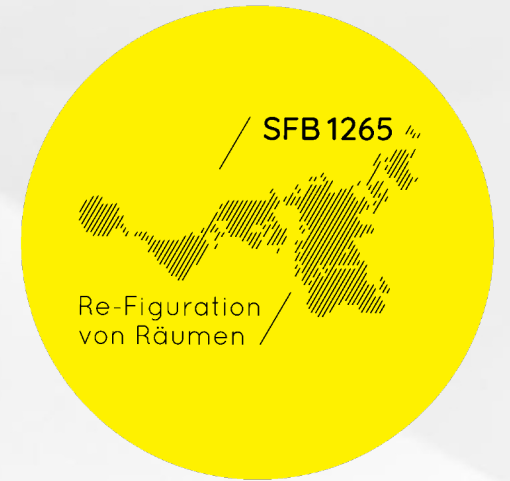


# What Prevents Change? Reflections on the Spatial Refiguration of Natures



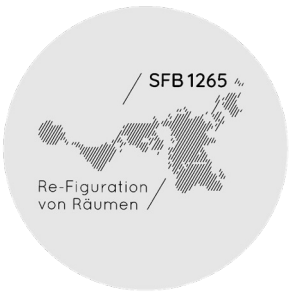
Einfach: gerecht? Fachsymposium

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Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 08.05.2026

Jamie-Scott Baxter (HafenCity University Hamburg, TU Berlin)  
Séverine Marguin (HafenCity University Hamburg, TU Berlin)



