



**Utrecht University**

Master Thesis – Master Sustainable Business and Innovation

## How philanthropic foundations act as field-builders influencing justice discourses in land conservation

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# Abstract

## Introduction

Through their increasingly influential and financially powerful role within the field of conservation governance, philanthropic foundations act as field-builders directing the fields' creation and structure. Thereby, the foundations' interpretations of how to perceive justice issues affects who is considered when addressing injustices and what is aimed for when striving for justice within the field. This research assesses the understudied role of philanthropic foundations functioning as field-builders and thereby influencing justice discourses in the conservation governance field.

## Theoretical Framework

This thesis builds on the pluralistic justice framework of Biermann & Kalfagianni (2020) and extends it with an eco-centric perspective to assess the foundations' justice views. To evaluate their field-building role, this research examines the foundations' collaborative activities to build a field. Further, countries in which the foundations fund conservation activities are identified to find out in which geographical locations the foundations extend the field of conservation governance.

## Methodology

By following a qualitative comparative research approach, 12 foundations contributing largely to 'Sustainable Development Goal 15 – Life on Land' were studied. The data was collected through website information of the foundations and interviews with eight conservation program representatives of six foundations. A discourse analysis was applied to analyse the data regarding underlying justice interpretations.

## Results

Focused justice issues by the foundations are the protection of basic needs and rights for Indigenous and local communities combined with increased representation of marginalised groups in decision-makings. The foundations mainly collaborate with non-profit organisations as grant receivers to build the field of conservation governance. Throughout these grantee partnerships, the foundations apply different participatory approaches whereby perspectives of people affected by injustices are aimed to be engaged in the field. Most foundations fund initiatives in their origin country, the U.S. and in countries in the Global South.

## Discussion/ Conclusion

The findings reveal that foundations as field-builders promote specific complementary combinations of human-centred justice views. The foundations' build the field by involving partners and people affected by injustices into the field according to the foundations' interpretations of justice. Thereby, foundations maintain the field-building power, particularly by funding financially weaker countries in the Global South.

In conclusion, the role of philanthropic foundations is most relevant in regards of justice norm developments in the conservation governance field. By critically reflecting on their own interpretations and approaches, more awareness can be brought to these issues to shift field-building power to people affected by injustices.

## Acknowledgements

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# 1. Introduction

The “golden age of philanthropy” (Hay & Muller, 2014, p. 635) refers to the current era of substantial philanthropic funding activities for charitable purposes. The following four attributes can be ascribed to a philanthropic foundation: a non-profit and non-governmental organisation, which is self-managed by its own trustees and aims at fostering charitable objectives for the common good through resources provided by donors (Kiger, 2016). Foundations aim to counteract global challenges such as poverty, hunger, and climate change through their funding activities (Martens & Seitz, 2015). However, the foundations’ impact not only involves a donation of financial resources but a much wider influence through their role as field-builders (Bartley, 2007; Hay & Muller, 2014; Rogers, 2011). Field-building entails specifically the creation of advocacy networks, formulations of concepts to promote their activities and the involvement of different organisations, movements, or individuals to extend the field (Bartley, 2007).

By acting as field-builders, foundations greatly affect discourses around norms (Betsill et al., 2021; Stone, 2010). Foundations influence which norms are constituted in society and what behavioural patterns are deemed appropriate (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998). Norms can be interpreted and transferred into practice very differently while depending on specific circumstances such as cultural and individual backgrounds (Srivastava, 2011). Increasingly debated in scientific research, public debates, and political papers are issues on justice. When extending and structuring a field, the foundations’ underlying aspirations and objectives influence these justice discourses throughout the field (Biermann & Kalfagianni, 2020; Kalfagianni, 2022). Thereby, foundations’ perspectives on how to interpret and operationalise justice affects who is considered when addressing injustices and what developments to strive for when aiming for a more just and inclusive field (Kalfagianni, 2022). For example, a foundation might perceive that women are particularly affected by injustices. This foundation might dominantly support gender equality while providing funding or involving actors into a field. Thereby, other justice issues such as racial or intergenerational injustices might be neglected. Consequently, certain justice interpretations are more dominant while others get marginalised in the field. For this reason, a critical discourse on norms in general and more specifically on justice norms is essential to better understand how foundations interpret justice and engage actors in the field according to their justice interpretations (Biermann & Kalfagianni, 2020; Lahsen & Turnhout, 2021).

Particularly in the field of conservation governance many definitions and classifications of justice norms brought up evolving discourses (Kopnina & Washington, 2020; Mollett & Kepe, 2018; Schlosberg, 2013; Srivastava, 2011). The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) developed by the United Nations aim at creating a more peaceful, prosperous planet for humans and nature (UN, 2021). One goal in which justice discourses are very prominent is SDG 15 – Life on Land (Kopnina & Washington, 2020; Mollet & Kepe, 2018). This goal entails the restoration, protection, and promotion of sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, overarchingly called hereinafter ‘land conservation’ (SDG Funders, 2021c). Due to declining financial support by states, foundations increasingly emerged in funding land conservation activities (Holmes, 2012) and thereby further build up and structure the conservation governance field (Betsill et al., 2021). While the goal of philanthropic land conservation funding is to protect and restore natural landscapes, challenges in regards of a just procedure can occur such as tensions between local and non-local communities or wildlife (Fortwangler, 2007; Kopnina & Washington, 2020). By acting as field-builders, foundations impact which of these challenges are perceived most relevant and how to deal with those challenges in the field of conservation governance (Bartley, 2007; Kalfagianni, 2022).

## 1.1 Scientific Relevance

The powerful but understudied role of philanthropic foundations in global justice discourses results in urgent need of empirical research (Jung et al., 2018; Kalfagianni, 2022). Especially in conservation governance, research on norm discourses influenced by philanthropy is very limited. Up until now there are few philanthropic foundation studies on justice discourses in sustainability governance more broadly (Faber & McCarthy, 2005; Kalfagianni, 2022), on their field-building activities (Bartley, 2007; Betsill et al., 2021; Brulle, 2014; Quinn et al., 2013) and on different conservation activities (Bakker et al., 2010; Delfin & Tang, 2006; Gruby et al., 2021; Holmes, 2012; Mallin et al., 2019). However, studies on the field-building role of foundations in land conservation focusing especially on the influence in justice discourses are missing for which reason scholars called for more scientific and empirical research (Betsill et al., 2021; Gruby et al., 2021).

Due to a steadily evolving process of justice discourses, there is a need to theoretically assess different interpretations of justice in a comparable format (Biermann & Kalfagianni, 2020). This study builds on the pluralistic justice framework developed by other scholars (Biermann & Kalfagianni, 2020) to identify the role of different organisations regarding their interpretation of justice. The extension of this framework with an eco-centric perspective further increases the theoretical relevance of this study.

## 1.2 Societal Relevance & Research Aim

The aim of this research is to obtain a more in-depth understanding of how foundations interpret justice throughout their funding and collaboration activities in land conservation. The conservation and restoration of our land ecosystems is fundamentally affected by questions such as: ‘Who is included in justice attributions?’, ‘What are main challenges when counteracting injustice?’ or ‘What are current pathways towards justice for life on land and how can we do better?’ (Kopnina & Washington, 2020). There can be different interpretations of what underlying reasons and approaches for preserving land ecosystems are. For example, it could be to protect basic needs or rights of humans such as Indigenous peoples depending on terrestrial ecosystems for food or plant-based healthcare (Kalfagianni, 2022). It could also be the entitlement of conservation rights to all living and non-living entities independent of human involvement (Celermajer et al., 2020). As these differing justice interpretations have diverse consequences within land conservation activities, this research on 12 philanthropic foundations dominantly active in land conservation in the last five years is of high societal relevance.

## 1.3 Research Questions

In this regard, this study investigates the following research question:

**How are philanthropic foundations functioning as field-builders influencing justice discourses in activities contributing to land conservation?**

From this overarching research question, three sub-questions are derived:

1. How do foundations interpret justice in land conservation activities?
2. With which organisations do they collaborate to promote land conservation activities, and thus develop their justice interpretations in the conservation governance field?
3. In which geographical locations are the foundations mainly extending the field of conservation governance?

## 2. Theoretical framework

In the theoretical section, part 2.1 describes the concept of field-building regarding foundations. This study assesses justice interpretations of foundations whereby part 2.2 argues the importance of justice discourses in the conservation governance field. Part 2.3 presents and explains the theoretical justice framework developed by Biermann & Kalfagianni (2020) to analyse the foundations' justice interpretations. Secondly, this research examines how these justice interpretations are developed throughout collaboration activities for field-building and in which locations the foundations are prominently active. Lastly, Figure 2 presents the conceptual framework of this study.

### 2.1 Philanthropic foundations as field-builders

Recent research on how norms are formed and how these spread puts emphasis on the influential role of non-state actors in shaping norm perceptions (Acharya, 2004; Lawless, 2020; Paterson et al., 2014; Wiener & Puetter, 2009). A group of non-state actors that are becoming increasingly powerful through their direct or indirect influence on societal developments are philanthropic foundations (Betsill et al., 2021). Different theoretical approaches exist to assess the philanthropy's influential role. One example is that foundations are examined as patrons being "anyone who supports an organisation for the benefits it might in turn provide" (Barnes & McCarville, 2005, p. 125). This implies a self-referenced and advocating position of foundations when funding activities (Barnes & McCarville, 2005; Reckhow, 2016). Other scholars examine foundations as agents which are actors that influence governance processes by promoting specific values, structures, or practices (Betsill et al., 2021; Dellas et al., 2011; Ulbert & Hamm, 2011). Linked to the agency concept, foundations are observed as institutional and norm entrepreneurs (Quinn et al., 2014), being financially powerful organisations that can establish or change institutional structures (DiMaggio, 1988). Patronage, agency, and norm entrepreneurship are all interrelated theories which correlate directly with the concept used in this study: the field-building approach (Barnes & McCarville, 2005; Betsill et al., 2021; Quinn et al., 2014).

The applied field-building concept is especially concerned with the establishment of an organisational field being "an arena that brings a number of different actors (often with different interests, ideologies, and organisational forms) into routine contact with one another, under a common frame of reference, in pursuit of an at least partially shared project" (Bartley, 2007, p. 233). This study focuses on the organisational field of conservation governance which entails actor networks directing operations and processes with a common interest to conserve natural ecosystems (Wilshusen & MacDonald, 2017). Besides their grant-makings, foundations act as key players in creating and structuring this field whereby they are referred to as field-builders (Bartley, 2007). They use financial and non-financial resources to establish networks of public and private organisations while engaging in political, economic, normative, and institutional decision-makings (Martens & Seitz, 2015; Reich, 2020). In this regard, they have a powerful agenda-setting capacity to steer or oppose issues according to their interests (Delfin & Tang, 2006). The field-building concept is applied in this study as specifically foundations' collaboration activities for field-building are focused when examining their influence on justice discourses (Bartley, 2007; Betsill et al., 2021). This concept, initially influenced by DiMaggio & Powell (1991), is used for studies with similar research frames (Bartley, 2007; Betsill et al., 2021; Brulle, 2014; Faber & McCarthy, 2005; Quinn et al., 2014). Therefore, this theoretical approach is most promising regarding the assessment of the influential role of foundations in the field of conservation governance.



Within the field, foundations proactively impact field frames which are “political constructions that provide order and meaning to fields of activity” (Lounsbury et al., 2003, p. 76-77). Field frames represent the context in which normative standards are legitimised and diffused (Hirsch, 1986). Foundations build organisational fields and thereby influence these field frames through mainly two different practices analysed within this study. First, the foundations’ interpretations of justice norms which are constituted through aspirations and perceptions of what is deemed adequate in their view (Bartley, 2007). Second, to implement, diffuse, and maintain field frames, wide networks of actors are needed. For this reason, foundations develop their justice interpretations throughout collaboration activities which is explained in some detail in part 2.4 (Bartley, 2007).

## 2.2 Justice norm interpretation as field-building activity and the need for norm discourses

There are many different definitions of norms which until today have not led to one coherent specification (Gibbs, 1965; Srivastava, 2011). In this thesis, norms are defined as appropriate behavioural standards which are expected to be followed by actors within the conservation governance field (Katzenstein, 1996). For example, when it is deemed adequate in the field to support poor members of society, actors behave accordingly. Norms can have a dual quality by stabilising and structuring the field on the one side, meaning that they can act as standards to regulate and constitute behaviour. On the other side, norms have a flexible and constructing character. These norms are altered or generated over time through social interactions between field actors or by involving new actors into the field (Wiener, 2007). Identifying how a norm is influencing field frames is a challenge belonging to its evolving character (Srivastava, 2011).

Foundations impact field frames of an organisational field through interpreting norms in a certain way. As there are different understandings and no best practices on how to conceive and operationalise normative standards (Wiener, 2007), discourses on norms are crucial. Particularly, in the field of conservation governance, there are often diverse interpretations and utilisation activities of norms and especially the justice norm (Kopnina & Washington, 2020; Lawless et al., 2020; Mollett & Kepe, 2018; Schlosberg, 2013). Justice is a highly critical issue needed to be considered and discussed when aiming for sustainable development (Srivastava, 2011). In the last years, justice issues were covered more often in different political and scientific publications (Biermann & Kalfagianni, 2020). Nevertheless, justice can be interpreted very differently leading to various possible behaviours (Kalfagianni, 2022). Therefore, when striving for justice in our society people have different perceptions of what that means. It could mean, for example, to end extreme poverty, combat racial injustices or ensure equal opportunities for everyone. As these diverse interpretations exist, a realistic and integrative approach towards justice would be to recognise these different perspectives and find a joint pathway (Agyemang et al., 2002; Schlosberg, 2013).

Researchers start to recognise the broadness of justice in sustainable development for example by addressing not only social justice but also ecological justice concerns (Schlosberg, 2013). However, as justice perceptions of Northern scientist groups focus mainly on personal normative beliefs, there are still insufficient concepts able to address justice issues in a more inclusive and holistic manner (Klinsky et al., 2017). There is a need for a reflective and open discussion on how the justice discourses influence global sustainability governance and thereby the field of conservation governance (Biermann & Kalfagianni, 2020; Kopnina & Washington, 2020). For this reason, a concrete concept examining how

interpretations of justice are actually conceptualised by political actors is required (Biermann & Kalfagianni, 2020). Through funding provisions and collaboration activities, foundations are powerful field-building actors shaping the norm discourse (Betsill et al., 2021). However, while currently the focus lies on the role of foundations as problem solvers, their influence on justice norm formations and developments remains understudied (Kalfagianni, 2022).

### 2.3 A pluralistic justice approach

In the absence of an agreed upon understanding of what justice is, scholars developed a framework that operationalises different approaches to justice and enables systematic, comparative and empirically grounded research (Biermann & Kalfagianni, 2020). The aim of this framework is to “allow social scientists to engage in a meaningful and practical manner in concrete, comparative research efforts that study how the deep philosophical positions around justice have found their reflections in actual political discourses, programmes and policy positions” (Biermann & Kalfagianni, 2020, p. 3). Following Kalfagianni (2022), this study builds on the framework to assess justice interpretations of foundations active the field of conservation governance. Three dimensions presented in Table 1 help to distinguish empirically different justice perspectives of foundations (Biermann & Kalfagianni, 2020; Kalfagianni, 2022). First, the foundations’ subjects affected by justice issues need to be specified to understand who or what they consider as units of moral concern when addressing injustices (Kalfagianni, 2022). These subjects of justice are differentiated by their normative ties throughout society (Biermann & Kalfagianni, 2020). Second, it is relevant to identify what mechanisms the foundations use to address injustices. These can reach from political to psychological factors such as strengthening a marginalised voice or enhancing the well-being of people or entities (Biermann & Kalfagianni, 2020). Third, the principles of justice are based on the foundations’ beliefs of what a ‘just’ world would look like (Biermann & Kalfagianni, 2020). These assumptions reflect what the foundations strive for when addressing justice issues such as freedom through the market or sufficiency regarding basic needs for everyone (Kalfagianni & Biermann, 2020).

Table 1. Dimensions to distinguish justice interpretations.

Dimension	Question to identify dimension
Subjects of justice	How do foundations define their subjects of justice?
Substance of justice	Which essential justice concerns are present in foundations’ agendas and how do they prioritise and practice those?
Principles of justice	What principles are underlined as important by foundations?

Note: Derived from Biermann & Kalfagianni (2020).

In the pluralistic justice framework by Biermann & Kalfagianni (2020), there are five perspectives distinguished representing different justice approaches in global sustainability governance which are displayed in Table 2. As this framework predominantly reflects anthropocentric perspectives with little emphasis on an approach decentring the human as main pivotal point for every justice classification and implementation, it is extended with a sixth perspective, the eco-centric view (see Table 2). Our human existence depends on eco-system processes of nature. However, we as humans put ourselves at the centre of every justice discussion and process (Kopnina & Washington, 2020). Kopnina & Washington (2020) argue, especially within land conservation philanthropy, there is a need for reframing and

reconsidering justice issues by holistically and equally integrating social and ecological positions. In the following, all six perspectives are explained in regards of the three dimensions described above.

The utilitarianism view is striving for the greatest well-being of the greatest number of people (Crisp, 2014). As subjects of justice the utilitarianism view considers beings having the ability to feel joy and pain (Bentham, 1996). The representatives of the utilitarianism perspective attach more importance to immaterial concerns such as their emotions (Kalfagianni, 2022).

The subject of the cosmopolitanism perspective is divided in a relational classification, meaning that members of society are interdependent on international relations and institutions, and a humanist classification, which is based on shared humanity of rational individuals (Biermann & Kalfagianni, 2020; Brock; 2005). Furthermore, the cosmopolitan view can be divided into global egalitarians and global minimalists (Kalfagianni, 2022). The substance of egalitarians has a material focus (e.g., the distribution of money or resources for land conservation projects) and its principles focus on prioritising most vulnerable groups in a redistribution of wealth globally (Beitz, 1979; Kalfagianni, 2022). While the minimalist view is concerned with ensuring a minimum standard of basic rights and needs (e.g., access to fresh water, clean air or food), the substance consists of individual liberties (Brock, 2005).

The subject of the capabilities view includes all individuals with emotions and values (Kalfagianni, 2022). In this regard, the substance considers interpersonal disparities of humans such as health or integrity (Nussbaum, 2011). As underlying principles to fight injustices, this approach focuses on improving quality of life for people discriminated or marginalised by their capabilities (Nussbaum, 2011). Thereby, only if everyone has the ability to equally operationalise possible opportunities, a just distribution is assured (Kalfagianni, 2022).

Through a libertarianism view, distributed wealth imbalances are considered legitimate if initiating activities were executed lawfully (Nozick, 1974). The subjects of this perspective are seen as free individuals with self-ownership (Kalfagianni, 2022). Legal rights and entitlements dedicated to these individuals represent the substance of the libertarianism view. Eventually, this perspective aims for a world enabling free exchange (Biermann & Kalfagianni, 2020).

Next, the critical perspective is recognising all social and political structures leading to injustices for specific social groups (Fraser, 2009). Therefore, the substance of justice is concerned with material factors such as economic benefits and burdens, cultural aspects such as gender, ethnicity or social status and political representation concerns (Fraser, 2008; Fraser, 2009). As underlying principle, parity by counteracting inequalities in social, economic, and political dimensions is aspired (Kalfagianni, 2022).

Regarding the integrated eco-centric perspective, subjects of justice are all “living and non-living entities, and their interactions and processes” (Tschakert et al., 2020, p. 4). Therefore, ecosystems and all their species, microbiomes, water bodies et cetera with their own diverse needs, abilities, forms of existence, and interrelations are included in the subjects of justice (Celermajer et al., 2021; Schlosberg, 2009; Schlosberg, 2014).

The substance of justice in regards of an eco-centric view entails first, the extension of legal rights to all subjects of justice (Tschakert et al., 2020). Since legal recognition is primarily based on the rights a person, animal or other entity has, the way towards an eco-centric and just direction needs to be pathed by allocating these rights to all living and non-living subjects (Celermajer et al., 2021). Second, to apply

this legal recognition it is necessary to build up a deeper appreciation and comprehension for these subjects and their interactions. By understanding and engaging with different ecosystem entities and processes, a more respectful and just treatment can be constituted (Celermajer et al., 2021).

Lastly, the principles of eco-centric viewed justice are explained. It consists of the fundamental idea of interconnectedness which means that all living and non-living entities are interwoven (Tschakert et al., 2020). By recognising these connections, a responsibility to respect not only the individual but each part of the whole web occurs. Consequently, the principles of an eco-centric justice perspective can be viewed as an inclusive pathway to justice which considerably fosters networks of relations allowing all human and non-human beings to flourish (Celermajer et al., 2020).

Table 2. Pluralistic justice framework with added eco-centric perspective.

Justice dimension	Utilitarianism	Cosmopolitanism		Capabilities	Libertarianism	Critical Perspective	Eco-centric Perspective
		Global egalitarians	Global minimalists				
<b>Subjects of justice</b>	On the basis of individual ability to feel pleasure and pain	<b>Relational</b> On the basis of global interdependence among different political communities  <b>Humanists</b> On the basis of common humanity		On the basis of personhood	On the basis of self-ownership	On the basis of subjection to a particular governance structure	All living and non-living entities & their interactions & processes
<b>Substance of justice</b>	Well-being; happiness	Liberty & opportunity; Income & wealth; Global commons & resources	Basic needs & human rights	Human capabilities & freedoms	Individual rights & entitlements determined historically	Economic, social, & political dimensions of life	Legal rights & recognition for more-than human entities & their relations
<b>Principles of justice</b>	Maximization of utility	Priority (most vulnerable globally)	Sufficiency	Equality	Freedom	Parity	Inter-connectedness

Note: Adapted from Biermann & Kalfagianni (2020) with extensions from Celermajer et al. (2020), Celermajer et al. (2021) and Tschakert et al. (2020).

