



The Group and Organisation Future of Conservation Survey Project

Facilitator's Guide

Background

The last few years have seen intense debates within the conservation community about what, why and how to conserve. Two positions have been particularly prominent in these debates – a ‘new conservation’ viewpoint which sees conservation as being for the benefit of people as well as non-human life, and supports working with business to achieve conservation goals, and a ‘traditional conservation’ viewpoint which is focused on protecting nature for its own sake and rejects working with business.

Public debate on these issues has been dominated by a few individuals, whose views tend to fit into these neatly polarised positions. We designed the Future of Conservation Survey to find out what a much broader range of conservationists felt about these same issues, and how these views varied according to the demographic characteristics of conservationists.

Our results show that conservation viewpoints can be distinguished on three dimensions - ‘people-centred conservation’ (relating to the role that people should play in conservation), ‘science-led ecocentrism’ (relating to the role of science and the conservation of species and ecosystems), and ‘conservation through capitalism’ (relating to the role of corporations and market based approaches in conservation). These dimensions can be used to describe the ‘new’ and ‘traditional’ conservation positions, but they can also describe many other viewpoints that are held by conservationists from around the world.

The launch of the Future of Conservation Survey (more information in [Annex 1](#)) in 2017 triggered a series of requests from conservation organisations to be able to use the survey as an internal tool to characterise the range of views within defined groups and organisations. In response to these requests, we have created the Group and Organisation Future of Conservation Survey (GO-FOX).

The GO-FOX tool allows the user to create their own unique version of the Future of Conservation Survey and distribute it to a closed group of respondents they are working with. Analysed survey

results from this group are then made available to the GO-FOX user, who can then use them for the benefit of the group. Examples of how GO-FOX may be used include, but are not limited to:

- Conservation NGOs wishing to generate discussion amongst their staff or members about their individual conservation viewpoints and how these relate to the work of the organisation. This could be done as part of a strategic planning process
- Teachers in conservation courses who wish to use the tool to support learning about diverse perspectives in conservation and self-reflection of students on their own views

This document focuses on the first example, working as a guide for anyone wishing to use GO-FOX to facilitate this process within an organisation or team.

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Facilitation Guide produced by:



The Group and Organisation Future of Conservation Survey Project is a collaboration between:



Facilitator Notes

In an organisational context, there are multiple circumstances where the process of completing and discussing the results of the Future of Conservation Survey is relevant and could be of great value:

- As a team-building exercise
- When developing or reviewing a mission statement and brainstorming organisational values
- When trying to understand differences between groups that may be associated with conflict
- When trying to understand how the views of the group compare to other conservationists from around the world

Approach

In addition to there being multiple purposes for which this process can be useful as an organisation, there are also two different approaches we recommend for facilitating it, depending on context and time available. Table 1 lists different criteria relevant to decide which approach to use.

Table 1 - Criteria for selecting facilitation approach

	Approach 1	Approach 2
<i>Enables group discussion</i>	++	++
<i>Length of session (time)</i>	++	+
<i>Allows anonymity of individual scores</i>	-	++
<i>Requires full attendance in session</i>	++	+
<i>Example of when to use this approach</i>	Team building	Organisational values and mission

Preparation

Once you decide which approach you'll choose, ensure you prepare accordingly, following the guidance in Table 2.

Table 2 - Preparation required for each approach

	Approach 1	Approach 2
<i>Engaging participants pre-workshop</i>	No need to get in touch with participants	Ensure all participants (and others not attending) complete the Future of Conservation Survey, which you should distribute from your GO-FOX account
<i>Slides</i>	Use <i>The Group and Organisation Future of Conservation Survey Project</i> slides and the facilitation slides, but these may optional	Use <i>The Group and Organisation Future of Conservation Survey Project</i> slides, and the facilitation slides, including any results slides for your group that you wish to include (these can be downloaded from your GO-FOX account)
<i>Venue</i>	<p>If not using slides - Ensure there's a large area, clear of desks or tables, where the group can stand and move around. This could be outside. Keep a hardcopy of the facilitation notes</p> <p>If using slides - Indoors, with chairs (tables are optional) laid out in a way where participants can see the projected screen and hear each other clearly</p>	Indoors, with chairs (tables are optional) laid out in a way where participants can see the projected screen and hear each other clearly
<i>Stationery and Equipment</i>	<p>Flipchart stand, paper and markers</p> <p>Blue-tac / masking tape</p> <p>Laptop and projector (but not essential)</p>	<p>Flipchart stand, paper and markers</p> <p>Blue-tac / masking tape</p> <p>Laptop and projector (but not essential)</p>

Approach 1 (90-120min) – Facilitated session first; Survey after

Start the session going straight into the activity, without giving any context to what it is about.

