

Unravelling reasons for the non-establishment of protected areas:
Justification regimes and principles of worth in a Swiss national park project

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Abstract

This article engages with pragmatic sociology to understand an environmental dispute and its underlying moral issues in a direct-democratic and bottom-up setting. The non-establishment of a planned national park in the Swiss Alps serves as a case study to analyse principles of worth presented in national park negotiations. We point to the complex nature of conservation negotiations and argue that loosely defined ideas of the common good can lead to additional difficulties for a bottom-up project. Moreover, we open up new ground for discussion concerning the interplay of nature conservation and direct democracy.

Keywords

Protected areas; national park negotiations; orders of worth; pragmatic sociology; Switzerland

Introduction

Since the founding of Yellowstone National Park in 1872, the idea of confining ‘nature’ to a ‘park’ has been transferred to a diverse range of ecological and socio-political settings (Gissibl et al., 2012). Protected areas are sites of social production and interaction, and the development and planning of these areas often involve clashes between different actors (West et al., 2006). Thus, protected areas pose a rich setting in which to investigate both human-environment relations and social and political negotiations (Brockington and Wilkie, 2015; Holmes and Cavanagh, 2016; Palomo et al., 2014; West et al., 2006). Whilst protected areas are simultaneously both inherently political and inherently moral, the politicised moral geographies vital to protected area debates have only played a minor role in social research (see Bryant, 2000; Bryant and Jarosz, 2004; Neumann, 2004; Proctor, 2001). This paper applies Boltanski and Thévenot’s (1991) pragmatic sociology to explore the moral issues underlying the negotiation and establishment of protected areas. Our empirical case study involves the planned establishment of a national park in Switzerland. The park project, *Parc Adula*, was based on a direct-democratic, bottom-up process and was abandoned after the negative outcome of a decisive popular vote in 17 municipalities in late 2016.

Protected areas in the Alpine regions of central Europe are often regarded as opportunities for economic regional development. Topics such as the possible positive influence of eco-tourism or labels for the regional development of rural areas form the main body of current central European literature on protected areas (Hammer and Siegrist, 2008; Mayer et al., 2010; Mose, 2007; Müller-Jentsch, 2017; Siegrist and Stremlow, 2009; Weber, 2013). Schenk et al. (2007) outline financial considerations as one of the major factors influencing the acceptance of nature conservation measures in Switzerland besides participation and communication strategies. Financialisation is one of the core traits of neoliberal conservation, a term which refers to ‘a complex and multifaceted trend characterized largely by the rise of practices and

discourses of financialisation, marketization, privatization, commodification, and decentralisation within conservation governance' (Holmes and Cavanagh, 2016: 199). Economic surplus and regional development are also the main forces driving the politics of Swiss parks (BAFU 2010). Nonetheless, such strategies have been strongly criticised in scientific literature, which cites rising conflicts and the negative social impacts of neoliberal conservation with a geographical emphasis on the Global South (see Brockington and Duffy, 2010; Holmes and Cavanagh, 2016; Igoe and Brockington, 2007). In the Parc Adula case, the park proponents relied strongly on economic arguments about regional development and economic surplus. During the weeks preceding the referendum, opposition against the park project increased sharply. Anti-park groups were formed to oppose pro-park associations, fostering vivid discussions and igniting strong disputes, which were often conducted in the public sphere. Opposition to nature conservation measures has been extensively discussed in literature. The focus has been on local opposition and its oppression in the Global South (Brockington, 2004; Neuman, 2004; West et al., 2006; Palomo et al., 2014), the body of scientific literature on resistance against protected areas in central Europe is small, particularly when considering bottom-up settings. Mose and Mayer (2017) reflect upon ongoing land-use conflicts challenging alpine national parks in terms of large-scale touristic development versus nature conservation, which are based on conflictive perceptions and valuations of alpine areas. In the early 2000s, Stoll-Kleemann (2001a; 2001b) addressed opposition to the designation of protected areas in Germany. She concluded that opposition towards protected areas is a 'function of social identity, stereotyped images, and how particular social groups are regarded and approached' (Stoll-Kleemann, 2001a: 13). In the late 1980s, a Swedish national park project near Kiruna was shelved indefinitely due to local resistance. Although not based on direct democracy, some parallels can be drawn between the Swedish case and Parc Adula, since a clash of interests was evident, especially between

authorities and locals (Sandell, 2005). The principle of local support as a premise for the success of protected areas still arises in current studies, although several authors, such as Brockington (2004) and Holmes (2013) challenge this notion by contrasting the roles and perceptions of authorities with the agency of local people.

