

**RESTRICTIONS AND RESISTANCE: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF
MARINE PARK OPPOSITION IN SOUTHEASTERN TANZANIA**

by

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B.A., The University of British Columbia, 2013

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(Anthropology)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

August 2016

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Abstract

The Mnazi Bay-Ruvuma Estuary Marine Park (MBREMP) in southeastern Tanzania has been touted as a ‘win-win’ project in public discourses, given its potential mutual benefits for marine biodiversity and local resource users. In this thesis, however, I argue that residents of Msimbati, a large fishing village within its catchment area, oppose the marine park, citing its negative impacts on their everyday lives. Drawing on four months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Msimbati village, which included participant observation, forty in-depth interviews and four focus group discussions, this thesis examines the village residents’ specific reasons for contesting the MBREMP, and subsequently, the different forms of resistance they employ to mobilize their opposition to the marine park. Using the concept of environmental governance, I maintain that people in Msimbati have been excluded from significant processes of conservation-related decision-making. Consequently, the management priorities of the MBREMP underrepresent their perceived needs and well-being. Furthermore, many study participants perceived the introduction of conservation regulations within the MBREMP as overt assertions of state power intended to control and subjugate the people of Msimbati. I argue that this finding closely resembles Michel Foucault’s notion of governmentality. In response to this perceived top-down flow of power, I discuss the abilities of village residents to exercise their individual and collective agency through explicit acts of resistance against the MBREMP. I argue, however, that the fear of state violence deters most village residents from engaging in acts that convey visible opposition to the MBREMP. Many people in Msimbati instead choose to engage in subtle acts of noncompliance to the conservation regulations. These acts are entangled with material benefits and moral statements about customary rights to resources. They can also facilitate political mobility by undermining the success of the conservation effort, while simultaneously

avoiding open confrontation with governing authorities. Ultimately, this thesis brings to the fore the on-the-ground complexities of marine conservation in a resource-dependent coastal fishing village in southeastern Tanzania. I demonstrate the importance of taking an ethnographic approach to understanding the nuanced and context-specific reasons for local opposition to marine protected area formation in coastal communities.

Preface

I, Justin Raycraft, conducted all research for this thesis. The UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board approval number is H14-01713 (Mtwara Study). The Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) research permit number is 2013-240-ER-2008-68.

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Acknowledgements

I firstly thank Abdalla and Mariam for all of their hard work and companionship throughout my time in Tanzania; their help was indispensable to me. I also thank Roberti for his assistance in smoothing my initial transition into the Tanzanian context.

I am very grateful to Salumu, Saidi, Issa, Asha, Jumulia, Bilaya and Ali for welcoming me into their home while conducting fieldwork for this study. I want to extend this thank you to all of the people in Msimbati, and the village leadership in particular for welcoming me into Msimbati with warm hearts.

I thank Dr. Leslie Robertson for sharing her thoughtful insights with me, and for helping me refine this thesis. I also want to thank Dr. Carole Blackburn for her continued support throughout my graduate studies, and Dr. Charles Menzies for his constructive comments on this thesis, which helped improve its clarity.

I thank Maggie for her ongoing support, and for taking the time away from her UN post in the Central African Republic to visit my field site in Msimbati. I also thank Brian for visiting me in East Africa in both 2014 and 2015, and for sharing with me an artists' 'way of seeing' to complement my anthropological 'way of thinking'. I wish to also thank Chris, Jeff and Courtney for making my everyday life colourful and fulfilling during the writing phase of this thesis.

I want to express my gratitude to the UBC Department of Anthropology for its support of my graduate studies. I am hopeful that my academic journey will lead me back to the University of British Columbia again in the future. I thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) for supporting me financially with a Joseph Armand Bombardier Scholarship during my fieldwork. I also thank the Tanzanian Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) for issuing me a permit to conduct research in Tanzania.

I especially want to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Vinay Kamat, for his unwavering dedication, guidance and mentorship over the past four years. Dr. Kamat has taught me how to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in Tanzania and has helped me cultivate my identity as an anthropologist. I cannot thank him enough for all of his efforts, and I look forward to eating masala dosa with him again in Dar es Salaam, when I return to Tanzania for my PhD fieldwork.

Lastly, I thank my parents, Niloo and Stephen, for their unconditional support, and for providing me with every opportunity to pursue my ambitions. This thesis, as with any of my personal achievements, is a reflection of their hard work and devotion.