1. Clear a large area of chairs and tables (or go outside, if quiet enough, and possible) and define 4 corners, using chairs, large objects or landmarks (corners of a room, a tree, etc.).
2. Announce to the group that each corner corresponds to one of four profiles, which you will read out loud without revealing any titles or designations, only the definitions.
3. Read each profile whilst standing by or pointing at the corresponding corner, asking participants to move into the corner that resonates the most with how they think (ensure to say that staying in the middle is not allowed):
 - **Corner 1:** *Central to this position is a shift towards viewing conservation as being about protecting nature in order to improve human wellbeing (especially that of the poor), rather than for biodiversity's own sake. You believe that win-win situations in which people benefit from conservation can often be achieved by promoting economic growth and partnering with corporations. [This corresponds to **New Conservation**]*
 - **Corner 2:** *You support the protection of nature for its own sake. This emphasis on nature's intrinsic value typically leads advocates of this stand to be critical of markets and economic growth as tools for conservation. This is because you believe that by embracing markets, we run the risk of 'selling out nature' by neglecting species that may be considered to be of little economic value. What's more, economic growth itself is seen as a major driver of threats to biodiversity. You typically favour protected areas, particularly in ecosystems with relatively low human impacts, as a primary conservation strategy. [This corresponds to **Traditional Conservation**]*
 - **Corner 3:** *You support conservation based on nature's intrinsic value along with a market-based approach. You are less concerned about the role of people as participants and beneficiaries of conservation. Perhaps one example of this approach is EO Wilson's recent book 'Half-Earth', which advocates the setting aside of half of the Earth's surface for nature reserves. Aware that this ambitious target would require a drastic decrease in per capita environmental footprint worldwide, Wilson supports free markets as a means to favour those products which generate the maximum profit for the minimum energy and resource consumption. [This corresponds to **Market Ecocentrism**]*
 - **Corner 4:** *For you, the impacts of conservation on human wellbeing should be at the forefront of the conservation debate. This entails both being critical of negative side-effects that conservation activities might have on people who are economically poor and/or politically marginalised, and also employing conservation initiatives as a means of improving human welfare. However, you*

*tend to be sceptical of the ability of markets and capitalism to deliver benefits for both nature and people. [This corresponds to **Critical Social Science**]*

4. If participants feel there are other corners that resonate with their thinking, allow them to shift towards them, but ensure that no one stands in the middle or takes a neutral stand.
5. Ask participants to look around, and check they are happy with where they are, reading out the profiles as required (you may also now put up the slides with the profile descriptions – slides 3-6).
6. Explain that this exercise is about how each of us perceives conservation. No profile/corner is more or less conservation-minded than the other, and all roughly represent the aspects of conservation individuals tend to value more, according to three variables/axis:
 - a. 'People-centred conservation' - relating to the role that people should play in conservation
 - b. 'Science-led ecocentrism' – relating to the role of science in the conservation of species and ecosystems
 - c. 'Conservation through capitalism' – relating to the role of corporations and market based approaches in conservation)

[This point should be reemphasised several times, as it's often the case that individuals feel some profiles are “anti” conservation, or less favourable]

7. (Slide 7-11) Reveal the designation of each profile and how they are represented through the three axes. [Annex 1](#) also includes a representation of each of these, for the facilitator's reference. These can be drawn on flipchart paper or printed out, if no projector accessible.
8. Ask the group to look around and discuss whether they are surprised with their position or their colleagues' and allow them to comment. Ensure you make a note of how many individuals were in each corner.
9. (Slide 12 & 13) Ask the group to discuss their results and what it means for their group or organisation. You should allow the discussion to flow, using the prompts listed below. [This step can be done in plenary, but you may also split the group into sub-groups, ideally mixing people from different profiles]

Possible discussion questions could be:

- a. How do you think your conservation values influence how you undertake your day to day work?
- b. Are there other conservation values that you think are very important that affect the way you do your work?

- c. Would you expect your colleagues to share your values? Does it matter if they have different values to you?
 - d. Does your colleagues' position affect how you feel about them (professionally)?
 - e. Do the conservation values people hold impact their organisation, or vice-versa? How?
 - f. What would you feel is the ideal mix or proportion of people in each profile for your organisation to function, and be adequately represented as a whole?
 - g. Do you think your organisation portrays one of these values more specifically? Which? What does that mean?
10. Make bullet point notes of key phrases used and general answers given.
11. If time allows, and particularly if this exercise was intended for team-building, deliver the presentation or show the video on *The Group and Organisation Future of Conservation Survey Project*, to give context and further insight into the project. These are available from the *Resources* page on the GO-FOX website
12. (Slide 14) Ask all members of the group to complete the Future of Conservation Survey, to get objective result for the group's conservation values. You should do this using your own version of the survey that you have created using your GO-FOX account. If including the link on the slide, you will need to copy and paste the unique URL for your own version of the survey
- a. This could be done now, as a coffee break, as long as there are enough computers with internet access. You can ask each individual to write down their result on each axis, without sharing it with their colleagues.
 - b. This could be done during a set period of time, before continuing with a facilitated workshop (e.g. could continue the session the day after, or the first half in the morning and the second half in the afternoon). You will need to download the results and run the analysis from your GO-FOX account
 - c. This could be done post-workshop, with a proposed follow-up to discuss the results more accurately. You will need to download the results and run the analysis from your GO-FOX account
13. Compile all the results – in chart form – for the organisation/team from your GO-FOX account, and add that information to Slide 15. This should give a representation of the distribution of everyone in the organisation who took the survey. You may wish to create multiple slides with your results, based on the various figures you can download from your GO-FOX account results page on the website
14. If you have included any additional questions in your version of the survey (e.g. to look at differences between subgroups among your respondents), put these results onto a separate slide. Facilitate a discussion about whether these results show any consistent differences between subgroups, and what this might mean for your group or organisation.

