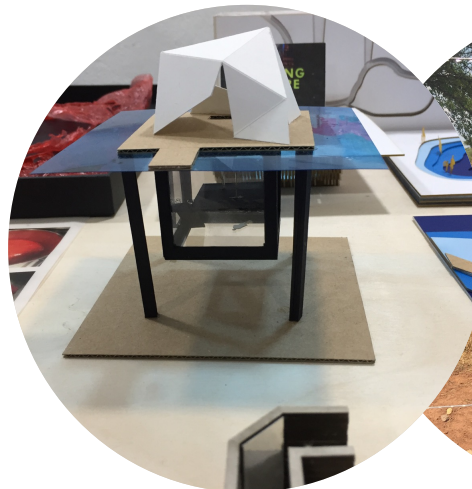


Violent conservation Infrastructures and the Potential for Convivial Conservation in South Africa

BICC International Conference on Infrastructural power at global frontiers, 29 November 2022

Prof. Bram Büscher (Wageningen University)



Introduction: violent conservation infrastructures

- South African conservation completely dependent on, and even supported by fossil fuel infrastructures
 - Sponsorship by fossil companies
 - 'offsetting' agreements
 - But most importantly: 'everyday' use of fossil fuels through cars, planes, electricity, + associated infrastructure

Büscher, B, S. Koot and L. Thakholi (2022, in press). Fossilized conservation, or the unsustainability of saving nature in South Africa. *Environment and Planning E*



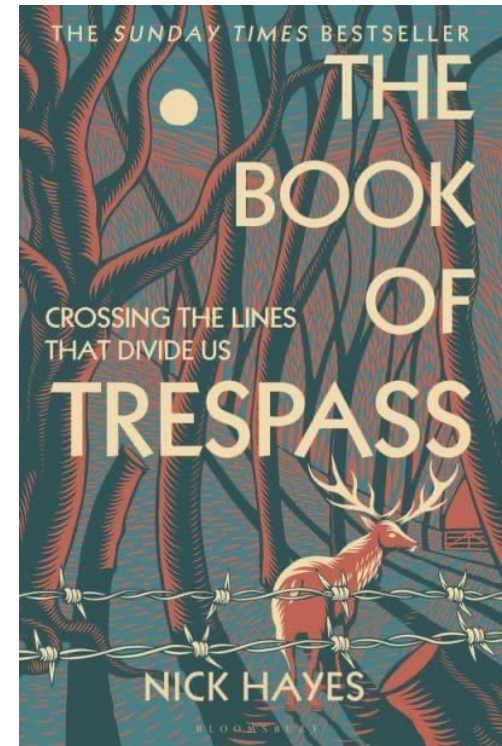
Introduction: violent conservation infrastructures

- Most ubiquitous infrastructure, however: fences, gates and walls:
 - Mark and 'protect' (private or other) property boundaries
 - Often violently defended (electricity, barbs, etc): part of 'green violence'
 - Physical symbol of (elite) privilege + power
 - Though not only negative, of course (WHC)



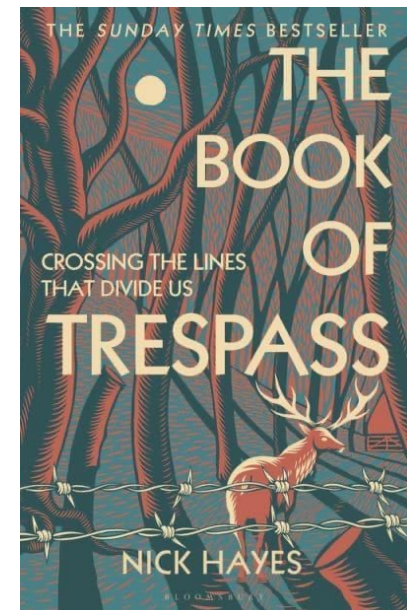
Introduction: violent conservation infrastructures

- Can fences ever become convivial? Can we ever 'cross the lines that divide us'? Important:
 - Tackle what fences represent (property, power)
 - Focus on political economy
 - Get to the roots of conservation violence, especially human-nature dichotomy



Introduction: violent conservation infrastructures

- Famous English court ruling from 1874 where a judge decided that a horse leaning over a fence to bite another person's mare was indeed trespassing and that this was an offence:
 - “with this ruling, the absolute inviolability of property, a notion that had been hardening for 500 years, was finally consolidated into law”
- Fences and infrastructures as part of ‘hardening’ of property and political economy?
- If that is the case, can we also rethink infrastructures and fences to ‘soften’ property and political economy?
 - In the context of a need for new conservation paradigm!



