced at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

When discussing the rise of (public-)private steering mechanisms in the international governance of sustainable development, two closely related bodies of literature are most relevant: regime and governance literature. Regime literature (see Quental *et al.*, 2009 for a historical analysis of global sustainable development policy) has made significant contributions to understanding regime effectiveness (Miles *et al.*, 2001; Rittberger, 1993) and regime interaction (Keohane *et al.*, 1995; Oberthür, 2002). The regime effectiveness debate '… ultimately deals with the ability of international regimes to solve the problems that prompted their establishment' (Andresen and Hey, 2005, p. 211). In the regime interaction debate, authors presume that (the effectiveness of) one regime is affected by its interaction with other regimes from the same issue area and/or regimes governing other issues.

Governance literature studies the ongoing changes in the manner in which society is being steered, which is often called the shift 'from government to governance' (Rosenau *et al.*, 1992). Not only governments, but also actors from the other two main societal sectors, the market and civil society sectors, have and take responsibility for steering society (see for example Van Zeijl-Rosema *et al.*, 2008). Three hypotheses on the increasing role of private steering mechanisms in the governance of sustainable development can be distinguished in the literature:

- positive evaluation: private steering mechanisms represent a necessary reinvention of policy and politics in the emerging network society
- negative evaluation: private steering mechanisms are an erosion of public authority, the private capture of what should be public
- utilitarian view: private and public steering mechanisms can complement each other (Glasbergen, 2007).

The literature on partnerships (Bezençon, 2009; Bitzer *et al.*, 2008; Cashore *et al.*, 2004; Gulbrandsen, 2004; Ite, 2007; Morse and McNamara, 2009; Pattberg, 2007; Visseren-Hamakers *et al.*, 2007) represents a prominent part of governance literature, because partnerships represent a specific type of governance instrument. The term partnership addresses a broad range of organizational forms of intersectoral collaboration ranging from global policy networks (Levy *et al.*, 1995; Reinicke, 1999) to partnerships between an individual company and a non-governmental organization (NGO) (Van Huijstee *et al.*, 2007). The majority of the partnership literature can be viewed as part of the research focused on how markets contribute to sustainable development (Shaw and Black, 2009; Vermeulen and Seuring, 2009), because many partnerships develop certification standards to promote sustainable production and consumption. The partnerships studied in this article, however, do not use the market for their sustainability goals, but focus on enhancing international policy processes. In other words, they are not market-oriented partnerships, like most others, but policy-oriented partnerships.

The article is organized as follows. The next section presents the research methodology, after which the case studies are described, followed by the discussion and conclusions.

Research Methodology

The research methodology used in this article builds on the regime, governance, and partnership literature presented above. Using the three hypotheses distinguished in governance literature, this article answers the question

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to what extent the role of international intersectoral conservation partnerships in biodiversity governance can be assessed using a positive, negative, and/or utilitarian qualification. To interpret the implications of conservation partnerships for public biodiversity policy, both the functions that partnerships fulfill in the biodiversity governance system, and the institutional interaction that takes place between the partnerships and governmental regimes when the partnerships fulfill these functions are researched. The term 'regime' is defined as the (inter-)national institutions and formal agreements (treaties) that govern an issue area (Leebron, 2002). Institutions are defined as 'organized patterns of socially constructed norms and roles, and socially prescribed behaviors expected of occupants of those roles, which are created and re-created over time' (Goodin, 1996, p.19). Finally, the international biodiversity governance system is defined as the total of all public, public–private, and private international initiatives working on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

For the assessment of the role of partnerships it is necessary to know to what extent the partnerships improve the effectiveness of biodiversity governance by fulfilling governance functions. If partnerships effectively fulfill functions in support of governmental regimes, they may be complementary; if they effectively fulfill functions that used to be fulfilled by governments, they may be eroding public authority; if they fulfill functions in a new manner, they may be reinventing politics. This article distinguishes the functions agenda setting, policy development, implementation, metagovernance (strategic steering and coordination in the governance system), and enhancing participation (Visseren-Hamakers and Glasbergen, 2007). Based on Underdal, effectiveness is analyzed in terms of output and outcome (Underdal, 2002). For the different functions, output can be interpreted as new issues on the agenda, new or improved policy, and improved implementation, coordination, or participation. Outcome can be analyzed by the number of actors reached and/or involved (for the functions agenda setting, metagovernance, and enhancing participation), the extent to which new policy is integrated into existing policy, and the number of actors implementing new policy.