This paper analyses perceptions, opinions, and conceptions of worth of policy makers, planners, and locals with various backgrounds and interests in the Parc Adula case. To understand and identify key factors in the non-establishment of the national park, we scrutinise the debates preceding the referendum. The pragmatic sociology of Boltanski and Thévenot (1991) helps to analyse these debates by recognising the capacity of actors to issue justified critique. By focusing on situations of conflict and on justifications issued in such situations, we grasp underlying values – or, to adopt Boltanski and Thévenot's (2006) phrasing, 'principles of worth'. We argue that the compromising of different justifications and principles of worth is used, strategically but also sometimes unconsciously, to strengthen personal claims in a public debate and avoid conflict. This can lead to a 'discursive blur' (see Büscher, 2008; Büscher and Dressler, 2007; Igoe and Brockington, 2007) within a call for consensus arising from the usage of 'nice sounding, yet often empty words' (Büscher, 2008: 230). In conjunction with mistrust within a public discussion, this results in an obstructive setting for the establishment of protected areas.

In the sections that follow, we introduce Boltanski and Thévenot's pragmatic sociology as well as our methodology before presenting and discussing the results, a range of compromises and conflicts. In our conclusion, we consider the role of direct democracy and the consequences of too many frames of reference in a conservation project.

Pragmatic Sociology and environmental disputes

To understand the negotiations surrounding the Parc Adula project, we analyse everyday discussions and disputes. We argue that pragmatic sociology is a powerful approach for that

purpose, since it does not only consider critique formulated by scientists, ‘but also by ordinary actors, whose reflexive and moral capacities permit them to participate in everyday disputes’ (Susen, 2014: 52). Hence, this framework understands people as capable of purposive action and as being ‘equipped with critical, moral, and judgemental capacities’ (Lemieux, 2014: 154). Therefore, we follow the understandings of pragmatic sociology to unravel people’s opinions on Parc Adula, attached critiques and justifications thereof, and to grasp underlying principles of worth.

Pragmatic sociology found its clearest statement in its landmark publication, *On Justification* by Boltanski and Thévenot (1991; 2006). The primary aim of the text is to build a framework with which to analyse various constructions of an ideal, common ‘world’ to which people refer to in everyday, non-violent, disputes. Such disputes, or ‘critical situations’, subject the persons involved to an imperative of justification. In these critical situations, justifications are necessary for an argument or evaluation and include a reference to some kind of general interest or common good (Thévenot et al., 2000). Any form of coordination among individual action plans within a critical situation therefore requires a mutual understanding of values, in Boltanski’s language ‘worth’, that are to regulate the legitimate expectations of the participants (Honneth, 2010: 378). In this context, people refer to ‘common worlds’ as ideal points of reference (Bogusz, 2010). Each common world constitutes an order of worth that offers a distinct basis for justification and involves a specific mode of evaluating what is good for common humanity (Thévenot et al., 2000; Lussault and Stock, 2010). Regarding terminology, Boltanski (2012) construes the term ‘worth’ as being oriented towards justice, and it does always presuppose a reference to a justifiable order – a common world. ‘Values’, on the other hand, are not necessarily oriented towards justice, as there are also aesthetic values, tastes, opinions, and so on (Boltanski, 2012: 47). Thus, we will use the former term to elaborate on the plurality of the common worlds.

Boltanski and Thévenot's (1991) original justification model comprises six worlds, but the orders of worth as conceptual constructions are not limited to these six. This is shown by Boltanski and Chiapello's (2005) work on a 'new spirit of capitalism', which introduces a project-oriented world organised in networks. Furthermore, and especially relevant for environmental disputes, Lafaye and Thévenot (1993) discuss the possible emergence of an ecologically focused green world. In each world, actors follow a respective higher common principle and the worthiness of people (and things) is evaluated differently based on this principle (Table 1).

Boltanski and Thévenot (2006: 215) emphasise that one of the chief guiding threads of their model stems from 'the observation that human beings ... can manifest themselves in different worlds', meaning that social actors do not have a one-dimensional connection to a certain world but can appeal to several worlds to advance their beliefs, interests or arguments by choosing adequate justifications (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006; Giulianotti and Langseth, 2016). Thus, acting human beings have to interpret the respective situations, in which they find themselves immersed, with a view to the (in-) adequacy of justifications (Susen, 2014).

Each world is revealed when situations of discord or agreement occur. In these situations, the interaction of different worlds produces diverse structures of conflict, compromise, and collaboration (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006; Giulianotti and Langseth, 2016). Furthermore, Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) examine how each world pursues different criticisms of and compromises with the other worlds, which will also be further discussed in this paper.

Research conducted by Lafaye and Thévenot (1993) and Thévenot et al. (2000) emphasises how environmental conflicts in particular have proved to be among the most interesting settings for the application of pragmatic sociology. Blok (2013: 492) argues that 'pragmatic sociology provides important insights into the bounded multiplicity of nature's worth in political modernity'. By accounting for this multiplicity and the plurality of principles of

worth in everyday disputes, pragmatic sociology helps to clarify park negotiations with a focus on underlying moral issues. Furthermore, it allows to distinguish how people actively engage with questions of the common good (see Centemeri, 2015).