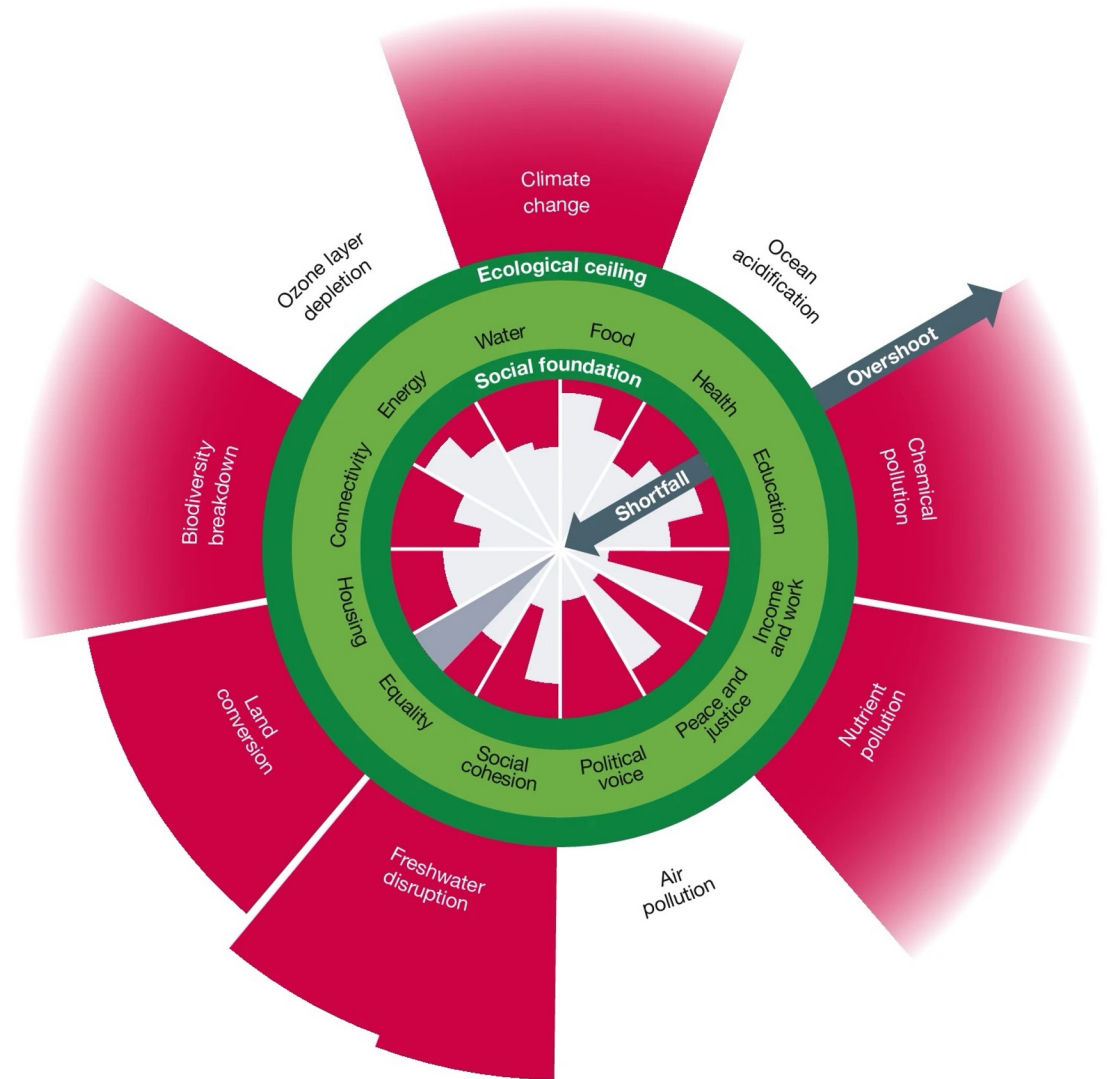


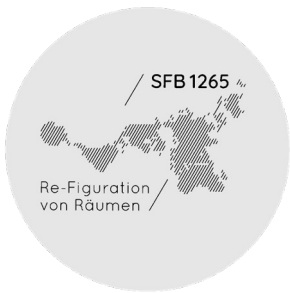
# The Problem at Hand

‘Ecological overshoot would have to stop immediately and accelerate nearly two times faster towards planetary boundaries to safeguard Earth-system stability by 2050.’

(Fanning and Raworth 2025)

Image: Current global status of shortfall and overshoot in the Doughnut of social and planetary boundaries. Fanning and Raworth, 2025. CC BY 4.0





# Biodiversity Conservation Regime: ‘Dachbegriff’

*‘Geo-social classes [are] defined by their territorial conditions of survival, their material conditions of existence or reproduction’. Class struggle over territory and not [only] over the means of production.. division [not only of labour but] of space’*

*(Latour and Schultz 2019)*

## Conservation a Spatial Regime

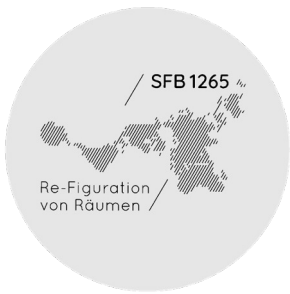
A regulatory structure that governs and legitimises the spatial (re)organisation of biodiversity (including human and nonhuman natures) developed through the 20th century.

Interlinked with empire, colonialism, nation state building and capital the development of the conservative regime unfolds within a globalised constellation of public and private actors, and exercises power through diverse infrastructures such as IUCN, COP, management plans, or **botanical gardens**.

(Adams 2004, Baxter and Marguin 2024 & 2025, Braverman 2023)

	Nature/culture dichotomies	Beyond Nature/culture dichotomies
Capitalist	Mainstream conservation	New conservation
Beyond-capitalist	Neoprotectionsim	Convivial conservation

(from Büscher & Fletcher 2020:14)



# Biodiversity Conservation Regime: ‘Dachbegriff’

## Aims:

to demonstrate how socio-ecological transformation is a conflictual and nonlinear spatial processes shaped across scales by the conservation regime.

### Conservation a Spatial Regime

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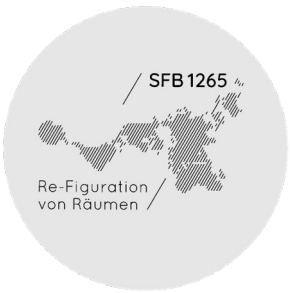
(Adams 2004, Baxter and Marguin 2024 & 2025, Braverman 2023)