### 2.4 Funding in specific locations and collaboration as field building activities

The foundations’ main activity is funding which gives them a powerful position as financial provider in the field of conservation governance (Delfin & Tang, 2007). Through this financial support of specific processes and projects of their interest, foundations enable field-building (Bartley, 2007). The funding is funnelled through collaborative activities of foundations (Betsill et al., 2021). Foundations establish an organisational field of their grantees, people affected by a project and other actors by enrolling them into initiatives and forming private or public-private partnerships (Bartley, 2007). As other actors of the field usually lack the financial capacity to further enhance a projects’ impact, they are dependent on external resource providers (Hay & Muller, 2014; Roelofs, 2007). By using their financial as well as non-

financial resources, foundations can decide who to involve into these empowering and cross-sectoral networks (Bartley, 2007; Betsill et al., 2021). Grantees or other actors are not homogenous but have different backgrounds, follow various missions, and operate in diverse ways (Delfin & Tang, 2006; Reich, 2020). For example, one grantee might focus on justice issues of an Indigenous community while another grantee works together with smallholder farmers to secure their livelihoods. Through these selective partnership choices, foundations directly influence processes shaping the agenda and therefore the field frames (Martens & Seitz, 2015). Thereby, the foundations' powerful and inevitable present field-building position is expanding (Roelofs, 2007). As Betsill et al. (2021) state, there is a need to better understand which approaches are being used by foundations to create and coordinate a field as well as its field frames. Derived from the field-building theory, this research focuses on the following two aspects guiding the examination of collaborative activities. First, main partners of the foundations are identified to understand who the foundations engage into the field of conservation governance (Bartley, 2007). According to Bartley (2007), especially people affected by the foundations' practices and their justice interpretations should be engaged in the operation processes. Therefore, a focus of the collaboration research lies on how people directly affected by justice are engaged in the field. Second, it is an essential indicator of the foundations' field-building activity to understand how justice interpretations are discussed and implemented within partnerships to shape the field frames (Bartley, 2007; Lounsbury et al., 2003). Therefore, this study assesses the communication with their main partners regarding justice issues and how these partners approach to integrate the needs of people affected by injustices.

Furthermore, the foundations substantially influence in which geographical locations the conservation governance field is built (Betsill et al., 2021). As foundations often have a worldwide reach with their projects, their field-building is relevant for global justice issues (Betsill et al., 2021). By deciding on funding grantees working in a particular region, the foundations coordinate which issue areas should be focused and consequently which other issue areas are neglected (Delfin & Tang, 2006). For example, if they rather fund projects in the Amazon Rainforest, their focus might lie on supporting justice concerns of local communities in this area. However, they could also mainly provide funding to grantees in the U.S. promoting enhanced representation of Black people in the conservation governance field. By deciding on funding specific locations more prominently, the foundations influence which justice issues the field dominantly addresses (Betsill et al., 2021). For these reasons, this research assesses in which locations the foundations extend the field of conservation governance.

## 2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 visualises the combined theories examined for this research. The outer white frame represents the organisational field of conservation governance in which foundations are active. Within this field, the double lined white frame displays the philanthropic foundations. The justice interpretations of foundations are identified by analysing how subjects, substance, and principles of justice are classified by them. Further, it is analysed how philanthropic foundations develop their justice interpretations within the field. This is done by assessing collaboration activities in regards of their actor engagement and communication processes. Lastly, it is identified in which locations the field is extended. The findings lead to a better understanding of the foundations influence on field frames for appropriate justice norms.

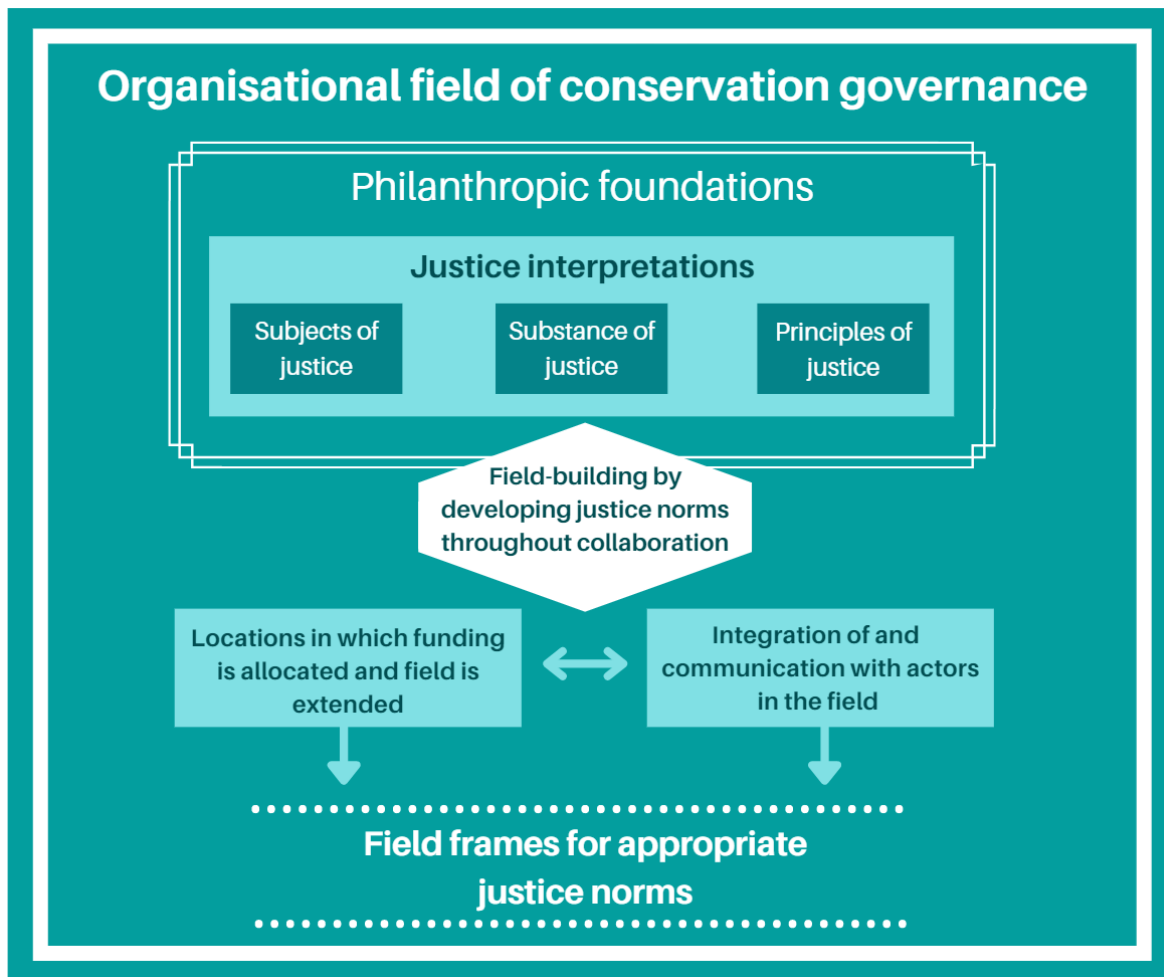


Figure 1. Conceptual framework operated in this research.

### 3. Methodology

In the following section, the methodological approach of this research is explained. First, the case selection and the overall research design of this thesis are presented. Afterwards, the data collection process is stated, followed by a description of how the data was analysed. Lastly, it is argued how data validity and reliability was assured during the research process.

#### 3.1 Case selection

By using a qualitative comparative research approach, this study allowed for a comparison of different foundations' justice interpretations to identify commonalities or differences in their understandings (Hancké, 2009). This identification mattered as it demonstrated empirically which representative patterns exist around justice norm interpretations and how these interpretations developed within philanthropic contributions to land conservation. The units of analysis were chosen through 'SDG Funders' which is a freely accessible website to find funding organisations and recipients of those funds aligned with the SDGs (SDG Funders, 2021a). SDG Funders was established by Candid, a database which developed algorithms that identify foundation grants impacting the SDGs with data from 2016 up until today (SDG Funders, 2021b). For each SDG, the top foundations contributing to the goal are listed and sorted by their funding amount which can be filtered by region, country, and population group (SDG Funders, 2021b).

As SDG 15 - Life on Land aims for conservation of terrestrial landscapes, this goal was chosen as a starting point for locating the top philanthropies contributing to land conservation (UN, 2021). At first, the top ten foundations contributing to SDG 15 – Life on Land, listed in Appendix A, were selected to examine. However, due to limited data availability, some foundations on this list had to be excluded. For this reason, the next foundations in the list of SDG Funders were included whereby finally ten of the top 16 foundations contributing to SDG 15 – Life on Land were assessed (SDG Funders, 2021b).

During the data collection process and through contacts of already conducted interviewees, it was possible to have interviews with two additional foundations contributing to land conservation, namely the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Ford Foundation. These two foundations were added to the research cases. The final selection of the 12 case foundations including their funding contributions is listed in Table 3. Since the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Ford Foundation are not listed on the SDG Funders website, no representative funding amount can be given here. As all these foundations are based in the U.S., it was considered to include foundations from Europe for a more regional diverse comprehension. However, SDG Funders does not differentiate these foundations by regions and including another database to find the largest foundation within Europe would have decreased the comparability quality between the selected foundations. Therefore, it was decided to keep the case selection of the 12 foundations listed in Table 3.

Table 3. The 12 case foundations predominantly active in land conservation and their funding contributions to SDG 15 – Life on Land.

Position	Name of foundation	Amount of funding in Million USD
1.	Foundation for the Carolinas	226.55
2.	Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation	153.06
3.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	112.26
4.	The Wyss Foundation	103.59
5.	The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	96.14
6.	Howard G. Buffett Foundation	93.92
7.	Walton Family Foundation	84.25
8.	The David and Lucile Packard Foundation	72.49
9.	New Venture Fund	65.99
10.	John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	61.9
11.	Doris Duke Charitable Foundation	-
12.	Ford Foundation	-

Note: Derived from SDG Funders (2021c).

### 3.2 Research Design

The analytical framework which is presented in Figure 2 visualises the overarching research design. Throughout the research process, theoretical background literature on field-building, norm discourses and justice interpretations was drawn from as a guiding fundament displayed by the upper dark green box. As explained above, the selected 12 foundations active in land conservation were used as units of analysis. A document analysis of reports and website information for each foundation was performed. Additionally, six interviews with members of the foundations were conducted (see Table 4).

The combination of document and interview analysis lead to a comprehensive identification of how the foundations interpret justice. This was done by using the justice framework presented in part 2.2 which was applied to land conservation practices. By observing the collaboration activities in regards of partnerships and engagement processes of subjects of justice, the field-building role of foundations was assessed. Additionally, information on the funding locations was collected to understand on which continents the foundations are active to build the field of conservation governance. Eventually, the identification of justice perspectives of the selected foundations led to a better understanding of their influence on justice discourses within land conservation.



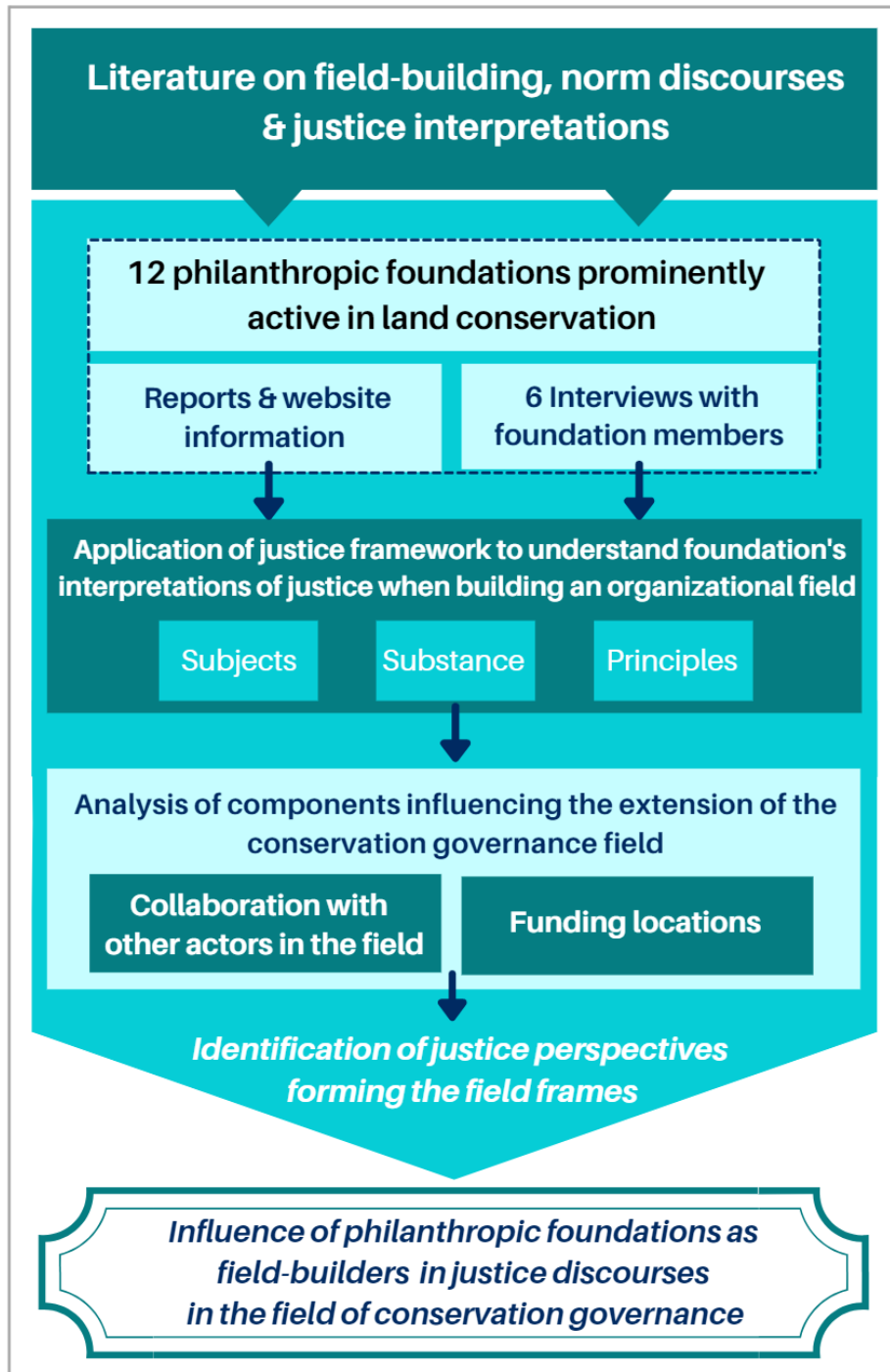


Figure 2. Analytical framework to identify the influence of philanthropic foundations on justice discourses in the field of conservation governance.

### 3.3 Data collection

The data collection was conducted in a complementary way through documents and semi-structured interviews. Internal data was collected such as organisational publications, especially annual reports and information retrieved from the foundations' website (e.g., program descriptions, information about collaborations and news on latest projects). Further, the data was collected at a program level. Different programs contributing to land conservation were distinguished and displayed by their goals, strategies, and desired outcomes. For example, 'Climate and Land Use' or 'Agricultural Development' can be

considered as different programs within land conservation. Throughout these programs’ information on underlying justice interpretations, collaboration activities and funding locations was gathered. In addition, external data was gathered and analysed such as news articles, website information or reports of third-party organisations and scientific studies on the foundations’ activities. To identify relevant documents, the following criteria were used. First, a timeframe of documents and data published within the last 5 years was chosen. Second, as this research focuses on the conservation governance field and foundations usually fund activities in many different sectors, data was selected by identifying references to conservation, preservation or restoration of different terrestrial areas or sustainable land use philanthropy. Thirdly, to ensure credibility, data sources were checked on their trustworthiness for example through their citation quality. Lastly, only documents indicating collaborative networks of the foundations, referencing justice related topics or stating the countries in which the funding is allocated were selected. Due to little research on this topic up until now, this study had a more exploratory nature. Consequently, gathering of documents was already a sufficient data collection method by itself (Bowen, 2009).

Next to documents, this study aimed to conduct interviews with employees of all 12 foundations working within the programs contributing to land conservation. Program officers, directors, associates, or other representatives of these programs were contacted via e-mail whereby eight employees of six different foundations agreed to be interviewed (see Table 4). Eventually, six semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain an even more in-depth understanding of the selected foundations’ justice interpretations and field-building activities. Semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility during the conversation. While researchers could prepare the structure of questions asked, they were able to adjust this structure during the interview process (Barkley, 2019). The interview guide for foundation members is displayed in Appendix B. All interviewees were informed of their rights and all of them, but one, agreed to use direct quotations from the interview by stating their position in the specific foundation. The transcripts were safely stored and accessible only by the research team, being the research investigator and supervisors. Therefore, it is ensured that ethical issues are taken into consideration during the research process.

Table 4. Interviewee positions at the foundations.

Name of foundations	Position of interviewees at the foundation	Designation in text
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation	Program Director of the Andes Amazon Initiative	Interviewee A
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	Program Officer of the Environment program	Interviewee B
	Program Associate of the Environment program	Interviewee C
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation	Anonymised on request of interviewee	Interviewee D
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	Senior Program Officer of the Conservation and Sustainable Development program	Interviewee E
	Director of the Climate Solutions program	Interviewee F
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation	Program Officer of the Environment program	Interviewee G
Ford Foundation	Program Officer of the Indonesian Department	Interviewee H

### 3.4 Data analysis

The collected data was analysed through a discourse analysis as it allowed examining the relation between justice discourses in theory and reality, understanding hidden perceptions as well as different underlying interpretations of justice (Bondarouk & Ruël, 2004). To utilise the discourse analysis, the pluralistic justice framework presented in Table 1 was operationalised. This framework helped analysing how the foundations interpret justice throughout programs contributing to land conservation. This led to a better understanding of how the foundations define their subjects, substances, and principles of justice when extending the field of conservation governance.

Second, to examine how their justice interpretations are developed through field-building activities, the collected data was analysed in regards of collaboration activities. As the selected case foundations work with numerous different grant receiver groups such as non-profit organisations, governments, research institutions or local communities, an elaborate analysis of every single partnership was not feasible within the scope of this research. Instead, the more overarching partnerships of foundations together with grantees and main other partners were identified and analysed. This was done in regards of the foundations' approaches to involve subjects of justice into the conservation governance field, their collective developments of justice interpretations and their communication processes with these subjects of justice. Some representative examples of grantees engaging with subjects of justice are given throughout the collaboration sections to better understand the foundations' typical communication or coordination processes with grantees. However, it is important to note that these examples are not giving an extensive portrayal of all grantee group collaborations.

Third, this study assessed in which locations the conservation governance field is built by the foundations. This was done by gathering information on their funding locations and summarising those by continents. However, a limitation here is that the foundations did not always provide precise information on the areas they funded initiative in. For this reason, the information can only be considered as an indication of prominent locations the foundations support with fundings.

The analysis of data at a program level did provide a sufficient basis to analyse the foundations' justice interpretations, as these contain general criteria of where and how projects (i.e., a specific initiative in a region, within a timeframe and with certain stakeholders) are operationalised. However, important to consider is that only specific information on example cases, approved to be published by the foundation, was examined which might distort the actual project circumstances.

As justice is not always framed consistently and rather discursive patterns on the justice issue were examined, similar terms or indications were considered such as data talking about equity, equality, fairness, rights, or other related content. In Table 5, the steps of analysing documents and interview transcripts in regards of first, theoretical justice interpretations and second, developments of justice interpretations through collaboration and location are listed by following the discourse analysis structure of Bondarouk & Ruël (2004).

Table 5. Concrete steps for the data analysis of documents and interview transcripts to identify justice interpretations of the selected foundations.

Aim of each step	Sub-steps
Step 1: Understanding the main intention and contexts of the document	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Thoroughly read document parts deemed relevant</li> <li>2. Make first notes on important themes</li> </ol>
Step 2: Identification of first causal relations within the documents and transcripts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Start drafting emergent codes regarding justice interpretations &amp; collaboration activities including causal relations via NVivo</li> </ol>
Step 3: Categorisation of document content in regards of the pluralistic justice framework	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Develop the code scheme in an open and inductively by considering the subjects, substance, and principles of justice as well as approaches to engage partners</li> <li>5. Constantly revise coding schemes in an iterative way</li> </ol>
Step 4: Explication of the overall construct	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Make insightful labels to the codes by assessing the causal relations and most often used interpretative justice aspects</li> <li>7. Extracting a core summary with an interpreted set of components</li> </ol>
Step 5: Characterisation of linguistic features within coding	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Reading the interpreted sets within the core summary</li> <li>9. Identify the linguistic presentation in terms of convincing debates, vagueness, clearness etc.</li> </ol>
Step 6: Depicting refined dimensions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Determine the noteworthiness of each part in the interpreted sets (Identification of significant presentation of each component)</li> <li>11. Find features and patterns such as underlying meanings and opinions, clearness or vagueness of interpretations, debates etc.</li> </ol>
Step 7: Explication of the overall relations within the construct	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Form a summarised model of the interpreted sets displaying the features and patterns of justice interpretations of each foundation</li> </ol>

Note: Adapted from Bondarouk & Ruël (2004).

### 3.5 Data Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity of data, this research followed a data triangulation which aimed at developing a comprehensive representation of the phenomena by using multiple data sources (Patton, 1999). The document analysis was composed of internal and to some extent external data sources from different publishers and periods of time which provided a triangulated data representation. The addition of interview insights from 6 of the 12 case foundations further ensured the validity of the data used for this research. Furthermore, the data analysis followed an iterative coding process to guarantee that data was reviewed adequately and reliably (Nowell et al., 2017).

# 4. Results

The results section is divided according to the 12 case foundations. The 6 foundations with which interviews were conducted are presented first, followed by the other 6 foundations. After a short introduction into their history, two parts are distinguished for each foundation. The first part elaborates on the foundations’ justice interpretations throughout the programs contributing to land conservation. This part is analysed through the lens of the pluralistic justice framework. The second part describes the collaboration activities for field-building and in which countries, or if the information was not precise enough, on which continents this field is extended by a foundation.

Figure 3 visualises the collaboration networks analysed. The thicker arrows visualise the direct collaboration of the foundation with its grantees while dotted arrows represent an indirect contact to other stakeholders or subjects of justice through the foundations’ grantees. It is important to note that on the one hand, field actors such as governments or Indigenous communities can be indirect partners of the foundation who communicate with the foundation through its grantees such as non-profit organisations. On the other hand, these governments, or subjects of justice such as Indigenous communities can also be direct partners by receiving grants directly themselves. The lighter green boxes represent specific groups of stakeholders, grantees or subjects of justice mentioned frequently throughout different foundations’ land conservation activities. Throughout the research process, it became clear that justice interpretations of foundations are mostly developed in collaboration with their partners. All foundations recognise the necessity but also challenge to involve subjects of justice into the field networks to collectively develop justice interpretations according to the subjects’ needs. The collaboration section demonstrates different approaches the foundations use to engage perspectives of subjects of justice.