In assessing the role of partnerships it is also necessary to understand how they interact with international, regional, and/or national biodiversity regimes while they are fulfilling governance functions, because it is through this interaction that their contribution to biodiversity governance materializes. Two types of institutional interaction are distinguished: overlap and influence (Young, 2002). For overlap, the analysis focuses on whether and how this overlap is managed, and for influence, the methodology of Oberthür and Gehring (2006) is used, who disaggregate complex relationships between regimes into single occurrences of influence. Institutional influence 'in essence … refers to a causal relationship between two institutions, with one of these institutions ("the source institution") exerting influence on the other ("the target institution")' (Oberthür and Gehring, 2006, p. 6). This approach is used here to 'untangle' the complex relationship between a partnership and a regime.

The interactions (both the overlap and the influence) between the partnerships and regimes are analyzed in terms of content (policy goals), discourses (how groups of people frame reality) (Hajer, 1995), and rules (established norms, routines, etc) (Giddens, 1984). This enables a broader analysis of institutional interaction than has been done so far in the regime literature, because researchers have focused mainly on interaction of content. This broadened analysis is necessary because reinvention of politics implies fundamental change, in terms of discourses and/or rules, and complementation implies interaction in terms of content. Erosion of public authority takes place when partnerships take over functions that used to be fulfilled, or can be performed better by regimes.

This article uses a case study approach to study two conservation partnerships, and is based on literature review, 24 interviews with partnership representatives and partner organizations, analysis of partnership documents, visits to the partnerships' secretariats, and seven returned questionnaires. All findings discussed below were confirmed through triangulation. In researching an interaction among two organizations, for example, the representatives from both organizations were interviewed, and the findings of these interviews were then checked through an interview with at least one other actor not involved in that specific interaction. The period of analysis encompasses the period between the start of the partnerships until the end of 2007. Because the case studies represent a specific type of partnerships, generalization of the findings to other partnerships or governance mechanisms should be made with caution.

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The Case Studies

The Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP)

Introduction

Great apes are members of the family Hominidae, which encompasses six species besides human beings: two species each of gorilla, chimpanzee (one of which is known as bonobo), and orangutan. All great ape species are considered (critically) endangered by the World Conservation Union, IUCN (Caldecott and Miles, 2005; Hopkin, 2007).

GRASP was launched in 2001. Its secretariat is based at the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) in Nairobi, Kenya, and is co-sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Partners include all 23 great ape range states; donor states; biodiversity-related regimes, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the World Heritage Convention, and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands; over 30 NGOs; and supporting organizations. GRASP's main mission is to conserve great apes in their natural habitat (GRASP, 2005).

Agenda Setting: Making Great Ape Conservation a Global Issue

One of the most important functions that GRASP has fulfilled is agenda setting at the international level. All interviewees agree that GRASP has effectively changed the discourse on great ape conservation in the biodiversity governance system by making it a global instead of a regional or national issue (see also Jolly, 2005). This institutional influence has had high outcome effectiveness: GRASP's agenda-setting role has had a broad reach, including range states, donor states, and biodiversity regimes. GRASP has also created high-level political attention for global great ape conservation, and has brought the range states together. The first intergovernmental meeting on great apes in Kinshasa in 2005 is seen by all interviewed participants as a historic moment, where ministers, other politicians, and GRASP partners came together to discuss great ape conservation. The Kinshasa declaration, which aims to secure the future of all species and subspecies of great apes in the wild by 2015, has been signed by 21 range states.