Approach 2 (60min) – Survey first; facilitated session after

1. Start this process at least a week before the workshop
 - a. Ask all members of the organisation/team part-taking in the process to complete the Future of Conservation Survey using the URL generated from your GO-FOX account.
 - b. Download and analyse their results using your GO-FOX account and load all results for the organisation/team onto Slide 15 (you might need several slides to include all the results you wish to share)
2. To open the workshop, deliver the presentation or show the video on *The Group and Organisation Future of Conservation Survey Project*, to give context and further insight into the project. These are available from the *Resources* page on the GO-FOX website
3. Show the group the diagram with the overall results for their organisation/team
4. Ask the group how they feel about the results, and facilitate a guided discussion, using the following prompts:
 - a. Are these the results you expected for this organisation/team?
 - b. How do you think your conservation values influence how you undertake your day to day work?
 - c. Are there other conservation values that you think are very important that affect the way you do your work?
 - d. Would you expect your colleagues to share your values? Does it matter if they have different values to you?
 - e. Does your colleagues' position affect how you feel about them (professionally)?
 - f. Do the conservation values people hold impact their organisation, or vice-versa? How?
 - g. What would you feel is the ideal mix or proportion of people in each profile for your organisation to function, and be adequately represented as a whole?
 - h. Do you think your organisation portrays one of these values more specifically? Which? What does that mean?
5. Make notes of key phrases used and general answers given in bullet-points

GO-FOX for Organisational Values and Mission

If you are doing this exercise in the context of strategic planning you should still follow the steps in either Approach 1 or 2, taking into account the criteria described in Table 1 - Criteria for selecting facilitation approach.

A good strategic planning process should always include time to review (or develop, if it's the first time) the organisation's mission and values. To better understand how this exercise can be useful for these processes, it's important to agree on definitions.

The **mission** statement operationalises the NGO's **vision**, and is the basis upon which the organisation will set its objectives. It articulates who the NGO is, what it does, what it stands for and why it does its work. In essence – the purpose of the organisation and its contribution to the vision.

For some organisations, the mission also describes the core values and principles of an organisation. Most organisations however state their values separately. The **values** guide the perspective of the organisation as well as its actions. Writing down a set of commonly-held values can help an organisation define its culture and beliefs.

More in-depth information about an organisation's values and mission can be found in [Annex 2](#).

1. The questions listed above for the facilitated discussion ([Approach 1](#), Step 9; [Approach 2](#), Step 4) are crucial for this exercise, so ensure you go through them with the group in plenary, or initially in sub-groups, followed by plenary discussion:
 - a. Are these the results you expected for this organisation/team?
 - b. How do you think your conservation values influence how you undertake your day to day work?
 - c. Are there other conservation values that you think are very important that affect the way you do your work?
 - d. Would you expect your colleagues to share your values? Does it matter if they have different values to you?
 - e. Does your colleagues' position affect how you feel about them (professionally)?
 - f. Do the conservation values people hold impact their organisation, or vice-versa? How?
 - g. What would you feel is the ideal mix or proportion of people in each profile for your organisation to function, and be adequately represented as a whole?
 - h. Do you think your organisation portrays one of these values more specifically? Which? What does that mean?

2. Make notes of key phrases used and general answers given in bullet-points. These will hopefully generate ideas that can inform the discussion about values and mission and help in articulating these.
3. Using slides 18 & 19, explain to the group what **organisational values** are:
 - The shared values that underpin the way you work, behave and your relationships with others
 - Provide a basis for making decisions
 - Set of principles (do's and don'ts) for:
 - how the organisation functions
 - how staff behave when they approach their work
 - who you will work with (partners etc.)
4. (Slide 20) Split the group into sub-groups of no more than 4-5 people. Ask them to brainstorm what they consider the values for the organisation should be, based on the previous discussion about individual and collective conservation values, and considering the ethos and operations of the organisation. These could be full sentences or phrases that will represent the organisation, and be understood and owned by everyone in the organisation.
5. Gather the sub-groups and ask each one to present their set of values. As one big group, facilitate a discussion with the aim of agreeing on a set of no more than 7.

If the organisation already has an agreed set of values, go through them, and ask the group to reflect on the previous conversation about conservation values, and discuss whether they are still valid and the most representative of their organisation. Allow the group to edit, add or remove ideas.