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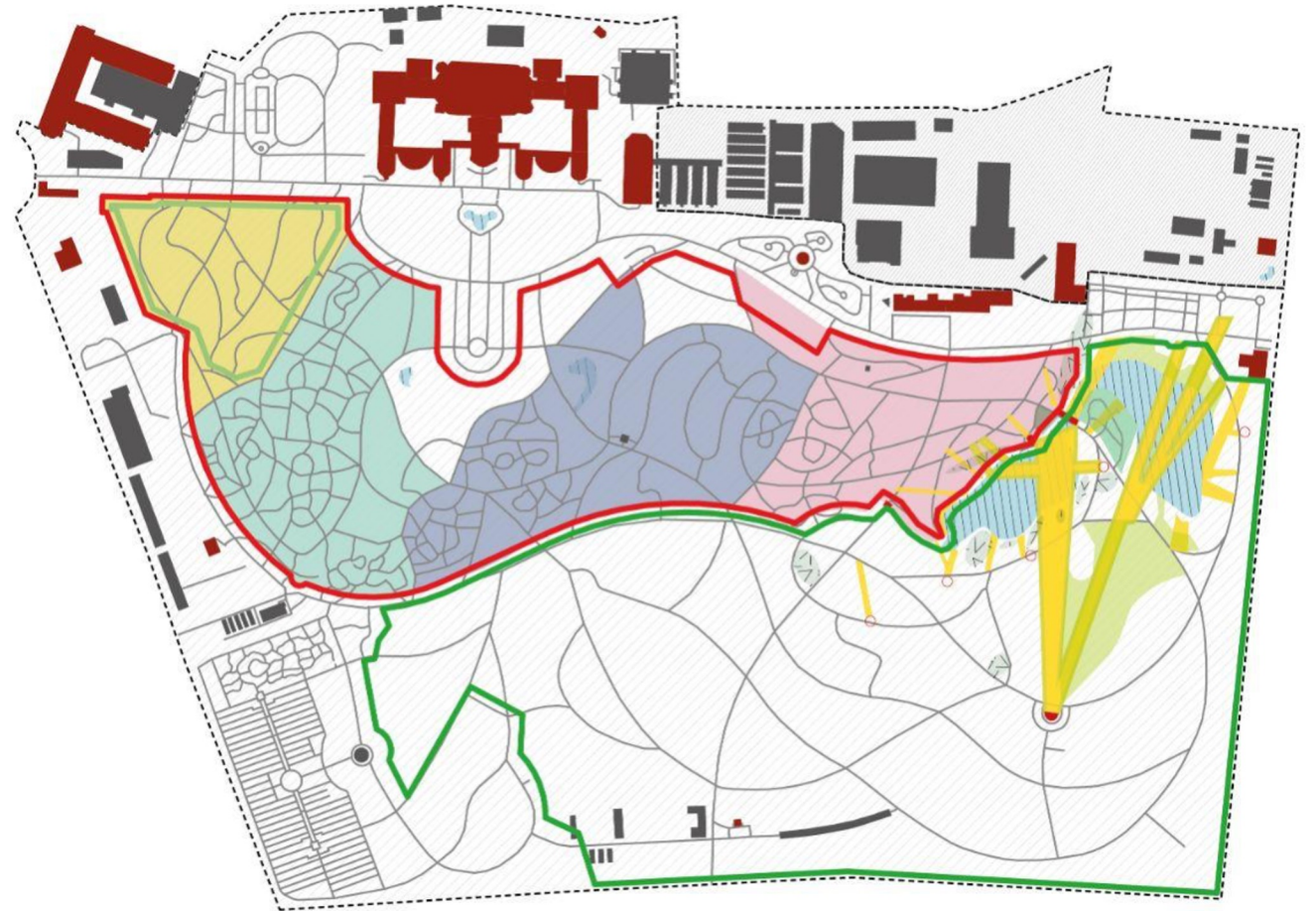
# Botanic Garden Berlin: Conservation Under Change