Differing Success in Policy Development

GRASP has formulated the following ambitions to influence the content of both national and international policy: GRASP's great ape population and habitat priorities should be integrated in national conservation and development plans; national and international legislation relating to great apes should be reviewed and tightened if necessary, and their enforcement should be improved; and GRASP priorities should influence implementation of conventions and other international mechanisms (GRASP, 2006). Until today GRASP's influence on national policy has been limited; most of its influence on policy content has taken place at the international level. Explanations can be found in the fact that the partnership first had to develop its own priorities for great ape conservation, which it has done, among others, through its Scientific Commission. Also, because GRASP's implementation on the ground has remained limited (see below), there has been less interaction at the national level.

GRASP's Scientific Commission's main purpose is to give scientific advice to GRASP. In aiming to manage content overlap, the Commission is closely linked to the scientific network of IUCN: the majority of the Commission members are also member of the Section on Great Apes (SGA) of the Primate Specialist Group (PSG) of the IUCN species survival commission (SSC), ensuring strong links with the global scientific community on great ape conservation. The Commission has developed a draft list of 110 priority populations for conservation in 94 sites. However, as the result of internal debates, the output of the Commission has been limited, to the disappointment of several interviewees, and the list of priority populations has remained a draft.

GRASP has developed National Great Apes Survival Plans (NGASPs) and has supported the development of regional action plans. Such national and regional plans, which prioritize the conservation needs for great apes, have been developed in multi-stakeholder processes for 17 of the 23 range states. The plans could also become

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tools for metagovernance among implementing partners and/or fundraising tools to enable implementation. The fact that the plans are being used by CMS in the development of its gorilla agreement (see below) shows the potential influence of the plans as policy instruments. However, none of the national plans have been formally adopted by the range states, and implementation and funding are lacking.

Most of the institutional interaction between GRASP and regimes takes place with CITES and CMS. An explanation could be that the content overlap with these conventions is the greatest because these regimes are species-based conventions, and GRASP is mainly a species-based initiative, although it also works on habitat and livelihood issues. This content overlap is managed mostly by close collaboration in policy development (for CMS) and implementation (for CITES).

CMS aims to protect migratory species, species that cross national boundaries. All gorillas are listed on CMS Appendix I (Endangered Migratory Species). The convention has developed a binding agreement on international cooperation in the conservation of gorillas, which was finalized in 2007. GRASP has been involved in developing this 'gorilla agreement' from an early stage. To manage overlap, the action plans that are being developed for the gorilla agreement are based, among others, on the GRASP national and regional action plans. Because CMS intends to use existing GRASP work as much as possible, the latter is influencing CMS in terms of content. CMS also influences GRASP: the fact that the convention is very active on gorillas, and is one of the more active GRASP partners, could result in the partnership being more active on gorillas than on the other great apes. Their collaboration also shows that the partnership is not eroding intergovernmental authority. CMS continues to initiate policy; however, it now does so in partnership.

Too Little Implementation

Implementation on the ground of GRASP activities is done by the partner organizations, which have implemented 20 projects. Most projects work on capacity building or community involvement. GRASP projects are therefore complementing governmental regimes because most interviewees and questionnaire respondents name lack of capacity as one of the main problems in great ape conservation. Most range states have adequate legislation and protected areas in place, but the capacity for enforcement and implementation is limited. GRASP can enable conservation implementation by its partners through fundraising. The total GRASP budget has been $6.4 million, even though the goal was to raise $25 million by 2005. The secretariat and the partners realize that this output is not sufficient to reach their conservation goals, and have developed plans to raise new funds. Many interviewed partner representatives felt that GRASP has not lived up to its potential as an implementation facilitator.

