



CONSULTATIVE COUNCILS IN CHILE: PARTICIPATORY OR PROTECTIONIST MANAGEMENT OF THE FRAY JORGE NATIONAL PARK?

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ABSTRACT

In 2001, the Chilean Government created Consultative Councils as part of their national park management strategy. Consultative Councils were designed with three objectives: 1) to generate opportunities for citizen participation with regards to the management, conservation and development of national parks and the surrounding communities; 2) to improve the abilities and opportunities for adjacent communities to protect their ways of living and be acknowledged and valued by society; and 3) to strengthen areas of development in communities and help promote strategic alliances between communities and private and public institutions. We set out to examine whether the Fray Jorge National Park – Consultative Council (FJNP-CC) has achieved these three objectives. Our findings indicated that the FJNP-CC has failed to facilitate community participation in park management (Objective 1) and has done little to improve the abilities and opportunities for adjacent communities to protect their ways of living (Objective 2). However, the FJNP-CC has proven effective at facilitating community access to private and public institutions (Objective 3). Despite achieving only one of its three objectives, the FJNP-CC is still considered by community members and park managers as the best opportunity to manage, if not reconcile, competing interests in the park.

Key words: CONAF, conservation, community, collaboration, conflict, management

INTRODUCTION

Since 1926, 42 national parks and 165 protected areas have been established in Chile. These areas now cover an estimated 151,465 km², or 19.5 per cent of Chile's total land base (Petit et al., 2018). The government agency responsible for the management of Chile's national park system is the National Forestry Corporation (CONAF), which is housed in the Ministry of Agriculture. CONAF was established in 1970 (originally named the Reforestation Corporation) to administer the sustainable management of national forest resources. In 1972, CONAF's role was expanded to include the administration of national parks and protected areas. With a mandate to maximise the environmental, social and economic values of these unique areas, CONAF undertook a national planning strategy for its park system.

CONAF's initial planning process was very much informed by what some have characterised as 'fortress conservation' (Brosius et al., 2005), which prioritises

the protection of biological resources over human uses. This approach was not out of step with other international planning approaches of the time that similarly emphasised authoritarian protection to safeguard critically threatened habitats (Stevens, 2014). Yet these biologically rich and intact areas were often home to communities who, following park designation, found themselves displaced, restricted from access, and unable to continue cultural and economic land-based traditions (Brosius et al., 2005). Considered to be threats to biological diversity, the presence of people in Chile's parks and protected areas was considered the most significant risk to achieving national conservation goals. For example, in Chile's Juan Fernandez National Park, uncontrolled human access is believed to be responsible for the over-exploitation of wildlife species, the introduction of invasive species, and the eradication of 75 per cent of the park's endemic flora (Cuevas & Van Leersum, 2001, p. 899). Similar impacts were reported in Rapa Nui National Park where the introduction of sheep, cattle and horses disrupted the ecology of the

park's environment (Lee, 1990). These types of threats proved influential to CONAF's 'fortress-like' approach to park management.

Since the late 1990s, there has been a global affirmation that reforms are necessary in the way parks and protected areas are managed, and that a reorientation of the protectionist approach to conservation is required (World Conservation Union, 2003). Stevens (2014) has characterised this affirmation as a new paradigm for park management where communities are actively engaged in park management and their livelihoods are enhanced rather than adversely affected. In Chile, this 'paradigm shift' was reflected in the creation of Consultative Councils.

In 2001, CONAF made it a priority to establish Consultative Councils for each of its national parks. Consultative Councils represent participatory institutions involving government and community representatives whose mandate involves three objectives: 1) to generate opportunities for citizen participation with regards to the management, conservation and development of national parks and the surrounding communities; 2) to improve the abilities and opportunities for adjacent communities to protect their ways of living and be acknowledged and valued by society; and 3) to strengthen areas of development in communities and help promote strategic alliances between communities and private and public institutions. In the 20 years that have passed

since first being established, no external assessments have been conducted to determine if Consultative Councils have achieved these objectives.

We set out to examine the Fray Jorge National Park – Consultative Council (FJNP-CC). This research was conducted in collaboration with CONAF and together we sought to understand how effective the FJNP-CC has been in achieving the three objectives noted above. This includes assessing whether the administration of the FJNP reflects the 'new paradigm' of participatory park management or if it remains rooted in protectionism and the prioritisation of biological conservation over local livelihoods. The research presented here offers insight into how effective the FJNP-CC has been in engaging local communities in park management while protecting the park's unique and ecologically sensitive values.

