

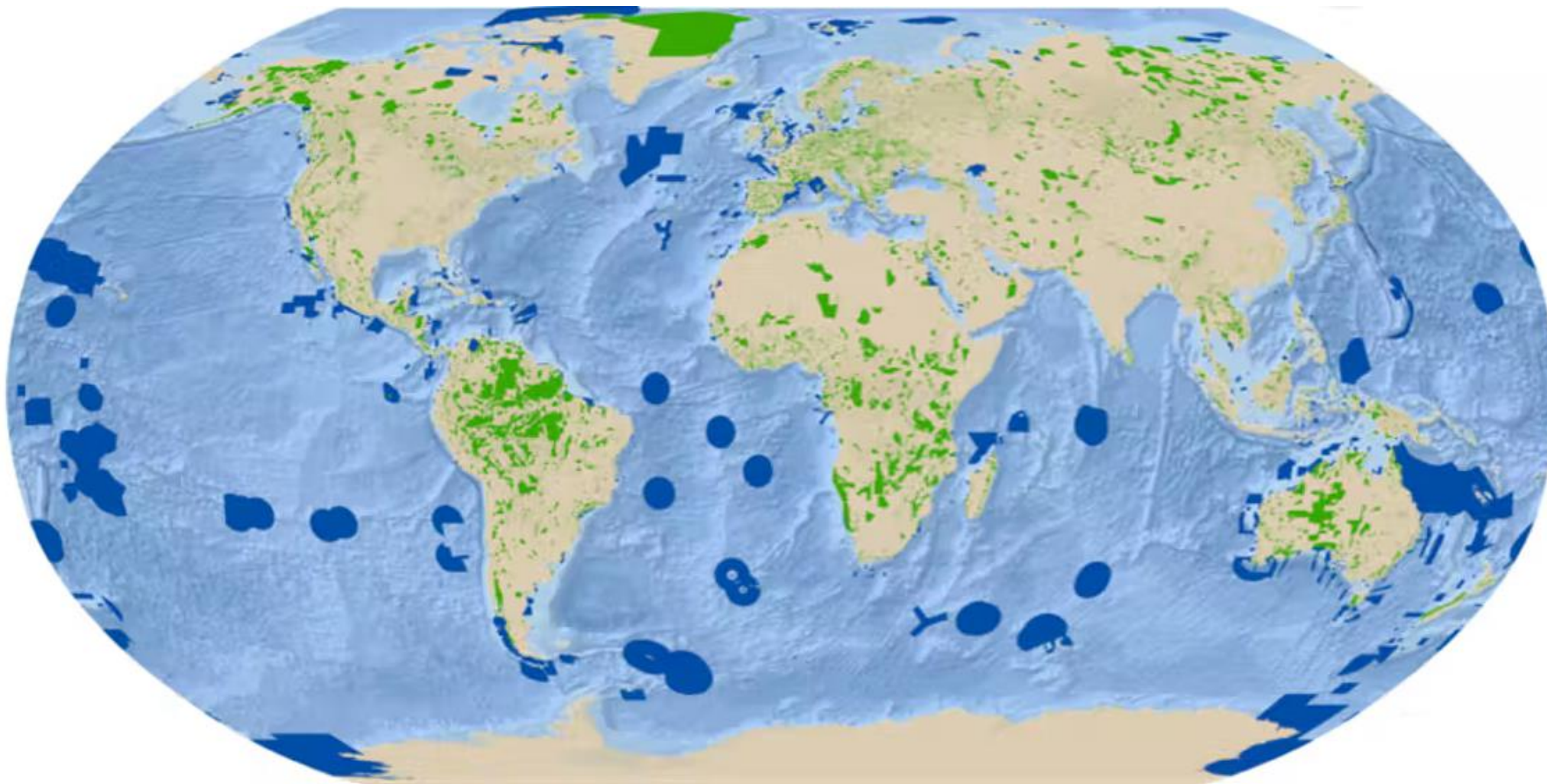
Biodiversity: conservation is also a power question

Who defines valuable nature, and who bears the costs of protecting it?