The anthropocene conservation debate: need for new paradigm

	Separation nature and people	Beyond separating nature and people
Mainstream growth / capitalism	Mainstream conservation	New conservation / natural capital
Beyond growth / capitalism	Neoprotectionism	Convivial conservation

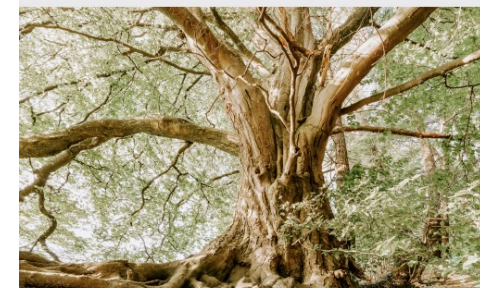
THE
CONSERVATION
REVOLUTION
RADICAL
IDEAS
FOR SAVING
NATURE
BEYOND THE

Bram Büscher,
Robert Fletcher
Die Naturschutzrevolution
Radikale Ideen zur
Überwindung des
Anthropozäns
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Thema

BRAM BÜSCHER Y ROBERT FLETCHER

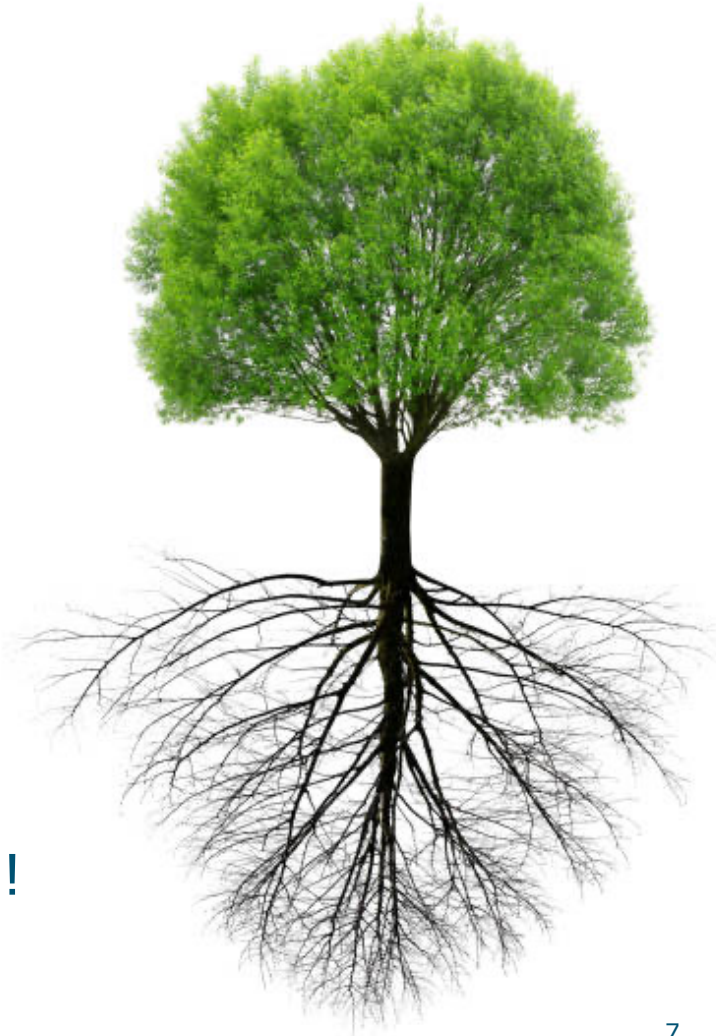
**La revolución
conservacionista**

Propuestas radicales para
salvar la naturaleza
después del Antropoceno

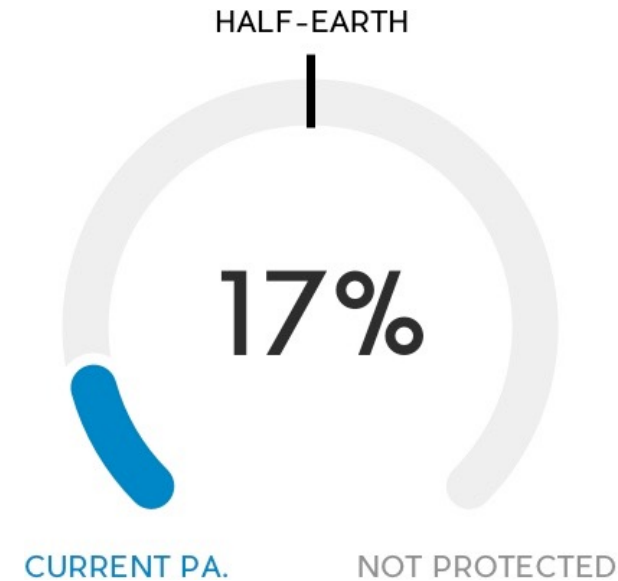


Evaluating the Anthropocene conservation debate

- The three currently dominant conservation perspectives – mainstream conservation, new conservation/natural capital and 30x30/neoprotectionism, do not go to the roots of the problem:
- *They do not take the history of (capitalist) political economy seriously enough, and so fail to present a coherent system(ic) alternative*
- YET: radical challenges important: sign of the need for systemic change!



How to do justice to these radical impulses but also move beyond them?