PARK AND PROTECTED AREAS MANAGEMENT

In parks and protected areas throughout the world, a shift from 'fortress conservation' to participatory approaches in park management has long been occurring. This transition can be witnessed in countries throughout Central and South America, where government agencies have created participatory institutions to engage communities in parks and protected areas management (Ferreira & Freire, 2009). Some of the more common approaches include supervisory committees, co-management and consultative councils (Elberts, 2008). For example, in



Fray Jorge National Park, Chile © David Natcher

Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Ecuador, supervisory councils have been established to facilitate community participation in protected area management (Elberts, 2008). Supervisory councils are used as public forums that allow communities the opportunity to influence park policies and help ensure that the rights and interests of communities are reflected in management decisions. In Colombia, the co-management of parks and protected areas has been successful in reducing conflict between communities and park managers and has facilitated grassroots participation in the deliberation of park policies (De Pourcq et al., 2015). In Brazil and Mexico, consultative councils are commonly used to bring local politicians, non-governmental organisations and communities together in a more collaborative approach to park management (Ferreira & Freire, 2009; Trimble et al., 2014; Catalan, 2015; Bockstael et al., 2016).

While communities have become increasingly insistent about their rightful place in park management and are demanding a greater say in the decisions that affect them, it has often been government agencies that set the terms, conditions and mandates for collaboration. While providing financial and various forms of technical support to communities (Elberts, 2008; Ferreira & Freire, 2009; Catalan, 2015), this top-down approach has been criticised for coopting the 'participation' of communities without relinquishing any real control over park management (Bockstael et al., 2016). For example, Trimble and colleagues (2014) found the co-management of national parks in Brazil is often hampered by procedural inequalities caused by hierarchical governance structures that are used intentionally to preclude local participation. Bockstael et al. (2016) reported similar deficiencies in the Paraty region of Brazil, where government officials and park managers continue to enact inequitable influence while purporting the benefits of community engagement. Executed in this way, participatory management is used by governments to manipulate the very communities they purport to assist, either by co-opting possible dissent, disenfranchising local representation, or downloading responsibilities to communities without providing the necessary resources (Bockstael et al., 2016; Guyot, 2011; Thorkildsen, 2016).

In their defence, governments sometimes claim that communities lack the capacity to engage in management (Trimble et al., 2014). Lacking the necessary human and financial resources, communities must rely on the capacities of government, who by necessity must retain management responsibility. This view has been challenged on grounds that governments too often equate capacity with formal education, income

and socio-economic status (Alonso-Yanez et al., 2016), and by these standards, the contributions of communities are rendered inconsequential to the challenges park managers face.

This is not to suggest that successful forms of collaborative park management do not exist. Rather, numerous examples have been reported that show the positive outcomes that have been achieved through participatory management (e.g. Guyot, 2011; Mason et al., 2012). In these cases, success has often been achieved through a shared commitment to ontological diversity, where social equity is prioritised alongside conservation objectives, and the empowerment of community members is viewed as a positive outcome of collaboration (Guyot, 2011; Catalan, 2015). In many of these cases, communities have gained an equitable space in park management and have used park resources to enhance their own livelihoods (Guyot, 2011) while contributing to the ecological sustainability of park resources (Andrade & Rhodes, 2012). Yet this same literature also acknowledges the fragility of collaborative management and the vulnerabilities that can occur when unforeseen and emergent demands (internal and external) are placed on the ecological values of parks. It is this variability that motivated our analysis of the FJNP-CC.

METHODOLOGY

Research site

Established in 1941, the Fray Jorge National Park (FJNP) is located 390 km north of Santiago in the semi-arid zone of Chile. Covering roughly 100 km², FJNP has a Mediterranean climate and receives an average rainfall of 114 mm per year (Squeo et al., 2016). The FJNP has four distinct ecosystems – semi-arid, forest relics, wetland, coastal zone – which are relatively undisturbed. This assemblage of environments has resulted in FJNP having a high level of ecological diversity. Park managers have identified 440 plant species within the park, of which 226 are endemic to Chile, including 10 endangered and 84 vulnerable species (Squeo et al., 2016). The park is also home to 130 avian, 23 mammal, five reptile and two amphibian species (Kelt et al., 2015). The FJNP has received UNESCO designation as a World Biosphere Reserve (1977) and at the time of this research is seeking RAMSAR designation for the Limari River and associated wetlands that serve as the park's southern boundary.