1. INTRODUCTION

I first arrived in Msimbati village by motorbike taxi (*piki piki*) in July of 2014¹. At the time, I was visiting a series of coastal villages on the Mtwara peninsula of southeastern Tanzania to familiarize myself with the area's basic topography. As I made the hour-long ride atop the sandy, unpaved road from Sinda village on the northern side of the peninsula to Msimbati in the southeast, I took the time to observe my surroundings. Coconut trees (*minazi*) swayed in the coastal breeze along the side of the road, as white sand swirled in the air. The road wound its way through small, tightly clustered rural villages, then through expansive networks of mangroves (*mikoko*), dry from the regular departure of coastal tides. As I neared Msimbati, I occasionally passed solitary farmers, tending to their cashew trees (*mikorosho*) and collecting coconuts. Entering the village, I crossed the small culvert connecting Msimbati to the rest of the Mtwara peninsula. During high tides, the coastal waters of the mangrove wetlands flow underneath, transforming the village into an island community. Riding through the village, I noticed large fishing nets (*nyavu*) laid out in the sun to dry. Women dressed in colourful cloth dresses (*kanga*) lined the main road, selling tomatoes (*nyanya*) and onions (*vitunguu*). Small groups of men were gathered around shop entrances, and under the shade of tall neem trees (*mwarobaini*), chatting and playing board games thoughtfully. I heard the laughter of young boys, and I looked over my shoulder to see them playing billiards (*pooli*) under a makeshift shelter of thatched palm tree leaves on the side of the road. They waved emphatically, chanting “*mzungu!*” (white person) as I waved back and smiled.

¹ The arrival story is a classic trope in anthropological writing used to convey a sense of ‘being there’. My narrative, however, serves as the conceptual backdrop for the central arguments that I make in this thesis.

I had entered a vibrant social world, full of nuances that I was eager to understand. I felt, however, as though I lacked a conceptual anchor to which I could reference my initial observations. As a researcher, abstract concepts are very important for my way of thinking; they are mechanisms through which I structure my thoughts and organize my observations of empirical reality. In the absence of a clearly discernable conceptual focal point, I began to contemplate what lay beneath the surface of these visual snapshots of routine life; the discontinuities, inconsistencies and contradictions that could complicate the harmonious image of village life that I had begun to construct in my mind. In considering the depths of detail underlying the visible village around me, I became uncertain about how my personal story, as a young anthropologist entering ‘the field’ for the first time, would unfold.

As I continued through the village, the coastline of the Indian Ocean came into focus in the foreground ahead of me. One of the primary reasons that I was interested in Msimbati as a potential field site was its unique location within the catchment area of the Mnazi Bay-Ruvuma Estuary Marine Park (MBREMP)². Msimbati is the largest of seventeen villages located within the MBREMP’s catchment area, with an approximate population of 12,000 people. In total, around 40,000 people live in these coastal villages and depend on marine resources for food and livelihood security, primarily through artisanal fishing of coral reef fish and shoreline harvesting of crustaceans. The marine park, established as a means of conserving sensitive marine biodiversity, has been touted as a ‘win-win’ scenario in public discourses, given its potential benefits for marine ecosystems and local resource users. However, Kamat (2014) documents that the empirical reality on the ground has diverged significantly from this rhetoric, as people living

² In this thesis, I use ‘MBREMP’ and ‘the marine park’ interchangeably.

in coastal villages have reported increasing experiences of food insecurity and social suffering. When the MBREMP was officially gazetted in 2000, park officials expected Msimbati to serve as a ‘showcase village’ for a socially inclusive model of marine conservation, given the close proximity of the village to the vibrant coral reefs of Mnazi Bay. As such, one of the primary ticketing offices of the MBREMP was constructed in Msimbati to regulate park entry via its main road. With the hopes of introducing myself to park officials, I stopped in front of the office, and stepped inside.

Shockingly, the office was in ruins. Half of the roof was missing and the windows were broken. The walls were black with ash and there was no furniture inside. I turned to the officer in charge, who explained to me that the office had recently been bombed. As I walked through the ruins of the building, my romanticized conceptualization of Msimbati as a harmonious coastal fishing village quickly began to fade. While I had previously been aware that the MBREMP had engendered significant social impacts on village residents, I had not realized that village residents also played an active role in opposing the marine park (Mwanjela 2011; Mangora, Shali, and Msangameno 2014). This realization reaffirmed my scholarly interest in Msimbati, and I recognized then that it would be an ideal field site for my research.