At the international level interaction takes place mainly by managing content overlap through close collaboration in implementation. As mentioned above, CITES is one of the conventions that interact most with GRASP. All non-human great apes are listed in its Appendix I, which means that their trade is strictly regulated, and will only be authorized in exceptional circumstances. The cooperation between CITES and GRASP was formalized in 2004, when the convention adopted a resolution on the conservation of and trade in great apes, in which its parties, the secretariat, and others are urged to work closely together with GRASP (CITES, 2004). Since then, there have been joint missions to Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, and Malaysia. Because the capacity of the CITES secretariat for doing this type of research is limited, the joint missions have in practice meant that a large part of this responsibility has been focused on great apes. GRASP and CITES also collaborate on a regular basis in cases of trade in great apes. The development of GRASP rules on when and how to become involved in these specific cases is a good example of the management of content overlap in implementation. The interviews showed that most NGO partners would like the partnership to campaign in every case, whereas the (inter-)governmental partners do not want GRASP to act as yet another NGO. The GRASP Executive Committee, in which both governmental partners and NGOs are represented, has decided that the partnership should not get involved while the intergovernmental institutions are working on a case. CITES, a member of the Executive Committee, played an important role in this discussion. These interactions show that the work of this convention is being complemented by the partnership. CITES remains a strong convention, which shares or demarcates its authority, depending on what is effective.

The interaction between GRASP and the site-based conventions, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the World Heritage Convention, consists mainly of management of content overlap in implementation. The fact that these conventions are GRASP members focuses their work on great apes. The Ramsar list of wetlands of

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international importance includes 15 sites with great apes. In 2007 Ramsar and GRASP formally agreed to closer cooperation, among others, to improve management of Ramsar sites with great apes, and designate new Ramsar sites with great ape habitat. There are also 14 World Heritage Sites harboring great apes, six of which are listed as so-called World Heritage in Danger. The convention was adopted by UNESCO, the co-sponsor of GRASP. The fact that a great ape site is a World Heritage Site enables UNESCO to become involved when a site is threatened.

Main Influence through Metagovernance and Enhancing Participation

GRASP is especially effective in metagovernance and enhancing participation. Because these functions are so closely connected, they are discussed jointly.

Through its metagovernance role, GRASP has enabled interaction among governments, NGOs, and scientists at the international, national and local levels. The informal network that has been established is one of the key strengths of the partnership. GRASP is a point of coordination in the international biodiversity governance system; it is able to involve large parts of the great ape conservation community. GRASP has influenced the rules for cooperation in the biodiversity governance system by enabling collaboration among partners that used to have more traditional rules for their interaction. For example, NGOs that formerly only lobbied governments, are now also collaborating with them.

It is important to note that all partners influence GRASP. Especially the partners that have been involved since the formation period, like some of the regimes, have had a strong influence on what GRASP has become. Therefore it is sometimes difficult to detangle the influences between these partners and GRASP. The GRASP secretariat and most partners understand the added value of being a partnership, of being a vehicle for interaction, and make strategic use of the formal status of the UN on the one hand and the high level of activity of NGOs on the other. 'A lot of what GRASP does is successful because it operates just under the radar of formality', as an interviewee summarized it. The advantage of being a partnership is that GRASP can work around a lot of the existing rules of the UN bureaucracy, and can be more critical than the UN system would be, although its effectiveness is still influenced by the sometimes slow pace of the UN system. On the other hand, the fact that GRASP is intertwined with the UN enables the partnership to have a different relationship with national governments than its NGO partners could have on their own. GRASP provides NGOs with a unique access to governmental regimes: it acts as a 'funnel' for NGOs. These interactions between the UN (including the conventions), national governments, and NGOs are where the added value is created most.

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)

Introduction

Biodiversity hotspots, first defined by Norman Myers (Myers, 1988), are terrestrial areas with high biodiversity that are under extreme threat. To be called a hotspot an area must have at least 1500 endemic plant species, and must have already lost at least 70% of its original vegetation through the impact of human activities. First, 25 hotspots were defined; later the list was expanded to 34 hotspots (Mittermeier *et al.*, 2005; Myers *et al.*, 2000). Together these hotspots harbor half of the biodiversity in the world, even though they cover only 2.3% of the Earth's surface.