Within the park there is an interpretive visitor centre, a small picnic site and a 3 km hiking trail, but overnight camping is prohibited. Despite its limited services, FJNP

receives approximately 18,000 visitors per year, 90 per cent of whom are Chileans who visit the park during the summer months of January and February. To manage visitor impacts, the park employs seven full-time and four part-time seasonal rangers who are responsible for supervising the park's single point of entry, staffing the interpretive centre and patrolling the park's 100 km² area.

There are six communities adjacent to the park boundary, four of which are agricultural and two that exploit near-shore fisheries (Figure 1). The collective population is approximately 650 residents, although this number can fluctuate as residents relocate for seasonal employment, most often to mining districts in the Coquimbo, Arica and Atacama regions, or to Ovalle for short-term employment or for young children to attend school (Table 1).

Due to variable access and their general remoteness, these communities have little infrastructure and limited public services (e.g. water, electricity, schools, public transportation). However, the agricultural communities have a moderate advantage. The agricultural communities typically have a community president, an agricultural president and some have a livestock community representative. In addition, they also have

Table 1. Attributes of communities adjacent to park

Community	Population (2016)	Primary livelihood	Area (ha.)
Valdivia de Punilla	153	Agriculture/ herding	1,896
Peral Ojo de Agua	47	Agriculture/ herding	1,459
Buenos Aires	148	Agriculture/ herding	2,112
Lorenzo Peralta	32	Agriculture/ herding	1,399
Caleta El Toro	200	Fishing/ seaweed collection	2.5
Caleta El Sauce	80	Fishing/ seaweed collection	2.5

other organisations that are actively involved in local affairs, such as: a potable water committee, livestock (goat keepers') association, neighbourhood association, subsidised housing association, seniors' association and parents' association. The two fishing communities have a President of the Neighbourhood Association who, along with members of the executive committee, serve as administrators for their respective village. They also have a Seaweed Collectors' Association, a Seaweed Cooperative and a Women's Association that is funded by the parent organisation in Santiago.

The FJNP-CC was established in 2001. The basis for community representation is determined by the community's relative proximity to the park and their historical use of the park area. Each community is responsible for appointing a single representative to the FJNP-CC. Government appointees include representatives from Agriculture and Livestock Services, the Technical Corporation Service, Agricultural Development Institute and Social Investment Fund (FOSIS). Internally, the FJNP-CC appoints a four-member Board of Directors, which includes three community representatives, two of whom serve as President and Vice-President, and a representative from CONAF who serves as Secretary. Board memberships are for two-year terms and are eligible for renewal. Membership of the FJNP-CC is non-salaried but incidental costs associated with participation are covered by CONAF. The FJNP-CC holds quarterly meetings that are open to the public, however only council members are permitted to cast votes. The authority of the Consultative Council is advisory, in that it serves only to "guide and/or advise the actions of CONAF in the planning and management of the



Figure 1. Fray Jorge National Park and adjacent communities

park” (CONAF, 2001). The Consultative Council, through its President, is therefore afforded the opportunity to make management recommendations, but actual decision-making authority rests with the Regional Directorate of CONAF (CONAF, 2001).

Methods

Data collection occurred primarily through semi-directed interviews (N=31) and focus groups (N=4). A purposeful sampling strategy was used to elicit known expertise (i.e. members of the FJNP-CC), followed by a snowball sampling strategy where recruitment was based on the recommendations of others. Interviews were conducted with CONAF regional and district employees (N=7), community members (N=16), and former (N=5) and current (N=3) members of the FJNP-CC. Interviews were conducted with 22 men and 9 women, who were between the ages of 24 and 68. Interviews typically lasted 1-2 hours and were conducted in the participants’ homes or offices. Prior to the interviews, the right to free, prior and informed consent was explained to each participant, as well as assurances regarding confidentiality and anonymity. Signed or verbally recorded consent was obtained before proceeding. Interviews were conducted through a semi-directed format that explored the perceived effectiveness of the FJNP-CC in achieving its three objectives. Semi-directed interviews conferred a significant advantage over a more structured or formal interview style in that they allowed participants the freedom to defer comment, raise other associations or propose alternative topics not anticipated by members of the research team. Interviews were aided by a locally hired interpreter.

