

# The globalization of conservation: How public perceptions of biodiversity and international trade patterns shape mangrove conservation

**Award Year:**

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**Associated Program:**

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Although conservation is implemented locally, the forces that shape conservation policy and decision-making are increasingly global. Simultaneously promoting human prosperity while protecting biodiversity requires an understanding of how interactions between global and local forces shape conservation management. This proposed SESYNC Graduate Pursuit will investigate how public perceptions of biodiversity may influence conservation. We will quantify the relative influence of public perceptions on conservation success at the country level, as well as conduct a case study comparison of three mangrove holding nations. International policies promote increased protection of mangroves, acknowledging their role in carbon storage and storm protection--critical in the face of climate change. Therefore, mangrove socio-environmental systems are well suited to study how public perceptions relate to the tension between economic forces and environmental protection across national to global levels. We will analyze the prevalence of discussion topics directly related to biodiversity conservation in the media and in Google Trends, which reflect national trends in online searches. We will parse out the potential relative influences of public perceptions of biodiversity, robustness of conservation policy (Environmental Performance Index; EPI), international trade, and their interactions to mangrove gain/loss (remotely sensed data), using regression analysis. Our findings will investigate the degree to which conservation policy responds to public perceptions of biodiversity, which is often assumed to be important for conservation success but rarely tested in a quantitative framework.

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