6. Using slides 18, 21 and 22, explain to the group what an **organisation's mission** is:
 - States the way in which your organisation intends to contribute towards its vision – Your role in achieving that vision.
 - Describes what the organisation does, with whom or for whom it does it, and how
 - Who or what are the primary targets that you expect benefit from your work?
 - Who, if anyone, will we work with on an on-going basis to achieve this?
 - Should include:
 - What do you aim to do/achieve?

- Who is it aimed at and done with?
 - How do you work/methods?
 - i.e. We are.....We aim to.....We do this by.....
7. (Slide 23) Split the group into sub-groups of no more than 4-5 people. Ask them to brainstorm what they consider the mission of the organisation should be, based on the previous discussion about the organisation's vision and values. Ideally, each sub-group should come up with a proposed mission statement.
 8. Gather the sub-groups and ask each one to present their statement, while you (or a scribe) writes each one on flipchart paper. As one big group, facilitate a discussion where the group discusses the ideas in each statement, and agree on a draft joint statement.

If the organisation already has a mission statement, present it to the group, and ask them to reflect on previous discussions about the organisation's vision and values, and agree on whether the current statement is still valid and the most representative of the work their organisation does. Allow the group to edit, add or remove ideas.

Summary of Slide selection

	Approach 1	Approach 2	Organisational Values and Mission
<i>Slide 1</i>	X	X	
<i>Slide 2</i>	X		
<i>Slide 3</i>	X		
<i>Slide 4</i>	X		
<i>Slide 5</i>	X		
<i>Slide 6</i>	X		
<i>Slide 7</i>	X		
<i>Slide 8</i>	X		
<i>Slide 9</i>	X		
<i>Slide 10</i>	X		
<i>Slide 11</i>	X		
<i>Slide 12</i>	X		
<i>Slide 13</i>	X		
<i>Slide 14</i>	X		
<i>Slide 15</i>	X	X	
<i>Slide 16</i>		X	
<i>Slide 17</i>		X	
<i>Slide 18</i>			X
<i>Slide 19</i>			X
<i>Slide 20</i>			X
<i>Slide 21</i>			X
<i>Slide 22</i>			X
<i>Slide 23</i>			X

Annexes

Annex 1 – About the Future of Conservation debate – from the website

Although discussions about the aims and methods of conservation probably date back as far as conservation itself, the ‘new conservation’ debate as such was sparked by Kareiva and Marvier’s 2012 article entitled [‘What is conservation science?’](#).

Two prominent positions emerged in this debate, that of Kareiva and Marvier, which they called ‘new conservation’, and a strongly opposed viewpoint that we label ‘traditional conservation’. Our research emerged from our concern that these two positions did not adequately describe the range of views held by conservationists around the world.

The new and traditional conservation positions can be clearly distinguished by their views on the role of ‘people-centred conservation’ (relating to the role that people should play in conservation), ‘science-led ecocentrism’ (relating to the role of science in the conservation of species and ecosystems), and ‘conservation through capitalism’ (relating to the role of corporations and market based approaches in conservation).

These pages describe these positions, as well as [two others that have been previously identified in the literature](#) about the ‘new conservation’ debate. Using diagrams, it also shows how these positions relate to the three axes identified by [our research](#). However, our work suggests that many conservationists do not belong to any of these four positions; or they hold different combinations of the views expressed in the literature. We include descriptions of these four positions here for information, but support efforts to move beyond characterising conservationists into separate ‘camps’.

New Conservation

Central to the ‘new conservation’ position is a shift towards viewing conservation as being about protecting nature in order to improve human wellbeing (especially that of the poor), rather than for biodiversity’s own sake (hence the relatively high score on the people-centred conservation axis).

‘New conservationists’ believe that win-win situations in which people benefit from conservation can often be achieved by promoting economic growth and partnering with corporations, corresponding to a high score on the ‘conservation through capitalism’ axis.

Where new conservationists stand on the second dimension, science-led ecocentrism, is harder to say. On the one hand, new conservationists often criticise conservation approaches which mainly focus on protected areas, making their score on this dimension lower than for other

positions, such as traditional conservation. Nonetheless, judging by the published literature, new conservation advocates are generally enthusiastic about conservation goals being based on evidence from the natural sciences, potentially making their score on this axis slightly less negative than that of critical social scientists, who often highlight the importance of input from other disciplines.

Although new conservation advocates have been criticised for doing away with nature's intrinsic value, key authors within the movement have responded by clarifying that their motive is not so much an ethical as a strategic or pragmatic one. In other words, they claim that conservation needs to emphasise nature's instrumental value to people because this better promotes support for conservation compared to arguments based solely on the rights of species to exist.