Within the hotspots CEPF focuses on globally threatened and geographically concentrated species, the sites critical for their survival, and the landscapes necessary to maintain ecological and evolutionary processes: the key biodiversity areas. The partnership was founded in 2000 by Conservation International (CI), the World Bank (WB), and the Global Environment Facility. The government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the French Development Agency joined the partnership later. CEPF is a global grant-making program that invests in civil society in hotspots. The CEPF office is located at the CI headquarters in Arlington, VA, USA, the lead organization in the partnership.

CEPF's functions and institutional interaction at the regional and national level are analyzed for the nine hotspots in which the CEPF investments have been finalized: the Guinean forests of West Africa; the tropical Andes; Madagascar and Indian Ocean Islands; Sundaland; the Philippines; the Atlantic forest; the Tumbes-Chocó-Magdalena hotspot; the Cape Floristic Region; and the Mesoamerica biodiversity hotspot (CEPF, 2006–2007).

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The outputs and outcomes in the hotspots have not been achieved through CEPF funding alone, but CEPF has contributed to them significantly.

Agenda Setting of Hotspots and Civil Society

One of the most effective functions of CEPF has been agenda setting. CEPF has had significant institutional influence on the biodiversity governance system by increasing attention for the issues of focusing on hotspots and investing in civil society. In the analyzed hotspots CEPF has had institutional influence in terms of content, discourse, and rules: new policy has been developed, the hotspot discourse is used by others, and civil society is more involved in conservation, as confirmed by both document analysis and the interviews.

When CI set up CEPF, it had the ambition to influence the core business of the CEPF donor partners through the partnership. Although CI has not been highly effective in realizing this ambition, CEPF has had some influence on its donor partners. When CEPF started, it was relatively new for the donors to collaborate with civil society. Since then the discourse to cooperate with civil society has become more institutionalized in the biodiversity governance system, and CEPF has contributed to this increased recognition of the contribution of civil society by its partners. The partnership has also influenced the donor partners in terms of content. They are more aware of the need to invest in the most critical areas, like hotspots, and CEPF has shown that it is possible to focus. The partnership has also strengthened the ongoing discourse to work more regionally instead of nationally.

Policy Development: Influence at the Hotspot and National Levels

CEPF starts its work in a hotspot by developing plans for the hotspot: an 'ecosystem profile' and 'strategic funding directions'. It involves local stakeholders, mainly from government, civil society, and science in this process. The grants awarded to civil society groups in the hotspot should contribute to achieving the goals defined in the strategic funding directions. Through working in partnership in the hotspots, other organizations get involved in working towards CEPF hotspot priorities.

A lot of CEPF's influence on governmental policy has been attained (partly) through the political sensitivity and connectivity of both CI and CEPF. Their political networks are extensive at all levels. Globally at least 22 policies, laws, or regulations in 12 countries have been affected through CEPF projects (WB, 2007), which represents a significant outcome effectiveness. Changes in national, regional, and local government policy include the incorporation of the corridor concept in policies, the development of new legal instruments for indigenous land claims and private protected areas, the cancellation of logging concessions and a highway, and the development of public–private partnerships. Also, in several hotspots CEPF has funded research on the conservation status of species. These species are often endangered and become listed on the IUCN list of threatened species or their listing is updated. New species have even been discovered.

The Core Business of Enabling Implementation

CEPF's core business is enabling implementation by fundraising. The partners are donor organizations; together they committed $150 million for the first 5-year phase. The second 5-year phase, which started in 2007/2008, has an equal financial target; the partners have almost committed $82 million. The partnership has been successful in leveraging funds and co-financing: almost $130 million of external funding has been spent on CEPF goals (WB, 2007). The CI representatives who were interviewed explained that this was exactly CI's strategy for the partnership. CEPF can be seen as a strategic fundraising tool of CI, engaging donor organizations in a partnership that supports CI's strategies, and using the partners' investments to enable co-financing and leveraging of these funds by third-party investors. Because CI is also a major CEPF grantee, there has been a perception of conflicts of interest (Wells *et al.*, 2006). Measures have been taken, and the amount of CEPF funding paid to CI has decreased substantially (WB, 2007; Wells *et al.*, 2006).