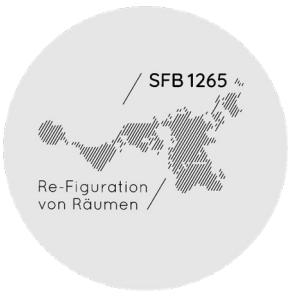
## Drivers of change

**Climate change:** threatening plants in the garden / efficiency of the glasshouses

**Decolonisation:** collections made on the back of colonial networks (Gramlich and Kray 2020; Kaiser 2016, 2022)

**Digitalisation:** Innovation in technology changing how knowledge is produced, stored and disseminated.





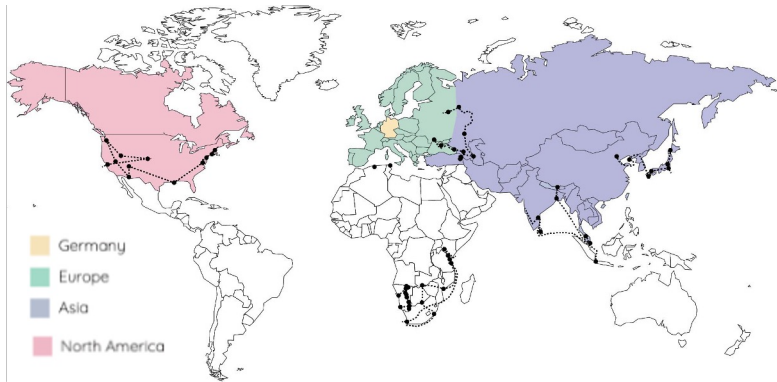
# Botanic Garden Berlin: Staging Nature

## Drivers of change

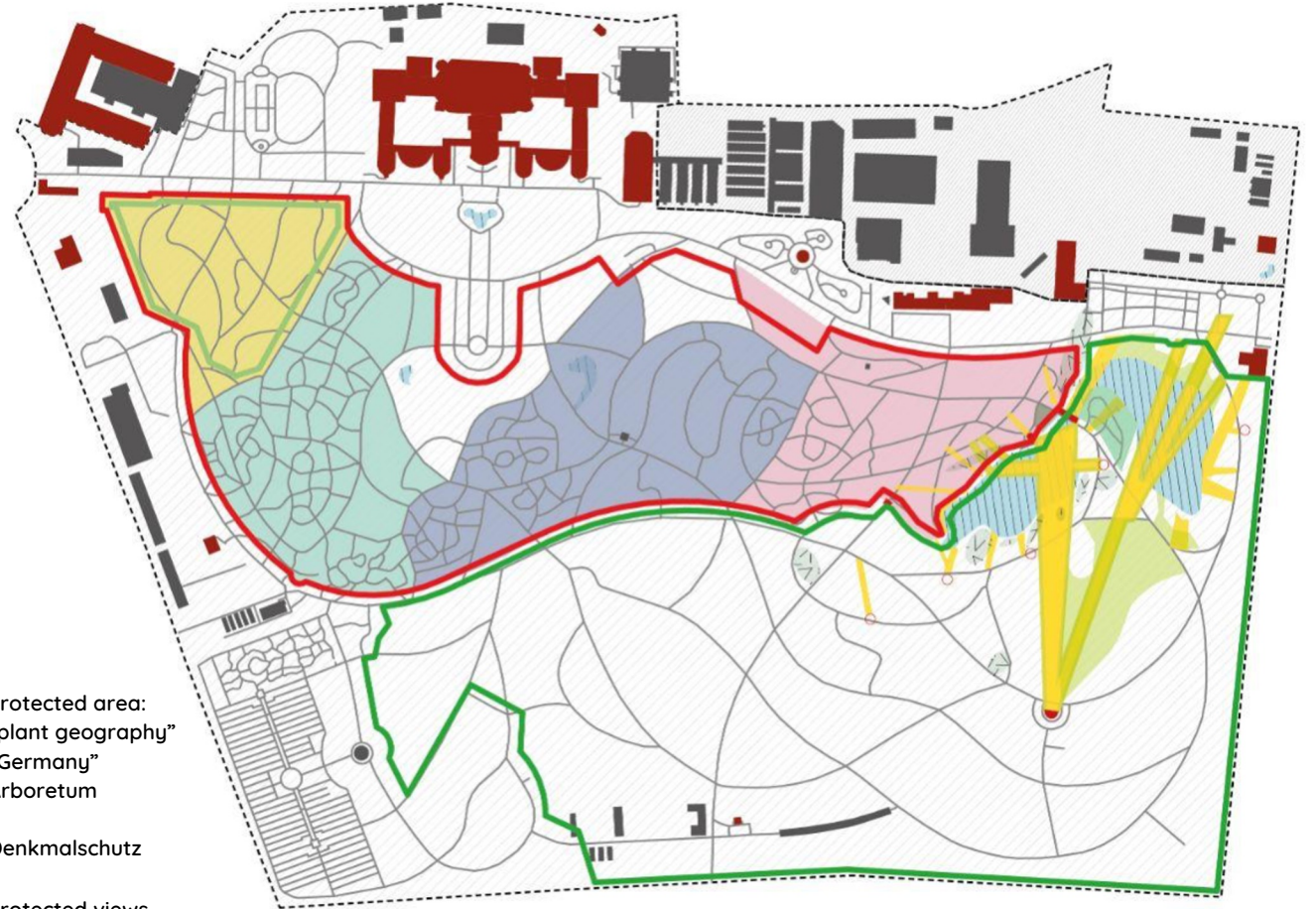
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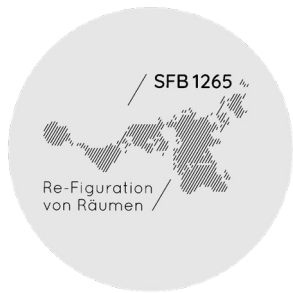


Adolf Engler's restaged his journey across the globe from 1900 and 1913 inscribing it into the plan of the Botanical Gardens in Berlin. What is known as the "plant geography" zone (in the red line) is still heavily protected preventing change today by Gartendenkmal



- Protected area: "plant geography"
- "Germany" Arboretum
- Arboretum
- Denkmalschutz
- ▲ Protected views

Mapping: inès Gartlinger, Séverine Marguin & Jamie-Scott Baxter



# SFB 1265: Refiguration of Spaces

Space is understood as socially produced in relational processes.

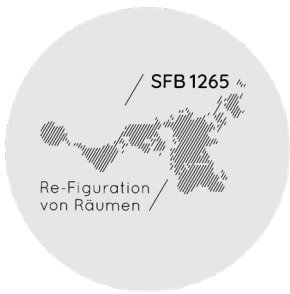
Subjective meaning-making (knowledges) and the arrangement of social goods and nonhuman life (actions) are important in the constitution of space.

Meanwhile, spaces also shape the possibilities of future action and knowledge.

(e.g. Lefebvre 1979, Massy 2009, Löw 2016)

The screenshot shows the website for Collaborative Research Center 1265 "Re-Figuration of Spaces". The navigation bar includes "ABOUT US", "RESEARCH & GRADUATE SCHOOL", "PROJECTS", "PUBLICATIONS", and "FORMATS & NEWS". The main content area is titled "Working Papers" and displays four cards for working papers No. 19, 20, 21, and 22. Each card features a yellow header with the paper number and a white body with the title and authors.