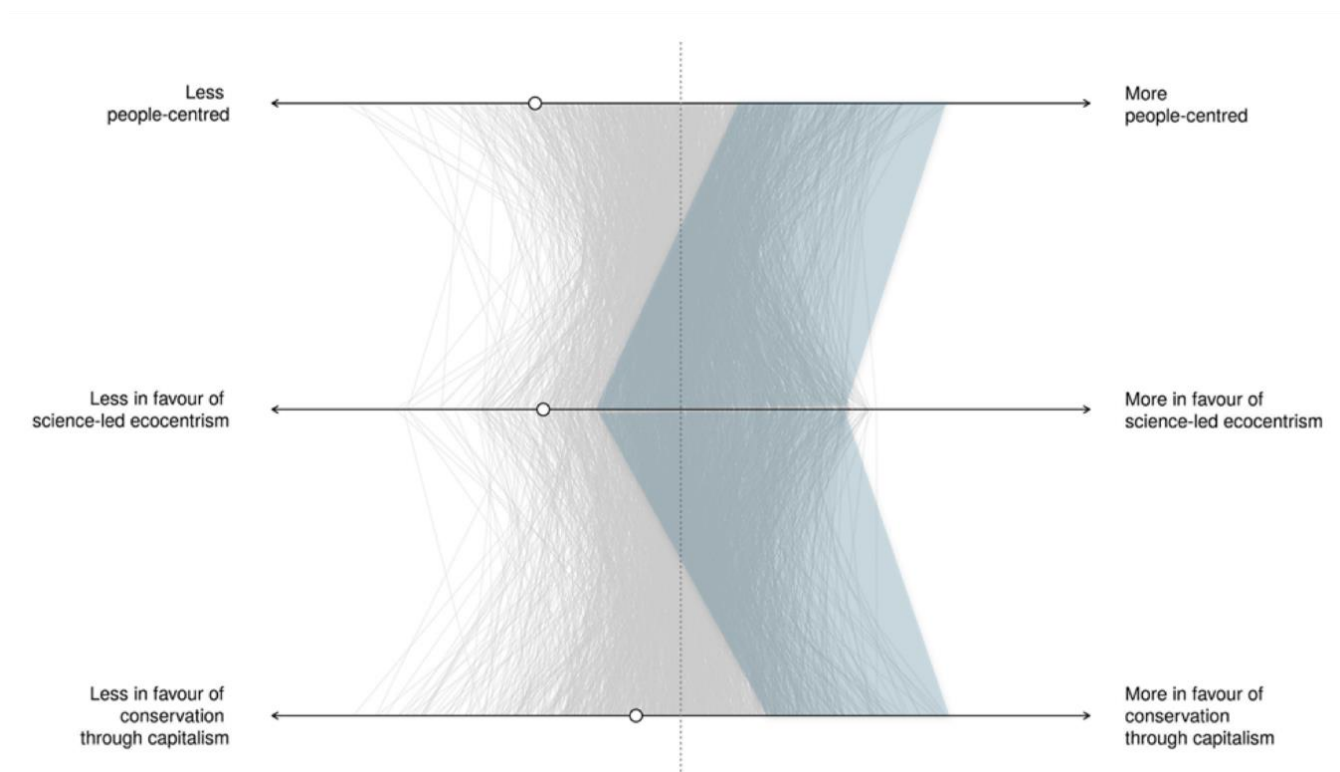


Fig. 1 New Conservation. The white circles represent the neutral point for each of the dimensions (the result obtained by answering 'neither agree nor disagree' to every statement), and the dotted line represents the average result on each dimension for 9,264 conservationists from 149 countries. The faded lines represent the scores for all 9,264 respondents, and the blue area represents the dimensional space in which new conservationists are most likely to be.

Traditional conservation

Traditional conservationists often support the protection of nature for its own sake, often advocating the use of protected areas as the main tool for conservation (hence the high score on the science-led ecocentrism dimension).

This emphasis on nature's intrinsic value typically leads traditional conservation advocates to score relatively negatively on the people-centred conservation dimension, as key figures, such as Michael Soulé, have claimed that conservation should be distinct from humanitarianism, and

that, whilst the alleviation of poverty is of general moral concern, this should not become the primary focus of conservation organisations.

Traditional conservationists tend to also be critical of markets and economic growth as tools for conservation. This is because they believe that by embracing markets, we run the risk of ‘selling out nature’ by neglecting species that may be considered to be of little economic value. What’s more, economic growth itself is seen as a major driver of threats to biodiversity.