Towards convivial conservation

- An *Intertwined strategy*: beyond-growth *and* beyond nature/people dichotomy
 - Beyond growth: “you cannot solve the problem with the same logic that created it” (Einstein)
 - Beyond nature/people dichotomy: we cannot ‘save’ biodiversity if we cannot live with it
- One (conservation) stream in a wave of movements that demand structural transformation

degrowth



The ICCA
Consortium

UR

SYMBIO(S)CENE

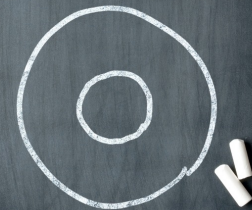
Frank Adloff,
Alain Caillé (eds.)
**Convivial
Futures**
Views from
a Post-Growth Tomorrow

[transcript] x TEXTS



extinction
rebellion

**DOUGHNUT
ECONOMICS**
Seven Ways to Think Like a
21st-Century Economist



KATE RAWORTH

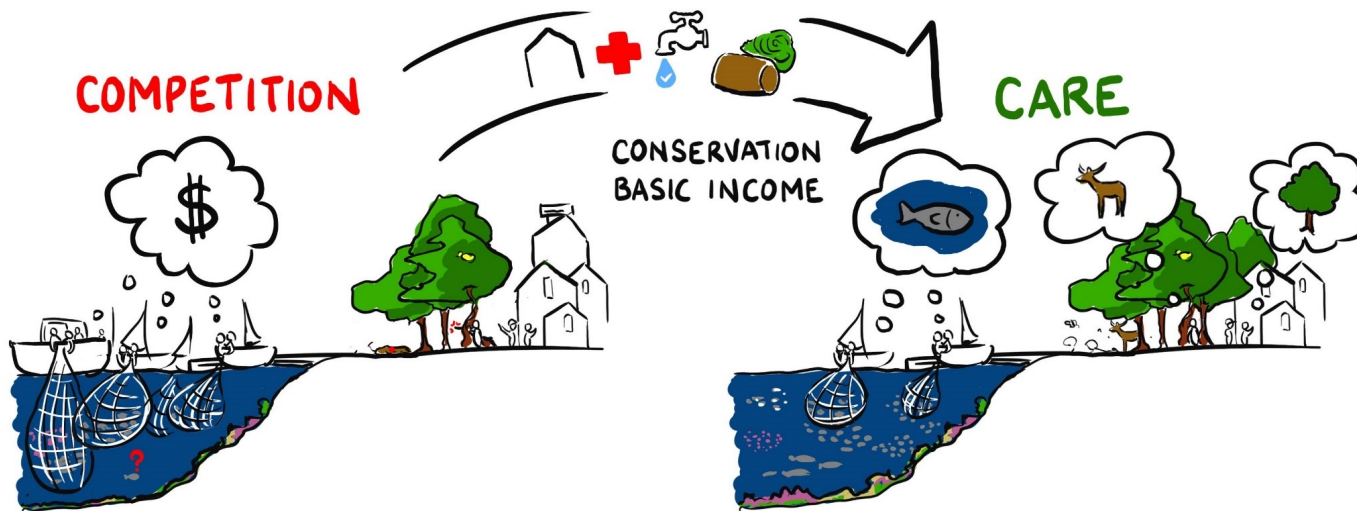
I read this book with the excitement that the people of his day must have read John Maynard Keynes's *General Theory*. It is brilliant, thrilling and revolutionary. George Monbiot

Towards convivial conservation: 5 idealistic, long-term propositions

1. From protected to promoted areas
2. From saving to celebrating human and nonhuman natures
3. From (speedy) touristic voyeurism to (slower, longer-term) engaged visitation
4. From spectacle outside to the everyday 'inside'
5. From privatised expert technocracy to common democratic engagement

Towards CC: concrete short-term actions to redirect conservation practice

1. *Historic reparations & decolonisation*
2. *Conservation basic income (CBI)*
3. *Rethinking (relations with) corporations and the state*
4. *Convivial Conservation Coalition (CCC)*
5. *Redirection: landscapes, governance and finance*



1. Upper classes

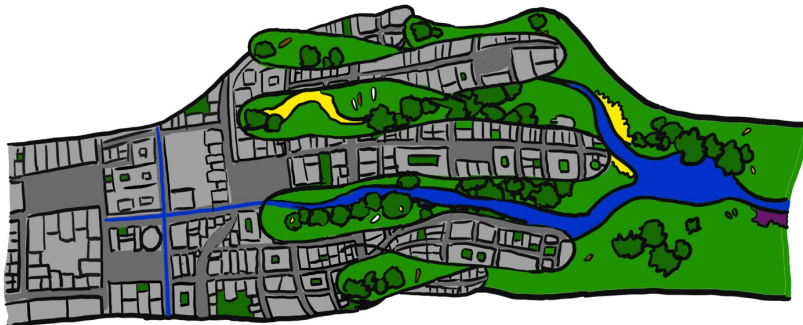
2. Land-owning
capitalist classes

3. Middle and
lower classes

4. Lower rural
classes

Conclusion: How to move beyond violent conservation infrastructures?

- Convivial conservation: an overarching, systemic alternative that encompasses diverse alternative conservation approaches
 - Structural transformation: Tackling biodiversity *and* political-economic crises through system(atic) change
 - Necessarily post-growth and hence postcapitalist: daunting idea, but also liberating AND realistic
 - Key levers for change: (dealing with) power, time and actors and the dialectics between them



Thank you



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