- Protected areas and land governance
- Indigenous and local knowledge
- Food systems and biodiversity
- North-South relations

A sustainability policy can protect ecosystems while still reproducing unequal control over land and resources.

The political task is to connect biodiversity protection with rights, livelihoods and legitimacy.



Source: UNEP-WCMC and IUCN (2021). Protected Planet: The World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA) and World Database on Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (WD-OECM) [On-line], July 2021, Cambridge, UK: UNEP-WCMC. Available at www.protectedplanet.net

AI and the environmental governance gap

AI is both an infrastructure challenge and a governance challenge.

INPUTS



Data, minerals, energy and water

SYSTEMS



Data centres, models and supply chains

EFFECTS



Environmental monitoring, decision-making and surveillance

GOVERNANCE



Who sets rules and who is accountable?

The geopolitics of AI sits under the hype: infrastructures, standards, data and unequal capacity.

AI GOVERNANCE NEWSLETTER • ISSUE #35

PATRICK UPMANN | 22 SEPTEMBER 2026

The AI Governance Gap

When Machines Gain Authority Over Critical Systems

FROM A NATO-SUPPORTED RESEARCH WORKSHOP IN ARMENIA
TO THE GLOBAL CHALLENGE OF GOVERNING AUTONOMOUS AI
IN CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE.

HUMAN
RESPONSIBILITY
REMAINS
ESSENTIAL

INTELLIGENCE
IS NOT
PERMISSION

—
DETECT
ASSESS
RECOMMEND
ACT
ACCOUNT
—



SECURE
INFRASTRUCTURE



GOVERN
AUTHORITY



STRENGTHEN
ACCOUNTABILITY



ENABLE
EVIDENCE



BUILD A SAFER
TOMORROW

AIGN

ADVISE
RESEARCH
CONNECT
FOR A SAFER TOMORROW

CRITICAL SYSTEMS.
RESPONSIBLE AI.
A MORE RESILIENT TOMORROW.



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI BERGAMO

Digital spaces: regulation beyond borders

Digital systems cross borders faster than political institutions can regulate them.

THE PROBLEM

Digital personas move across jurisdictions.

Platforms, states and users do not share the same rules or responsibilities.

THE GEOPOLITICAL QUESTION

Can transnational regulation protect rights while preserving room for democratic governance and technological innovation?

Data Sovereignty refers to the set of obligations and rights established by a series of conventions, rules and laws on the ownership, access, processing and storage of personal data.

Indigenous perspectives: another idea of sustainability

Sustainability changes when the object of governance is not only the economy, but relationships among people, land and non-human life.