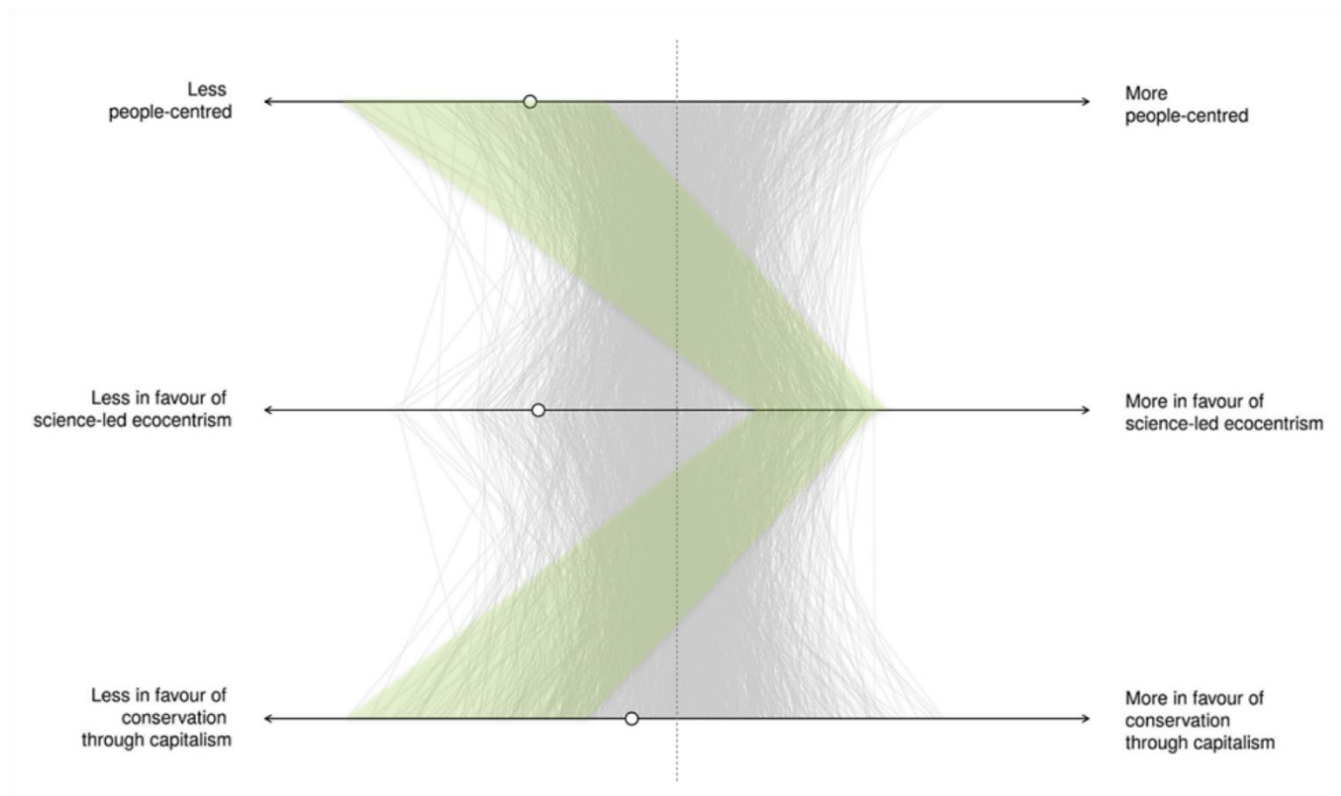


Fig. 2 Traditional Conservation. The white circles represent the neutral point for each of the dimensions (the result obtained by answering ‘neither agree nor disagree’ to every statement), and the dotted line represents the average result on each dimension for 9,264 conservationists from 149 countries. The faded lines represent the scores for all 9,264 respondents, and the green area represents the dimensional space in which traditional conservationists are most likely to be.

Critical social science

According to what we call the critical social science position, the impacts of conservation on human wellbeing should be at the forefront of the conservation debate (hence the positive score on the people-centred conservation dimension). This entails being critical of conservation activities that can have negative effects on people, such as creating protected areas. It is also critical of a nature-for-nature’s sake rationale for conservation and the use of natural science within conservation (hence the negative score on the science-led ecocentrism dimension).

Critical social scientists tend to be sceptical of the ability of markets and capitalism to deliver benefits for both nature and people. For example, the economic valuation of nature might be perceived as a corporate strategy to open up avenues for its exploitation, whilst concealing the

negative impacts of such activities by manipulating the way in which these activities are presented to the public (hence the negative score on conservation through capitalism).

This position is sometimes critiqued by others for offering a strong diagnosis of what is wrong with conservation practice, whilst failing to offer practical alternatives.