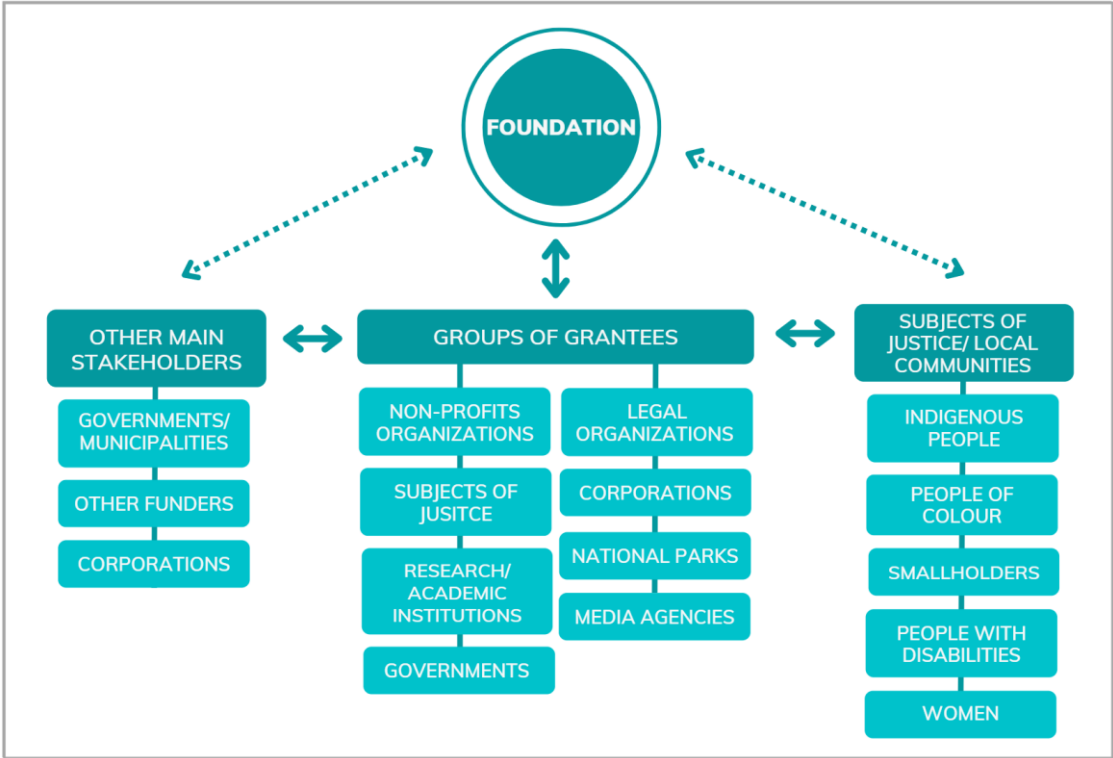


Figure 3. Collaboration networks of foundations, main stakeholders of projects and subjects of justice.

## 4.1 Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation (Moore Foundation) was founded in 2000 by Betty Moore and her husband Gordon Moore, one of the Intel co-founders (Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation [Moore], 2022e). The foundation's headquarters are based in San Francisco, in the U.S. (Moore, 2022e). Today, the foundation has 13 trustees with backgrounds in diverse sectors such as computer systems or economics. Five of these trustees still belong to the Moore family (Moore, 2022f). The Moore Foundation is driven by the following mission: "We foster a path-breaking scientific discovery, environmental conservation, patient care improvements, and preservation of the special character of the Bay Area" (Moore, 2022d, para. 2).

### 4.1.1 Interpretations of justice in the organisational field of conservation governance

Throughout its 'Environmental Conservation' program and the conservation initiatives in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Moore Foundation contributes to land conservation (Moore, 2022b; Moore, 2022d).

#### Subjects of justice

First, the subjects of justice the foundation focuses on are stated. With the habitat degradation of communities disproportionately affected by climate change and future generations being centred as subjects of justice, the cosmopolitan minimalist view is reflected throughout the foundation's land conservation activities (Moore, 2021c; Moore, 2022c). These communities are especially Indigenous peoples who are also characterised as marginalised people with limited decision-making access and political power (Moore, 2017b; Moore, 2018a; Moore, 2018b). This distinction links to the subject of a critical perspective. Through an eco-centric lens, the Moore Foundation furthermore defines all living and animal species, ecosystems, biomes, and biodiversity which are threatened or in need of protection as subjects of justice (Moore, 2022a, Moore 2022b).

#### Substance of justice

The substance of justice identified within the conservation work of the foundation is based on political and legal dimensions of life as well as ensuring that livelihoods of vulnerable people and future generations are protected (Moore, 2017c; Moore, 2018a; Moore, 2018b; Moore, 2022c). This is approached by strengthening the land rights and rights over natural resources of local communities. By focusing on these aspects, the cosmopolitan minimalist substance is represented.

*"So, one of the aspects of our work is to make sure that the people that have access and control over the resources, have permanent collective rights, and over the last ten years, for example, we have been working on making sure that Indigenous lands are respected and also well managed."*  
(Interviewee A)

According to the foundation, it tries to improve the representation of marginalised communities through lifting their voices, building Indigenous peoples' capacity by engaging them in leadership positions in conservation activities as well as strengthening their cultural heritage (Moore, 2017b; Moore, 2018a; Moore, 2018b; Moore, 2018c; Moore, 2021b). These approaches reflect the critical substance of justice.

Moreover, an approach in the direction of the eco-centric substance is identified. Interviewee A indicated that the foundation tries to give a voice to nature within project processes and thereby protect nature including habits of animal and plant species. Through collaborative conservation practices together with Indigenous peoples this protection is tackled, and it is approached to represent nature as an important stakeholder within decision-making processes. However, more concrete steps as giving non-human entities legal rights are not implemented.

*“When we talk about justice, we also talk about giving voice to those that are affected or benefited by a project [...] [and] you quickly think about giving voice to vulnerable people, which is great. But we go a step further. And we also think about giving a voice to nature which doesn’t have a voice at all. You know, they don’t have unions or anything to tell us what they want. [...] We have the principle of no harm. Number one is no harm to any living creature, or thing.” (Interviewee A)*

### **Principles of justice**

The eco-centric principle of justice implied by the Moore Foundation’s environmental programs is focused as it highly values the interconnectedness of the peoples’ lives and natural systems.

*“Just as the Amazon is an integrated system, we have to look at justice in an integrated way, justice for nature and justice for people.” (Interviewee A)*

As nature is an integral part of people’s and wildlife’s habitats, health, and food intakes, the whole ecosystem must be considered when talking about justice within land conservation (Moore, 2021c).

*“And our main purpose from the foundation’s point of view is to secure the habitat, [...] we’re making sure that we are securing the conservation of nature itself, but also the availability of resources for those people that need it most.” (Interviewee A)*

By supporting equal basic rights for people the foundation aims to ensure that everyone can thrive (Moore, 2018a; Moore, 2018c; Moore, 2021c). This refers again to the global minimalist principle of the cosmopolitan perspective. Lastly, the critical perspectives’ principles are reflected throughout the foundation’s work by striving for an inclusive conservation whereby marginalised groups of people are equally engaged (Interviewee A).

In sum, the Moore Foundation prominently views justice issues through a complementary combination of the cosmopolitan minimalist and critical perspective. A rights-based approach through enhanced representation of marginalised people aligns with sustainable development objectives of the United Nations regarding basic human rights (UNSDG, 2022). In combination with the critical perspectives’ substance, the foundation further aims to ensure that subjects of justice have a say in how these legal rights are formed and deployed. The findings indicate that the foundation takes a human-centred justice focus. Even though approaches are made to give nature a voice throughout the conservation governance field, a promotion of rights for other subjects of justice such as non-human entities is not observed.

#### **4.1.2 Field-building through collaboration activities and within funding locations**

The Moore Foundation mainly works together with its grantees as direct partners, being dominantly non-profit organisations. Interviewee A states that no formal documents or processes regarding the

grantees' justice interpretations need to be complied to decide whether the foundation works with a certain grantee.

*"We seek our grantees and we co-create projects with grantees. And in that process, we negotiate with them [...] but we don't have a specific form. [...] We are close to our partners, we kind of design and develop the projects according to the needs in that particular place." (Interviewee A)*

Throughout this cooperative development approach, more specific project aspects are discussed with these grantees of a project.

*"We have to work with current grantees and potential grantees, [...] and we have a consultation process of about one year so that we can determine where the opportunities are, where the challenges are, and what the foundation can contribute to." (Interviewee A)*

Interviewee A explains that most of the communication regarding project processes is done through the grantees as intermediaries without directly consulting with subjects of justice themselves. However, the foundation currently changes its consultation strategy to increase its direct contact with local people affected by initiatives.

*"We are right now planning a way of consultation on the ground with those people that might be affected. So that's in process. And we've had a few consultations already via Zoom. [...] Now the next step is to go with our partners to the field. COVID was preventing visits because we didn't want to go to a place where we could make people vulnerable with our presence." (Interviewee A)*

An example of a collaboration process together with subjects of justice grantees is given by a project based in the Colombian Amazon whereby Indigenous-led alliances are directly provided with funding (Moore, 2021b). According to the foundation, Indigenous peoples' land rights are threatened and through that also their stewardship role for ecosystems as well as their own livelihoods (Moore, 2021b). Therefore, the foundation tries to support bottom-up solution processes and shifts more self-determination capacity and decision-making power to these subjects of justice. Different methods are developed to "facilitate the interface of traditional knowledge, values, and customs with outside legal and socio-economic frameworks, allowing Indigenous communities to define the terms and conditions within which they must be legally consulted about projects that impact their territories" (Moore, 2021b, para. 8). One exemplary method the foundation uses is the 'Free, Prior, and Informed Consent' through which decision-making processes are tried to be enhanced by giving subjects of justice the right to withstand a project in their territory (FAO, 2022; Moore, 2021a). By applying different methods, long-term alliances are created between Indigenous-led organisations and different public or private stakeholders to protect territories of Indigenous peoples (Moore, 2021b). Through this example, the active field-building role of the Moore Foundation is prominent as its funding brings diverse stakeholders together to establish long-lasting networks. Further, Interviewee A states:

*"We have to take into account the specific social, political, economic, cultural conditions where we want to operate. So, working in a state in the Amazon in Brazil is very different than working in the Colombian Amazon or the Bolivian Amazon because there are different conditions." (Interviewee A)*

Therefore, the Moore Foundation's perception is highlighted, that no one-fits-all solution can be applied to each project but instead a process of creating justice interpretations together with locals in different contexts is necessary.



Additionally, governments are essential stakeholders in some of the foundation's projects (Moore, 2017a). In many countries land belongs to the state. To expand conserved areas, assign land rights to Indigenous peoples, or stop illegal mining or deforestation, it is critical to work together with government representatives, according to Interviewee A.

On their website, the Moore Foundation does mention another group of occasional collaboration partners being other funders such as they Wyss Foundation or the Andes Amazon Fund. These partnerships aim at increasing the positive impact of specific initiatives (Moore, 2017b; Moore, 2018c).

As demonstrated, the Moore Foundation predominantly involves non-profit organisation as grant receivers into the field (Interviewee A). However, direct contact of foundation with local communities throughout these non-profit collaborations is very limited. By providing some of its funding to grantees such as Indigenous-led organisations, direct contact to the foundation's subjects of justice is increased and an increased decision-making capacity of them is enhanced in the field. Additionally, collaboration activities with other funders and governments increases the political and economic influence of the Moore Foundation throughout the field.

The Moore Foundation builds the field by funding projects especially in the San Francisco Bay Area, North America, as this is where their headquarter are based (Moore, 2022b). Further, the foundation contributes to land conservation in critical ecosystems from the Andes to the Amazon (Foley et al., 2007). Within different poorer countries in this region in South America (Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia, Argentina, Chile, and Paraguay), the foundation's powerful field-building role is extended towards regions with less capacity to make decisions (Moore, 2017a; Moore, 2018b; Moore, 2018a; Moore, 2022a; Reich, 2020). This creates a dependence relationship of poor regions on the foundation as financial providers.

## 4.2 William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

In 1966, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (Hewlett Foundation) was established by William R. Hewlett, one of the co-founders of the Hewlett-Packard company, Flora L. Hewlett and their eldest son, Walter Hewlett (William and Flora Hewlett Foundation [Hewlett], 2022a). Today, the headquarter of the foundation is based in Menlo Park, in the U.S. (Hewlett, 2022c). As one of the largest family foundations in the U.S., it funds issues such as conservation of the environment, education, or gender equity (Hewlett, 2022a). The board is composed of five to eleven members from different backgrounds as education, business, or politics and additionally four members of the Hewlett family (Hewlett, 2022b). Together they are responsible to ensure that the commitment to the founder's values is fulfilled throughout the foundation's work (Hewlett, 2022e)

### 4.2.1 Interpretations of justice in the organisational field of conservation governance

Throughout its 'Environment' program, the Hewlett Foundation largely contributes to land conservation activities in the field (Hewlett, 2022d). As interviewee B and C explained, the program is divided into three buckets: The defence of current land conservation, the advancement of new protection areas, and the establishment of conditions for protection outcomes to sustain in the long-term. Thus, the following questions are always asked:

*“Who are we funding? Are we only giving our funds to white-led conservation groups? Or are we thinking about the full diversity of people that live in and value that landscape which we're seeking to protect? [...] And are we making sure that everybody is adequately resourced to stand up for this landscape and collaborate to advance its protection?” (Interviewee B)*

### **Subjects of justice**

Due to their limited representation in political discussions, different groups of marginalised people are mainly considered as critical subjects of justice by the foundation. These are Indigenous peoples, People of Colour, Latinx communities, women as well as young people (Hewlett, 2018b). Moreover, people most affected by climate change consequences and thereby facing threatened livelihoods are seen as subjects of justice which implies a cosmopolitan minimalist point of view (Hewlett, 2017). In a few news articles on conservation initiatives, the Hewlett Foundation also takes an individual perspective by considering frontline community members working to self-sufficiently maintain their livelihoods such as farmers or ranchers (Hewlett, 2018a; Hewlett, 2019a). This hints towards a libertarianism view but is not observed throughout other dimensions. Further, eco-centric subjects are frequently emphasised as wildlife and environmental ecosystems are in need of protection, according to the foundation (Hewlett, 2018b).

### **Substance of justice**

The critical perspective is majorly identified as substance of justice in land conservation activities (Hewlett, 2018b). On the one side, the subjects' voices and leadership positions in decision-making processes must be lifted, according to the foundation (Hewlett, 2019b). This is targeted by connecting People of Colour and especially women of colour in land conservation networks to create a more influential position for them (Hewlett, 2018b). For example, the Hewlett Foundation funds a grant called 'Outdoor Afros' which inspires Black connections and leadership in nature (Hewlett, 2020b). Hereby, the representation of People of Colour on public trails or in national parks is aimed to be increased, as historically mainly white people are visible in those. The foundation stresses that a more secure space must be created for these subjects whereby diverse communities gain more access to nature (Hewlett, 2020b).

*“Another justice issue we have is that there are communities that do not feel safe and welcome in our public lands system.” (Interviewee B)*

On the other side, the foundation focuses on Indigenous peoples' representation whereby a critical justice perspective is indicated. The foundation acknowledges that Indigenous peoples' traditional conservation strategies are most valuable for the protection of our ecosystems. According to the foundation, their voices must be made heard in strategic discussions through shifts in decision-making power from funders to local people (Hewlett, 2022f). The cosmopolitan minimalist substance is identified as the foundation supports the protection of Indigenous peoples' land, water, and hunting rights to safeguard their and their future generations' livelihoods (Hewlett, 2018b).

*“When we talk to Tribes, many are thinking seven generations ahead, not just about their own kids and grandkids. We have learned that means recognising your responsibility to the next generation and the generations beyond that, and that covenant that you have with future generations. It means that you're not going to use natural resources in their entirety, because the future generations didn't give permission for that.” (Interviewee B)*

## Principles of justice

One principle of justice of the foundation reflects the critical perspective. The foundation aims for a more safe, supportive, inclusive, and diverse conservation movement (Hewlett, 2018b).

*“We're [...] investing in a broader, more inclusive movement. So, we're investing in organisations that are creating safe spaces for People of Colour in the conservation movement, to meet each other, to build power together, to learn together and to support each other. We're supporting the creation of those spaces for people coming together to learn and grow.” (Interviewee B)*

Further, a focus on the eco-centric principle is identified throughout the foundation's conservation work. It emphasises and acknowledges the connection between people and nature (Hewlett, 2018b). A statement from the foundation's website says, “We take care of the land, and the land takes care of us” (Hewlett, 2020a, para. 1). As healthy rivers, sustainable agriculture, forests, or other vital components of our natural ecosystems are intertwined with the health and livelihoods of present and future generations, one goal of the foundations' conservation strategy entails ecological integrity (Hewlett, 2018b). This is connected to the foundation's global minimalist principles of the cosmopolitan view which aim for sufficiency of resources and intact ecosystems for future generations and people disproportionately affected by climate change consequences (Hewlett, 2018b).

To summarise, as one prominent justice view, the foundation's conservation practices reflect the cosmopolitan minimalists' perspective regarding basic rights to protect livelihoods of its subjects of justice. Additionally, this research identifies that the foundation takes a critical perspective of justice as it aims to strengthen voices of marginalised groups of people. This aligns with the values of human rights and non-discrimination of the United Nations towards a more sustainable development (UNSDG, 2022). Similar to the Moore Foundation, the Hewlett Foundation takes a human-centred justice perspective whereby other non-human entities seem to get less attention throughout justice discourses led by the foundation.

### 4.2.2 Field-building through collaboration activities and within funding locations

The Hewlett Foundation provides funding to numerous different grantee groups which are often supported together with other funders in the field (Hewlett, 2018b; Hewlett, 2021b). Majorly non-profit organisations are funded (Hewlett, 2018b; Hewlett, 2021a). Another example of a grantee group are research institutions to improve scientific knowledge on more sustainable ways of protecting land and water (Hewlett, 2018; Hewlett, 2021a). Grants are also provided directly to subjects of justice grantees such as Black, Indigenous and People of Colour -led groups, women, or youth movements (Hewlett, 2018b). When collaborating with a grantee, the Hewlett Foundation seeks to integrate ‘Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’ values into its collaboration processes.

*“The first thing we're doing is helping those grantees to diversify and make their organisations inclusive. The second thing is we're doing is investing in a broader, more inclusive movement. So, we're investing in organisations that are creating safe spaces for People of Colour in the conservation movement, to meet each other to build power together, to learn together, to support each other.” (Interviewee B)*

Interviewee C described that the foundation provides two different types of grants to its partners. The general operating support which is a fund that allows grant receivers to use the money more flexibly

adjusted to their needs instead of only for project-specific aspects. Long-standing partners typically receive this kind of funding as a fundament of trust was established throughout the years. Other grantees receive project grants which are tied to specific goals or other legal conditions of an initiative. With each grantee from those two groups, the foundation conducts conversations regarding the grantees' approach on how they engage and communicate with subjects of justice.

*“We try to ask the grantees, who are the people that you are aiming to serve with this approach? And are they at the table co creating the approach with you?” (Interviewee C)*

In this regard, interviewees B and C emphasised the importance of listening to the insights of grantees and learn how to support them effectively while ensuring a co-creation with all subjects of justice represented during the implementation of the projects.

*“It's not a prescriptive top-down approach, we fully understand [...] we do not have the answers. We are funding multiple sites in very different areas, geographically, and it's just impossible to know the depth and breadth of what's going on at each site. And so, there's that really heavy reliance on site based, especially smaller organisations that we're working with to kind of establish that trust and empower them to say that they are the experts, please let us know how best to help you.” (Interviewee B)*

This bottom-up approach of the foundation aims at making project impacts more enduring as locals are engaged from the beginning and fight for the outcomes to withstand policy or other social change (Interviewee B). To advance its conservation, collaboration and equity strategies, the foundation collectively reflects on its Western Conservation strategy every 5 years together with its partners (Hewlett, 2018b). In this regard, an important stakeholder of many projects the foundation funds are governments which establish relevant structures and policies to implement the projects' goals. However, this cooperation with governments is usually maintained by the grantees whereby only an indirect contact of the foundation with policymakers is observed (Hewlett, 2018b).

To enhance long-term solutions, a community-driven conservation approach is centred by the foundation through which capacity to lead initiatives is given to subjects of justice grantees (Hewlett, 2018b; Hewlett, 2022a). One of many examples is a grant to the Yurok tribe to improve its capacities in legal competences and thereby protect its land and rivers (Hewlett, 2021b). To really conserve those ecosystems, Indigenous or local stewardship is most effective and enduring, according to the foundation. Thereby, Indigenous peoples' involvement as leaders in the field is supported by the foundation (Hewlett, 2021b).

Lastly, to improve collaboration activities within the whole conservation governance field, the Hewlett Foundation invests in building up capacities to learn from one another and build up relationships to increase its impacts (Hewlett, 2018b).

*“So, we invest in structures and opportunities and forums for collaboration and try to create the spaces for people to collaborate. We also invest in ways for people to deepen their learning about collaboration and their opportunity for collaboration with people that are different than them. [...] We're investing in the skill building and the tools for the movement to be more effective.” (Interviewee C)*

Additionally, interviewee C described the example of a communication hub the foundation supports. This hub focuses on engaging diverse constituencies shifting narratives about conservation and lifting

the voices of people who are not typically represented in the conservation governance field such as communities of colour.

To conclude, the Hewlett Foundation's field-building role is extended by working mainly with non-profit organisations as grant receivers. This influential role is enhanced by engaging research institutions and governments in the field. A focus of the foundation lies in communication processes together with its partners and especially local people affected by a project to collaboratively develop strategies by supporting them according to their needs. Lastly, the foundation aims to engage more subjects of justice into the field by providing funding directly to organisations or groups of people representing Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, youth, or women.

The Hewlett Foundation extends the field of conservation governance solely in the North American West as mainly the foundation's origin country, the U.S., and parts of Canada are funded (Hewlett, 2022d). The foundation's field-building range is thereby limited to these countries of the Global North. However, this means that the protection of other highly threatened ecosystem landscapes around the world is not supported by the foundation.

