

# Producing Natural Capital in a Landscape of Social Difference



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The “natural capital” model of conservation has frequently marked progressive change with regards to its imagination of the relationship between traditionally distinct social, economic and ecological systems. However, through ethnographic fieldwork in Belize, I have also observed the potentially problematic ways by which the work of managing and protecting the flow of ecosystem services comes to naturalize an historically particular movement of people and material across a landscape—a political economy produced through a colonial history predicated upon the making and maintenance of racial and ethnic difference and hierarchy.

Through an analysis of the way in which scenario-based planning tools are used in Belize to manage and protect ecosystem services, I argue that the country’s imaginations of the future have become tangled (unintentionally) with colonial-era notions of the spatiality of ethnicity, race and economy. I explore how emergent scenario-based planning models call upon and articulate with ideas of nature, ethnicity, and space in ways that structure the social, political, and ecological possibilities (and impossibilities) of conservation project spaces.

*Patrick Gallagher is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Anthropology at Stanford. His research concerns way in which nature is symbolically and materially made through discourses of conservation. His dissertation project examines the social making of ecosystem services as objects of conservation concern in the Belize Barrier Reef.*

**Monday**  
**April 29, 2013, 12:00-1:05 pm**  
**Conference Room, Building 50, Room 51A**



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