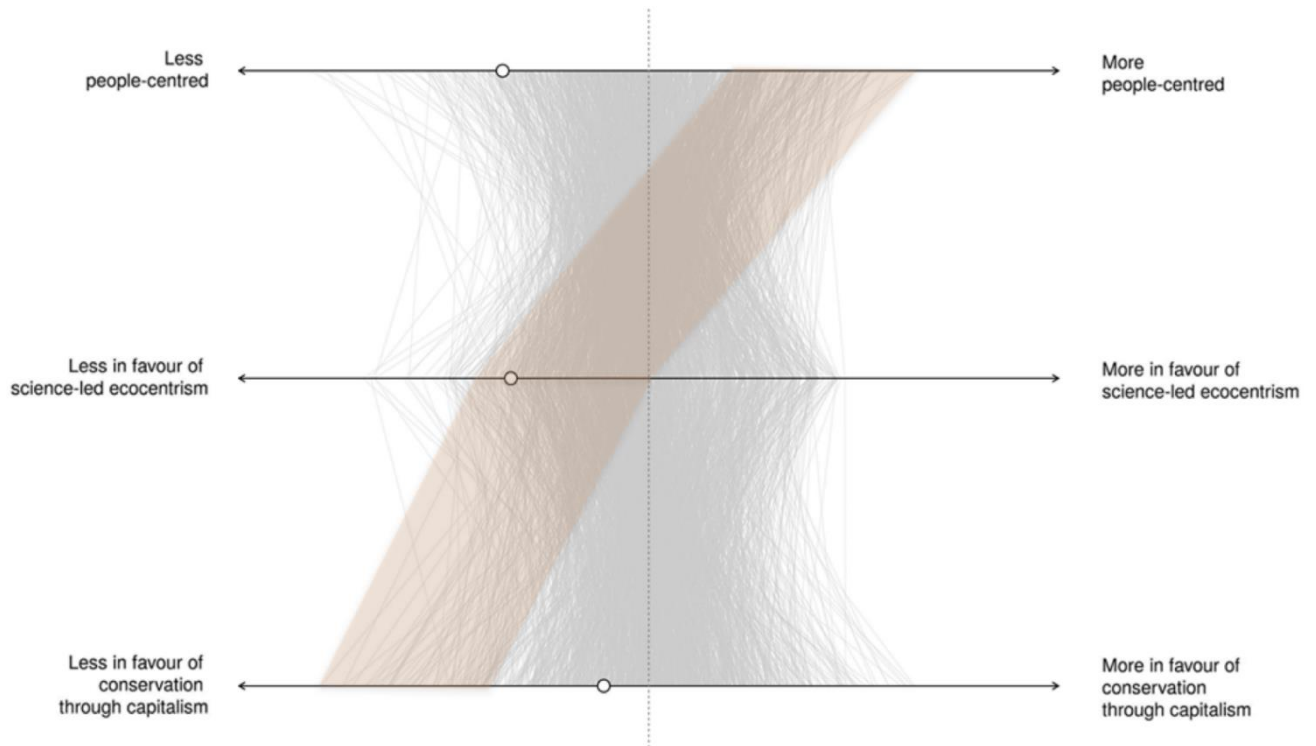


Fig. 3 Critical Social Science. The white circles represent the neutral point for each of the dimensions (the result obtained by answering 'neither agree nor disagree' to every statement), and the dotted line represents the average result on each dimension for 9,264 conservationists from 149 countries. The faded lines represent the scores for all 9,264 respondents, and the light brown area represents the dimensional space in which critical social scientists are most likely to be.

Market ecocentrism

Perhaps one example of 'market ecocentrism' is the recent Nature Needs Half movement (as well as the closely related Half-Earth movement). In his book entitled 'Half-Earth', biologist Edward O. Wilson uses scientific arguments about biogeography to advocate the setting aside of half of the world's area as 'inviolable nature reserves'. The motivation for these reserves would predominantly be to protect species and ecosystems for their own sakes; hence the positive score on the science-led ecocentrism dimension, and the relatively negative score on the people-centred conservation dimension. Aware that this ambitious target would require a drastic decrease in per capita environmental footprint worldwide, Wilson supports free markets as a means to favour those products which generate the maximum profit for the minimum energy and resource consumption (hence the positive score on the conservation through capitalism dimension).

However, Wilson's pro-markets view seems to be more to do with ensuring that humanity can flourish on only 50% of the Earth's surface rather than as a tool for carrying out conservation: that is, the pro-market strategy would be used to buffer the 'human' half of the Earth against the need to exploit the 'natural' half, rather than as a means to create economic value from protecting the 'natural' half.

Other instances of market ecocentrism include strategies in which market tools, such as ecotourism and 'willingness to pay' approaches are used to generate revenue to fund the creation and maintenance of protected areas.