### 4.3 The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Founded by the co-founder of the Hewlett-Packard company, David Packard, and his wife Lucile Packard, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation (Packard Foundation) was established in 1964 in the U.S. (The David and Lucile Packard Foundation [Packard], 2022f). This family-led foundation is governed by a board of trustees responsible for reviewing the policies and leading the strategy into the direction of the foundation's vision (Packard, 2022b). Its vision is: "A just and equitable world where both people and nature flourish" (Packard, 2022g, para. 1). Members of the Packard family are still engaged in the operations and governance of the foundation (Packard, 2022d).

#### 4.3.1 Interpretations of justice in the organisational field of conservation governance

The Packard Foundation contributes to land conservation mainly through its programs 'Agriculture, Livelihoods and Conservation' and 'Conservation and Science' which support the protection of natural lands (Packard, 2022c).

##### Subjects of justice

Main subjects of justice of the foundation indicate a capabilities perspective. Smallholders or communities who need more equal access to natural, employment, and educational opportunities to advance their economic situation are often referred to (Carter, 2019; Packard, 2022a). Further subjects of justice identified in these programs are reflected by the critical and the cosmopolitan minimalist perspective being Indigenous peoples, local communities, women, future generations, or young people whose rights and voices need to be strengthened (Carter, 2019; Packard, 2022a). Additionally, the foundation stresses that critical landscapes, and thereby habitats of threatened species, need protection whereby eco-centric subjects of justice are represented (Packard, 2021a; Packard, 2022a; Packard, 2022c).

## Substance of justice

One of the foundation's focused substances is viewed through the lens of the cosmopolitan minimalist perspective as land tenure and rights are aimed to be shifted from government ownership to native communities as well as smallholders. Their decision-making capacity over the land is crucial for their own livelihoods but also for a sustainable preservation of these enriched ecosystems (Packard, 2022a).

*"I think one of the biggest challenges related to justice is land ownership/ rights. So, recognition of Indigenous peoples and local communities' rights over forests, for example. [...] The research is there, the science has spoken that well if you give trust and leadership to the Indigenous peoples and local communities to lead the conservation of forests you will benefit more." (Interviewee D)*

Another focus of the foundation lies on the substance of the capabilities view. The foundation emphasises that strengthened equal opportunities are needed to advance economic developments in countries such as Ethiopia or Indonesia (Packard, 2022a; Packard, 2022f). Therefore, different grantees who focus on access to employment, education, financing, housing, or natural resources for those subjects of justice are funded by the Packard Foundation (Northern California Grantmakers, 2021; Packard, 2022a). On the other side, their representation is a critical factor to enhance livelihoods and economic opportunities, according to the foundation. The Packard Foundation strives for a more participatory conservation approach whereby subjects of justice are included in decision-making processes as Interviewee D described. These approaches reflect the critical justice perspective. By giving marginalised communities a voice and valuing their point of view, conservation efforts can be improved while engaging a more diverse, directly affected group of people. Especially young people and women are mentioned here frequently as their increased involvement in leadership positions provides them with more equal opportunities (Packard, 2022a; Packard, 2022g).

*"If you're talking about forests conservations, especially in the context of climate change, it's also about intergenerational justice, so we also need to include youth and women to be part of it because these groups are typically the ones that are left on the side-lines of these types of discussions, especially in developing countries." (Interviewee D)*

## Principles of justice

Regarding the foundation's principles of justice, again the capabilities perspective is emphasised. Interviewee D explained that fairness means safeguarding of equal opportunities for marginalised people. A sole reliance on overarching equal rights is not sufficient but considering the specific contexts and needs of subjects of justice is essential to then adapt the supportive interventions accordingly.

*"Because the context of justice in developed countries, is really related to the implementation of laws that are typically only pretty good in terms of upholding human rights, upholding what you call justice between races, but in developing countries I think it needs to be connected with fairness." (Interviewee D)*

Lastly, the eco-centric principle is mentioned throughout the work of the Packard Foundation. The connectedness of natural systems' ecosystem services and livelihoods of local communities is a critical factor recognised by the foundation (Packard, 2022a).

To sum it up, the foundation supports equal opportunities for humans to develop more self-sufficient capacities regarding their economic situations. Thereby, the capabilities justice perspective is centred

throughout the foundation's conservation work. Linked to this perspective are the critical views' dimensions to involve underrepresented subjects in leadership positions and elements of the cosmopolitan minimalist view by funding land right issues. Interviewee D states that a rights-based approach cannot respond to specific individual justice issues whereby the foundation supports justice aspects of all three justice perspectives. These perspectives align with the sustainable development values of the United Nations and are required for more effective conservation work (Isager, 2002; Mollett & Kepe, 2018; UNSDG, 2022). Nevertheless, all three justice perspectives focus on humans as subjects of justice and advocacy for legal rights of ecological entities is not observed throughout the foundation's work.

#### 4.3.2 Field-building through collaboration activities and within funding locations

In its value statement, the Packard Foundation is declaring to "strive for meaningful impact, evaluate and adapt [...] [its] work in partnership with communities" (Packard, 2022f, para. 7). Interviewee D described that this contact to communities is maintained through the foundation's mediating grantees. By collaborating with other funders in the field to support those grantees, the Packard Foundation takes an influential role and extends the networks within the conservation governance field (Packard Foundation, 2021a; Packard Foundation, 2021b; Wong, 2017). Two main grantee groups Interviewee D mentioned are non-profit organisations or especially NGOs and subjects of justice grantees as for example smallholder troops in Indonesia. Another grantee the foundation funds projects of research and academic institutions (Interviewee D). Among others, these projects can include research on innovative practices to better engage communities, outdoor education programs for young people or studies on the role of gender in conservation (Northern California Grantmakers, 2021; Packard, 2020; Wong, 2017). Another important grantee to implement justice ambitions in specific regions and 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion' values throughout the foundation's work are governments (Packard, 2022a).

*"[For example, we] support governments offices to ensure that they develop the correct policy mechanisms to speed up the acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples' rights over forests."*  
(Interviewee D)

The foundation seeks to work together with grantees who integrate 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion' values in their practices as well.

*"We definitely try to encourage them for example, to have policies on diversity, equity and inclusion in the organisation, so related to women or supporting young staff, as well."* (Interviewee D)

As interviewee D explained, to achieve equity throughout the foundation's projects a main need is enhanced engagement of diverse voices and perspectives throughout the field. Interviewee D further stated that the foundation completely avoids 'fortress conservation' which is an area designated to be conserved for wildlife by excluding all people currently living there (Oxford University Press, 2022). Instead, the foundation centres a more participatory conservation through which communities living in those regions help to protect natural ecosystems.

*"So, in many of the grantee's works, participatory approach is key. So, for example, they [the grantees] do work on participatory mapping the land of these local communities and Indigenous*

*peoples, they do participatory planning at the district level or the village level by bringing in local communities including youth or women as representatives as well.” (Interviewee D)*

Through local leadership capacity, the opportunities of these subjects of justice to engage in the conservation governance field are increased (Packard, 2022a). As a result, more region-based knowledge advances conservation activities and livelihoods of communities are protected through higher economic and nutritional returns (Packard, 2022a; Packard, 2022e). To give more decision-making power to subjects of justice, or in this case local and Indigenous communities, the foundation encourages grantees to use the ‘Free, Prior, and Informed Consent’ approach just like the Moore Foundation.

*“Well, I think in the context of our work, one thing that is always discussed and really important, in terms of guiding light of everything that we do is FPIC: free prior and informed consent. So, I think it entails everything that we do on the ground, especially the work that are related with Indigenous and local communities.” (Interviewee D)*

Interviewee D stated that the foundation and grantees acknowledge differing decision-making procedures per region or community. Therefore, grantees try to adapt the ‘Free, Prior, and Informed Consent’ methods to those local contexts to ensure a successful implementation.

*“The process is really contextual in different places. [...] Before they are brought into the ‘Free, Prior, and Informed Consent’ process, we really need to understand how they are making decisions because in many places [...] it's not about individual decisions, but about group decisions.” (Interviewee D)*

The importance of adapting the foundation’s practices to local contexts is often emphasised. Especially when talking about ‘Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’ values, the interpretations of the foundation members themselves should not guide the projects, according to interviewee D. There is a requirement to improve an understanding of ‘Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’ interpretations of subjects of justice and find out what action steps or regulations are needed to change root causes of injustices (Interviewee D). Hereby, a more long-lasting impact of initiatives is aimed to be ensured as described by Interviewee D.

*“Many of these concepts of justice, ‘Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’ are brought by the developed countries. [...] That's why, in many of our grant making strategies, we meet with our grantees in these countries to clarify with [...] [local people]: What do you mean about justice? What do you mean about fairness? What do you mean about diversity, equity, inclusion? [...] I think it is very important to really go to the people where we work and really ask them about these concepts first before we develop something on our behalf.” (Interviewee D)*

To conclude, by engaging with different grantees from non-profit work, politics, science, academia to local communities and other funders in the field, the foundation extends the field of conservation governance. The foundation is mostly adopting participatory conservation approaches whereby local communities’ capacity to make decisions regarding their own habitats is enhanced. Further, the foundation aims to develop its justice views throughout the field according to the interpretations of subjects of justice. However, as the foundation usually only indirectly communicates with the subjects of justice through its intermediaries, being the grantees, little possibilities for subjects to express their interpretations in direct conversations with the field-building foundation are given.



With its 'Land' program, the Packard Foundation funds conservation initiatives throughout the North American West including its origin region, the west of the U.S., and some western areas of Canada and Mexico (Packard, 2022d). Accordingly, the field of conservation governance is extended within a rather limited geographical range by the foundation. However, the foundation's 'Agriculture, Livelihoods, and Conservation' program extends the field more globally. Especially in Ethiopia, Indonesia and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo smallholder projects are supported (Packard, 2017). By funding these poorer, less developed countries in Africa and Asia, a funder-recipient dependence is created whereby power to make decisions regarding justice issues lies by the foundation (Reich, 2020).

## 4.4 The MacArthur Foundation

In 1970, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (MacArthur Foundation) was officially founded by John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur. Being one of the largest independent foundations in the U.S., it funds different organisations in around 50 countries (John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation [MacArthur], 2022f). Today, John Palfrey is the president of the MacArthur foundation (MacArthur, 2022f). The foundation's mission states that it "supports creative people, effective institutions, and influential networks building a more just, verdant and peaceful world" (MacArthur, 2022a, para. 1). This mission is aimed to be fulfilled throughout its funding initiatives in different sectors and support of critical, accessible journalism (MacArthur, 2022b).

### 4.4.1 Interpretations of justice in the organisational field of conservation governance

Throughout the program 'Conservation and Sustainable Development' the foundation funded land conservation projects for a long time. During the last years, this program was closed, and specific initiatives were integrated into a new program called 'Climate Solutions' which entails different focus areas next to land conservation (MacArthur, 2022e).

#### Subjects of justice

Most prominent within the 'Climate Solutions' program are subjects of the cosmopolitan minimalist view because Indigenous peoples with limited basic rights are frequently brought to issue (Dasgupta, 2017a; Greenstein, 2018; MacArthur, 2022e; MacArthur, 2022g). Additionally, women, poor people, People of Colour and again Indigenous communities with limited political representation or unequal decision-making power are highlighted in the foundation's conservation work representing the critical perspective (Dasgupta, 2017a; MacArthur, 2020; Sellers, 2018). To some extent, the findings indicate that the foundation takes a cosmopolitan egalitarian justice perspective as people affected by unequally distributed climate or pollution burdens are brought to issue. However, this perspective is not observed in regards of the foundation's substance and principles of justice.

*"We have lots of examples particularly around polluting industries that they always get placed in the areas where the poor people, People of Colour are living. So, the white people have their nice pristine areas, and all the pollution is where the white people are not living. That's not equitable. [...] So, in decision making, when a decision to place a new factory or whatever it might be, that principle of equity needs to play a role." (Interviewee F)*

Additionally, eco-centric subjects of justice are identified as the protection of wildlife threatened by extinction or human development is emphasised by the foundation (Dasgupta, 2017b; Dasgupta, 2018).

### Substance of justice

A substance of justice frequently highlighted during the interview and in publications of the foundation, is reflected by the cosmopolitan minimalist perspective as land, hunting, customary or treaty rights of subjects are supported (Dasgupta, 2017a; Greenstein, 2018; MacArthur, 2022e; MacArthur, 2022g).

*“So, a challenge that we have certainly worked on in a number of places is to help sort out who has the principle right to the land. Just the fact that somebody might have title to that land doesn't mean necessarily that there could not be competing interests. And sometimes that ends up in court where all of that has to be clarified. [...] and what philanthropy has done, either directly or through intermediary organisations, has often been helping to financially support that process so that people who have the rights or feel their rights are being challenged, have access to the courts and can participate alongside those who might have competing rights.” (Interviewee E)*

These land rights and rights to use resources in those areas sustainably not only ensure the livelihoods of Indigenous peoples but also enhance conservation work due to their local knowledge, as the foundation states (Dasgupta, 2017a). Highlighted is also enhanced representation of these people to ensure rights are maintained (MacArthur, 2022c).

*“All the key stakeholders need [...] to be invited equally to the table. What happens often is [...] they are not part of the styling process, so they don't have representation when something is initiated. And again, that's not equitable in from a decision-making perspective.” (Interviewee F)*

By building this engagement capacity, the foundation's cosmopolitan minimalist substance links to the critical perspectives' substance as it tries to lift the voice and leadership possibilities of Indigenous peoples and women, People of Colour or others who are mainly affected by pollution or degradation (Blue Ventures, 2022; Dasgupta, 2017a; Greenstein, 2018; MacArthur, 2020).

### Principles of justice

As a more inclusive, equal engagement of marginalised communities is strived for by the foundation, the principles of the critical perspective are prominent (Blue Ventures, 2022; Dasgupta, 2017a; Greenstein, 2018; MacArthur, 2020). Moreover, the eco-centric together with the cosmopolitan minimalist view are identified within the land conservation work by emphasising the dependence of human's livelihoods on intact ecosystems which is especially aimed to be protected through communities knowing best their local environment (Asher, 2018; MacArthur, 2019; MacArthur, 2022d).

According to these findings, the foundation dominantly views justice issues through a lens of the cosmopolitan minimalist in combination with the critical perspective. The foundation supports specifically Indigenous peoples' resource and land rights as well as political representation of Indigenous peoples, People of Colour and women to secure their livelihoods and protect nature. These political and civil rights are essential to support for a more sustainable development, according to the United Nations (UNSDG, 2022). As the foundation does not advocate the substance of the eco-centric perspective, legal recognition for all living and non-living species, ecology-focused justice discourses are limited to subjects and principles dimensions of justice.

#### 4.4.2 Field-building through collaboration activities and within funding locations

The MacArthur Foundation builds up the field of conservation governance especially by working with its main partners being non-profit organisation grant receivers.

*“We mostly provide funding to non-profits, [...] and they are the organisations that are facilitating those partnerships with communities and with governments.” (Interviewee F)*

Many grantees of the foundation’s program contributing to conservation work together with local communities to protect the environment and thereby their livelihoods (MacArthur, 2021a). An example of a non-profit organisation grantee is ‘BirdLife’ who partnered with locals in Rwanda and Burundi to assess landscape characteristics and co-develop optimal agriculture and forestry methods (Poelking, 2019). These customised methods are in turn benefitting ecosystem functioning and providing more secure incomes for communities in those regions (Poelking, 2019). To further ensure that resources or land rights of subjects of justice are protected, the foundation funds legal organisations.

*“In each of the places that we worked, we had a portfolio of grants and each of those included partnerships with legal organisations that understood local and regional contexts and could advocate on behalf of the communities.” (Interviewee E)*

Important to consider is that these land right issues are very much dependent on local contexts and therefore legal organisations, or also other grantees must develop an adapted strategy to support subjects of justice, according to the foundation (Interviewee F). Interviewee E gave the following example of a corporation grantee:

*“We actually made, what we call, a capstone investment to a new organisation. It's focusing on providing direct support to Indigenous communities that have territorial rights to these systems and supporting their effort to secure them and protect them.” (Interviewee E)*

Additionally, the MacArthur Foundation funds research institutions and media agency grantees to study different land conservation strategies as well as make those findings accessible to everyone (MacArthur, 2021b; MacArthur, 2021c). An example is the grantee ‘Mongabay’, a non-profit news platform publishing a series on the effectiveness of different community-based forest management strategies (Dasgupta, 2017a). Thereby, the foundation initiates the distribution of information on justice issues in conservation practices throughout the field.

Interviewee F described that the foundation’s preferred way is to allocate funds as local as possible. Even when going through larger non-profit organisations, the foundation tries to provide the funding to its department located in the focus country. Through this approach more power over the money lies in the hand of local staff familiar with the region’s needs. Further, Interviewee F stated that the foundation strives for a direct contact between grantee representatives and local communities already before the project started. The foundation seeks to ensure that the perspectives of subjects of justice are represented at the decision-making tables throughout the whole process.

*“That upfront consultation and engagement with the communities is absolutely necessary. [...] So, a bottom-up process where all of this starts with initial communication, not with a national government, but with the communities affected is really important. And the very first question to ask is really, who do you represent? And can you document that you actually fairly represent that organisation?” (Interviewee F)*

To guarantee that grantees first ensure that local communities approve the project's goals and strategies, the foundation has a legal requirement. 'Free, Prior, and Informed Consent' documentation needs to be provided by grantees as part of their proposal.

*"I would say at the highest level we very much support the principle of free prior informed consent. [...] We feel that they have a voice if there are development activities in that area. And that voice needs to be brought in before anything happens right?" (Interviewee F)*

Another important aspect emphasised by interviewees E and F is the long-term impact of a funded project.

*"One of the challenges with us leaving this space is really that investments have to take a long-term focus. [...] It has to be funding that is sort of prolonged in that place and is able to adapt to and respond to the realities of what's happening on the ground." (Interviewee E)*

By building up the capacity of local communities to self-sufficiently manage conservation activities in their regions and establishing networks with other communities, organisations or governmental institutions, this longevity of a project is aimed to be secured (Dasgupta, 2017a; MacArthur, 2021c; MacArthur, 2022c).

As main grantee partners non-profit organisations are mentioned by the foundation. The field is extended by involving legal organisations, corporations, media, and research institutions as grantees in the field. Consequently, the foundation's field-building influence is present throughout different collaboration networks. Further, Interviewee E states that the foundation recognises the need to adapt strategies to local needs. Besides an initial consultation process and the formal approval through the 'Free, Prior and Informed Consent', the foundation claims to engage locals in the development of project strategies and executions.

The MacArthur Foundation builds the field of conservation governance in many different countries on the continents of North and South America, Africa, and Asia (MacArthur Foundation, 2022d). Its focus areas are the watersheds of the Andes, the Great Lakes of East Central Africa, the Mekong watersheds, and the Eastern Himalayas (MacArthur Foundation, 2022d). These areas contain critical and threatened ecosystems which are important to protect (Chettri et al., 2010; Comer et al., 2022; Loury & Ainsley, 2020; Salzburger et al., 2014). However, these landscapes lie in rather poor and less-developed countries of the Global South. Therefore, a paternalistic position of the foundation is taken by providing funding to countries with little economic or decision-making power (Reich, 2020).

#### 4.5 Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

In 1996, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation was established in the U.S. to follow the will of Doris Duke (Doris Duke Charitable Foundation [DDCF], 2022i). Until her death in 1993, she used her inheritance from James Buchanan Duke to support projects for the welfare of people or environmental conservation initiatives. Her vision is entrenched into the work of all members of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation by "always working toward a more creative, equitable and sustainable future" (DDCF, 2022i, para. 1). The foundation funds 6 different program areas: Performing Arts, Medical Research, Environment, Child Well-being, Building Bridges, and the African Health Initiative (DDCF, 2022j).

#### 4.5.1 Interpretations of justice in the organisational field of conservation governance

Throughout its program 'Environment', the foundation funds projects conserving natural landscapes (DDCF, 2021c).

##### Subjects of justice

The subjects of justice centred indicate a critical perspective of the foundation by frequently mentioning People of Colour, Indigenous and low-income communities, or youth (DDCF, 2022a; DDCF, 2022b; Michels, 2021). These subjects are all characterised by facing injustices, being historically underfunded or having inequitable access to leadership, as the foundation states (DDCF, 2022b; DDCF, 2022f; Michels, 2021). Additionally, as other main subjects, intact and threatened ecosystems as well as species on our planet are centred which reflect the eco-centric view of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (DDCF, 2022c; DDCF, 2022d; DDCF, 2022g).

##### Substance of justice

Interviewee G explained that the foundation's funding for land conservation is divided by three approaches which demonstrate its interpretation of different substances of justice. The first two approaches represent the critical perspective while the third one additionally indicates a cosmopolitan minimalist view of the foundation. Both, the first and second approach emphasise the problem of white representation within philanthropic work without giving room for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (DDCF, 2022b; DDCF, 2022f). By, for example, supporting students of colour throughout their academic path, a more diverse staff, academia, and conservation field is strived for by the foundation (Michels, 2021).

*"Many of the agencies, the federal, state, and local government agencies, the non-profit organisations, the philanthropic organisations, primarily have white staff. So, a large part of our interest in the Environment Program was really helping to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of the conservation field and supporting some undergraduate student programs to support students of colour interested in conservation." (Interviewee G)*

Additionally, the foundation searches for ways to improve capacity building of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour by providing them directly with funding (DDCF, 2021a; DDCF, 2022a). This aims at increasing their potential to be engaged, ensuring their access to financial resources, building more diverse narratives, and giving them authority over land use decisions (Michels, 2021). These substances reflect the critical perspective while linking to aspects of the capabilities view.

*"One of the other challenges has really been around funding access. So, from a philanthropic perspective, most communities of colour or BIPOC [Black, Indigenous and People of Colour]-led organisations that are working on conservation issues, haven't had access to philanthropic funding, [...] and so what has happened is, there has been generally a lack of capacity for those communities, for those organisations to really have positive conservation outcomes." (Interviewee G)*

Thirdly, the substance of the cosmopolitan minimalist perspective is highlighted as the foundation focuses on land right issues and problems around access to conserved open spaces. These issues are prominent in urban areas in which nature access enhances physical and mental health, as Interviewee G explained. For example, the foundation works on 'land back projects' to support the transfer of ownerships to Indigenous peoples to make up for injustices evolved in the past.