Working Paper No.	Title	Authors
19	Refiguration von Räumen erklären? Überlegungen zum Verstehenden Erklären räumlicher Prozesse in den Sozialwissenschaften	Hubert Knoblauch, Silke Steets, Stefan Kirchner, Nina Baur
20	Power and Space: Understanding spatial refiguration through the lens of the regime – Working Paper No. 20	Dorothea Biaback Anong, Francesca Ceola, Christina Hecht, Stefan Kirchner, Severine Marguin, Indrawati Prabaharyaka, Quassy Amer
21	Die Refiguration von Räumen erforschen. Ergebnisse der ersten acht Jahre SFB 1265 und Ausrichtung der weiteren Forschung	Sonderforschungsbereich "Re-Figuration von Räumen" (SFB 1265)
22	Researching the refiguration of spaces. Findings from the first eight years of the CRC 1265 and directions for future research	Collaborative Research Center "Re-Figuration of Spaces" (CRC 1265)

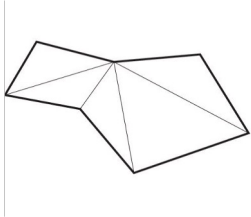
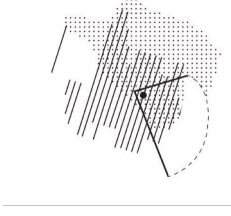
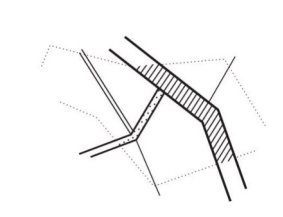
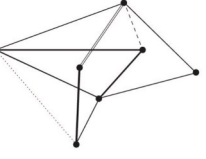


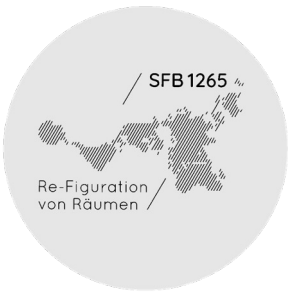
# Spatial figures: logics, orders, knowledge, and dependencies

Spatial figures have different spatial logics, orders, and associated forms of knowledge that can lead to the sedimentation of spatial structures over time.

The social structuring of space restricts future actions and enacts particular space(time) dependencies.

Space dependencies are situations of 'sustained persistence of spatial arrangements [where] knowledge or actions become firmly tethered to a particular arrangement' (Bauer & Kirchner 2025)

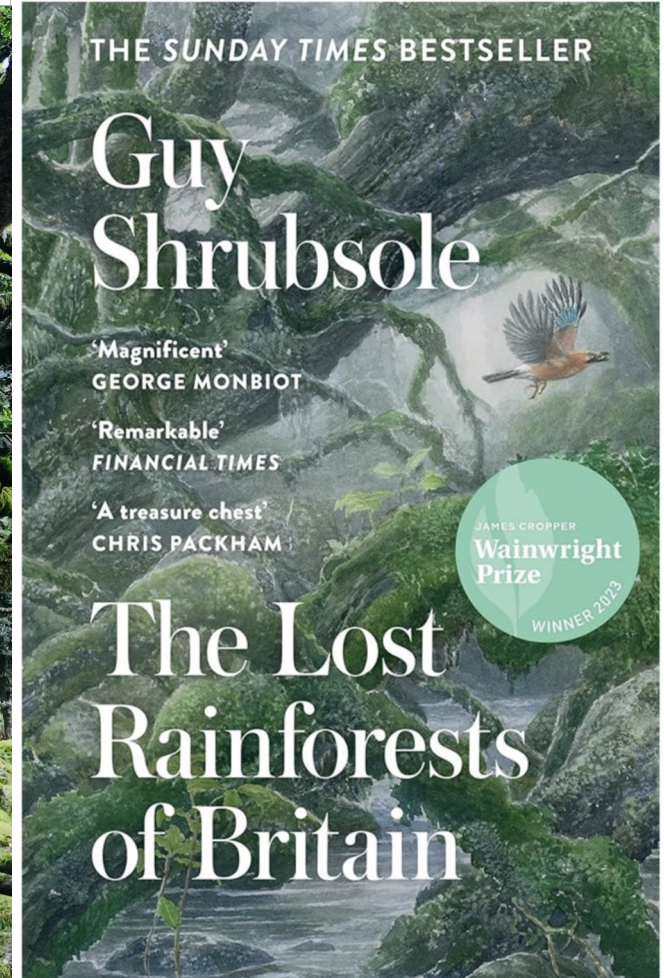
	Territory	Place	Route	Network
Constitutive Elements	Border / Surface	Name / Position	Impulsion / Direction	Nodes / Edges
Logic of Action	Bordering / Cutting	Marking / Identifying	Crossing / Moving	Relating / Associating
Topology				

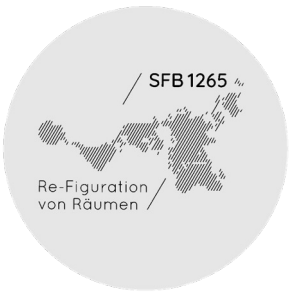


# 'Lost' Rainforests of Britain

Rainforest conservation and restoration

From botanical 'gardens' to large-scale 'more-than-human landscapes' (Tsign 2019).