In addition to interviews, four focus groups were held. Three of these focus groups were comprised of community members, including one involving only men (N=4), one with only women (N=7), and one involving both men (N=3) and women (N=2). These focus groups were conducted at the Valdivia de Punilla community centre. Focus group participants were recommended by community FJNP-CC representatives and were selected based on their experience, knowledge and general willingness to share their opinions. Focus group discussions followed a similar format as interviews, where informal and semi-directed questions were used to elicit insights on the success and challenges of the FJNP-CC to achieve its objectives. The fourth focus group was conducted with five of the seven FJNP rangers (1 female, 4 male), the format of which was consistent with the others. The interviews and focus group discussions were audio recorded, with transcripts coded and analysed using Nvivo software to identify key

themes and responses to probing questions. Outside of these structured formats, our research also benefited from numerous opportunistic conversations during the two years of research.

Results of this study were presented back to the FJNP-CC during an open-house community meeting that was held in Valdivia de Punilla. In addition to community members and FJNP-CC representatives, regional and national CONAF staff and directors were in attendance. This form of reporting proved beneficial for clarifying initial interpretations, identifying and exploring new insights that emerged, and perhaps most importantly, facilitating constructive dialogue among participants concerning the challenges and opportunities for the collaborative management of the FJNP.

RESULTS

Objective #1: Has the FJNP-CC generated opportunities for community participation with regards to the management, conservation and development of the FJNP?

FJNP-CC meetings are typically held in the community of Valdivia de Punilla. Scheduled quarterly, the meetings are used to keep community members informed about park activities and to be a conduit for information exchange. The FJNP-CC meetings are also used to hold park managers accountable to the communities. Prior to the establishment of the FJNP-CC, there was no mechanism or formal institution for keeping communities informed about park activities, but “now we know what they [park managers] are doing, what they are using money for, and how much money tourists leave here” (Valdivia de Punilla community member).

As valuable as these meetings may have been, they have become increasingly sporadic and are often only scheduled when park managers deem it necessary or when a conflict with one of the communities arises, for example following reports of illegal grazing within the park’s boundary. This has left fewer opportunities for relationship building or for the meaningful engagement of communities in park management. Furthermore, although these meetings were originally intended to be a venue for the exchange of knowledge and a safe space for communities to provide feedback on park activities, these opportunities have become increasingly uncommon. When meetings do occur, communication tends to be unidirectional, where park managers provide updates on the park’s activities and community members are simply the recipients of information or accusation. Community members noted that the opportunities to comment, let alone influence park decisions, are limited, and view the supposed openness

of park managers to community input to be disingenuous.

Park managers suggested that community members are reluctant to express opinions about the park and getting feedback on park initiatives has been challenging, with community members usually saying, “todo es bueno” (everything is good). Park managers attribute the limited input to apathy, coupled with a lack of organisational and technical capacity. To park staff, most community members are indifferent to the activities of the park, while community representatives on the council are believed to lack the background and wherewithal to participate in park management in a meaningful way.

However, the community members who serve on the FJNP-CC have considerable and diverse experience. Each has held numerous leadership positions, including elected presidents of their communities, serving as board members for community associations, and having been employed in the public and private sectors. Additionally, these leaders possess professional experience and backgrounds ranging from business owners, government employees and even a retired park ranger. Although residing in relatively small and isolated communities, community representatives bring a wealth of skills, experiences and qualifications to the FJNP-CC. For this reason, community representatives object to the suggestion that they lack the necessary skills or capacity to participate. To the contrary, community representatives accuse park managers of using such characterisations to justify their dismissiveness and exclusion of local input in decision-making.

Accusations of capacity deficit were also levied against park managers and staff. Although community members acknowledged the formidable task of trying to balance ecological protection with local and societal uses of the park, some community members were nonetheless critical that ecological protectionism and park enforcement have subordinated the equally important need for relationship building and conflict resolution. Community members said that most often they are made to feel peripheral to the management of the park, and in many instances treated as threats to the sustainability of park resources. Park managers and staff did not dispute this charge, but rather justified their prioritisation of ecological protection to the growing societal demands placed on the park's resources – whether in the form of tourism or local extraction – that by necessity require protection. The demands placed on park managers, compounded by



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limited human and financial resources, require the efficient allocation of time and resources. For this reason, park managers acknowledged that the protection of the park's most at risk ecological values has been prioritised over the important but less pressing need for relationship building with communities.