*“We wanted to explore [...] supporting land back work in the U.S. and what that looks like and ended up providing some funding for a tribe to basically purchase some property that was of cultural and historical significance to that tribe and [...] to help steward that property. [...] There's been a really broad range of types of land back projects. So [for example] there's been a co-management. That's where a tribe would partner with a public agency or a non-profit that owns the land to actually manage it jointly.” (Interviewee G)*

### **Principles of justice**

The foundation's mission specifies its critical perspective's principle: “The mission of the Environment Program is to ensure a thriving, resilient environment for wildlife and people, and foster an inclusive, effective conservation movement” (DDCF, 2022h, para. 1). By majorly supporting the three funding areas explained above, the foundation aims to achieve racial equity and inclusivity in its grant making (DDCF, 2022a; DDCF, 2021a). Additionally, the principle of the eco-centric view is highlighted. The foundation identifies itself as stewards of the environment and therefore tries to protect valuable ecosystems being essential habitats for wildlife and livelihoods of humans (DDCF, 2022h).

To conclude, the foundation mainly views justice issues through a critical perspective. The foundation strives for racial equity especially by building up narratives and authority of Black, Indigenous and People of Colour in the conservation governance field. As systemic, historically evolved racism in this field is still a large barrier for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour to be involved, the foundation's approaches are critical for a more just, inclusive field. Further, the support of 'land back projects', indicating a cosmopolitan minimalist perspective, is another relevant step towards a more just sustainable development (UNSDG, 2022). However, again an eco-centric substance of justice is not promoted by the foundation. Consequently, ecological entities are not focused throughout justice discourses on legal rights.

#### **4.5.2 Field-building through collaboration activities and within funding locations**

To strengthen the conservation field, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation is fostering a stable network of partners working together to protect the environment (DDCF, 2022f). Interviewee G stated that the foundation seeks to diversify this conservation governance field especially throughout its work with grantees. The foundation's largest group of grantees entails non-profit organisations.

*“In the foundation's history we have predominantly worked with larger environmental non-profits in the U.S.” (Interviewee G)*

By funding research institutions, the foundation extends the conservation governance field further. On the one side, the foundation funds research projects, and tools for more enhanced conservation solutions (DDCF, 2022e). On the other side, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation financially supports students graduating in environmental programs at different universities. Especially by focusing on providing education opportunities to Black, Indigenous and People of Colour students, a more diverse conservation governance field is strived for (DDCF, 2021b; Michels, 2021). In collaboration with other funders, many different projects supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation are implemented. This connection to other financially powerful organisations strengthens the role of the foundation in the land preservation field and its possibilities to integrate their DEI values in those networks (Doris Duke, 2022d; Doris Duke, 2022e; Michels, 2021).

*“Whether that’s through communications or something else, there’s lots of different ways for us to help [...] [communities] elevate their presence among other funders in the field as a whole.” (Interviewee G)*

Other relevant grantees are governments such as states of the U.S. or subnational political institutions. The foundation aims at fostering actions of states and municipalities to enhance its conservation strategies (DDCF, 2022e). These are, for example, the creation of incentives for adopting environmentally friendly methods in agriculture and forestry or the introduction of policies benefiting inclusive conservation approaches (DDCF, 2022e).

To integrate ‘Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’ values into its work, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation established the ‘Inclusion Capacity Building Program’ (DDCF, 2022a). Through this program the foundation’s grantees receive funds to create more diverse, inclusive, and equitable leadership positions and thereby diversify an essential part of the conservation field (DDCF, 2022a). Interviewee G described that the foundation also tries to build a more trusting relationship with its grantees by being very transparent about how it operates. Further, the foundation aims to increase the involvement of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour in the field by providing them with fundings directly.

*“We have supported a couple of native-led and a handful of Black-led organisations or projects and my hope is that we’re moving in a direction to support more of those organisations doing conservation work.” (Interviewee G)*

By, for example, working with Indigenous- and People of Colour -led grantees, such as ‘Aina Momona’, ‘Native Movement’ or ‘Ekvn-Yefolecv’, capacity to decide what the funding is used for lies in the hands of different subjects of justice grantees (DDCF, 2021a). Thereby, the foundation strives for a more community-centred conservation field (DDCF, 2021a).

*“For us, as we think about our work, we are really looking to those communities to be leading and telling us what they need. So, can we be flexible with our funding and change the way that we work in order to help support those communities?” (Interviewee G)*

To achieve this flexibility throughout funding activities, the foundation seeks to provide more funds adapted to the needs of local communities in the future. An approach aimed for in the future is the implementation of the general operating fund.

*“We have tended to make more project specific grants that are a little bit more constrained. [...] We as a funder like moving towards funding more general operating support [...] to [give local organisations] freedom and flexibility to use those resources.” (Interviewee G)*

To sum it up, the foundation particularly aims at diversifying its own work as well as the practices of their partners to give Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour more capacity in decision-makings. To further support these subjects of justice, the foundation plans to extend its grant-making directly to Black- or Indigenous-led organisations. For now, its financial support for these subjects is still mainly directed through their main grantees being non-profit organisations and some scientific and academic institutions. Thereby, decision-making capacity of these subjects of justice is still limited whereby their justice interpretations are less represented in the field.

The projects funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation are all based in different regions throughout the U.S., North America (DDCF, 2021c). This demonstrates that the foundation is building the field of conservation governance solely in their origin country. Many other critical landscapes worldwide are thereby not supported by the foundation.

## 4.6 Ford Foundation

In 1936, the Ford Foundation was established by Edsel Ford, who is the son of Henry Ford, the founder of the Ford Motor Company (Ford Foundation [Ford], 2022f). The foundation is based in New York, in the U.S. (Ford Foundation, 2022f). Today Darren Walker is the tenth president of the Ford Foundation and together with a board of trustees leads the foundation to achieve social change (Ford, 2022d). The overall mission statement of the Ford Foundation says: “Across eight decades, our mission has been to reduce poverty and injustice, strengthen democratic values, promote international cooperation and advance human achievement” (Ford, 2022b, para. 3).

### 4.6.1 Interpretations of justice in the organisational field of conservation governance

Throughout the ‘Natural Resources and Climate Change’ program, the foundation contributes to land conservation (Ford, 2022c).

#### Subjects of justice

Through the lens of a cosmopolitan minimalist view, Indigenous and poor people, or local communities with a lack of economic or natural resources are centred by the foundation (Irwan & Nugroho, 2018; Walker, 2018). Further, the foundation frequently mentions subjects of justice affected by injustices and underrepresentation such as women, people with disabilities, and again Indigenous or poor people (Ford, 2020a; Irwan & Nugroho, 2018; Zuzy, 2018). This indicates a critical perspective of justice.

*“We have categorised all of them as marginalised communities. Because now women, of course, get more attention and equality between men and women is becoming more mainstream in the discourse. And there's Indigenous peoples, especially after COP26, where they got so prominent, [...] But others are not that lucky [...]. Its people with disability because they got the least attention from the public” (Interviewee H)*

#### Substance of justice

On the one side, the cosmopolitan minimalist substance stands out in the foundation’s land conservation initiatives. The foundation often talks about making an effort to ensure land or tenure rights for Indigenous peoples or other local communities (Ford, 2021a; Ford, 2021b; Zuzy, 2018). These people are affected by unfair policies regarding lands they inhabit as the state owns these lands and rather sells them to powerful corporations to make profit, as Interviewee H explains. People rely on these lands for natural resources and as habitats while preserving the ecosystems they live in through more locally adapted and sustainable ways of living, according to the foundation (Cunningham, 2022; Zuzy, 2018).

*“The rights of the local community were not recognised or prioritised, and there are overlappings over the land resources and also the forest resources and being a social justice organisation, the*



*Ford Foundation has one objective: to address these land rights issues and help these communities to get recognised for their rights and their lands.” (Interviewee H)*

On the other side, the critical perspective is highlighted throughout the foundation’s land conservation work. The foundation aims to increase decision-making power and enhances participation potentials of marginalised groups, being most prominently women and people with disabilities (Davies, 2018; Ford, 2020a; Warnaaars, 2020). Interviewee H clarifies that not only the voices of subjects of justice must be strengthened. A key to more equal representation is to really make them be heard in political decision-making processes.

*“[We] help them be seen because if you are women or you are disabled, you are invisible in that community [...] so they need someone else to speak on behalf of them. So, it would be the ideal situation, to give them a voice but in many instances, they cannot even do it themselves. So, they need help.” (Interviewee H)*

For example, by claiming to hold governments accountable, the foundation tries to guarantee that the voices are not suppressed or ignored. This in turn ensures that these subjects of justice not only have the official approval to engage but that they eventually are able to enjoy the same benefits as other community members (Interviewee H).

### **Principles of justice**

An inclusive society with respect to the rights of minority groups and equity in terms of their representation is aimed for by the foundation (Ford, 2020a; Ford, 2021b; Ford, 2022a). Therefore, the principles of justice are composed again of a combination of the cosmopolitan minimalist and critical perspective.

*“We want a world where everybody gets justice independent of their physical conditions, sexual ambition etc.” (Interviewee H)*

To summarise, the Ford Foundation emphasises the support of people with disabilities besides other marginalised groups of people being mainly women, Indigenous and poor communities. The protection of their rights and political representation is focused whereby the cosmopolitan minimalist and the critical perspectives are identified. This rights-based approach and more involvement capacities of marginalised groups is relevant for sustainable development and more effective, just conservation approaches (Isager, 2002; Mollett & Kepe, 2018; UNSDG, 2022). However, the foundation supports conservation of the environment only as a key to protect livelihoods of people whereby no eco-centric justice view is indicated (Ford, 2022c).

#### **4.6.2 Field-building through collaboration activities and within funding locations**

Interviewee H stated that collaboration throughout the foundation’s work is fundamental to create positive impacts.

*“It’s important to collaborate, work together as an ecosystem, listen to each other, work together rather than being the one only giving the money.” (Interviewee H)*

Before providing funding to grantees, the foundation tries to ensure their commitment to ‘Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’ throughout a potential project.

*“We make that extra requirement for grantees who have to answer the question how they are going to engage with people with disabilities, women, Indigenous peoples, and youth increasingly. [...] We do have documents that we share with our potential partners about what ‘Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’ means and a lot of the organisations actually do not think about ‘Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’ that much. [...] We make our partner think about these issues and provide them with resources.” (Interviewee H)*

A subjects of justice grantee of the Ford Foundation through which especially many funders such as the Moore Foundation, Hewlett Foundation or Packard Foundation and governmental leaders from different countries come together is the ‘Global Alliance of Territorial Communities’ (Ford, 2021b). This alliance is mainly composed of Indigenous peoples themselves and fights for an increased engagement of tribal representatives in global decision-makings and acknowledgment of their advanced stewardship of nature (Ford, 2021a). Amongst other things, these foundations financially support protections of the tribes’ tenure rights or opportunities to be engaged in committees or conferences such as the United Nations Climate Change conference in Paris (COP21) (Ford, 2021d). Through the foundations’ organisation of annual meetings with different Indigenous leaders and other partners as scientists or storytellers, these conference attendances are prepared and new insights are collectively discussed (Ford, 2021a).

Another subjects of justice grantee of the Ford Foundation supports is ‘AMAN’ which is part of the ‘Global Alliance of Territorial Communities’ as well (Ford, 2021c). This organisation represents more than 2000 Indigenous communities (Ford, 2021c). The grant of the Ford Foundation to ‘AMAN’ is called ‘Building Institutions and Networks’ (BUILD). By being a ‘flexible general operation fund’ the grant receivers are less restricted by the funder (Ford, 2021c). Thereby, ‘AMAN’ can improve communication infrastructures with Indigenous communities as well as their possibilities to use the money adjusted to local priorities and strategies (Ford, 2021c).

Examples of other subjects of justice grantees are ‘Greengrants’ or the ‘Association for women with disabilities’ which help people with disabilities to receive a voice and more power in the environmental justice movements as they are currently very much underrepresented (Ford, 2020b; Interviewee H).

*“A lot of our grantees are disability group grantees. And we are trying our best to connect them with different actors, different organisations and we hope that these organisations that we are matching them with then think about disability issues in their approaches as well.” (Interviewee H)*

Through direct representation by subjects of justice, these grantees have first-hand experiences of what interventions are needed by people with disabilities as interviewee H explained. A main stakeholder group frequently mentioned throughout the work of the Ford Foundation are local or national governments. Interviewee H stated that a strengthened representation of marginalised groups throughout collaborations with governments is strived for.

*“We are also partnering with the government, and we bring the [justice] issues in the government and to partners that we are talking with.” (Interviewee H)*

According to the foundation, most of its projects must go hand in hand with governmental institutions to establish supportive policies and counteract illegal activities (Ford, 2022b; Ford, 2022c). For example, in El Salvador, governments work together with civil society to incentivise a more responsible

management of resources while opposing projects harming the environment (Kaimowitz & Warnaars, 2017).

Overall, the findings indicate that the Ford Foundation partners with different grantees directly representing subjects of justice being especially groups of people with disabilities and Indigenous-led organisations (Ford, 2022c; Interviewee H). Thereby, the foundation increases these subjects' capacities within the field. However, the foundation still decides which specific groups to fund and who to give these capacities to extend the field of conservation governance. Financially and politically powerful partners of the foundation are funders and governments whereby the field is further extended.

The continents on which the Ford Foundation contributes to land conservation through its funding are North America (Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico), South America (Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela), Africa (Nigeria, Senegal, Ghana, South Africa, Zimbabwe) and Asia (Indonesia) (Ford, 2022e). Thereby, a global reach of their field-building capacity is prominent. As many of the funded locations belong to poorer, less-developed countries, the foundation maintains the financial and thereby decision-making power throughout these partnerships (Reich, 2020).

## 4.7 Foundation for the Carolinas

The Foundation for the Carolinas is one of the largest community foundations in the U.S. receiving donations by individuals or organisations to fund charitable projects in North and South Carolina (Council on Foundations, 2022; FFTC, 2022a). The foundation was established in 1958 and grew to have charitable assets of around \$4 billion (FFTC, 2022d). Since 1999, Michael Marsicano leads the Foundations of the Carolinas as president and CEO (FFTC, 2022c).

### 4.7.1 Interpretations of justice in the organisational field of conservation governance

There is prominently information available on two initiatives directly supported and funded by the Foundations of the Carolinas which contribute to land conservation. These are the Carolina Thread Trail, and Trees Charlotte (FFTC, 2022b). Therefore, a focus of this research lies on the foundation's justice interpretations within these two initiatives.

#### Subjects of justice

The subjects of justice frequently mentioned throughout the foundation's land conservation work are different groups of people such as future generations or children, Black people, Indigenous tribes, women, and people with disabilities (Bolkin, 2021; Carolina Thread Trail, 2022b; Cole, 2020). According to the foundation, these subjects are all connected by their underserved role in society due to unfair power dynamics (Carolina Thread Trail, 2022a; Carolina Thread Trail, 2022b). Through these two aspects a combination of the critical and the cosmopolitan egalitarian justice perspective of the foundation is identified.

#### Substance of justice

Throughout its 'Carolina Thread Trail' initiative, the foundation acknowledges lands of Indigenous tribes (Carolina Thread Trail, 2022). However, more specific steps towards how to include these tribes in its philanthropic work are not mentioned. The critical perspectives' substance is highlighted due to a main goal of strengthened voices and increased representation for People of Colour, local people affected by

initiatives as well as women. For example, the foundation publishes articles on the achievements or contributions of women in conservation science, education, or NGO work (Trees Charlotte, 2021). Additionally, the foundation commits to enhance diversity throughout its staff and in decision-making positions for specific regional projects (Carolina Thread Trail, 2022b). The other substances of justice identified in the foundation's conservation work indicate a link between the cosmopolitan egalitarian and capabilities view. The foundation states that benefits of nature such as clean air, water, or recreation spaces are often reserved for a specific group of people (Baker, 2022; Carolina Thread Trail, 2022b). Thereby, the foundation aims to distribute those benefits more equally by ensuring access to nature for everyone (Baker, 2022; Carolina Thread Trail, 2022b; Trees Charlotte, 2021). One example here is the foundation's funding support for 'Outdoor Afros', an organisation that stands up for equal opportunities of People of Colour in nature (Outdoor Afros, 2022). "In the US, communities of color are three times more likely than white communities to live in nature-deprived areas, while 70% of low-income communities have less access to nature than the rest of the country. We all should have access to nature close to home. People with disabilities and those without cars, groups that face the greatest barriers to accessing greenspace and the health benefits that it provides." (Baker, 2022, page 18). By giving these groups of people more equal opportunities to access nature and engage in conservation activities, the Foundation of the Carolinas' justice interpretations reflect a combination of the cosmopolitan egalitarian and capabilities view (Carolina Thread Trail, 2020).

### **Principles of justice**

The critical, capabilities and cosmopolitan egalitarian perspectives' principles of justice are expressed through a focus on racial equity and by ensuring access to nature especially for underserved groups of people (Baker, 2022; Carolina Thread Trail, 2022b; Cole, 2020; Trees Charlotte, 2021). Further, the connection between people and nature is very often highlighted. As the previously mentioned benefits of nature enhance livelihoods of communities, initiatives by the foundation aims at enhancing this connection while simultaneously strengthening the relations between different people or communities (Baker, 2022; Carolina Thread Trail, 2022a). This interconnectedness represents the eco-centric principle of justice.

To conclude, the foundation works on justice issues through a complementary combination of three justice perspectives. It supports those underserved in society which reflects the cosmopolitan egalitarian view. This is done by strengthening their representation, indicating the critical perspective and strengthened opportunities to access nature, implying a capabilities justice perspective. However, the advocacy of basic rights for its subjects of justice to strengthen their legal recognition is not observed by the foundation's activities. Further, the projects of the Foundation for the Carolinas essentially contribute to land conservation to ensure health and well-being of its community. Other living and non-living entities are neglected as subjects of justice.

#### **4.7.2 Field-building through collaboration activities and within funding locations**

In its commitment to racial equity, the foundation emphasises its intention to listen and learn from its community and give community members opportunities to engage as well as improve their economic positions (Carolina Thread Trail, 2022b; Foundation for the Carolinas [FFTC], 2022a).

For example, with its initiative 'Carolina Thread Trail', the foundation wants to directly get in contact with local people affected by this project to find out what their needs regarding environmental

conservation are (Leggett, 2021). Following the requests of those people, a greenway system accessible to everyone is developed with the foundation's support. To establish this system, a non-profit organisation, being the Catawba Lands Conservancy, governments, corporations, and local communities are collaborated with (Carolina Thread Trail, 2022a; Leggett, 2021). Additionally, 'trail masters' are selected to function as intermediaries between the foundation and local needs and ensure a proper implementation of the trails (Carolina Thread Trail, 2022c). A critical group of subjects of justice the Foundation of the Carolinas aims to increasingly integrate in the conservation governance field as grant receivers are People of Colour (Carolina Thread Trail, 2022b). By working together with Black-led organisations such as 'Outdoor Afros', the foundation tries to increase the engagement and decision-making power in land conservation for People of Colour (Baker, 2022).

The foundation's initiative 'Trees Charlotte' is another community project with the aim of planting at least 5.000 trees a year, especially in underserved areas (Trees Charlotte, 2021; Trees Charlotte, 2022). This initiative is created in collaboration with local citizens directly. Volunteers are trained to plant those trees while additionally financial support goes to research and academic institutions which provide programs educating locals about the valuable services of trees (Trees Charlotte, 2021). Benefits, that are strived for through this project, are not only improved environmental aspects but especially building relationships throughout the region as people come together to support and learn from this initiative. Again, important stakeholders are governments or municipalities whereby the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County are highlighted (Trees Charlotte, 2021). By working together with companies such as 'Duke Energy' to plant more trees or 'Greensboro-based Urban Offsets' to offset carbon emissions of local universities as the Davidson College or Duke University, the Foundation for the Carolinas engages corporations and academic institutions in the conservation governance field (Trees Charlotte, 2017a; Trees Charlotte, 2017b).

To conclude, as the Foundation for the Carolinas is a community foundation, its exchange with subjects of justice is more direct than for the other foundations (FFTC, 2022d). According to the foundation, the involvement of community members and especially People of Colour is not only critical regarding conservation efforts but especially necessary for collective, equal engagement opportunities. By working with local governments, corporations and universities, the field of conservation governance is further extended by the foundation.

The Foundation for the Carolinas is a community foundation for North and South Carolina and consequently funds projects only in these regions of the U.S. (FFTC, 2022d). Thereby, the foundation builds the field of conservation governance only in a specific part of North America whereby other critical ecosystems globally are not funded.

#### 4.8 Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

The Bill and Melina Gates Foundation (Gates Foundation) was founded in 2000 by Melinda Gates and her husband Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation [Gates], 2022b). Today, this private foundation is the largest one in the world (Gates, 2022b). With the donated wealth earned through Microsoft, the foundation spent more than \$53.8 billion to charitable purposes since 2000 (Gates, 2022b). The foundation is based in the U.S. and is active in 134 countries around the world to support people lifting themselves out of extreme poverty as well as improving their health (Gates, 2022a; Gates, 2022c). The intention behind the establishment of this foundation was "that people

everywhere, regardless of identity or circumstances, should have the chance to live healthy, productive lives” (Gates, 2022e, para. 1).

#### 4.8.1 Interpretations of justice in the organisational field of conservation governance

The Gates Foundation, unlike the other foundations analysed before, contributes to land conservation through its ‘Agricultural development’ program as it supports sustainable land use practices (Gates, 2022d).

##### **Subjects of justice**

Within the agricultural development program, smallholder farmers and especially female farmers in need of lucrative businesses are emphasised reflecting the subjects of the libertarianism view (Gates, 2022d; Gates, 2022g). A link is made to both the egalitarian and the minimalist subjects of justice of the cosmopolitan view as these smallholder farmers face poverty and disproportionate vulnerability to climate change impacts (Gates, 2022g)

##### **Substance of justice**

By expanding economic opportunities and ensuring access to key resources or services for the smallholders, the libertarianism substance can be identified (Gates, 2022d; Gates, 2022g). Providing those opportunities and resources for most vulnerable communities can likewise be indicators of a cosmopolitan egalitarian substance. But as insights of those projects focus on individual’s abilities to earn income and to have the potential to drive a more sustainable agricultural transformation, the libertarianism view is more prominent (Gates, 2022d; Gates, 2022g). Accordingly, investments are made in instruments or technologies improving sustainable agriculture practices and support for partnerships to operate the smallholder’s farms as an effective business (Gates, 2022d). This supports the innovative capacity of farmers and especially female farmers who can secure their livelihoods with their agricultural efforts (Gates, 2022d). Moreover, the safeguarding of food security for the poorest smallholder farmers is highlighted in the agricultural development program whereby the cosmopolitan minimalist perspective is followed by the foundation (Gates, 2022g; Gates, 2022h).