Knowledge

Local and intergenerational knowledge

Authority

Community-led decision-making

Justice

Recognition of rights and histories

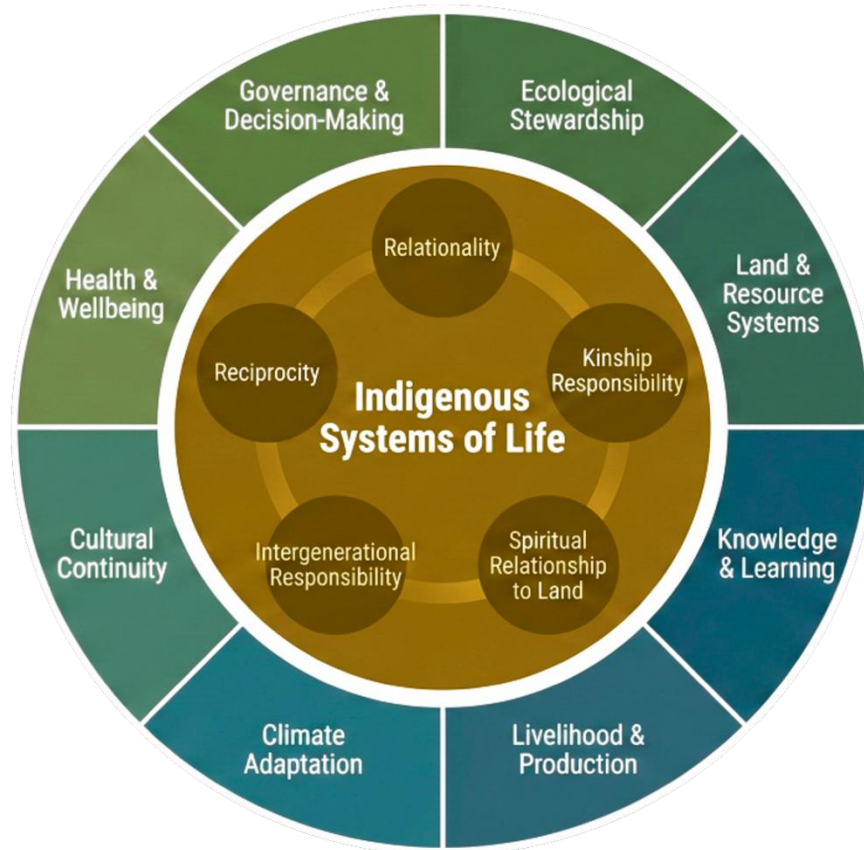
Resilience

Adaptation rooted in place

Planetary equity requires more than adding local voices to existing institutions. It can require changing the institutions themselves.

Indigenous Systems Framework

Analytical Lenses for Interpreting Indigenous Systems



Source: Humanculture / Stephanie Zabriskie ORCID: 0009-0000-9273-1529

**Legitimacy
versus
Legality**



Empowerment

What the cases have in common

1

Transitions redistribute power

New infrastructures and resources create new dependencies

2

Scale matters

Local impacts are tied to global markets and institutions

3

Justice is geopolitical

Distribution of costs and benefits shapes cooperation

4

Institutions lag behind change

Rules remain fragmented while systems are connected

5

Security is expanding

Environmental change enters defence, finance and technology policy

The cooperation problem

Global challenges create shared exposure, but political incentives remain uneven.

WHY COOPERATION IS DIFFICULT

- Shared risks
- Unequal responsibility
- Different capacities
- Competing time horizons

WHY COOPERATION REMAINS NECESSARY

- Fragmented institutions
- Strategic rivalry
- Short-term political pressure
- Weak accountability

Challenges in a world in transition

The central question is political:

How can societies redesign power, institutions and security so that sustainability becomes a shared capacity rather than a new source of inequality?

Main points of group work

1. *Introduction (reminding the title and explain your vision/position)*
2. Territorial analysis of the chosen patch
3. Socio-economic analysis of the patch
4. Analysis of social actors involved in the patch
5. Global challenges and the perception of the landscape:
pollution and mobility
6. *Conclusion (summarise the problems and envisage solutions)*

Main challenges in the Anthropocene

Group 1 FAST FASHION

-

Group 2 GOLD EXTRACTION ASANTI REGION

-

Group 3 IMPACT OF OLYMPIC GAMES

-

Group 4 LAGOS URBAN LABORATORY OF GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Examples of last year!

GROUP WORK | Brainstorming

GROUP 1



- *Global Challenge*
 - Risk of the fast fashion sector (es. Shein)
 - Low working condition
- *Territorial Patch (TBD)*
China

GROUP 2



- *Global Challenge*
 - Overexploitation of resources
 - Environmental damage
 - High cost of living
- *Territorial Patch (TBD)*
Ghana

GROUP 3



- *Global Challenge*
 - Low working condition in industrial districts
 - Global warming
- *Territorial Patch (TBD)*
India

Brainstorming

Examples of places and their challenges

NAME OF PLACE	IMPACTS	Name
GREENLAND	Political Environmental: ice melting Social: indigenous life system	Irina – Liza - Silvia
MALESIA	Political Social Environmental	Kira
CYPRUS	Political two countries.... Religious division Environmental exploitation of resources for energy	Alex-Secil
AUSTRALIA	Social indigenous people, migration issues Environmental	Anna

BRAINSTORMING