We therefore argue that pragmatic sociology can make a significant contribution to protected area research. The orders of worth provide a powerful tool to examine types of justifications, and struggles over the legitimisation of these justifications that are expressed in environmental disputes.

Methods

Study Area

This research involves a case study of the Parc Adula national park project. Parc Adula was a national park candidate in Switzerland, planned to be established between 2001 and 2016. Following the negative outcome of a decisive popular vote on municipality level in late 2016, the project was shelved indefinitely.

The national park project was one of the first in accord with the Swiss federal ordinance on parks of national importance (ParkO), which came into effect in 2007. The ParkO states that a park of national importance, such as a national park, must be based on a local or regional bottom-up initiative. The establishment of such a park has to be supported by direct democracy and include a participatory process for local residents (Pichler-Koban and Jungmeier, 2015; Swiss Confederation, 2007). Parc Adula was intended to become a national park of the new generation, meaning that nature conservation would be brought together with regional development (Quarenghi, 2015). The term ‘new generation’ is derived from the ParkO and distinguishes new park initiatives from the only existing national park in Switzerland, the Swiss National Park. The main ideas fostering the establishment of the Swiss National Park in 1914 were pure conservation and scientific research. In contrast, the concept

of the new generation of parks aims for sustainable economic, social, and ecological development (Kupper, 2016; Pichler-Koban and Jungmeier, 2015).

The proposed Parc Adula covered 1230 km² spanning the border between the cantons of Grisons and Ticino, in the Alpine area of south-eastern Switzerland (Figure 1). Approximately 14,000 people live in the 17 municipalities in the park area, and they speak three different languages: German, Italian, and Rumantsch, also called Rhaeto-Romanic (Pichler-Koban and Jungmeier, 2015). A preliminary survey conducted in 2013 showed that opinions concerning a possible national park varied greatly over the planned park area. The most negative attitudes were observed in the northern part, the Surselva (WSL, 2014). Consequently, a focus was laid on this area during field research.

On 27 November 2016, the approximately 12,500 voters living in the area voted in a referendum on the park's establishment. Voter participation was approximately 60 per cent, which is quite high in a Swiss context; mean nationwide voter participation is about 46 per cent (BFS, 2017). Figure 1 depicts a map showing the proposed boundaries, the municipalities affected, and the referendum results. The voters were asked whether their municipality should be part of a future Parc Adula or not. Hence, the votes were counted for each municipality and were not aggregated for the entire region. Overall, although 50.8 per cent of voters voted against the establishment of the park, a majority of municipalities said yes to the project. However, since the main part of the park's core zone was to be located in municipalities that voted no, the park project became infeasible. In some municipalities, less than two dozen votes were decisive.

Data collection

Data was collected during several field visits to the Parc Adula region in summer 2015 and in summer and autumn 2016, before the popular vote. Seventeen semi-structured interviews and eleven unstructured interviews were conducted, as well as numerous open conversations.

Different interviewing methods were used to understand actors' different roles, views, opinions, and experiences (Flick, 2005). Semi-structured interviews were an appropriate method for questioning actors belonging to the park planning committee, government, and NGOs. Residents, who were not formally involved in the park planning process, were much more accessible when approached less formally through unstructured interviews and open conversations (Bernard, 2006; Schlehe, 2003). This methodological approach is considered very suitable to understand the opinions, hopes, fears, and justifications of local residents. In addition, extensive participatory and non-participatory observation (Lüders, 2005) was used to gain insight into everyday life and further understanding of ongoing debates in these valleys, resulting in a vast record of detailed ethnographic field notes.

All recorded data was transcribed as verbatim as possible and analysed using Mayring's (2007) qualitative content analysis, an approach in which transcriptions and other text is always understood in its context of communication. The transcriptions were coded and further interpreted using MaxQDA analysis software.

Promoting a park: Compromising principles of worth for regional development

The Parc Adula project needed to find a way to reach an agreement between affected actors with a diverse set of interests to pursue the idea of a common good for this remote and economically weak region. One way to streamline the discussions would have been to constitute and follow one dominant principle of worth. Boltanski and Thévenot (2006), however, describe 'compromises' as a more frequent scenario to reconcile conflicting principles of worth. A compromise aims for the acceptance of a common good that transcends different worlds and thus averts a dispute. Regarding Parc Adula, for instance, some may argue based on the profit in the short term from tourism but still respect nature conservation by providing more eco-friendly activities for tourists. This section elaborates on arguments in

favour of a new national park in Switzerland and analyses the compromises in park negotiations.