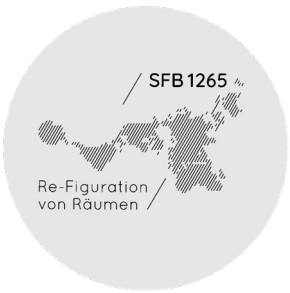
# Restaging Rainforest: Benmore Botanic Garden

## Spatial conflicts I:

From a species-centered to a ecosystem-centered approach

Lichen, moss trail, and fern trails reconnecting fragmented patches of rainforest.





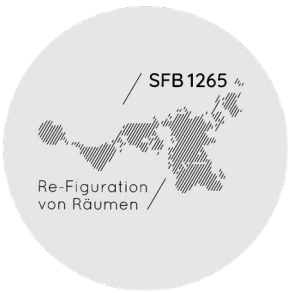
# Restaging Rainforest: Benmore Botanic Garden

## Spatial conflicts II:

From spatial distinction to hybrid. Reevaluating 'exotic' and 'native' species.

Inversing the spatial order of an 'exotic garden' to become a site of experimentation.





# Restaging Rainforest: Scotland

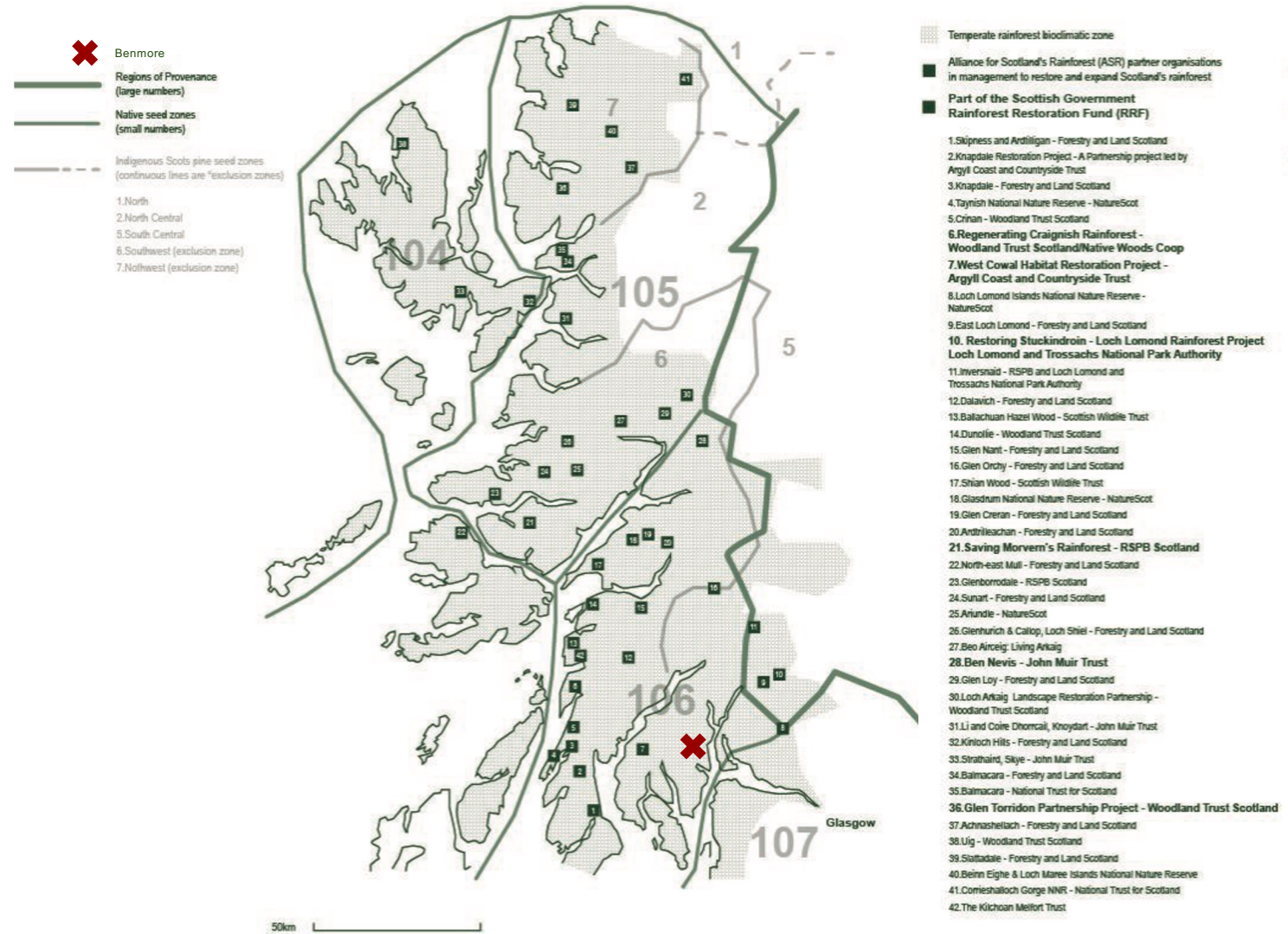
## Spatial conflicts III:

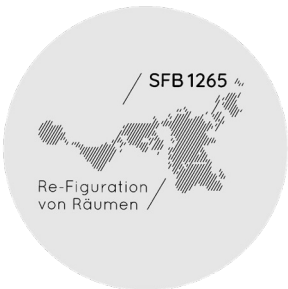
Between *environments-on-the-move* and seed zones.