Objective #2: Has the FJNP-CC improved the abilities and opportunities for communities to protect their ways of living and be acknowledged and valued by society?

Within the park's visitor centre, there is no representation of the culture or history of the local residents. Rather, only the 'natural' (non-human) features of the park are highlighted. Yet the land within FJNP had originally been used for cultivation and grazing. These uses include accessing water, pasture, wildlife and seaweed. The park also contains the northernmost remaining tract of Valdivia temperate forests; timber that was originally harvested by communities for housing, fence posts and fuelwood. When FJNP was gazetted, access to resources within the park was restricted and strictly enforced. Today, the communities adjacent to the FJNP continue to derive much of their livelihoods from either agriculture or fishing, but now must do so in more marginal areas outside the park boundary.

Park related employment is also limited. FJNP provides seasonal employment for four community members who work as rangers from January to March. The remaining seven full-time staff are employees of CONAF who typically rotate through the national park system. Service opportunities outside of the park are equally limiting. There are no overnight accommodation or camping facilities, and food service is limited to an occasional roadside kiosk that sells snacks and drinks. One of the community members who was interviewed did secure a permit to operate a small restaurant but found it difficult to attract customers outside the peak tourist season (January or February). She explained:

“...those [tourists] who go to the park pass through the communities. But since there is nothing much to do, no swimming pool, they just go back home.”

This same informant suggested that if CONAF was willing to assist community entrepreneurs there would be an opportunity to develop tourism-based businesses.

“There are about 15,000 people going through the park and the communities are not doing anything to take advantage of that market.”

At the urging of the FJNP-CC, CONAF did agree to re-route the park's access road from lands that passed through private ranches to an area in closer proximity to the communities. The FJNP-CC requested this change recognising the economic potential that could be gained from tourism and other spillover developments. While the economic benefits have been marginal to date, and tend to be seasonally derived, the park visitors that do pass through the communities do on occasion stop for local services when available. This economic potential has led some community members to consider future business investments:

“...we have the chance to dream about businesses to make money, you know, because before there was no road, we did not even dream about having a kiosk or some small business.”

Community members did, however, acknowledge that it will be difficult to attract tourists until more efficient services can be provided.

“The problem is that if the people with money come here now, they find that we don't have potable water, or a place to stay. So if they came here, they don't have a place to stay.”

With few employment opportunities in or outside the park, coupled with their exclusion from the park's natural resources, many community members expressed concern that their ways of life were at risk. Many community members fear that if conditions do not change, and income earning opportunities fail to be

developed, an outmigration of youth will occur. In fact, some community members feel this is the actual intention of CONAF, in that if community members ultimately leave and relocate to more populated regional centres, there will be less pressure placed on the park's ecological resources. Others had a less cynical view of CONAF's motivations, believing they have in fact made sincere efforts to support the economic development of communities. However, their motivations for doing so were similarly exclusionary in that if economic opportunities can be created for communities outside the park boundaries, there will be less demand placed on the park's natural resources, for instance through grazing or the collection of plants, fuelwood or seaweed. In the end, community members voiced frustration that their historical uses of the park area have been criminalised while receiving little to no assistance in developing and maintaining alternative livelihoods. Having no direct or personal experience of accessing resources of the park, the youth of the communities do not necessarily share the same connection to 'place' as their parents and grandparents do. Many youth now experience the park as do tourists – short walks in a peaceful setting. Older community members seem to accept this as an inevitable change but recognise that if they hope to keep the younger generation from leaving, new economic opportunities will need to be found that do not involve the extraction of park resources.

Objective #3: Has the FJNP-CC strengthened the areas of development in communities and helped to promote strategic alliances between communities and private and public institutions?

In the context of making strategic alliances, nearly all interviewees said that participating in the FJNP-CC has benefitted their respective community. Prior to the formation of the FJNP-CC, the communities lacked the most basic of services, as one CONAF representative explained:

“We found a very, very poor people. They didn't have electricity, they didn't have potable water, bathrooms, no basic services. Now that is starting to change.”