The proposal for the Parc Adula national park fostered many discourses based on economic arguments. Added value and regional development were the main lines of argumentation for the park proponents. Therefore, this case study can be said to have analysed a neoliberal conservation project and thus contributes to recent academic debates surrounding neoliberal conservation (see Brockington and Duffy, 2010; Holmes and Cavanagh, 2016; Igoe and Brockington, 2007). The park project was often described as a unique opportunity to bring progress and spark new business ideas in the mountain valleys. A representative of the cantonal government of Grisons referred to financial profit as a quintessential aspect of park negotiations:

Often, the argumentation is ‘you have to protect now in order to conserve the environment’... But I could say now that when you say that, no one wants to cooperate. But, if we say, we make a park, with which you can earn money, then the park and the money we earn will help to establish the protection. Cantonal government representative 2 (220-224).

The economic sphere of the Parc Adula project was versatile, meaning that justifications based on ideas from the market world, such as financial opportunities, economic benefits, and competitiveness on the market, were largely based on compromises. Boltanski and Thévenot (2006: 194) explain that ‘economic actions are based on at least two main forms of coordination, one by the marketplace, the other by an industrial order’. This distinction introduces a novel approach to economic theory that enables the authors to discuss critical relations and problems between market goods and the implementation of efficient technologies (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006). The need for compromise between an order governed by the market, the market world, and an order based on efficiency, the industrial

world, is described as lying at the very heart of a business enterprise (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006: 332).

In the Parc Adula case, this compromise appears in arguments involving regional development that mean increasing the economic efficiency of the region over years or decades. A substantial investment is involved in such a park project, so tests are needed for both long-term efficiency (by the industrial world), and short-term profit (by the market world). The park project management team, government representatives, and other park proponents in particular resorted to market and industrial justifications involving emigration, a drop in the birth rate, and decreasing use of tourist accommodation in some valleys within the proposed park's boundaries and vicinity (AWT, 2017; Müller-Jentsch, 2017; BFS, 2016a; 2016b). Many proponents anticipated that the opening of the national park would trigger an economic upturn accompanied by an increase in employment opportunities. These actors adopted a specific economic vocabulary when justifying opinions, referring to 'added value' or 'turnover'. Such a vocabulary was also adopted by some residents, who were not involved in the park planning process. Local participants at a public information event about Parc Adula were especially interested in facts and figures about the possible added value the park would bring to the region. The interest of a broad group of local residents in the economic benefits of a conservation project supported the park promoters' further arguments, which compromise the market and industrial worlds.

Discussing the compromise between the market and industrial worlds, Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) describe products as the most common points of passage between them. 'Products may be the output of the operation of an efficient production unit, or they may consist in more or less rare market goods, coveted by competing desires' (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006: 333). This description also seems to express the understanding that a protected area can be promoted both as a tourist destination and as the origin of special local

produce or cultural artefacts. The use of protected areas to brand regions as tourist destinations has been widely discussed in European literature on the topic (see Job, 2008; Hammer and Siegrist, 2008; Weber, 2013). It is regarded as a suitable approach to fostering nature-based tourism as a driver of development in rural regions. Furthermore, Hammer and Siegrist (2008) propose the promotion of nature-based tourism as a way of improving the acceptance of protected areas in politics and among local populations.

The tourism sector expressed a strong positive attitude towards the Parc Adula project. Most areas within the planned park perimeter focus on rather small-scale tourism. A representative of a tourism office stressed the opportunity of a partnership with Parc Adula and of financial support for joint tourism projects. Another tourism professional discussed the opportunities with Parc Adula as a destination that would attract certain target groups:

We have a lot of regulars here during winter. But summer is generally very slow. For that, Parc Adula would be perfect. It just matches the nature and culture here as well as our new projects. Plus, it addresses people of 50 and over, which also is the target audience of our offers. Tourism representative 1 (44-48).

Besides tourism, the Parc Adula label was also intended to serve as a certification or quality seal for local produce. Many interviewees in favour of the park referred to labels as an important way of increasing sales figures, especially of local food products, and to spark new ideas and initiatives.

Such labels do have an importance, because they show that a product has a high quality. Our concern is that we can keep the added value here and don't dump our products in bulk. Cantonal government representative 4 (66-69).