Plant regulations lock spaces *in* time challenged by changing climates.

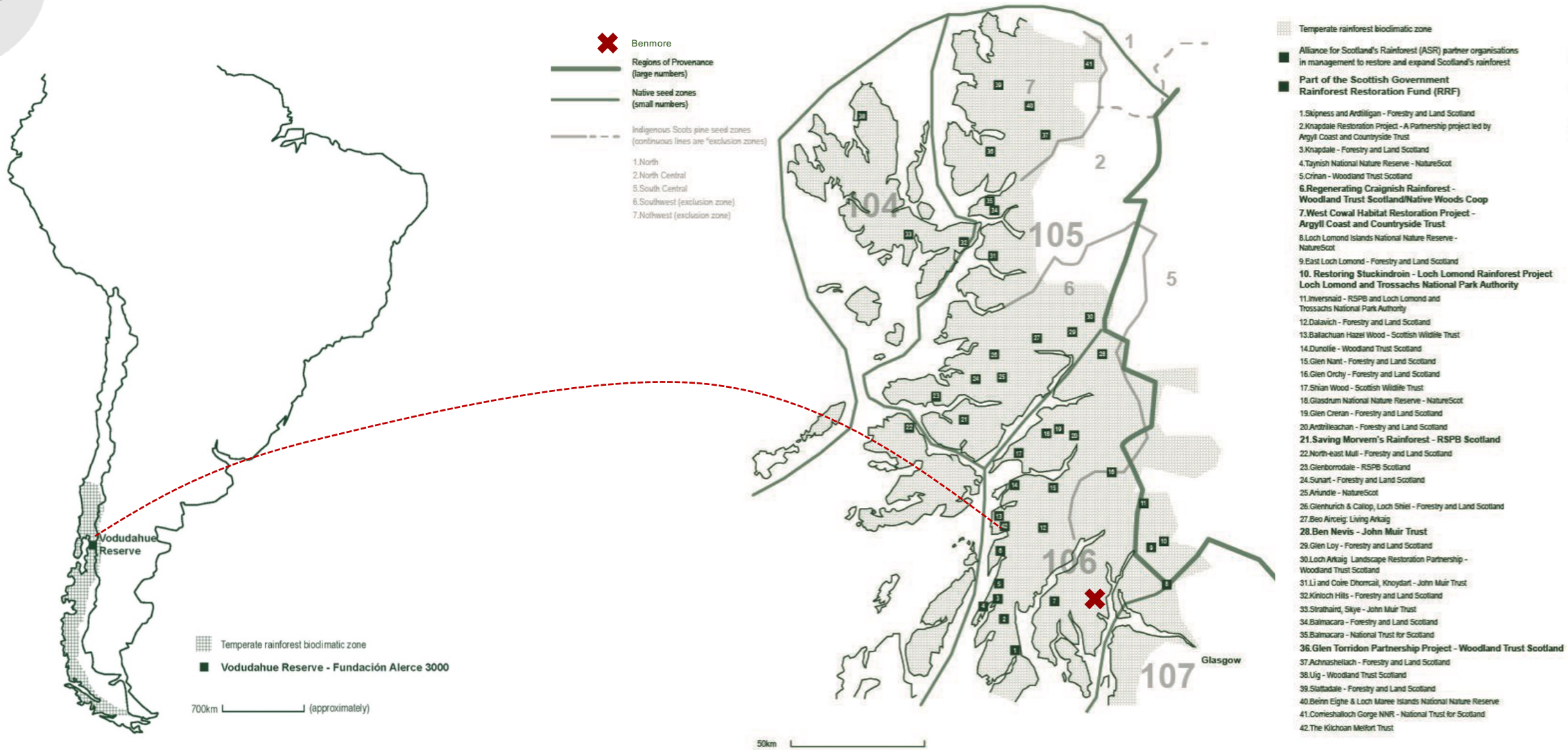
‘Native’ becomes a temporal category.