The community leaders attributed the improvement in the provision of basic services to the FJNP-CC. For example, one community leader noted that:

“CONAF was involved in the formation of the Potable Water Committee. CONAF suggested the idea at the Consultative Council. CONAF then connected the communities to the General Directorate of Water here [Ovalle] so that they could start the committee to get potable water.”

The FJNP-CC was also given credit for facilitating community access to representatives in other

government departments that prior to the formation of the Council were inaccessible. As one community representative explained:

“...it is a good opportunity because we meet with the people who have the power and people with authority. So they come here and we can present our problems to the authorities and get the response we need.”

In this way, the FJNP-CC serves as an important bridging organisation that is used by communities to gain access to other institutions and funding opportunities. This includes gaining access to other government agencies responsible for non-park related activities, for instance access to potable water, connectivity to the electrical grid and road maintenance. In the absence of the FJNP-CC, community leaders would have to travel roughly 30 km to Ovalle in the hope of meeting with government officials. Given that only one of the four agricultural communities has regular public transport, which runs only three days per week, transport is problematic and requires time and financial resources that often need to be allocated elsewhere. For this reason, many community members viewed the FJNP-CC in a positive light. A CONAF employee similarly explained that “In the end the Consultative Council is like a bridge between the communities and the authorities.”

Yet not all community members shared this positive outlook. Notwithstanding the bridging opportunities the FJNP-CC affords, some community leaders expressed frustration that in the absence of a genuine relationship with CONAF, most activities are superficial in terms of park management and are more often only supported when they can be used in promotional materials or during election campaigns. According to one community leader, FJNP-CC only supports activities that are visible to tourists and can be seen from the park entrance. They argue that the more remote communities that are not readily visible to the public are often neglected, and the needs of their residents are rarely considered.

“There have been no benefits to the communities for the past two years. We don’t have agreement or disagreement [with CONAF], because there is no relationship at all. We feel ignored because we are hidden off the [park] road. And that’s why I want to go to this meeting to increase the participation of my community in the Consultative Council.”

DISCUSSION

Many of the FJNP-CC representatives spoken to during this research offered positive examples of the changes that have occurred in park management over the past 20 years. Some described the relationships that have

evolved, which has been made possible from a shared commitment to the conservation of the FJNP. Others noted a shared responsibility for the park and a sense of ownership in the collaborative process that would not have occurred in the absence of the FJNP-CC. However, personal experiences are subjective in that people recall events from their own cultural and political vantage points. Examples of the past that depict cooperation were not necessarily shared by all, but they do suggest a vision of what they would like to achieve and what they would like others to see.

During our interviews the issue of capacity, and the lack thereof, was often raised. For many government representatives the capacity of community representatives was considered lacking, with limited technical, financial or organisational skills available. Government representatives suggested that community members’ lack of capacity was demonstrated by their perceived apathy towards park management and a disinterest in engaging in decision making. For this reason, communication was admittedly unidirectional, flowing from park managers to community members with little in return. Aware of these perceptions, community members explained that park managers use ‘capacity’ as a way to justify the exclusion of community members from management decisions. By advancing the notion that communities lack capacity and are ill-equipped to assume meaningful roles in park management, park managers are unencumbered to set park policies in the absence of local input or influence. Some community members acknowledged that apathy does exist among some but note that it results from 20 years of having their concerns dismissed and their recommendations rejected. This is particularly the case when discussions arise over access to park resources (e.g. fodder, fuelwood, algae).

Whereas CONAF and park managers have proven reluctant to engage in any discussions about community access to the park, they have been supportive of economic development opportunities outside the park boundaries. This support is reflected in the rerouting of the park’s access road that has made local businesses visible to tourists and has inspired entrepreneurial interest. CONAF has also helped facilitate community access to other government agencies where communities can leverage other financial and capital development resources. As welcome as this support is, many community members see this type of aid as strategic and believe it is used to lessen the human impacts on the park, regardless of the risk posed to community livelihoods. That is, by creating more economic opportunities outside the park, communities will be less dependent on, and therefore disinclined to

exploit, park resources. For these reasons, community members accuse park managers of clinging to practices emblematic of fortress conservation where the protection of ecological values takes precedence over the needs and historical ties of park-adjacent communities. Yet this criticism is readily accepted by park managers who unapologetically feel their principal responsibility is to protect the integrity of the park's ecological values, even if that protection comes at the expense of community interests. For this reason, the transition from fortress to participatory management of the FJNP has yet to be achieved, with park managers clinging to the notion that ecological values are best protected by the exclusion of people.