From Boltanski and Thévenot's (2006) perspective, at the heart of such marketing and advertising activities lies a compromise between the market world and the world of opinion or fame. The 'national park' label confers an attractive image that speaks for the quality of produce as well as the uniqueness of a tourist destination (Mayer et al., 2010). The importance of culture and heritage for Parc Adula as a tourism region was considered by the park planning committee and its supporters. The park project funded various restoration projects, such as the renovation and repair of dry walls on alpine pastures. The compromise between the market world and the world of fame was therefore extended into the domestic world. 'It is rare for compromises of this sort not to be extended to a third world ... that contributes to stabilizing a product's "brand image" or its reputation' (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006: 323). The park project esteemed the preservation of local traditions and heritage and placed these at heart of the national park's aims. In addition, the park promoters, mainly the park management team, realised over time that having locally well-known and trustworthy people speaking in favour of the park could help with further promotion. This idea led to the founding of the Pro Parc Adula association in late 2014. Having respected locals promoting the park at local events and supporting the project in information dissemination was a central goal of the park management:

...we founded it mid-December. And I have to say, this is what mainly keeps me busy at the moment. Especially updating members so that they can win over new members. This means that they must have a level of knowledge and know the current state of affairs, which is higher than the one we issue to the public otherwise. Parc Adula management team member 2 (84-88).

Trust is a vital aspect in the domestic world (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006), but the strategy of the Parc Adula management to create a bond of trust with the local residents was only partly successful, as is discussed further in this paper.

Another world that also sometimes appeared in compromises with others, although indistinctly, is the proposed new ‘green’ world (Thévenot et al., 2000). In this case, this world was not clearly represented, since other ideas about the worth of the natural landscape, such as heritage, were often more important. Blok (2013) describes the contours of a green world as still lacking theoretical coherence. Nature conservation was regarded as a positive side effect of a national park used chiefly as a regional development tool, but justifications based on a green world were never presented on their own, as can be seen in the quote above of Cantonal government representative 2. To some extent, this was used as a strategy by proponents to address more salient challenges in the valleys than protecting nature and thus to reach a wider audience. Indeed, Thévenot et al. (2000: 242) argue that the emphasis on economics is a keen strategic move to ‘appeal to the sensitivity of politicians to economic arguments’.

Interview respondents referred to worlds in compromise to strengthen their justifications and therefore their stance. Whilst it is a strategic marketing tool to reach a wide audience with different needs and principles of worth, we also reach compromises in everyday situations to forego conflict. Moreover, the goal of a public vote is to avoid or resolve conflict by achieving an agreement and finding a common good that transcends different forms of worth; this is the heart of a compromise (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006). Therefore, compromises are a pivotal element of public negotiations and direct democracy.

Worlds in conflict and the non-establishment of a national park

According to Boltanski and Thévenot (1991, 2006), a dispute like the Parc Adula case can easily develop into a clash over the very nature of the common good. Such a clash typically

involves critiques of the divergent ideas arising from different worlds. ‘Critiques are articulated by operators such as “in fact”, “in reality”, “are only” and so on’ (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006: 224).

A clash of different worlds was at stake in the Parc Adula case, where people used different principles of worth to argue and negotiate. Just as individual worlds can be criticised, a compromise can also serve as the basis for a critique. Moreover, the Parc Adula case showed that critical situations can be highly complex and multi-layered, since critiques can also be based on compromises themselves. One of the main pro-park modes of justification, a compromise between the market and industrial worlds, serves as a clear empirical example, but these same ideas have also been used in anti-park arguments as a critique of fame, civic, or even possible green justifications. Opponents referred to a possible interference of the national park with business opportunities by imposing restrictions or limitations on future long-term development in various economic sectors, resulting in financial loss due to decreasing resources, investments, and competitiveness in the region.

Very strong critiques were also based on domestic principles of worth; many interviewees living in the villages of the Parc Adula area discussed aspects of locality and ties to their community and place as occurring in everyday life. The park promoters brought domestic worth to compromises, for example through restoration projects. However, heritage and origin also formed the basis for strong critiques of the market and industrial justifications of park proponents. In particular, mistrust in ‘outsiders’ was frequently expressed by park opponents. Nevertheless, the notion of an outsider is a diffuse concept, as it can refer, for example, to the government or inhabitants of another valley in the park region. The different understandings of the term outsiders overlap and are re-created in everyday discourses on language differences and different cultural traits within and beyond the proposed park perimeter. Contrary to the understanding of a national park as a bottom-up process, as is

stated in the ParkO, many locals regarded the park project as an idea brought by people from the outside, namely city dwellers or ‘Berne’ (the name of the Swiss capital used as metaphor for the federal government). The following quote, recorded in 2015, expresses mistrust due to the lack of information:

Parc Adula simply doesn’t approach the municipality and does not inform us. ... You just feel like the outside is deciding for us. Local 3 (10-16).