##### **Principles of justice**

The goal of “transforming smallholder agriculture into a sustainable, inclusive foundation of economic opportunity” (Gates, 2022d, para. 16) reflects the libertarianism principles by striving for freedom of each individual. Additionally, gender equality is one main principle pursued which indicates the principle of the critical perspective of justice (Gates, 2022f; Gates, 2022h; Voorhies, 2021).

These findings indicate that the Gates Foundation views justice issues mainly through a combination of the libertarianism and cosmopolitan minimalist perspective. The promotion of economic opportunities is aimed at giving poor, smallholder farmers and especially female farmers the ability to independently lead their businesses and ensure their food security. This economic-centred approach implies that justice is achieved by ensuring freedom of individuals through capitalistic market mechanisms while critical political and civil concerns are neglected (Birn, 2014; Kalfagianni, 2022; UNSDG, 2022). Further, the foundation takes a human-centred justice perspective whereby ecological entities are not considered throughout its work.

#### 4.8.2 Field-building through collaboration activities and within funding locations

In its ‘Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’ commitment, the Gates Foundation states the following: “We will [...] [a]chieve the impact we want to have in the world by actively listening to our partners and the communities they work within and serve, investing in and elevating their voices and ideas” (Gates, 2022e, para. 5).

On its website, the foundation lists different partner grantees from its agricultural development program (Gates, 2022d). For example, ‘AGRA’ is a non-profit organisation grantee that is led by Africans striving to connect smallholder farmers from different countries in Africa to the larger agricultural markets to improve livelihoods and increase their incomes (AGRA, 2022). By partnering with farmer organisations and small businesses on a local level, the integrations of their perspectives and more locally adapted idea generations are encouraged (AGRA, 2022). Another example of a non-profit organisation grantee is ‘FarmStack’ which is an open-source software supporting smallholders to exchange and receive customised data to enhance agricultural practices (Gates, 2022d). Through these examples, the Gates Foundation acts as field-builder by providing financial resources to strengthen the position of smallholder farmers in the agricultural network.

Further, the Gates Foundation funds different research institutions such as ‘Central and West African Virus Epidemiology’ (WAVE) or ‘Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research’ (CGIAR) to enhance science and innovation in the agricultural sector (Gates, 2022d). These research partners work together with local farmers to develop and ensure a successful implementation of sustainable land use innovations (Gates, 2022d). To support women’s equal opportunities, the foundation works with another research institutions grantee that empowers the role of women in the agriculture landscape (Tanager, 2022; Voorhies, 2021). The ‘Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index’ develops advanced assessments of gender inequalities and support collectives of women active in agriculture (Voorhies, 2021).

By funding local and state governments in different countries, a more inclusive agricultural transformation is strived for (Gates, 2022i). Through these collaborations the foundation aims to strengthen the governments institutional capacity to support smallholders in their economic opportunities (Gates, 2022d).

Other important partners of the Gates Foundation are agricultural corporations. Larger companies are usually in the powerful position to decide with whom they work with. Therefore, the Gates Foundation collaborates with these “larger firms on ways of incorporating smallholder farmers into their business model” (Gates, 2022d, para. 16). As a results, these smallholders are provided with enhanced business potentials within the field.

In conclusion, the foundation extends its field-building influence by working with different grantee partner groups, being mainly non-profit organisations, research institutions, governments, and corporations. Through these partnerships the foundation aims to strengthen smallholder farmers’ capacities, improve their agricultural practices and protect their economic opportunities. Especially the collaboration with financially powerful corporations that rule over large areas of land ecosystems extends the foundation’s powerful position as field-builder (Folke, 2019). However, little information is provided by the foundation on if and how they integrate and communicate directly with its subjects of justice.

The Gates Foundation is active in many different countries around the world. Throughout the foundation's agricultural development program, funding goes to the continents Africa (Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe) and Asia (India) (Gates, 2021). The foundation's field-building role is therefore extended exclusively to poor countries in the Global South. Thereby an unequal power relationship is created between the foundation and its subjects of justice depending on the funding and the foundation's decisions of who to support (Reich, 2020). As these funded countries usually have weaker institutional and political structures in place, the work of the foundation together with governments is essential for economic developments (Tebaldi & Mohan, 2010). However, this means that the foundation takes an influential role by making decisions on which policies or processes to advocate for.

## 4.9 The Wyss Foundation

The Wyss Foundation was founded in 1998 by Hansjörg Wyss (Wyss Foundation [Wyss], 2022a). While the foundation is based in the U.S., it aims to protect natural landscapes in this country (Wyss, 2022a). Today, the foundation funds different projects to ensure good education, sufficient medical provision, social justice, and economic opportunities (Wyss, 2022a) This private foundation is "dedicated to supporting innovative, lasting solutions that improve lives, empower communities, and strengthen connections to the land" (Wyss, 2022a, para. 1).

### 4.9.1 Interpretations of justice in the organisational field of conservation governance

The Wyss Foundation's justice perspectives throughout its land conservation initiatives are presented in the following (Wyss, 2022a).

#### Subjects of justice

The foundation centres groups of people with unequal opportunities, threatened rights and livelihoods such as Indigenous peoples, women, and future generations including young people whereby a capabilities and cosmopolitan minimalist justice perspective is observed (Wyss, 2018; Wyss, 2020; Wyss, 2022b). Further, natural entities such as wildlife, biodiversity areas, rivers or forests can be identified as subjects of justice of the foundation indicating an eco-centric view (Wyss Campaign for Nature [WCFN], 2022d; Wyss, 2018).

#### Substance of justice

According to the foundation, especially Indigenous rights, values, and livelihoods are threatened throughout land conservation activities. That is why the Wyss Foundation funds organisations supporting those cosmopolitan minimalist substances of justice (Wyss, 2020). Further, the capabilities substance of justice is indicated throughout the work of the foundation as the reinforcement of traditional conservation strategies by local communities is supported. By providing them with financial or educational resources and leadership opportunities, the Wyss Foundation tries to strengthen this capacity to enhance conservation successes (WCFN, 2019b; Wyss, 2021a). Most environmental initiatives of the Wyss Foundation aim at protecting landscapes and their ecosystem functions in order to create a public area for people to enjoy nature (Wyss, 2018; Wyss, 2022a; Wyss, 2022b). This interpretation can be linked to the Utilitarianism substance of justice. However, as the Utilitarianism



view is not substantiated throughout the other dimensions of the justice framework, it is not identified as one focus perspective.

### **Principles of justice**

The principles of the eco-centric as well as the cosmopolitan minimalist perspective combined say that humanity and its security of food, health, and peace is interdependent on the natural world and that this connection needs to be safeguarded (Wyss, 2021b). Additionally, equal capabilities in terms of access to nature or educational potentials for every person are strived for. These principles reflect the capabilities perspective. Lastly, due to more equally distributed economic opportunities, the principles of the cosmopolitan egalitarian view are indicated (WCFN, 2019b; Wyss, 2021c).

To summarize, the foundation's land conservation initiatives focus on basic rights, needs and equal opportunities of Indigenous people, women, future generations, and young people. These are in line with the United Nations' universal values of equal empowerment potentials and human rights towards a sustainable development (UNSDG, 2022). Accordingly, the cosmopolitan minimalist and capabilities justice perspectives are prominent. A protection of the environment is stressed by the foundation but rather for the protection of humans' livelihoods. Consequently, legal recognition for other subjects of justice but humans is not promoted.

#### **4.9.2 Field-building through collaboration activities and within funding locations**

The foundation provides funding mainly to non-profit organisations or grant-receivers directly representing subjects of justice. An example is the 'Corazon Latino' organisation which engages underrepresented young people such as People of Colour in grassroot digital activities to achieve a more diverse civic engagement and enhance their representation in the conservation field (Wyss, 2021b). Another grantee example is the 'National Young Farmers Coalition' which is funded by the Wyss Foundation to represent young farmers in political discussions and engage them in the agricultural sector (Wyss, 2021b). Further, the Wyss Foundation shifts resources to organisations lifting the voices of People of Colour in the environmental movement (Wyss, 2021b). A main aspect centred by grantees of the Wyss Foundation is to ensure co-management of local ecosystems through which local communities benefit economically from conservation and protection efforts (WCFN, 2018; WCFN, 2022b).

By establishing the 'Wyss Academy for Nature' at the University of Bern in Switzerland, more advanced research in the conservation field is strived for (WCFN, 2019c). As the Wyss Foundation partners with other research or academic institutions, its field-building role is extended throughout the scientific sector (WCFN, 2021c). Through its initiative 'Wyss Campaign for Nature', the Wyss Foundation takes a major field-building role as it establishes networks of diverse actors (WCFN, 2022a; WCFN, 2022c). Especially by supporting locally created projects, the foundation engages with many different stakeholders (WCFN, 2021d). For example, to establish Bolivia's largest municipal protected area, over 800 stakeholders are collaborated with including municipal governments, other funders, and many local community members (Wyss, 2019). To achieve the campaign goal of protecting 30 percent of the planet by the year 2030, a need for increased capacity of Indigenous peoples is prominent as they majorly conserve natural ecosystems (WCFN, 2022a). According to the foundation, a direct contact with Indigenous peoples is essential to sustain their local conservation techniques as well as understand and support their needs such as strengthened land rights and voices (Wyss, 2022b).

On its website, the Wyss Foundation states that it works together with local communities and Indigenous peoples for more than two decades (WCFN, 2021b). A main goal when collaborating directly with Indigenous or local communities is to empower them to promote their traditional conservation methods on the ground as well as on a larger scale within political discussions (WCFN, 2021a; WCFN, 2021b; WCFN, 2022c). Different non-profit organisations act as intermediary actors to communicate between foundation and subjects of justice and coordinate funding resources (WCFN, 2021b; WCFN, 2022c). The Wyss Foundation is committed to support governmental efforts around the world to protect nature and wildlife whereby governments are identified as main stakeholder throughout implementations of projects (Wyss, 2021c). By organising conferences, bringing different stakeholders together, acting as mediator and providing essential resources, the Wyss Foundation takes a fundamental field-building role throughout its 'Wyss Campaign for Nature' (WCFN, 2020; WCFN, 2021b).

With its conservation work, the foundation extends the field by working with non-profit organisations, research institutions, governments, other funders and subjects of justice-led grantees such as People of Colour-, Indigenous- or youth-led organisations. Further, the foundation emphasises the need to evolve co-managed conservation approaches within the field to give communities decision-making capacity. Nevertheless, these networks and communication processes of different actors are dominated by decisions of the foundation regarding which specific grantees and subjects of justice to involve in the field.

The Wyss Foundation funds land conservation projects on five continents to conserve natural ecosystems. These continents are Europe, Africa, Australia, North America, and South America (WCFN, 2019a). Accordingly, a wide field-building range of the foundation is observed, and many critical ecosystems are aimed to be protected. However, particularly the funding towards countries in the Global South initiates a paternalism position of the foundation as these areas depend on the grants and thereby have less power to make claims (Reich, 2020).

#### 4.10 Howard G. Buffett Foundation

The Howard G. Buffett Foundation (Buffett Foundation) was established in 1999 and is based in the U.S. (Candid, 2022; Howard G. Buffett Foundation [Buffett], 2021a). The founder Howard G. Buffett, son of Warren E. Buffett, leads the foundation as Chairman and CEO together with the president, Ann Kelly Bolten. She is responsible for philanthropic investments and grant making strategies within the foundation (Buffett, 2021a). The funding is channelled in three programs: 'food security', 'public safety' and 'conflict mitigation' (Buffett, 2021c). The foundation states on its website: "Our mission is to catalyse transformational change to improve the standard of living and quality of life for the world's most impoverished and marginalized populations" (Buffett, 2021d, para. 2).

##### 4.10.1 Interpretations of justice in the organisational field of conservation governance

The Buffett Foundation, just like the Gates foundation, does only indirectly fund land conservation activities through its 'food security' program. Therein, more sustainable agricultural activities are promoted by the foundation which contribute to conserving terrestrial landscapes (Buffett, 2021c).

### **Subjects of justice**

Centred as subjects of justice within this program are poor, small-scale farmers who have less resources available, a smaller financial safeguarding and are in need to secure their livelihoods (Buffett, 2018; Buffett, 2021c). Thereby, the cosmopolitan minimalist and a direct combination of the cosmopolitan egalitarian and the capabilities perspectives are reflected. Next generations of farmers, immigrant farmworkers, and especially girls learning about agriculture are particularly supported by the foundation (Buffett, 2021b).

### **Substance of justice**

Through the improvement of governance systems, the right to food for people living in the poorest countries is aimed to be secured by the foundation (Buffett, 2018; Buffett, 2019; Buffett, 2021b; Buffett, 2021c). Accordingly, the substance of justice is viewed through a lens of the cosmopolitan minimalist perspective. For example, the foundation ensures land ownership or tenure rights of smallholder farmers. Therefore, their opportunities to independently seed a variety of crops without reliance on large corporations promoting monoculture are increased (Buffett, 2018; Buffett, 2021b). These 'conservation-based agriculture' approaches in turn positively contribute to land conservation goals (Buffett, 2021c). Moreover, basic working conditions or legal rights of immigrant farmers are protected through the foundation's support (Buffett, 2021b). The cosmopolitan egalitarian view is integrated into the 'food security' program by focusing on unequal opportunities of smallholder farmers. These farmers are more vulnerable to agricultural losses than larger corporations as they have less financial safeguarding (Buffett, 2018; Buffett, 2019). Especially by giving young and female farmers more entrepreneurial, financial, and educational opportunities, potentials to improve their livelihoods are created (Buffett, 2021b). Accordingly, the substance of the cosmopolitan egalitarian view is linked with the capabilities perspective.

### **Principles of justice**

The principles of justice are built around basic needs of most vulnerable, smallholder farmers by tackling hunger in the poorest countries (Buffett, 2021b; Buffett, 2021c). These principles reflect the sufficiency aspects of the cosmopolitan minimalist view and to some extent the prioritisation of most vulnerable people indicating the cosmopolitan egalitarian perspective.

Prominent complementary justice perspectives of the foundation are the cosmopolitan minimalist and egalitarian as well as the capabilities view. The minimalist view is reflected as the foundation supports food security through sufficient basic rights for smallholder farmers. A combination of the egalitarian and capabilities justice perspectives is observed because of the foundation's focus on equal economic and educational opportunities for most vulnerable farmers. A rights-based approach and the development of equal capabilities is aligned with goals for a sustainable development (Ballet, 2013; UNSDG, 2022). However, again the eco-centric perspective is neglected by this foundation while humans are centred as subjects of justice.

#### **4.10.2 Field-building through collaboration activities and within funding locations**

The Buffett Foundation talks about engaging its subjects of justice, being smallholder farmers, as key stakeholders in agricultural practices (Buffett, 2019). A main approach is to learn from their traditional, local-based techniques to improve agricultural effectiveness (Buffett, 2019; Buffett, 2021b). The

foundation supports cooperative farmer networks which enhance communications between farmers, efficient use of resources, and a more powerful political and economic position of smallholders (Buffett, 2018; Buffett, 2019; Buffett 2021b).

Throughout its reports, the foundation states to fund mainly research institutions and governments to strengthen farmers' economic opportunities (Buffett, 2019; Buffett, 2021b). An example research initiative the foundation funds is the 'Global Water Initiative – West Africa' (GWI-WA) (Buffett, 2018). The goals are to improve water quality, promote sustainable agriculture and empower smallholder farmers. By bringing "together key stakeholder who previously did not work well together: government agencies, research structures, and outreach and advisory agencies" (Buffett, 2018, p. 27), the foundation fosters the establishment of a network within the field of conservation governance. A focus throughout the foundation's agricultural development initiatives is the integration of smallholders directly by giving them a voice when developing processes of improved practices. The foundation states that communication processes are enhanced to better understand the farmers' needs and share experiences between each other (Buffett, 2018). Thereby, GWI-WA claims to have taken a moderator role in these processes while especially smallholders are encouraged to bring in their ideas. Through feedback workshops with different stakeholders involved, a more effective implementation of this involvement approaches is ensured by the foundation (Buffett, 2018). Further, the foundation funds research and academic institutions promoting publications of research papers on injustices in food systems, research projects on enhanced agricultural practices or support of students' academic pathways in sustainable agricultural programs (Buffett, 2018; Buffett, 2019; Buffett, 2021).

Other frequently mentioned grantees, being governments, are a main collaboration partner of the foundation. According to the foundation, especially in less developed countries, governmental organisations or representatives are critical in terms of implementing enhanced agricultural practices and their long-term success with the right infrastructural conditions (Buffett, 2019; Buffet Foundation, 2021). An example of a collaboration with governmental organisations and research institutions is the 'Rwanda Institute for Conservation Agriculture' (RICA) (Buffett, 2019; Buffett, 2021). RICA was established through fundings by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation in partnership with the 'Rwanda's Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources' (Buffett, 2021). The goal of this partnership is to "address the challenges of engaging youth in agriculture and improving the connection between education, research and extension to address national food security priorities" (Buffett, 2021b, p. 22). RICA students are provided with educational and economic opportunities while engaging with local farmers to learn from each other and collectively develop solutions for food insecurities (Buffett, 2021). Through the 'Gashora Girls Academy' at RICA, particularly female students are encouraged to become leaders in the agricultural sector (Buffett, 2019).

These findings indicate that the foundation mainly extends the field of conservation governance by collaborating with its grantees being research institutions, governments, and advisory groups. The foundation decides which research projects, scientific institutions, and academic pathways of students to fund whereby it acts as field-builder. Further, governments are key stakeholders to develop political structures which enhance economic opportunities for smallholders (Tebaldi & Mohan, 2010). Thereby, the collaboration with this critical field actor increases the foundations' influence within the field. Further, the foundation aims to involve its subjects of justice, smallholder farmers, in the field networks to have the ability of contributing to strategy developments. There are some approaches of connecting smallholders among each other to increase their influence in the field or conducting workshops with

these subjects to be able to listen to their insights. However, more concrete approaches to give them decision-making capacities are not mentioned by the foundation.

The Buffett Foundation extends the field of conservation governance in many countries around the world. Its priority countries are located on the continents of North and South America and Africa (Buffett, 2021e). The Global South is thereby focused by the foundation whereby particularly poor, less institutionally stable countries are funded. Therefore, an unbalanced power relationship between funder and recipient is created as the foundations takes an authoritative field-builder position and decides who to fund and under which conditions (Reich, 2020).

#### 4.11 Walton Family Foundation

The Walton Family Foundation is a family-led organisation by the heirs to Sam Walton, the founder of the American supermarket chain 'Walmart' (Influence Watch, 2022b). The foundation was established in 1987, in the U.S. and majorly supported charter schools in its first years (Influence Watch, 2022b; Walton Family Foundation [Walton], 2022a). Today, the foundation funds three key programs: K-12 education, community support in Northwest Arkansas and the Arkansas-Mississippi Delta as well as the protection of rivers and oceans together with communities supported by these ecosystems (Walton, 2022b). The intention when establishing this foundation was to fulfil the following mission: "We are a family-led foundation that tackles tough social and environmental problems with urgency and a long-term approach to create access to opportunity for people and communities." (Walton, 2022a, para. 5).

##### 4.11.1 Interpretations of justice in the organisational field of conservation governance

The Walton Family Foundation contributes to land conservation goals through initiatives within its 'Environment' program (Walton, 2022c). Therein, a focus lies on protecting water bodies such as rivers (Walton, 2022c).

##### Subjects of justice

Particularly marginalised community members, being Black, Indigenous and People of Colour and women, are focused as subjects of justice by the foundation indicating a critical perspective (Kowalski & Tanana, 2022; Snyder, 2021; Williams, 2020). Additionally, community members such as farmers or fishers are supported. The foundation emphasises that they depend on the ecosystems around them and need more opportunities to ensure their livelihoods and engage in decision-makings (Bruchez, 2020; Saltzman & Wolfe, 2021; Walton, 2022c; West, 2021). This reflects the capabilities and cosmopolitan minimalist perspective. Other subjects of justice, indicating an eco-centric perspective, are rivers, lakes and its diverse species that are aimed to be protected by the foundation (Walton, 2020b; Walton, 2022c)

##### Substance of justice

The substance of justice centres mostly around the critical perspective as often the representation of marginalised individuals is focused. A main target within the foundation's conservation activities is to support individual perspectives, local expertise, and voices of diverse community members in policy processes, research and agriculture or fishery practices (Kowalski, 2021; Meier, 2021; Saltzman & Wolfe, 2021; Snyder, 2021). Additionally, by giving young farmers the economic resources, educational

opportunities, and capacity to become leaders in the field of conservation governance, the capabilities view is highlighted again (Walton, 2020a; Walton, 2022c; Williams, 2020). The cosmopolitan minimalist perspective is represented by the following substance of justice. The foundation supports more equitable access to basic needs such as food, water security or health resilient economies for every community member (Bruchez, 2020; Walton, 2017). This is especially strived for when talking about People of Colour who are disproportionately affected by environmental risks (Meier, 2021).

### **Principles of justice**

The principles of access to opportunity for every community member to have the potential to thrive is foremost given attention within the environmental program of the foundation (Walton, 2020a; Walton, 2022c; Williams, 2020). By creating a level playing field, the capacity to engage in decision-makings is aimed to be increased for Indigenous peoples, People of Colour, women, farmers and fishers (Meier, 2021; Snyder, 2021; Walton, 2022c). These principles link the capabilities and critical perspective of justice. Moreover, the foundation focuses on protecting nature sustaining peoples' livelihoods through fresh air, water, or food (Alberts, 2022; Walton, 2017; Walton, 2020a). These findings imply that the cosmopolitan minimalist and the eco-centric principles of justice are deemed important by the foundation.

To conclude, the foundation focuses on non-discrimination, equal opportunities and basic needs protection for People of Colour, Indigenous peoples, women and farmers or fishers. Accordingly, the critical, capabilities and cosmopolitan minimalist perspectives are identified as prominent justice views. These justice interpretations are in line with the United Nations' sustainable development values and a step towards environmental justice (Ballet, 2013; UNSDG, 2022). Nevertheless, eco-centric justice approaches in terms of legal recognition for non-human entities are not promoted by the foundation throughout the field.