When CONAF set out to establish Consultative Councils for national parks and protected areas, they undoubtedly knew the challenges that would be involved, particularly in settings where historical interactions between communities and government institutions are marred by distrust. In our study of the FJNP-CC, all participants acknowledged the challenges in collaborative management. Community members recognised the importance of protecting the critical species and unique habitats found within the park. Park managers also acknowledged the historical connection that communities have with the park area and the need for community members to generate an adequate livelihood from the park and its resources. Yet finding a balance between these needs is challenging and all conceded that probable tensions have and will continue to arise. However, community members and park managers sincerely believe that despite its fragility, the FJNP-CC represents the best opportunity to manage, if not reconcile, these competing interests in an area that is valued by all.

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Compliance with ethics standards

This research (Ethics Number: 17–253) was reviewed by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) and is in full compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS): Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS, 2018). Ethical requirements for informed consent in research are consistent with Article 9.1 of the TCPS for protecting the welfare of communities. This research was guided by a Research Memorandum of Understanding signed between CONAF and the University of Saskatchewan, which defined the terms and conditions for the ethical conduct of research and the dissemination of results.

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RESUMEN

En 2001, el Gobierno chileno creó los Consejos Consultivos como parte de su estrategia de gestión de los parques nacionales. Los Consejos Consultivos se diseñaron con tres objetivos: 1) generar espacios de participación ciudadana en torno a la gestión, conservación y desarrollo tanto de los parques nacionales como de las comunidades aledañas; 2) mejorar las capacidades y oportunidades de las comunidades aledañas para proteger sus formas de vida y que sean reconocidas y valoradas por la sociedad; y 3) fortalecer áreas de desarrollo de las comunidades y promover alianzas estratégicas entre éstas y las instituciones públicas y privadas. Nos propusimos examinar si el Consejo Consultivo-Parque Nacional Fray Jorge (CC-PNFJ) ha logrado estos tres objetivos. Nuestros resultados indicaron que el CC-PNFJ no ha facilitado la participación de la comunidad en la gestión del parque (objetivo 1) y ha hecho poco por mejorar las capacidades y oportunidades de las comunidades adyacentes para proteger sus formas de vida (objetivo 2). Sin embargo, el CC-PNFJ ha demostrado ser eficaz a la hora de facilitar el acceso de la comunidad a las instituciones públicas y privadas (objetivo 3). A pesar de haber alcanzado sólo uno de sus tres objetivos, los miembros de la comunidad y los gestores del parque aun consideran que el CC-PNFJ es la mejor forma de gestionar, si no reconciliar, los intereses contrapuestos en el parque.

RÉSUMÉ

En 2001, le gouvernement chilien a mis en place des conseils consultatifs dans le cadre de sa stratégie de gestion des parcs nationaux. Ces conseils consultatifs ont été conçus avec trois objectifs : 1) créer des opportunités de participation citoyenne en ce qui concerne la gestion, la conservation et le développement des parcs nationaux et des communautés environnantes ; 2) améliorer les capacités et les opportunités des communautés adjacentes à protéger leurs modes de vie et à être reconnues et appréciées par la société et ; 3) renforcer les domaines de développement dans les communautés et aider à promouvoir des alliances stratégiques entre les communautés et les institutions privées et publiques. Nous avons cherché à déterminer si le Conseil consultatif du Parc national de Fray Jorge (PCFJ -CC) a atteint ces trois objectifs. Nos résultats indiquent que le PCFJ-CC n'a pas réussi à faciliter la participation des communautés à la gestion du parc (objectif 1) et qu'il n'a pas réussi à améliorer les capacités et les possibilités des communautés adjacentes à protéger leurs modes de vie (objectif 2). Cependant, le PCPNF-CC s'est avéré efficace pour faciliter l'accès des communautés aux institutions privées et publiques (objectif 3). Bien qu'il n'ait atteint qu'un seul des trois objectifs, le PCFJ-CC est toujours considéré par les membres de la communauté et les gestionnaires du parc comme la meilleure occasion de gérer, voire de concilier, les intérêts concurrents dans le parc.