Initiating the Pro Parc Adula association was a response by the park project management to such fears. The power and importance of trust in the success of protected areas has been discussed in relation to the Swiss National Park (Kupper, 2012; Kupper, 2016), as well as other conservation projects (see Marcus, 2016; Stern, 2008; Treffny and Beilin, 2011). The fear of externally imposed decisions on a planned expansion of the Swiss National Park’s boundaries in 2002 resulted in a rejection of the plan by people in the affected municipalities (Kupper, 2012; Pichler-Koban and Jungmeier, 2015). Local scepticism towards central authorities was also one of the main reasons for the failure of a park establishment near Kiruna (Sandell, 2005). Stern (2008) discusses local distrust in park managers as a predictor of active opposition towards neighbouring national parks. Along these lines, Marcus (2016) emphasises the fundamental role of large-scale trust-building in natural resource management and stresses that ‘approaches to promote pro-environmental behaviour will be limited in their efficacy without a preliminary change in the level of trust among individuals and the systems that purport to support them’ (Marcus, 2016: 259). Trust and the perception of outsiders played a crucial role in the Parc Adula case. Often, trust was linked with a person’s origin – sometimes at a very small scale, as can be understood from the following quote:

In the village, families and family names are still important, especially for the older generations. Whether you are a Huber or a Müller or so. They say things like ‘... well, he’s a typical Huber’. Local 2 (41-43).

Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) discuss the types of critiques originating from the domestic world. In the domestic world, personal relationships stand at the centre of the search of what is just. ‘The worth that, in the domestic world, is a function of the position one occupies in chains of personal dependence can only be grasped in a relational sense: worthier than... less worthy than...’ (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006: 164). This is reflected in the hierarchical thinking or grouping of locals within a village system. Mistrust in outsiders is strongly rooted in this world, since outsiders do not belong in an order of traditional hierarchy. Critiques from the domestic world address issues of anonymity in the civic world and world of fame, where associations of strangers (e.g., the park management) may gather public support that is opposed to the ideas of the domestic world. Another critique from the domestic world that invokes mistrust in outsiders is aimed at the industrial world. This critique addresses the ‘lack of professionalism of workers with diplomas’, as opposed to the competence of people with experience that is anchored in the domestic environment, such as traditional customs (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006: 246). While Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) refer to a situation within a company, a general aversion to professionals, such as public officials and scientists supporting the park project was observed in several situations in our case study. Although interviewees did not directly refer to this topic, which was presumably influenced by the interviewer’s background of a non-local scientist, a reinforced mistrust of professionals and their perceived or discussed ineptitude was evident at information meetings and visible in anti-park statements. In a public information event organised by the park opponents shortly before the referendum, various professionals answered questions from the audience. As a government representative explained some legal aspects, many attendees shared their disbelief and mistrust in the speaker. An anti-Parc Adula poster on a village notice board stated that ‘we don’t need any office clerks’, referring to the assumed inefficiency of people working in a desk job.

At this point, we can see that critiques arise in a very multi-layered and complex way. In the examples discussed above, critiques not only originate in the domestic world, but also in the industrial world and addressed to the civic world concerning the inefficiency of administrative procedures. Intertwined with these critiques are justifications and critiques stemming from the inspired world. Whilst inspired justifications are often brought into compromises and emerge within discussions in a rather loosely defined form, they nevertheless play a vital role in the Parc Adula negotiations. Linked in particular to fears about restrictions, inspirational ideas were evident in justifying claims against the park and often appeared in compromises with other worlds.

When we were kids we always spent the summer up there [on the alp]. ...

Today... I still like to go. And when I hike up there, then I also have my own paths, which I take and not the hiking trail. I wouldn't like it when I couldn't use these anymore. Local 5 (12-17).

The notion of self-determination and not having one's decisions made by other people is closely associated with freedom, a crucial principle of worth in the inspired world (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006). Critiques originating from the inspired world aiming at components of the civic world criticise its 'most institutionalized forms, heavily instrumented and detached from persons' (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006: 239). This correlates with claims made by park opponents about the negative aspects of administrative procedure, thus establishing an additional compromise of worlds within this critique. Furthermore, inspired worth is part of critiques against outsiders or persons who issue their opinions publicly. This is entwined with ideas of inauthenticity; being humble is an asset in the inspired world (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006: 238). Such justifications are well-known in Swiss park negotiations. Urban and academic personalities were also viewed critically during the establishment of the Swiss National Park in the early 1900s (Kupper, 2012; Pichler-Koban and Jungmeier, 2015).

All these justifications and critiques are strongly linked to each other and entangled within a main thread of argument about the unknown impact of such a project and the feelings of uncertainty that this evokes. These critical tensions were clearly evident in park negotiations in several municipalities and were too strong to be assuaged by the compromises made by park proponents. This led to the decisive no-vote in several municipalities.