#### **4.11.2 Field-building through collaboration activities and within funding locations**

The Walton Family Foundation talks a lot about community-driven change throughout its environmental initiatives (Walton, 2022c). The foundation frequently emphasises its approach to “partner with those who are closest to the problem because they're usually closest to the solution” (Walton, 2022a, para. 1). In a five-year cycle, the foundation reflects on its approach to inclusively work together with communities. Thereby, the foundation aims at improving its listening and learning skills and better engagement opportunities of local community members (Walton, 2022c). In 2021, the foundation identified three main values which it aims to integrate in its grantees' practices. First, by ensuring that the foundation's work “is guided by the voices and needs of the communities where [...] [it] work[s]” (Walton, 2022c, para. 5), it improves its community-driven approach. Secondly, a more advanced ‘Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’ integration into its initiatives is strived for to represent diverse ideas and interpretations. Thirdly, the foundation aims to increase its positive impact by building up supportive networks across different sectors (Walton, 2022c).

An example collaboration case of the foundation is its partnership with eight tribal communities throughout the Colorado River Basin (Snyder, 2021). This relationship is maintained through the foundation's grantees directly representing Indigenous peoples such as ‘Gila River Indian Community’ or non-profit organisations grantees such as ‘National Wildlife Federation’ (Snyder, 2021; Walton, 2021a). Regarding the tribes, the foundation together with its grantees, drives a local development and

implementation of nature-based agricultural or conservation practices. Through that capacities of local community members to engage, negotiate, and form policy solutions are supported by the foundation (Kowalski, 2021; Walton, 2022c). According to the foundation, long-term partnerships are strived for to unlock the communities' potential instead of taking a short-term saviour-role as foundation (Johnson, 2021; Stevens & Nanjappa, 2020). To ensure these stable relationships, the foundation emphasises that all different stakeholders must be engaged in the field such as farmers, ranchers, governmental representatives, environmental advocates, or businesses (Kowalski, 2021).

'Audubon' is an example of a non-profit organisation grant receivers that supports enhanced representation of People of Colour when discussing solutions to environmental challenges (Tracz, 2020). Through conversations with communities of colour, these subjects state that a main need is to feel respected and be engaged (Tracz, 2020). The foundation together with grantees tries to tackle this by building up trust, listening to their needs within feedback sessions with patience and care as well as providing them with possibilities to get involved in the field such as job opportunities (Tracz, 2020; Williams, 2020).

Other relevant field-building partners the Walton Family Foundation mentions on its website, are research and academic institutions as well as media agencies. The foundation funds research and academic institutions to improve conservation efforts or financially supports educational pathways of students in the conservation governance field (McDonald, 2021; Meier, 2021; Walton, 2020a). Additionally, the Walton Family Foundation aims to make research more accessible by removing paywall restrictions to scientific papers. Especially for People of Colour, the foundation wants to provide more equal opportunities in the academic sector through this approach (Stevens & Nanjappa, 2020). An example of how the foundation is increasingly engaging journalists into the field is the podcast program in the Mississippi River Basin (Saltzman & Wolfe, 2021). The foundation's intention behind supporting this podcast is to have an increased offer of local news regarding traditional or emerging agricultural and environmental issues (Saltzman & Wolfe, 2021). In partnership with the University of Missouri School of Journalism, the Walton Family Foundation promotes a broader field of journalists covering these issues (Saltzman & Wolfe, 2021).

In sum, the foundation majorly builds the field of conservation governance with its grantees being predominantly non-profit organisation, Indigenous- or People of Colour-led communities, research or academic institutions and media organisations. Throughout these partnerships, a community-led approach is emphasised by the foundation. By implementing this approach, the foundation supports communities to guide conservation practices according to their local knowledge and promotes the communities' capacity to lift their voices in the field. Nevertheless, the foundation maintains the powerful position in the field by making the choice on who to give this capacity in the field. For example, as critical subjects of justice of the foundation, women were identified but little concrete approaches on how to particularly involve this group of subjects in the field processes are stated.

According to its website, the Walton Family Foundation is solely funding land conservation initiatives in the U.S., North America (Walton, 2022c). Thereby, the foundation extends the field of conservation governance solely in its origin country. Other threatened terrestrial landscapes and critical justice issue areas outside of the U.S. are not supported by the foundation.

## 4.12 New Venture Fund

In 2006, the New Venture Fund was founded in the U.S. as a public charity making grants to projects in sectors such as conservation, education, arts, global health, and disaster recovery (Influence Watch, 2022a). The Arabella Advisors, a philanthropy consulting company, is the parent organisation of the New Venture Fund (New Venture Fund [NVF], 2021f). The New Venture Fund hosts funded projects of many largest U.S. foundations (NVF, 2021f). Today, the president Lee Bodner, chief operating officer Kathleen Flynn, general counsel Andrew Schulz and chief financial officer Shannon Scott lead the fund's processes and funding activities (NVF, 2021c). The vision statement of the New Venture Fund says that it strives for "a more equitable world, built on fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all" (NVF, 2021d, para. 1).

### 4.12.1 Interpretations of justice in the organisational field of conservation governance

Throughout its 'Environment' program, the New Venture Fund supports projects contributing to land conservation goals.

#### Subjects of justice

The subjects of justice are characterised by being most vulnerable to climate change consequences, facing threats to their livelihoods and being marginalised in our society such as youth, communities of colour, Indigenous peoples, or women (Climate Justice Resilience Fund [CJRF], 2021e; CJRF, 2021f; CJRF, 2022b; NVF, 2021a; NVF, 2021h). This reflects the cosmopolitan egalitarian, minimalist, and critical justice perspective. In addition, the fund supports the protection of habitats for threatened species and wildlands whereby the eco-centric subjects of justice is represented (NVF, 2021h; NVF, 2022b).

#### Substance of justice

A main goal of the fund is to give the above-mentioned subjects of justice a voice in political and economic decision-making processes to strengthen their views on local climate change solutions (NVF, 2021a). Thereby, the critical substance of justice is reflected. To increase the representation of its subjects of justice, the New Venture Fund aims to improve their engagement possibilities in negotiation processes or job opportunities (CJRF, 2021f; CJRF, 2022a; NVF, 2019; NVF, 2022a). For example, the fund engages young people from diverse backgrounds in leadership positions and connects them within the land conservation network. Through this approach the fund aims to shift more equal opportunities towards young people disproportionately affected by climate change consequences (NVF, 2021b). This indicates the cosmopolitan egalitarian substance of justice. Lastly, the cosmopolitan minimalist view is linked to the egalitarian perspective. Food, water, and resource sovereignty of people most vulnerable to climate change is threatened, according to the fund (NVF, 2022c). This problem is intended to be counteracted by the New Venture Fund through supporting the subjects' rights in shaping policies, making land use decisions, and applying traditional knowledge to sustain their livelihoods (CJRF, 2021b; CJRF, 2021f; NVF, 2019).

#### Principles of justice

The fund strives for a more equitable, inclusive future through which those disproportionately affected by climate change have opportunities to engage in solution developments (NVF, 2019; NVF, 2021a; NVF, 2021b; NVF, 2021h). Accordingly, the principles of the cosmopolitan egalitarian and critical perspective



are reflected. Further, frequently emphasised by the fund is the connection of human and nature whereby especially climate change consequences affect humans' livelihoods (NVF, 2022a; NVF, 2022b; NVF, 2022f). This indicates the principles of the cosmopolitan minimalists and eco-centric perspective.

To summarise, the New Venture Fund prominently views justice issues through a lens of a complementary compilation of the cosmopolitan egalitarian, minimalist, and critical perspectives. To ensure basic needs of people most vulnerable to climate change are protected, the fund strengthens political voices and leadership opportunities of its subjects of justice being young people, communities of colour, Indigenous peoples, and women. The protection of environmental ecosystems is prominently aimed at sustaining humans' lives. Consequently, legal rights for non-human entities are not promoted by the foundation to further integrate non-human entities in justice discourses.

#### 4.12.2 Field-building through collaboration activities and within funding locations

In its Impact Report, the New Venture Fund explains its approach on how to integrate 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion' values into collaborative projects (NVF, 2019). For a project being established, an advisory board is in place which aims at engaging people directly affected by issues the projects tries to tackle. The fund states: "Upon joining with NVF, all projects must participate in a 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion' training, and they have access to best-in-class expertise to live the values they want to see in the world. [...] At NVF, our ambition is to use the collective work of our projects to improve philanthropy" (NVF, 2019, p. 11).

As the New Venture Fund is exclusively hosting projects funded by many different foundations, its connection to other funders is stronger than for before analysed foundations (NVF, 2022g). The fund organises panels together with partner funders. In these panels, for example, strategies on how to engage frontline communities better are discussed or tools and resources are provided to enhance collaboration activities with subjects of justice (CJRF; 2021e; Duren & Keller, 2021). The New Venture Fund intends to counteract injustices and decentralise power by giving recommendations to philanthropic organisations in land conservation as well as other sectors (CJRF; 2020; NVF, 2021g).

Throughout its project 'Climate Justice Resilience Fund' (CJRF), the New Venture Fund talks a lot about the collaboration and communications with subjects of justice (CJRF, 2021a). The initiatives within this project are funded by different foundations such as the Oak Foundation or the Robert Bosch Foundation (CJRF, 2021a). Throughout these initiatives, "CJRF promotes community-led, justice-centred approaches to adaptation and resilience-building" (CJRF, 2022a, para. 1). The CJRF centres five pillars throughout which it interacts with subjects of justice and engages them in the conservation governance field (CJRF, 2020). First, the CJRF advocates for and enhances storytelling of subjects of justice. Further, CJRF improves their access to critical knowledge while focusing on local, self-determined solution development. Additionally, the CJRF supports network formations of like-minded groups to increase their influence, and lastly shift power and leadership capacity to those subjects of justice (CJRF, 2020; NVF, 2021e; CJRF, 2022a). Representatives of projects at the CJRF also talk about other challenges such as policy barriers to implement its objectives. By working together with governments as relevant stakeholders more resilient projects can be established and necessary structural conditions are ensured, according to CJRF representatives (CJRF, 2021d).

Another project through which subjects of justice are provided directly with a grant is the 'IllumiNative' which partnered with the 'Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative' and different other foundations

to develop an asset map tool that connects funders to food sovereignty initiatives (Duren & Keller, 2021). The development of this tool was driven by native community members, and it aims at making the initiatives more effective. These above-described example projects indicate the field-building capacity of the New Venture Fund. The fund engages local community members in decision-making processes of projects and connects other organisations and funders with each other and with those local communities.

Another important aspect frequently mentioned by the New Venture Fund is the importance of long-lasting solutions throughout its projects (CJRF, 2021d; NVF, 2022e; NVF, 2021h). The fund emphasises the need to commit to long-term fundings and therefore give communities more stability and build up trust (NVF, 2021h). Hereby, it is important that “[p]hilanthropy leaders [...] make a deep commitment and real investment to understanding the needs of local and Indigenous communities” (NVF, 2021h, para. 13). The ‘Huairou Commission’ is one subjects of justice grantee example, being a women-led social-movement, through which the fund aims to strengthen voices and capacities of women (CJRF, 2021c).

To conclude, the New Venture Fund dominantly works together with other foundations as it coordinates their fundings. Thereby, the fund extends its field-building role towards other financially powerful actors in the field. Further, the New Venture Fund influences these funders’ justice interpretations through hosting panels or providing them with advisory resources on justice issues. The fund provides financial resources to projects which give local communities such as Indigenous peoples or women more access to supportive networks and lift their leadership capacities within the field. However, decision-making capacity regarding which organisations or local communities to provide with funding lies by the fund whereby its field-building role is prominent.

The New Venture Fund financially supports conservation projects in many countries around the world. It does not list all these countries by name but displays a world map on its website indicating which continents receive its funding. Thereby it becomes clear that the fund extends the field of conservation governance to all continents but Antarctica, being North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia (NVF, 2019). Even though critical ecosystems are protected through this funding support, particularly countries in the Global South become dependent on the fund’s financial resources and thereby its field-building capacity.

## 5. Discussion

This section reflects on the overall findings of this research linked to the fields of literature on conservation governance, philanthropy, and justice norms. At first, most prominent justice interpretations within land conservation of the assessed foundations are discussed. Second, the collaborative activities within the conservation governance field are reflected on. The next part visualises on which continents the foundations build this field. After that, scientific and societal contributions are specified. Lastly, limitations of this research and avenues for further research are discussed.

### 5.1 Justice interpretations within land conservation philanthropy

By publishing diverse reports on projects, news articles, or elaborately discussing justice issues throughout the interviews, it can be inferred that foundations prominently active in land conservation, intensely concern themselves with issues of justice. In this regard, there are many different interpretations of who is considered as subject of justice, what the substance of justice entails and what principles of justice are followed. Not only between foundations differences are recognised but also within one foundation two to three main complementary justice perspectives are identified. Focusing on more than one perspective has the advantage that varying dimensions of justice are taken into account. However, it is possible that among different perspectives some are still dominant which means others are marginalised within the field. In Table 6 prominent justice perspectives for each foundation are listed.

A clear pattern of frequently identified justice perspectives within the field of conservation governance can be observed. The two most prominent views are the cosmopolitan minimalist and critical perspective which are often linked to each other within one foundation's activities (Table 6). Through the cosmopolitan minimalist lens especially the protection of land rights and livelihoods of Indigenous and poor, local communities as well as future generations is centred throughout the field. The critical perspective of justice is highlighted as the foundations aim to strengthen the political representation and decision-making power of marginalised groups of people, being prominently Black, Indigenous and People of Colour and women, to build a more inclusive conservation governance field.

A reason that these two views are often used complementary throughout the foundations' work might lie in historical processes. On the one side, due to colonialism, lands were forcefully taken away from many Indigenous communities and racial inequities were driven (Mollett & Kepe, 2018). On the other side, 'land grabbing' triggers land right issues as economically or politically powerful actors such as transnational corporations or governments take possession of large land areas to use those for agricultural functions (Margulis et al., 2013). As these land right issues often take place in potential land conservation areas, the foundations address those issues prominently (Mollett & Kepe, 2018). Within the field, this indicates that the protection of land and resource rights is seen as a requirement when conserving natural landscapes in a just way. Thereby, the foundations provide legal support or promote strengthened voices of those people who are politically and historically underrepresented. Consequently, large funding amounts and advocacy work is directed particularly towards these justice issues. While counteracting these historical grown injustices is highly important, scholars criticise that these justice interpretations derive from an anthropogenic, western perspectives and might neglect

rather non-human inequities or justice perspectives of local communities (Kopnina & Washington, 2020).

Further, within some foundations, aspects of the cosmopolitan egalitarian and capabilities justice views are linked (Table 6). These foundations emphasise the need to advance equal opportunities for people most vulnerable to climate change consequences or with less powerful, privileged positions, indicating the cosmopolitan egalitarian view. In turn, the foundations support the subjects' personal capabilities such as educational, leadership, or entrepreneurial opportunities to strengthen their capacity and gain more powerful positions themselves, indicating the link to aspects of the capabilities perspective. While distributing the benefits of ecosystem services fairly is most relevant when promoting just conservation efforts and enabling people to live dignified lives (Schlosberg & Carruthers, 2010), confrontations in regards of the promoted human capabilities can occur. Equal opportunities of subjects of justice can only be effectively implemented when having supportive institutions in place (Kalfagianni, 2014; Kronlid, 2014). This forms a barrier specifically in poorer, less developed countries of the field as less institutional stability is in place. Authoritative actors, such as larger corporations, rule over institutional standards implemented in those countries and thereby control whether the subjects' opportunities are enabled (Kalfagianni, 2014). For the field of conservation governance, this implies that the support of the subjects' capabilities is a relevant step towards distributing opportunities more equally. Nevertheless, a dependence on institutional structures within a country is a critical factor to consider. Further, Martin et al. (2016) emphasise that capabilities needed for a dignified life rely largely on the individuals' perception or cultural values. This is a constant challenge for the conservation governance field as certain ways of life might harm the environment (Martin et al., 2016).

The eco-centric view is reflected by different foundations to some degree but solely in regards of the subjects, being threatened animal and plant species or overall natural ecosystems, and principles of justice, being the interconnectedness of nature and humans. However, the aspect of the eco-centric substance to give nature entities legal rights is not implemented by any of the foundations. For this reason, the eco-centric view is not listed as one focus perspective of the foundations in Table 6. Only the Moore Foundation states approaches to represent natural entities' voices throughout decision-making processes. However, the promotion of legal recognition for those entities is not observed throughout the foundation's work. Most foundations provide funding for the protection of nature and wildlife within specific areas such as National Parks. These areas are often legally protected but within a constricted range and through human allocation. An overarching advocacy of rights for all living and non-living entities and thereby their legal recognition as important components of our ecosystems is not funded by the foundations. Even though the observed field focuses on conservation of natural landscapes, the foundations only take human-centred justice perspectives. To advance conservation practices and decentre the human from justice discourses, a step towards a more ecology centring justice perspective might be necessary (Tschakert et al., 2020). By promoting this eco-centric substance of justice, the whole field might be able to protect and conserve natural ecosystems in a more holistic and integrative way.

As only for the Gates Foundation the libertarianism view is identified, justice interpretations focusing on free exchanges through capitalistic market mechanisms are almost absent in the field of conservation governance (Table 6). Other philanthropy scholars discuss the phenomenon of 'philanthrocapitalism' characterising foundations' neoliberal approaches to implement philanthropic activities (Bishop & Green, 2010; Bosworth, 2011; Holmes, 2015; Mcgoey, 2012). Most of the assessed foundations were

established by founders of larger companies which is why a more capitalistic justice view might have been implied. However, the thereby expected libertarianism view reflecting these market and free exchange attributes is not prominent throughout the field (Table 6). This could be explained by the foundation members' recognition of capitalistic structures or histories destructing natural areas and conflicting with rights of local communities (Celermajer et al., 2020; Celermajer et al., 2021). Consequently, this might be a reason why previously mentioned perspectives that better align with the foundations' land conservation goals are dominantly observed in the field instead of the libertarianism view.

The Utilitarianism view is not highlighted by any of the assessed foundations (Table 6). It is only very rarely observed through its substance of justice when foundations talk about the enjoyment of nature or the peoples' mental well-being through benefits of ecosystem services (Baker, 2022c; Interviewee H; Wyss, 2022a). This might be explained by foundations' having the intentions to first and foremost secure basic needs, rights, and equalities in terms of opportunities and representation. Accordingly, this would imply that physical, legal, or political aspects are centred instead of psychological factors throughout the foundations' justice interpretations.

Table 6. List of prominent justice perspectives of each foundation.

Justice views Foundations	Utilitarianism	Cosmopolitan egalitarian	Cosmopolitan minimalist	Capabilities	Libertarianism	Critical perspective	Eco-centric view
FFTC		X		X		X	
Moore Foundation			X			X	(X)
Gates Foundation			X		X		
Wyss Foundation		X	X	X			
Hewlett Foundation			X			X	
Howard G. Buffett Foundation		X	X	X			
Walton Family Foundation			X	X		X	
Packard Foundation			X	X		X	
NVF		X	X			X	
MacArthur Foundation			X			X	
DDCF			X			X	
Ford Foundation			X			X	

## 5.2 Field-building role of foundations

Throughout the analysis of the foundations' collaborative activities a coherent intention of the foundations is observed. All foundations see the need to engage subjects of justice into land conservation activities and have different approaches to do this. In the following, it is first reflected on the main partnerships of the foundations and secondly on the engagement of subjects of justice to collectively develop justice interpretations.

### Main direct and indirect partners of the foundations to build the field

Figure 3, in the beginning of the results part, summarises the main collaboration networks of the foundations. Even though foundations are not directly partnering with many other project actors next to the grantees, the foundations still initiate relationships in the field through their essential role as financial providers and are thus indirectly interwoven in those networks. Therefore, the foundations form indirect partnerships with actors in the field when grantees act as intermediaries between foundations and, for example, local communities or governmental institutions. A risk when only indirectly working together with main stakeholders or the people affected by a project is that foundations are not held accountable for the projects' negative outcomes. Even though foundations have an immensely influential role as field-builders within conservation governance, their accountability is often limited (Betsill, 2021; Tedesco, 2015). As Porter & Kramer (1999) state, philanthropic organisations must take responsibility when projects directed by their grantees fail. Thereby, a more critical reflection on the foundations' work would be enhanced and practices could be improved.

Regarding the foundations' direct partnerships with grantees, especially non-profit organisations are funded by the foundations. These non-profits implement conservation objectives and therefore maintain direct contact with subjects of justice affected by a project. As non-profit organisations differ in their values, power structures and approaches to engage people affected by an initiative (Polonsky et al., 2011), foundations' capacity to decide which one to partner with influences the structures and practices within the field of conservation governance.

Natural landscapes are often objects of diverse economic and political interests. To advance the foundations' conservation practices, local contexts and circumstances need to be taken into account (Isager, 2002). For this reason and to ensure more just decision-making capacity and representation, local people must be equally integrated in the field of conservation governance (Isager, 2002). Many foundations have approaches to work together with grant receivers such as Black- or Indigenous-led organisations to involve them in the field. However, these subjects of justice grantees are still a minority and advanced involvement is necessary to develop and implement strategies according to their needs and insights.

To coordinate conservation practices in the local context, governments are another main partner of foundations. These governments have essential capacities for the establishment of institutional structures that allow the creation of long-lasting impacts for subjects of justice (Isager, 2002). However, with this capacity they can also create barriers to the implementation of just conservation initiatives. Especially, in regards of land and resource rights, governments control processes as they often maintain ownership of the land (Tura, 2018). Conflicting interest over the land can occur as 'land grabbing' procedures, which are explained in part 5.1, commonly provide higher economic returns for the governments whereby justice issues are disregarded (Margulis et al., 2013; Tura, 2018). This implies that

collaborations of foundations with governments are largely relevant and impactful when building the conservation governance field.

### *Foundations' approaches to engage people affected by injustices*

Most interviewees explained that they seek to invest in bottom-up collaboration processes together with subjects of justice due to different reasons. According to these foundations, circumstances in every project differ whereby preformed, top-down justice interpretations would not fit the needs of affected subjects of justice (Interviewee B; Interviewee D; Interviewee F; Interviewee G). Second, different interviewees claimed that foundations themselves do not have optimal insights into the needs of those subjects (Interviewee B; Interviewee D). Third, by engaging subjects of justice into projects' processes, more effective, long-lasting solutions to be developed collectively are strived for by foundations (Interviewee B; Interviewee D; Interviewee E). While being aware of the need for more bottom-up communication and collaboration is essential to create a more just field (Isager, 2002; Paulson et al., 2012; Rai et al., 2021), the foundations' concrete approaches leave room for optimisation.