As I stared down at the blackened floor of the office, now littered with sticks and leaves, I began to think of Msimbati as a social-spatial arena where village residents actively contested the MBREMP and its negative effects on their everyday lives. This process of cognitively constructing Msimbati as a field site characterized by conflict became the conceptual anchor that shaped my future ethnographic fieldwork, and enabled me to contextualize my observations of everyday life against the thematic backdrop of village residents’ opposition to the MBREMP.

During my subsequent ethnographic fieldwork between August-October of 2014 and July-August of 2015, I focused my analytical gaze on the ways in which the MBREMP had become a source of conflict in Msimbati. I sought to examine two key questions during my research: Why do village residents contest the MBREMP?, and subsequently, What forms of resistance do village residents employ to mobilize opposition to the marine park?. I formulated the first question through a close reading of the literature on contestations over marine conservation in coastal communities (Bennett and Dearden 2014b; Voyer, Gladstone, and Goodall 2012; Voyer, Gladstone, and Goodall 2014; Voyer, Gladstone, and Goodall 2015; Walley 2004). I constructed the second question based on my readings of the literature on resistance, and in particular, from previous studies on resistance to biodiversity conservation projects (Hoffman 2014; Holmes 2007; Kull 2004). In pursuing answers to these two key research questions, I carried out participant observation of everyday life in Msimbati and conducted forty in-depth interviews and four focus group discussions (FGDs). During my fieldwork in Msimbati, I lived in a shared homestead with my key informant Salumu³ and his family, who I will introduce in greater detail in the methods section (3.3). The findings from this research serve as the empirical foundation of this thesis.

To address the first question, I draw from an environmental governance framework to discuss the ways in which village residents have been excluded from significant processes of conservation-related decision-making. Consequently, the MBREMP's management priorities underrepresent the perceived needs and well-being of people in Msimbati. This form of social exclusion highlights power imbalances implicit in the conservation process. As I will

³ All names in this thesis are pseudonyms.

demonstrate later in this thesis, many study participants perceived the introduction of conservation regulations within the MBREMP as assertions of state power intended to control and subordinate the people of Msimbati. I argue that these perceptions neatly fit Foucault's (2009) concept of governmentality⁴. Thus, I maintain that village residents contest the marine park primarily because of their lived experiences of being neglected, constrained and coerced by the conservation process.

To address the second question, I reference the growing literature on resistance to biodiversity conservation in discussing the various ways that village residents oppose the MBREMP. I highlight village residents' agency by arguing that some people in Msimbati resist the marine park overtly, through acts such as bombing the park office, engaging in dynamite fishing, or continuing to visibly practice other prohibited activities inside the catchment area of the MBREMP. As I will discuss, however, the fear of both 'remembered' and 'anticipated' physical violence for overtly protesting against the MBREMP deters most people in Msimbati from openly opposing the marine park (Holmes 2007, 186). Drawing from Scott's (1985) notion of 'weapons of the weak', and Holmes' (2007) reiteration of 'everyday forms of resistance', I assert that many village residents engage in covert acts of noncompliance to the conservation regulations, which undermine the success of the conservation effort, while simultaneously avoiding the risks associated with visibly confronting governing authorities. I argue that these acts are interwoven with material benefits and moral statements about customary rights to resources, which I illustrate through my ethnographic data.

⁴ I cite Foucault (2009) in this thesis with reference to his book published posthumously, and translated by Graham Burchell, which documents his 1977-1978 lecture series at the College de France entitled, "Security, Territory, Population".

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the following sections, I outline the key theoretical concepts that inform my analysis.

2.1 Political Ecology and Environmental Governance

At the broadest level, I draw from a body of literature within the subfield of political ecology.

When applied analytically in the context of biodiversity conservation, this framework draws attention to the wider political and economic contexts in which conservation projects are embedded (Adams and Hutton 2007). A political ecology framework can also shed light on the underlying relationships that exist between local communities and the state (West, Igoe, and Brockington 2006). Accordingly, parks and protected areas can be interpreted as microcosmic examples of deep-seated interactions between these actors.