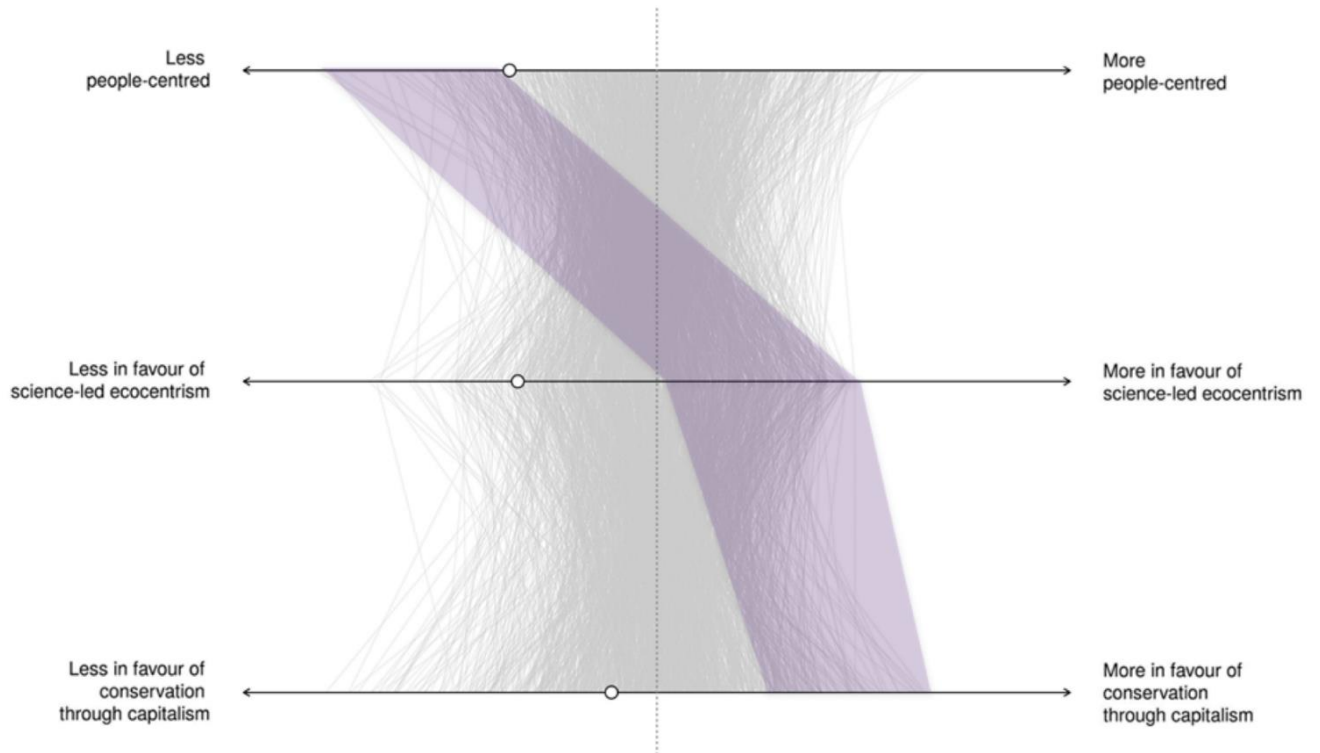


Fig. 4 Market-based Ecocentrism. The white circles represent the neutral point for each of the dimensions (the result obtained by answering 'neither agree nor disagree' to every statement), and the dotted line represents the average result on each dimension for 9,264 conservationists from 149 countries. The faded lines represent the scores for all 9,264 respondents, and the purple area represents the dimensional space in which market ecocentrists are most likely to be.

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Annex 2 – About Organisational Values and Mission

Taken from [Strategic Planning Toolkit](#), by Janet Shapiro, for CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation

Organisational Values

Your organisational values are the shared values that underpin your work as an organisation and your relationships with users and other stakeholders. They are what you believe is the right way to do things and to deal with people, and what you believe about the way that, ideally, the world ought to be organised. Your organisational values will determine your strategies and your operational principles. If, for example, you have an organisational value that emphasises doing things with rather than for people, then you are likely to involve beneficiaries, or potential beneficiaries, closely in your planning process. Clarifying and reaching consensus on your organisational values is very important because it is this that provides a basis for you to make difficult decisions. The kinds of decisions you need to make based on your organisational values include:

- Should we work with this group of people, or project, or organisation?
- Should we spend money on this?
- Is what we are doing worthwhile or could the money be better spent doing something else?
- Can we tender for this particular work?
- How should we respond to this statement from business, government or a donor or other civil society organisations?
- Is the way we are going about this project consistent with our values? If not, what should we do?
- Is the work we are doing consistent with our stated values?

Organisation's Mission

You should now be in a position to express your organisation's mission in a mission statement. Your mission includes the particular way in which your organisation intends to make a contribution towards your vision. A mission statement describes what the organisation does, with whom or for whom it does it, and, in broad terms, how it does it. So, a mission statement will have four components: What the organisation or project is; What the organisation or project aims to do or achieve; Who the work is aimed at (the target group) and who it is done with; How it does its work – in broad terms, what methods it uses. Note that, when it is possible, a mission statement gives the geographical area in which the organisation or project works. A working

principle of working with others whenever possible reflects a value about combining, complementing and reinforcing efforts. This is different from working with a particular stakeholder group such as government, as an ongoing strategy for achieving your vision. An example of a mission statement reflecting the latter is: We are an NGO working to ensure that all people in our country, particularly the landless poor, have access to land for sustainable development. We do this by helping government develop land policies that will benefit the disadvantaged. In this example, the work is not geographically defined. It is important for an organisation or project to be very clear about the target group. So, for example, in the mission statement above which deals with land, the target group is landless people, although the actual work may involve improving the understanding about land issues of government officials. The government officials are an interim target, but the actual target is the landless poor. The project is meant to benefit the landless poor not the government officials. Why is a mission statement important? A mission statement is important because:

- It is an easy way to communicate to others what you do and how you do it;
- It helps you to clarify and focus your work.

If any of the components change, then the mission statement needs to change as well. That is why it is important to revisit your mission statement from time to time. In the context of a strategic planning process, it is useful to introduce the mission statement once you have clarified your vision and values, but you cannot finalise it until you have reached agreement on your overall goal and immediate objectives. On the next page you will find an exercise you could use to help you develop a mission statement for your project or organisation.