In the first phase, CEPF prioritized 14 hotspots out of the then 25 existing hotspots as priorities. For the second phase, 10 new hotspots will be prioritized, while the 'old' are eligible for limited consolidation grants (CEPF, 2007a). Not all hotspots are eligible for CEPF funding, because CEPF only invests in countries that are WB clients (developing countries) that have ratified the Convention on Biological Diversity. Twenty-five hotspots covering 77

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countries are wholly eligible, and five additional hotspots include 17 eligible countries (CEPF, 2007b). For this reason, CEPF's implementation outcome after 10 years will include the support of projects in 24 out of 30 (partly) eligible hotspots. The decision on to what extent CEPF would expand into new hotspots in the second phase, and therefore phase out the old ones, was difficult, as several interviewees confirmed. The organization tried to balance the wish to consolidate its past investments and its ambition for other hotspots. A fundamental question is to what extent 5 years of CEPF investment will suffice to sustain the institutional influence it has had, especially for fundamental change like shifts in discourses or rules. In all hotspots the partnership has made a significant but incomplete contribution; the accomplishments are still fragile (CEPF, 2006–2007).

CEPF's support of conservation implementation complements and strengthens the existing regimes. CEPF's hotspot approach focuses the implementation of governmental biodiversity policy. When applying the hotspot approach in a region for the first time, gaps are often found in the existing network of protected areas. The partnership mostly works on filling these gaps. Hence, in the vast majority of hotspots, CEPF works on corridors and connectivity, and on transboundary cooperation. CEPF's outcomes include supporting the creation or expansion of almost 10 million hectares of protected areas worldwide, and improving the management effectiveness of 21 million hectares of protected areas (WB, 2007).

Besides the interaction among the CEPF partners there is little interaction between CEPF and biodiversity regimes at the international level. Most of the institutional interaction happens at the hotspot, national, and local levels because CEPF funds conservation implementation. The partnership explicitly aims to contribute to the biodiversity targets of the Global Environment Facility and Convention on Biological Diversity (CEPF, 2007b), and in practice supports governments in implementing their international commitments to all international biodiversity regimes. To manage overlap and to realize government buy-in, national government officials and national focal points of the international biodiversity regimes are involved in the development of the hotspot strategy, and the strategy has to be approved by the national Global Environment Facility focal points. There is, however, little effective operational collaboration between CEPF and its partners at the field level.

Metagovernance through Engagement and Funding

Metagovernance, or 'alignment' as CEPF calls it, of conservation investments is an explicit CEPF goal (CEPF, 2007b). CEPF wants as many other organizations to work towards achieving its goals as possible, and aims to manage overlap. A 'Regional Implementation Team' is responsible for the coordination of the CEPF work in the hotspot; these are NGOs that were already present in the hotspot. In the majority of the analyzed hotspots this was the local CI office.

The partners' different rules and discourses influence the partnership. Most importantly, the fact that CEPF is a partnership of donor organizations has a large influence on the organization. The donor community is keen on measuring the effectiveness of its investments, and requires thorough monitoring and reporting back. Both the document analyses and interviews have shown that CEPF has internalized these existing rules of the donor community, and that CEPF has become a transparent partnership. Also, the WB, Japan, and France, with strong roots in the development cooperation discourse, want the partnership to contribute not only to biodiversity conservation but also to poverty alleviation. CEPF has now included indicators for livelihoods in its work, while remaining in essence a biodiversity partnership.

Enhancing Participation through Supporting Civil Society

CEPF has improved participation by enabling civil society in developing countries to become more involved in conservation, and by enabling the development of partnerships in different hotspots. All interviewees see supporting civil society in hotspots in developing countries as the CEPF core business. The partners have internalized the discourse that sustainability cannot be attained by governments alone; that both a strong government and civil society are necessary. CEPF is complementing the existing work of the donor partners by expanding the content of their work. Through CEPF, the governmental partners can channel relatively small amounts of funding to civil society, something they are not equipped for themselves. Hence, CEPF enables large institutional donors to make grants available for a new target group, and local civil society groups to access new sources of funding. More than