In addressing my first question of why village residents oppose the MBREMP, I focus more specifically on conservation governance, or the mechanisms and pathways through which important conservation-related decisions are made. Such decisions can determine the management priorities of marine parks and marine protected areas, and the ways in which marine conservation efforts will ultimately be regulated and enforced (Jones 2014; Bennett and Dearden 2014a; Bennett 2015). Thus, discussions about environmental governance retain a central focus on power dynamics and the ways in which various actors are either integrated into, or excluded from, significant decision-making processes. The degree to which community members feel that their perspectives are attributed authority in these processes can serve as an important indicator of how they perceive power to be distributed across stakeholders in parks and protected areas (Bennett 2015). This in turn can influence the extent to which local community members support or contest the overall conservation effort.

I must, however, explicitly mention that my engagement with a governance framework is only partial. Scholars who conduct governance analyses typically take a multi-stakeholder approach in attempting to examine the particular roles that all involved actors play throughout decision-making processes; such an undertaking is beyond the scope of this thesis. My analysis focuses solely on the perspectives of village residents and their dispositions towards the processes of conservation-related decision-making that have shaped the implementation of the MBREMP. In doing so, I seek to highlight power imbalances implicit in the conservation process. As Brockington, Igoe and Schmidt-Soltau (2006) argue, in contexts where local community members are excluded from important decision-making processes, conservation projects can deepen pre-existing structural inequalities. As I will show, the governance processes of the MBREMP excluded the voices of village residents, who came to associate the marine park with a tremendous asymmetry in power.

2.2 Power, ‘Governmentality’ and Resistance

Some scholars maintain that state-driven conservation projects are less about the intrinsic value of nature preservation, and more about the management of society and citizens (McElwee 2016). This argument is rooted in the canonical works of Foucault (2009), and his discussions of the various ways in which states attempt to ‘produce’ governable citizens through the top-down exercise of power. He conceptually refers to the various techniques that the state uses to construct subjects as ‘governmentality’ (Foucault 2009). Specifically, he draws attention to the ways in which the state is able to maintain control over citizens through increased surveillance and influence over their everyday lives (Foucault 2009). I will argue that village residents’ lived

experiences of the state-driven conservation regulations, which increase constraints on their everyday lives, closely reflect Foucault's (2009) concept of governmentality⁵.

In examining how village residents mobilize their opposition to the MBREMP, I draw from a body of literature on the concept of resistance. Many scholars highlight the agency of citizens, and the power that individuals and groups also wield in relation to state power (Scheper-Hughes and Lock 1987). Structural constraints can simultaneously restrict agency, while also motivating marginalized people to act in particular ways in an attempt to improve their political positioning (Scott 1985; 2013). In Foucault's (1978) own words, "where there is power, there is resistance" (95)⁶. In many cases, people publically protest their subjugated positions in relation to the forces of domination that restrict them (Scott 1985). I will later demonstrate that some people in Msimbati exercise their agency by openly displaying their opposition to the MBREMP.

Scott (1985), however, highlights the potential risks associated with overt acts of rebellion for those who experience subjugation. Often, such acts evoke violent response from the state in an attempt to re-assert control over citizens and maintain social order (Scott 1985). This was the case in Msimbati when the state responded to the office bombing in a militarized manner. I will describe this event in greater detail in section 4.3. As Orwell (1950) suggests, it is often the public visibility of such open clashes between governing authorities and citizens that force the state to 'save face' by visibly displaying power and authority. Consequently, people who engage in acts of protest run the risk of subjecting themselves, or their families, to physical harm or other significant repercussions (Scott 1985). In light of this, many people who

⁵ While people living in rural Tanzania do not distinguish between the terms 'state' and 'government' in their everyday discourses, the KiSwahili word, *serikali*, is used as an umbrella term to refer to the national government of Tanzania and the overall state apparatus.

⁶ Many scholars, however, point out that state-driven structural inequalities can restrict individual agency so significantly that they are indicative of human rights violations (Farmer 2005; Ho 2007).

experience subjugation act in ways that do not directly confront ruling powers, choosing instead to undermine existing power structures discreetly (Holmes 2007; Scott 1985). Scott (1985) refers to these actions as ‘weapons of the weak’. Such acts are subtle and covert in nature, and avoid the risk of direct persecution for blatant insubordination. Although seemingly less effective than direct acts of rebellion, however, the consequences of such acts can be far reaching. As Scott (1985) describes, the amalgamation of a multitude of individual acts of resistance can serve to dismantle the structural relationship between the forces of domination and those who are subjugated.

