

STRUGGLING FOR THE GOLDEN EGG: CONSERVATION POLITICS OF THE GALAPAGOS



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Introduction

This study is an in-depth analysis of the Galapagos Marine Reserve management system, and the socio-political relations between the stakeholders. The management problem of the Galapagos Marine Reserve (GMR) was manifested through the conservationist narrative of over-fishing, illegal fishing and a social conflict over access to resources between users. Failure of the conventional eco-centric approach to management has produced the realization of the importance of linking ecological sustainability with social and economic sustainability. This realization has resulted in a participatory approach to the management of the Galapagos Marine Reserve and the policy of diversification of economic opportunities for local artisanal fishers, what became a step towards sustainable resource management and social conflict resolution. This thesis focuses on the shift in management and builds on two examples of economic alternatives for fishers.

Methods

The theme was approached by means of an empirical study, based on a series of interviews with key personnel within the organizations involved in the management of the Galapagos Marine Reserve and the local artisanal fishermen. We challenged the narrative of over-fishing and sought to characterize conservation politics of the Galapagos by accounting the positions of all stakeholders. By applying the theoretical framework of New Institutional Economics, Actor Oriented Approach and Critical Discourse Analysis, we produced our scientific discourse of the management system, the mechanisms of resource distribution and their implications for sustainability of the GMR management.



Results and Conclusions

Despite the Participatory Management System being a good example of co-management practices for marine Protected areas, it has failed to fulfil its main purpose: to decrease conflicts among the GMR users. Although based on the ideal of participation, it has excluded certain users and re-produced asymmetric power relations and conflicts among the included ones. It has maintained the crisis of fisheries and with it, the threatened image of the Galapagos.



**PRESENTATION OF THE RESEARCH
WILL TAKE PLACE
AT ENSPAC BUILDING 02,
IN THE BIG LECTURE ROOM
ON
MAY 11, 2007
BETWEEN 12.30 – 13.00.**

**ALL STAFF AND STUDENTS ARE
WELCOME!**

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