Before working together with a grantee, some foundations state different procedures to ensure 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion' values are implemented in the grantees' work. This is done for example, in collective consultation processes, by using formal document commitments or by providing financial or educational resources to grantees (DDCF, 2022e; Interviewee A; Interviewee B; Interviewee D, Interviewee H). Some foundations mention consultations processes together with their grantees which can enable mutual communication processes and thereby allow for integrating insights of the grantees. However, other approaches are the requirement for grantees to fill out a formal document committing to the foundations' values or the provision of financial or educational resources to advance their 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion' work according to the foundations' justice views. While basic justice values are aimed to be ensured with these processes, the foundations directly influence the field frames by particularly promoting their interpretations of justice.

In regards of directly engaging perspectives subjects of justice into the field, the foundations state different prominently used approaches. Often used is the 'Free, Prior and Informed Consent' approach through which subjects of justice, being mostly local communities, must give their consent before a project is implemented (FAO, 2022; Interviewee D; Interviewee F; Moore, 2021a). Thereby, legal recognition of land tenure is promoted for those specific groups of people. However, this only gives subjects of justice the option to withstand a project execution and maybe more ability to negotiate terms and conditions of project executions (FAO, 2022). A bottom-up capacity to integrate the subjects' own insights and needs is not ensured with this approach. Furthermore, scholars argue that this approach has its limitations as only selected groups of people are provided with this informal legal recognition whereby others without land rights to assert do not benefit (Mahanty & McDermott, 2013). Again, the power of foundations to influence the field according to their justice perceptions is prominent. This is the case as these foundations might only use the 'Free, Prior, and Informed Consent' selectively for specific subjects of justice and do not necessarily provide communities with more decision-making power throughout the strategy development of the projects' executions.

Another approach some foundations apply to build more trust and long-term relationships in the field is the 'general operating fund' (Ford, 2021c; Interviewee C, Interviewee F, Interviewee G). Through this approach, grantees and especially subjects of justice grantees are provided with more flexibility regarding the investments made with the funding and are less dependent on foundations' directions

(GEO, 2014). As a result, self-sufficient capacity building is enhanced by the foundations applying this approach (Krehely et al., 2004). Nevertheless, it must be taken into account that the foundations are still in a power-position to decide whom to provide with this support and under which conditions.

Further, a recurring feature is a more participatory, community-led approach supported by most foundations. A few centuries ago, 'fortress conservation' models were widely spread through which natural areas are protected by an exclusion of all human inhabitants (Rai et al., 2021; Siurua, 2006). During the end of the twentieth century, more awareness regarding the critical stewardship role of local and Indigenous communities to conserve natural ecosystems was spread (Nattrass, 2021). Accordingly, the foundations aim to give leadership and decision-making power to these subjects of justice. Additionally, Interviewee A indicated that this participatory approach further aims to prevent community members from engaging in illegal activities such as deforestation in conserved areas to secure their livelihoods. Thereby, this participatory approach can be a beneficial step towards more integrative conservation activities whereby the connection between humans and nature is valued. However, other scholars emphasise that there is still a lack of shifts in decision-making power towards these local communities to actually lead those conservation activities (Dill, 2009; Goldman & Milliard, 2014).

As often combinations of different approaches to engage subjects of justice are applied simultaneously by different foundations, it is unclear which are most effective and enduring throughout the field. Nevertheless, an overall need to advance bottom-up approaches by foundations is required to further strengthen the engagement of affected peoples' justice perspectives into the conservation governance field.

To sum it up, all foundations have approaches to promote enhanced engagement of their subjects of justice in governing processes throughout the field of conservation governance. However, the authoritative decision-making capacity on who to integrate in the field, which justice issues to promote and how to communicate with the subjects of justice lies by the foundations as field-builders.

### 5.3 Funding locations

The dominant funding locations of the foundations give an indication in which areas worldwide the foundations build the field of conservation governance. Figure 4 visualises the continents on which the assessed foundations are active with their land conservation work. The number within one circle indicates how many of the 12 foundations are active on one of the seven continents (Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, South America).



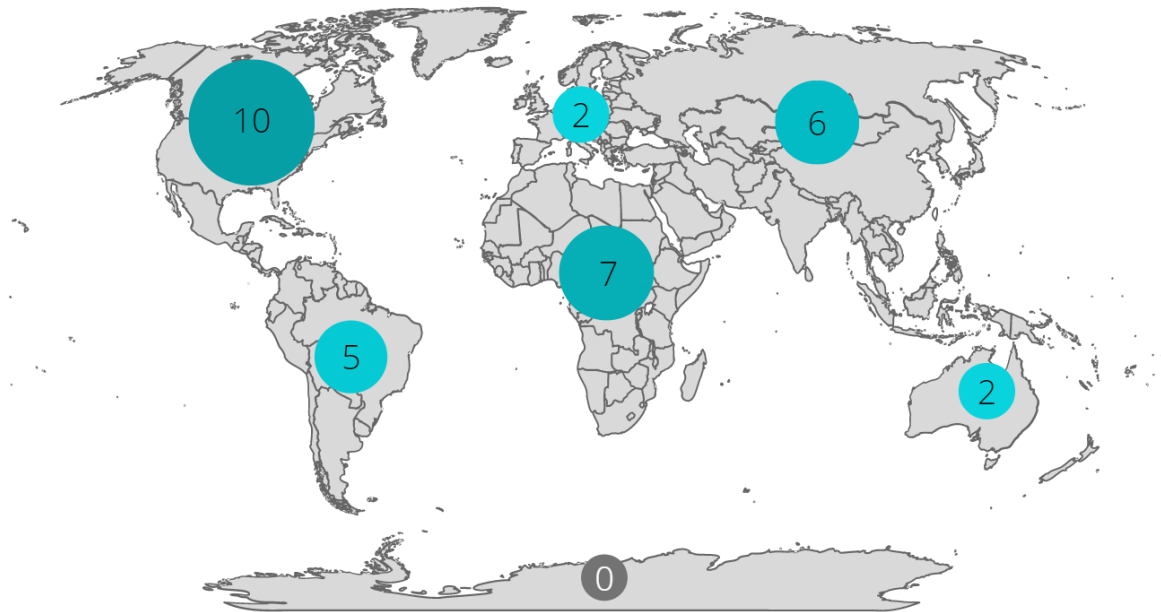


Figure 4. Location map visualising on which continents the foundations extend the field of conservation governance.

All 12 foundations analysed were established in the U.S. whereby many local projects are funded in this country. Consequently, especially in North America, the field of conservation governance is extended by prominently taking a minimalist and critical perspective of justice. As the U.S. is the origin country of all 12 foundations many decision-making employees as well as collaboration partners are based in this country. Thereby, prominent justice interpretations in the field and decisions on which justice issue areas to focus stem presumably largely from perspectives of the Global North.

Besides the U.S., land conservation projects are mostly funded in less developed, poorer countries on the continents Africa, Asia, and South America. In Africa many different low-income countries are provided with funding by different foundations. In Asia, Southern countries laying around the Mekong watersheds and the Himalayas as well as India and Indonesia are prominently funded. In South America mostly projects within the Amazon Rainforest and the Andes are funded. All of these funding locations have fewer financial resources available. On the one side, this funding of low-income areas can be regarded beneficial as otherwise little money for the protection of valuable ecosystems and livelihoods of people would be available. On the other side, a dependence of these regions and its communities on the financial providers is generated. As Reich (2020) explains, this often results in a form of paternalism whereby the foundations have the autonomy in the funder-recipient relationship. Consequently, less financial and decision-making power lies by people within those funded locations and their interpretations of justice are less present in the field.

As Australia and Europe are only funded by few foundations, the field is not dominantly enlarged to those two continents. It indicates that little emphasis is put on richer continents, besides the U.S., when funding conservation activities. This might be explained by these countries' available financial capacities and little dependence on fundings for tackling societal or environmental issues.

Even though the Antarctica is a threatened area of our planet's ecosystem no foundation extends the conservation governance field to this area. Critical environmental and justice issues such as species loss, tourism harming the ecosystems or Indigenous peoples' livelihoods are neglected (Hughes et al., 2013;

Wehi et al., 2021). A reason for this could be that most threatened locations of Antarctica are marine areas which are not assessed in this research.

Another critical factor this research observes is that foundations often provide funding to the same locations over years. Again, this has a positive aspect as thereby grantees are able to use the funding to establish longer-lasting institutional changes and ensure sustained impacts of the projects. However, a negative aspect is that the foundations get stuck in a funding cycle whereby other relevant issue areas might get neglected.

## 5.4 Scientific contributions

The research gap addressed with this thesis is the understudied role of foundations as field-builders by influencing justice norm discourses in land conservation philanthropy. These justice norms can evolve in different forms depending on the individual or groups of people interpreting it (Mollett & Kepe, 2018; Schlosberg, 2013; Srivastava, 2011). As literature has shown, different philanthropic foundations take varying justice perspectives throughout their work whereby the lives of subjects to these justice issues are directly affected (Kalfagianni, 2022). To better understand this influential capacity of philanthropic activity in the field of conservation governance, this research provides several scientific contributions.

First, this study builds on the pluralistic justice framework developed by Biermann & Kalfagianni (2020) to classify diverse justice meanings into one of five overarching perspectives. As solely anthropocentric perspectives putting humans at the centre of every justice discourse were included, this framework is extended with an eco-centric perspective. Through this contribution, the framework allows to identify interpretations that more holistically integrate social and ecological entities in their justice discourses (Kopnina & Washington; 2020). Consequently, a more critical assessment of present or absent ecology centring justice interpretations of different persons or organisations is promoted. Further, by applying this justice framework together with the added eco-centric perspective, most prominent justice views within the conservation governance field were identified. Almost coherently observed throughout the field are the human-centring cosmopolitan minimalist and the critical perspectives of justice.

Regarding the field-building literature, more research especially on the foundation-grantee collaboration activities was called for (Betsill et al., 2021). Through this study different frequently mentioned grantee groups are identified, being most prominently non-profit organisations and increasingly subjects of justice grantees such as Black, Indigenous and People of colour-led organisations (Figure 3). As indicated by different scholars, foundations take a field-building role by deciding which grantees to enrol into the conservation governance field and how to further engage with subjects of justice (Bartley, 2007; Betsill et al., 2021). Even though the field-building literature implied a more top-down approach of foundations by shaping norms and field frames according to their own perceptions of what is deemed appropriate (Bartley, 2007), the findings show that foundations claim to prevent this. A more bottom-up collaboration process according to the needs of subjects affected by injustices is strived for by these foundations. Different methods to implement this were observed with this study. These are for example, the 'Free, Prior, and Informed Consent' approach, a general operating fund or more community-centred conservation projects. Nevertheless, the foundations decide which project goals to fund, provide resources on 'Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion' values to their partners or organise consultation meetings with different stakeholders to develop project strategies whereby their field-building influence is still prevalent.

Lastly, it is shown that the location in which an organisational field is extended is critical to assess. Even though a field is not necessarily bound to geographical locations, the backgrounds or perspectives of actors the foundations integrate in the field are highly relevant when influencing the field frames. For this reason, the compilation of all location information given by the foundations' land conservation funding programs is another contribution to literature.

## 5.5. Societal contributions

As many people worldwide face permanent injustices regarding their social, economic, physical, or political position, there is a substantial need to advance more just developments (UN, 2022). While philanthropic foundations are commonly perceived as organisations solving societal problems through their charitable activities, their impactful field-building role influencing justice discourses is disregarded (Anheier & Daly, 2007; Betsill et al., 2021; Kalfagianni, 2022). As demonstrated with this study, justice interpretations are developed throughout activities and field networks initiated by the foundations as field-builders. As a result, the foundations directly impact field framings of how of a just and inclusive world should look like (Kalfagianni, 2022) and more importantly, how these framings are translated into action. As there is no optimal practice to perceive and operationalise norms such as the justice norm (Lawless et al., 2020; Wiener, 2007), it is important to critically reflect on prevalent interpretations to detect pathways for alignments or improvements (Agyemann et al., 2002; Schlosberg, 2013).

On the one side, an increased understanding of most prominent justice perspectives in the field is provided through this research. Two widespread justice interpretations, being protected rights and needs of local and Indigenous communities as well as enhanced representation of marginalised communities, are identified in the field. While conducting this research, comparable justice issues are covered throughout their programs, and similar terms are used by different foundations throughout their work. This indicates an alignment of their justice interpretations and collaboration approaches. Through the findings of this research, foundations and partners can reflect on their own coherence of interpreting and applying their justice views whereby they can develop more critical interpretations of justice.

On the other side, diverse collaboration approaches to engage subjects of justice into the projects' processes are observed. Therefore, foundations have the possibility to again reflect on their own practices, learn from other actors in the field and optimise their strategies. Especially in regards of those more inclusive, participatory collaboration processes different approaches were indicated which have the potential to be formed to even more effective and engaging methods.

As foundations build the field especially in the U.S. and in several poorer countries which are consistently funded over time, there might be a need to reconsider their ties to these focus locations and extend the field to other issue areas. Additionally, the funded, poorer regions are usually directly dependent on the financial support of foundations. Hereby, it should be noted that this dependence and limited power of those regions is presumably a critical barrier to highlight their own justice interpretations in the field.

## 5.6 Limitations

While this research provides valuable findings, its limitations must be taken into account. By focusing mostly on internal data or interview insights of foundation members, little information is provided

regarding perspectives of other actors in the field and particularly subjects of justice's points of view. Hereby, it is relevant to consider that published data through the foundations' choices might be more positively connoted to favour their reputation. Especially in regards of their collaboration activities more specific information from project sites would have enhanced the quality of the findings. Further, assessments of foundations' collaboration networks were focused to obtain insights in their overall engagement with subjects of justice. However, to comprehensively assess the foundations' field-building role in the land conservation network, specific partnerships would have been necessary to examine more thoroughly. Through the interviews more in-depth insights were provided which increased the data validity. For this reason, more interviews would have yielded in an even deeper level of detail but not necessarily in fundamentally different information. The applied discourse analysis allowed for room to interpret findings in regards of their underlying meanings (Bondarouk & Ruël, 2004). However, this in turn forms a limitation as different statements are perceived subjectively. Especially as aspects of the perspectives within the pluralistic justice framework are often interwoven and foundations do not strictly follow one justice perspective, there might be slight variations when interpreting the findings. Another limitation is the case selection of 12 foundations whereby differing justice interpretations or collaboration strategies could be prevalent for the rest of the conservation governance field. Lastly, due to a limited scope of this research a more extensive, regional study on the funded locations was not feasible. Thereby, only the overarching locations are presented in which the foundations' justice interpretations are developed.

## 5.7 Future research

Due to the before mentioned limitations, future research should investigate the following aspects. At first, there is a need to examine how justice interpretations are perceived and operationalised through the lens of other actors in the field. Especially when talking to subjects of justice affected by a project, a more comprehensive understanding of how they are involved in the development of justice interpretations can be obtained. In this regard, a need to include more diverse justice perspectives into the applied justice framework is given as the current ones represent solely views of western cultures. To study the overarching field-building role and influence of foundations on justice interpretations in land conservation, this research was assessed on a program level. By conducting future studies on a project level with more in-depth insights into the foundations' procedures, a more circumstantial observation can be achieved. Particularly when examining collaboration and communication activities, the project level might uncover valuable findings regarding best practices whereby improvements can be made to existing approaches of foundations. Furthermore, as the conservation governance field comprises many more foundations, a larger case selection in future research would give an even more accurate representation of its most prominent justice interpretations and field-building approaches. As all assessed foundations are based in the U.S., future research should investigate justice interpretations of philanthropic organisations established in different countries worldwide. Additionally, by assessing regional differences of the funded locations, a better understanding of diverse cultures and contexts influencing the development of justice interpretations could be derived.

## 6. Conclusion

The research question aimed to be answered with this study was how philanthropic foundations function as field-builders influencing justice discourses in activities contributing to land conservation. A qualitative analysis of 12 foundations active in the conservation governance field examined their justice interpretations and collaboration activities with grantees and subjects of justice. The findings indicate that philanthropic foundations function as field-builders by using different participatory approaches to engage subjects of justice into their philanthropic activities to collectively develop their justice interpretations.

Usually different justice perspectives are interwoven and combined by the foundations. Most prominently addressed are land rights and livelihoods of indigenous or other local communities (Cosmopolitan minimalist view) and equal representation of marginalised communities (Critical view) when discussing justice issues. Consequently, large funding sums within the field are invested to support people facing those injustices. As the foundations themselves seem to be eager to make their practices more just and inclusive, critical discourses on justice interpretations could further be enhanced in the field. This is necessary especially regarding a more integrative eco-centric approach to improve conservation practices. A promising finding is that all foundations apply varying methods to engage subjects of justice directly into their philanthropic activities. Thereby, they aim to better serve the subjects' needs while providing them with more self-determined leadership capacity of the projects. However, it is important to emphasise that very little of the publications and interview conversations revealed critical information on the foundations' own practices or even failed projects. This might be linked to their prominent reputation as problem-solvers which is aimed to be preserved. However, more holistic, critical, and transparent assessments of their own role in conservation activities would allow progress towards improved practices.

Most foundations have similar justice interpretations, and all see the need for more participatory, bottom-up conservation processes. As these foundations already have established partnerships, more collaborative approaches to reflect on their field justice interpretations and their diverse approaches to engage subjects of justice might advance just and inclusive developments. This engagement of different actors in the field is particularly focused within the foundations' main funding areas, the U.S. and poorer countries in Africa, Asia, and South America. However, a critical assessment of other locations in need of funding could be conducted by the foundations to prevent marginalising relevant conservation areas and justice issues.

In conclusion, the role of philanthropic foundations is highly relevant in regards of justice norm developments in the conservation governance field. Together with the foundations, more awareness can be brought to these justice issues whereby a shift of the field-building power to groups of people affected by injustices is required.

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# 8. Appendix

## Appendix A – List of top ten foundations active in SDG 15 – Life on Land

Position	Name of foundations	Amount of funding in Million USD
1.	Fidelity Investments Charitable Gift Fund	337.29
2.	Foundation for the Carolinas	226.55
3.	Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation	153.06
4.	Bloomberg Philanthropies, Inc.	132.45
5.	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	112.26
6.	University of Florida Foundation, Inc.	110.58
7.	The Wyss Foundation	103.59
8.	The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	96.14
9.	Howard G. Buffett Foundation	93.92
10.	Walton Family Foundation	84.25

## Appendix B – Interview guide for foundation members

### Introduction:

My name is Sarah Hübsch and I am a student of the MSc program Sustainable Business and Innovation at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. Within the scope of my master thesis, I am researching how philanthropic foundations influence justice discourses in land conservation activities. As you are [position of interviewee], I am very interested in your insights on how the [foundation] is interpreting justice more generally and use these interpretations throughout their funding decisions and collaboration activities.

### Consent form:

This interview will take about 30-45 minutes and is strictly confidential. The transcript of the interview will be analysed by me as research investigator and can be accessed by supervisors guiding my research. Direct quotations from the interview that are made available through academic publication will be anonymized, but if that is okay for your, your position at the foundation will be mentioned when quoting passages from the interview.

You have the right to step out of this interview at any point or to not answer a question. You maintain ownership of what you have said in the recording and can control what happens with it. The answers will be safely stored and will not be accessible to anyone but the research team. If you have any questions during the interview, feel free to ask them at any time. Lastly, I would like to ask whether I can record this interview for research purposes.

\*start recording\*

Your name is .... And with the words “I agree” you confirm that you have been fully informed about your rights and the purpose of the interview and what happens with the collected data.

Topic	Questions
<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do you want to briefly introduce yourself and your task as [position of interviewee] at [foundation]?</li> <li>- For how long have you been part of the [foundation]?</li> </ul>
<b>Justice issues within land conservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Which are the main challenges you face in land conservation programs regarding justice?</li> <li>- What is the [foundations] general strategy to counteract injustices within land conservation?</li> </ul>
<b>Justice interpretations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If you think about the land conservation programs funded by [foundation]- Who or what is considered most important to take into account when facing justice issues? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Is there a difference who or what is prioritized when approaching justice issues (e.g. specific groups of humans, animals, ecological entities)?</li> <li>o Are there critical discussions on which entities should be included in justice considerations?</li> </ul> </li> <li>- What is the [foundations] interpretation of how justice is achieved in their land conservation programs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Is there a specific material, social, political or environmental concern the [foundation] focuses on when identifying justice challenges?</li> <li>o Is the [foundation] formulating specific justice goals to be reached through operationalizing funded land conservation programs?</li> <li>o How are these justice targets decided on and are they communicated?</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Do you want to add something else to how the foundation is interprets justice issues?</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborative work in land conservation programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Which organisations is your foundation working with to support land conservation activities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Do you cooperate with governmental organisations or representatives?</li> <li>o Which public or private organisations or groups predominantly receive your funding to invest it in land conservation activities?</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Do you consider the previously discussed justice interpretations in your decision who you collaborate with and who receives the money to distribute it?</li> <li>- Is the [foundation] discussing who is affected of justice issues and how to counteract injustices with representatives of every organisation it is working with?</li> </ul>

<p><b>Funding activities for land conservation programs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Towards which land conservation initiatives does the foundation (...) funnel its funding? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Which of these initiatives receive most financial support, and why?</li> <li>o How and to what extend are the justice interpretations discussed earlier considered while choosing an initiative to fund?</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Are there any preconditions on justice issues for an initiative to be selected and deemed appropriate?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Closing of the interview</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Would you like to add anything to this conversation?</li> <li>- Are there things you think are important to tell, which have not come forward out of this conversation?</li> <li>- Thank you for your time in taking this interview. We will inform you about the results of the study. If there will be any follow up questions, would it be okay for you that we will contact you again?</li> </ul>

## Appendix C – Coding Scheme

- Approaches to counteract injustice
- Awareness of injustice
- Collaboration
  - Affected people
  - Corporations
  - Education institutions
  - Governments
  - Grant receivers
  - Justice Collaboration Organizations
  - Media
  - Municipalities
  - NGOs
  - Other foundations
- Environmental program info
- General
  - Mission
  - Vision
- Justice considerations in land conservation
  - Principle
    - Capabilities
    - Cosmopolitan
    - Critical perspective
    - Eco-centric view
    - Libertarianism
    - Utilitarianism
  - Subject
    - Capabilities
    - Cosmopolitan
    - Critical perspective
    - Eco-centric perspective