‘Designing Back from the Future’ (Willis and Fry 2025)



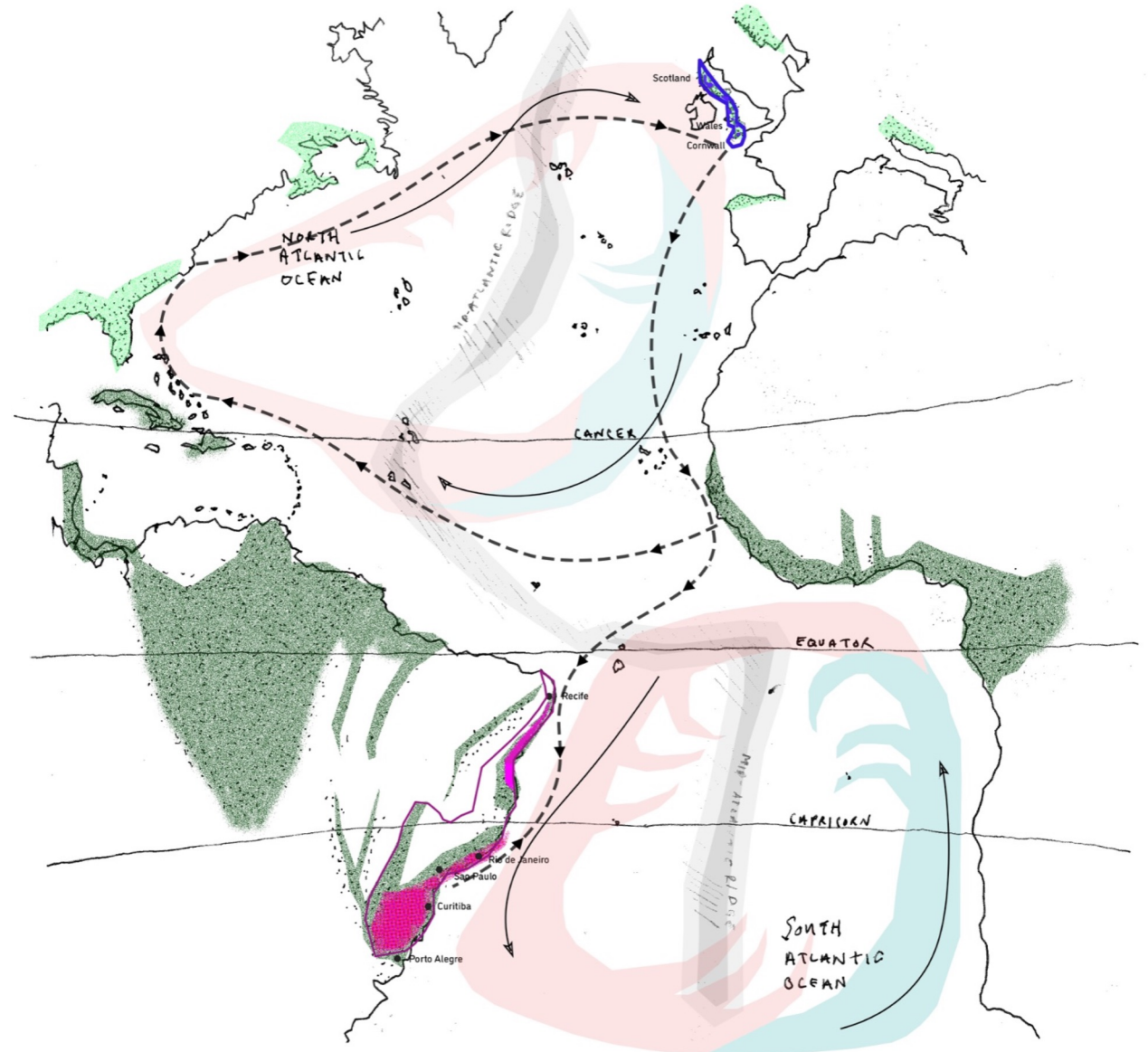


# Restaging Rainforest: Scotland and Chile

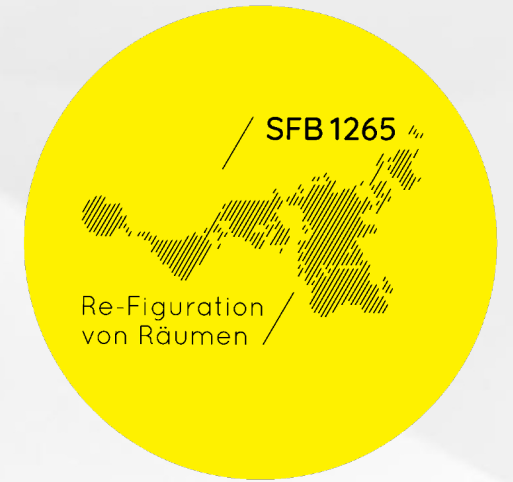


# Conclusions and Outlook

- Analysing socio-ecological transformation as a conflictual and nonlinear spatial processes at multiple scales.
- Identifying the spatial regimes and structures at play as forces of stratification.
- Developing new spacetime imaginaries.
- *Prefiguring* as an attempt to ‘design back from the future’ (Willis and Fry 2025)



# What Prevents Change? Reflections on the Spatial Refiguration of Natures



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Thank you for your attention!

Jamie-Scott Baxter (HafenCity University Hamburg, TU Berlin)  
Séverine Marguin (HafenCity University Hamburg, TU Berlin)