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1000 civil society groups, including community-based groups, indigenous-based groups, and local, national, and international NGOs, have been supported by CEPF grants (CEPF, 2007c). This strengthening of civil society is influencing the existing local rules for interaction between the different sectors of society, a reinvention of conservation policy. Local NGOs have sometimes for the first time been formally involved in conservation management together with government officials. The civil society community and individual NGOs have become better equipped to contribute to biodiversity conservation, through increased capacity, improved information exchange and coordination, and the establishment of partnerships and networks. Also, community participation in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity has been supported in many hotspots, and CEPF grantees have worked with communities on alternative livelihoods.

Discussion and Conclusions

This article has researched the question to what extent the role of international intersectoral conservation partnerships in biodiversity governance can be assessed using a positive, negative, and/or utilitarian qualification. To answer this question both the governance functions that partnerships fulfill, and the institutional interaction (in terms of content, discourses, and rules) between the partnerships and governmental regimes when the partnerships fulfill these functions have been researched.

Conclusions Based on the Case Studies

The analysis of the two policy-oriented conservation partnerships supports the first and third hypotheses. Although the partnerships' effectiveness in fulfilling the different functions varies, both GRASP and CEPF contribute to biodiversity conservation in a unique manner, making necessary improvements in the governance system, and complement existing governmental biodiversity regimes. No evidence was found to support the hypothesis that these partnerships erode public authority. Intergovernmental regimes remain pro-active, and defend their role when they anticipate that goals can be achieved better by intergovernmental processes than through partnership.

Reinventing Conservation Politics

The partnerships have reinvented conservation governance mainly by fulfilling functions of agenda setting, metagovernance and enhancing participation. They have had institutional influence on leading discourses and rules in the governance system, necessary to improve its effectiveness.

GRASP has influenced the discourse on great ape conservation, making it a global issue instead of a regional or national issue, and CEPF's hotspot discourse has been adopted by other actors, including governments. Both partnerships have contributed to the further institutionalization and implementation of the ecosystem approach as the organizing principle in the international biodiversity governance system.

The most important influence on the governance system has been achieved through metagovernance. The analyzed conservation partnerships fully understand the niche of the partnership approach. By strategically using the added value approach, they play a unique role in the biodiversity governance system, which could not have been done by the partners separately. They make maximum use of the partnerships' role as vehicles for interaction among societal sectors, and among formal governmental and informal processes. They have added a new public–private network intertwined in the intergovernmental system, creating new relationships to coordinate, focus, and improve biodiversity governance.

The partnerships enhance the participation and strengthen the role of civil society in global, regional, and national conservation politics, and involve communities in local conservation. This also affects the rules for intersectoral collaboration. The fact that both partnerships, but CEPF most strongly, work on capacity building of civil society in developing countries represents an important contribution. Both partnerships endorse the discourse that conservation in developing countries can only be realized if the implementation capacity of all societal sectors in

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developing countries is strengthened. Through the partnerships these new rules for intersectoral collaboration for conservation have been further institutionalized and implemented in the governance system. Especially CEPF also enables the development of new regional and national intersectoral partnerships. Hereby, the rule to work in intersectoral partnership is transferred from the global governance system, where partnerships are already becoming institutionalized, to developing countries, where they are often still a novelty.

Complementing Intergovernmental Biodiversity Regimes

The partnerships have complemented (inter-)national biodiversity regimes mainly by fulfilling implementation and metagovernance functions. Through institutional influence in terms of content, they have improved the effectiveness of existing regimes, and have supported others to improve their contributions to the regimes.

Both partnerships explicitly aim to contribute to the implementation of international biodiversity regimes, and enable implementation through funding. The partnerships concentrate on developing countries, CEPF more consciously, realizing that these societies need the most support, and GRASP simply because great ape habitats are found in the South. In essence, the partnerships are instruments to help these countries implement the commitments they have made in international biodiversity regimes. This improves the effectiveness of these regimes, which in the end depends on national implementation, because most biodiversity worldwide is located within national territories. Because the partnerships focus the international biodiversity governance system towards ecosystems with the highest biodiversity worldwide, such as tropical rainforests and hotspots, they make the governance system more effective.