Conclusions

The compromises between the worlds referred to by the proponents of the Parc Adula project did not convince the eligible voters of the 17 municipalities in the park area. Compromises involving market and industrial justifications were used as a strategy to address current issues in the valleys rather than the more abstract topic of nature conservation (see Thévenot et al., 2000). The park's promoters relied on promises of neoliberal conservation as a way to sustain rural communities by ensuring additional income opportunities and long-term economic security (see Igoe and Brockington, 2007). Such arguments have also resulted in higher local acceptance of other national parks in alpine areas, for example in Austria (see Mose, 2007). However, these compromises failed to reach the proponents' goal in the end. Although market and industrial justifications were brought into compromises with other worlds in the Parc Adula case, many opponents felt that essential local principles of worth were not respected in the project. Robinson and Sasu (2013) argue that neoliberal, material factors should not be the sole focus of conservation measurements. Moreover, a broader conception of local and fundamental values, such as responsibility toward future generations, should be incorporated in conservation governance (Robinson and Sasu, 2013: 660). Schenk et al. (2007) emphasise the relevance of considering the divergent perceptions and judgments within a conservation process to achieve acceptance of conservation measures in Switzerland, and this was clearly a goal of the Parc Adula management. However, drawing together advocates from diverse backgrounds and justifying pro-arguments by manifold compromises led to a rhetoric that

seemed hard to translate into reality for many of the local people affected by the proposal. Büscher and Dressler (2007) elaborate on such a ‘layer of discursive blur’, which leads to a substantial gap between discursive and grounded reality. We argue that we achieve a better understanding of this blur and how actors’ justifications interact within negotiations through pragmatic sociology. Conservation issues are very complex, and this complexity is reflected in the multi-layered ways in which worlds, compromises, and critiques surfaced in the Parc Adula debate. Moreover, several ideas of the common good coexist, so the goal was to establish a legitimate compromise that was acceptable for involved and affected people. Popular votes follow a common good in order to establish a compromise, whereby ‘people agree to come to terms, that is, to suspend a clash – a dispute involving more than one world – without settling it through recourse to a test in just one of the worlds’ (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006: 277). Difficulty arises when the idea of a common good is based on an unstable construct of compromises and critiques. Boltanski and Thévenot (2006: 336) state that ‘the presupposition of a common good is required in order to establish a compromise’. But once the involved parties try to move toward clarification, the compromise will not hold up, since the worlds represented in the compromise cannot converge (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006). ‘An attempt to stabilize a compromise by giving it a solid foundation thus tends to have the opposite effect’ (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006: 336). For many residents, it was challenging to relate to the compromised worlds of park actors such as government representatives or the park management team. Moreover, trust issues exacerbated the difficulty of bridging everyday reality and complex and loosely defined principles of worth concerning Parc Adula (see Büscher and Dressler, 2007).

The questions arise whether a national park brings together too many worlds, and thus whether nature conservation measures and regional development should be approached separately and by their respective values to avoid the plethora of compromises that leads to a

discursive blur. We argue that a discursive blur can be a very challenging basis for voters' decision-making. Direct democracy has brought an end to the critical situation by relying on an external principle, the popular vote, which is a justified action leading to acceptance of the plurality of worlds (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006: 235). In the Parc Adula vote, some people dropped the dispute after the referendum without seeking an agreement (see Boltanski and Thévenot, 1999), but for others, the park project sparked new ideas and discussions concerning regional development and nature conservation. Hence, even if we assume that the popular vote was accepted by the whole population, it did not entirely resolve the disputes, nor did it turn the clock back to the situation before park negotiations started.

Pragmatic sociology not only helps to identify and grasp the uncertainties, conflicts, and compromises that people have or make in a conservation project; it also shows that these aspects are part of the deliberation and negotiation of such projects. Nevertheless, we can ask whether protected areas encompass too many worlds in the compromises it demands, and whether direct democracy is not the solution but part of the problem conservation advocates and policy makers face.

It is assumed that a top-down procedure calls for less compromise, but the abolishment of participatory and democratic processes in national park establishment procedures would be a wrong direction for future conservation measures, and especially affecting local communities, disregarding social equity and justice. Instead, proponents of conservation projects should be aware of the negative impacts that a discursive blur can have on their goals. We argue that the emphasis on one common good, which is firmly anchored with residents in the affected areas, will help to untangle conceptions of worth in a conservation or regional development project.

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Tables and Figures

Table 1. A summary of the seven justificatory regimes (Worlds) and the possible green worth (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2005; Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006; Thévenot et al., 2000).

World	Higher common principle	State of worthiness
Inspired	Inspiration	Inexpressible and ethereal. Bizarre, Unusual, Marvelous, Unspeakable, Disturbing, Exciting, Spontaneous, Emotional
Domestic	Generation, Hierarchy, Tradition	Hierarchical superiority. Benevolent, well brought up, Wise, Distinguished, Discreet, Reserved, Trustworthy, Honest, Faithful
Fame/Renown	The reality of public opinion	Fame. Reputed, Recognized, Visible, Success (to have), Distinguish (oneself), Persuasive, Attention getting
Civic	The preeminence of collectives	Rule governed and representative. Unitary, Legal, Official, Authorized, Confirmed
Market	Competition	Desirable. Value (of), Salable, Millionaire, Winner
Industrial	Efficiency	Efficient. Functional, Reliable, Operational
Project-oriented/network	Activity, project initiation, remote links between people	Adaptability, flexibility, polyvalence; sincerity in face-to-face encounters; ability to spread the benefits of social connections
Green	Environmental friendliness	Sustainability, renewability

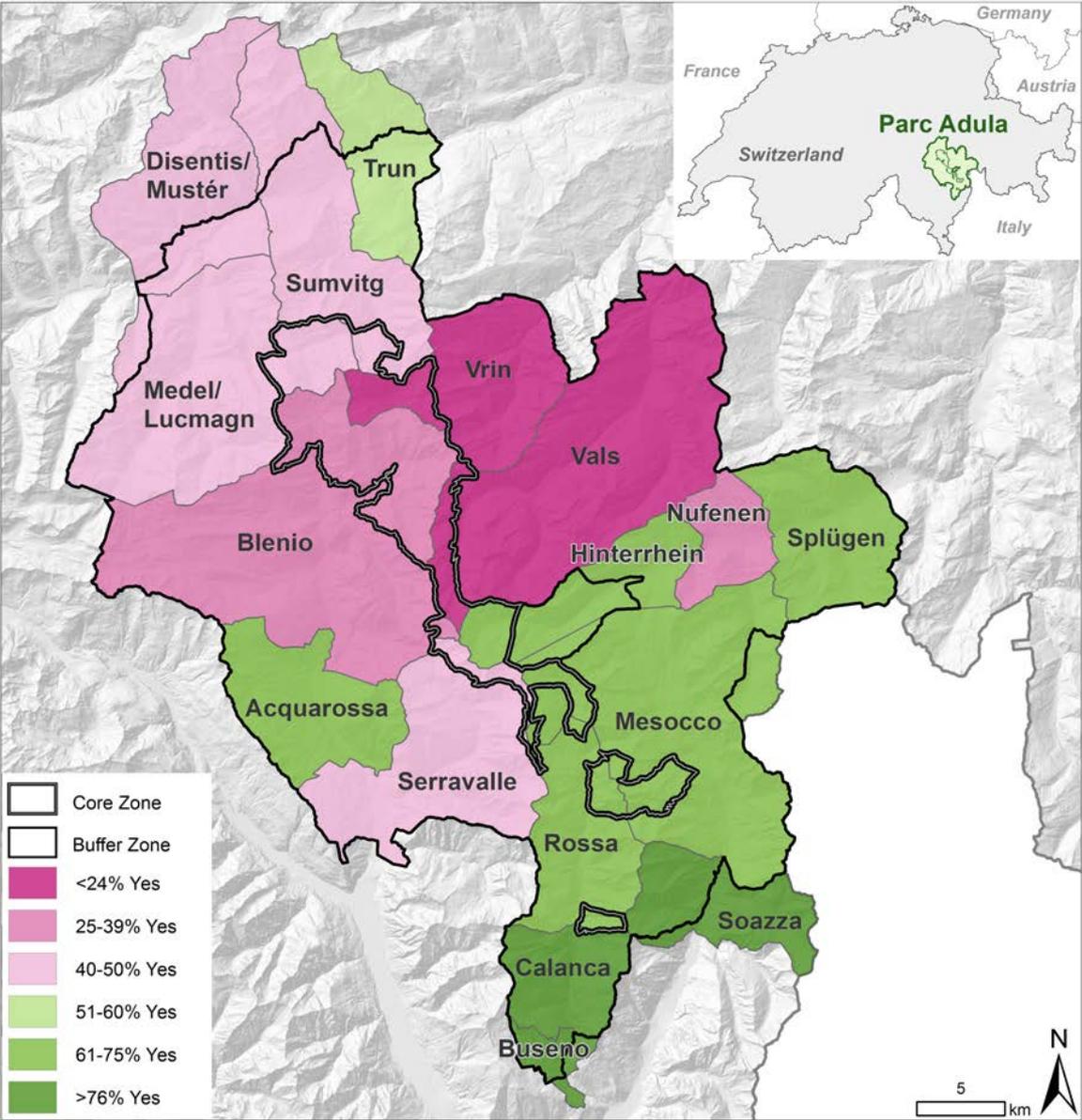


Fig. 1. Results of the popular vote on Parc Adula, 27 November 2016 (Map by author 2017. Referendum data by municipalities. Copyright geodata: Federal Office of Topography, Federal Office of the Environment, Swiss Parks Network).