Both partnerships fulfill a metagovernance function at the regional or national level. They complement governmental regimes by proactively bringing together public and private actors. GRASP's national plans and CEPF's ecosystem profiles have all been developed through multi-stakeholder processes. Through this metagovernance function, the partnerships also work on capacity building of governments in developing countries by cooperating with governmental focal points. Moreover, the partnerships enhance regional collaboration between governments in conservation because many great ape habitats and hotspots are cross-national ecosystems.

Varying Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the partnerships in fulfilling the different functions varies. Even though GRASP has been effective in agenda setting, metagovernance, and enhancing participation, the effectiveness of its policy development varies, and its implementation on the ground has remained limited. Its output of new policy is adequate, but its outcome is limited, as its policies have little influence on other actors. The output of implementation on the ground has been disappointing because of limited funding. CEPF has been effective in fulfilling all five governance functions, although the partnership may be spreading itself too thin over too many hotspots worldwide, aiming to influence the conservation policies of as many other actors as possible.

An important question is how durable the influence of the conservation partnerships in the regions is. Although the partnerships aim to attain achievements that will last in the longer term, they only fund the implementation of projects for a limited period of time. This question is especially relevant for the more fundamental changes, like shifts in discourses or rules that the partnerships have achieved. Also, despite the fact that the analyzed conservation partnerships fulfill important roles in biodiversity governance, their contribution remains limited. A partnership is only one instrument with limited financial means in a densely populated and large governance system.

Discussion

Methodological Discussion

This article has combined research approaches and methodologies from regime and governance literature to study the contributions of a specific governance mechanism: conservation partnerships. The approach combines analyses of the effectiveness with which partnerships fulfill governance functions with analyses of the interactions among

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the partnerships and governmental regimes in terms of content, discourses, and rules. It has proven to enable a thorough analysis of the partnerships' contributions to biodiversity governance. This represents an important contribution to governance research because actors working towards sustainable development increasingly choose to use governance instruments to do so. Therefore the development of effective research methodologies to study these governance mechanisms is crucial. Future research could not only apply the approach to other types of partnerships, like market-oriented partnerships, but also to other governance mechanisms.

Public–Private Interaction and the Role of Governments

This article has shown the relevance of public–private interaction in biodiversity governance. The effectiveness of the biodiversity governance system can be further improved by strengthening this interaction and using it strategically. Although all governance system participants can play a role, governments can be viewed as having a special responsibility in the strategic enhancement of public–private interaction, because they are expected to have a general overview of all public and private steering mechanisms.

An important success factor in the analyzed partnerships is the interaction between intergovernmental institutions and NGOs that are experienced in conservation implementation. When both types of partners are represented, the partnership becomes a natural link between intergovernmental regimes and conservation on the ground. Lack of implementation is one of the weakest aspects of biodiversity governance so governments should embrace this type of partnership to further adequate implementation of international regimes. Governments could facilitate the development of partnerships not only around specific types of biodiversity, but also to support the implementation of a specific (part of an) international agreement. Governments can also use partnerships to strengthen institutional capacity for metagovernance at the ecosystem level, and the partnerships can also be used as political instruments, enhancing political momentum for conservation.

The partnerships should be seen as a form of institutionalization of the increasing role of conservation NGOs in international biodiversity politics. In the partnerships, the public–private interactions are not only formalized but also intensified. Through this intensified interaction, working on improving the effectiveness of the governance system becomes easier for both the public and private partners.

Although the research has found no evidence for partnerships eroding governmental authority, it is important to note that tension could develop between the partnerships and national governments because the partnerships are deciding on conservation priorities and funding their implementation within national territories. National sovereignty issues have been an important debate in international environmental regimes, and the partnerships could be viewed as a way to bypass these discussions. Awareness of these tensions should be integrated in the recommended strategic use of intersectoral collaboration for conservation implementation.

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