A growing body of literature applies Scott’s (1985) discussion of resistance to acts of noncompliance to conservation regulations inside parks and protected areas (Hoffman 2014; Holmes 2007). Holmes (2007) argues that previously inconsequential acts of hunting and fishing can become politically charged acts of resistance once they are labelled ‘acts of noncompliance’ within protected areas. In such cases, these acts can undermine the conservation effort and destabilize the governing authority responsible for its implementation, regulation and enforcement (Holmes 2007). In some instances, community members may choose to exercise discretion when violating conservation regulations. Hoffman (2014) and Holmes (2007) refer to these kinds of acts as ‘everyday forms of resistance’ because they can reduce the effectiveness of conservation projects, while simultaneously avoiding the risks associated with overt forms of protest (Hoffman 2014; Holmes 2007).

I must, however, note that some of the literature surrounding the notion of resistance to biodiversity conservation is hazy, as scholars must subjectively interpret, and subsequently apply the label of resistance to observable actions. As Kull (2004) cautions, resistance is often overemphasized in comparison to the underlying economic benefits of acts of noncompliance;

put differently, sometimes people act in particular ways to meet their material needs, regardless of regulatory orders. However, other scholars differentiate between explicit forms of noncompliance to conservation regulations intended to make visible political statements, and those which primarily serve to fulfill material needs (Gibson 1999; Western 1994). As Holmes (2007) points out, the political symbolism of such acts is often mixed with pragmatic “livelihood functions” in an implicit manner (193). Furthermore, acts of noncompliance can also reflect moral statements about customary rights to resources. In my analysis, I will illustrate the ways in which acts of noncompliance to conservation regulations in Msimbati can be materially, morally or politically motivated. My intention for doing so is not to produce a ‘hierarchy of resistance’, but to describe the diverse and nuanced reasons why village residents engage in such acts, and how these acts reflect opposition to the MBREMP in its various forms.

3. RESEARCH SETTINGS AND METHODS

In the subsequent sections, I describe the research settings and methods for this study.

3.1 Ecological Degradation and Marine Conservation in Coastal Tanzania

Widespread overexploitation of marine resources in coastal Tanzania has led to significant degradation of coastal ecosystems (Tobey and Torell 2006). In 1994, the Tanzanian government enacted the “Marine Parks and Reserve Act”, which proposed the introduction of state-run MPAs and marine parks to mitigate local anthropogenic pressures on coastal ecosystems through the regulation of unsustainable fishing practices (URT 1994). While marine reserves had technically existed since the 1970s in Tanzania, these were widely considered to be “paper reserves”, given the complete lack of capacity to manage them (Bryceson 1981). Sustained declines in productivity and biodiversity of inshore fisheries have since motivated the state to establish a network of MPAs and marine parks throughout coastal waters (Silva 2006; Wells, Burgess, and Ngusaru 2007). The legacy of Tanzania’s state-driven model of terrestrial resource management, however, has forced the state to balance its attempts to protect marine ecosystems with the perceived needs of local communities, who depend on marine resources for livelihood. Such considerations have given rise to innovative forms of marine resource management, many of which strive to integrate some component of community participation (Makoloweka and Shurcliff 1998; Tobey and Torell 2006; Verheij, Makoloweka, and Kalombo 2004). Marine parks in Tanzania are intended to publically reflect a point of compromise between the two main objectives of environmental protection and community development (Kamat 2014; Katikiro, Macusi, and Deepananda 2015; Mwanjela 2011; Walley 2004).

The MBREMP is located along the southeastern coast of Tanzania, extending from the northern side of the Mtwara peninsula to the Ruvuma River in the south, marking the Tanzania-

Mozambique border. It was established in 2000 and encompasses approximately 220km² of terrestrial area and 430km² of marine area, including wetlands, lagoons, sand dunes, forests, islands, coral reefs, mangroves and estuaries (Kamat 2014; Machumu and Yakupitiyage 2013). The marine areas are considered by biodiversity conservationists to be of critical importance, given their unique intersection point between the South Equatorial Current (SEC) and the terrestrial coastline of Tanzania (Ruitenbeek, Hewawasam and Ngoile 2005). The marine areas also form a “source point for the East African Coastal Current (EACC) and Mozambique current”, rendering it a very important ecological zone for marine organisms throughout Eastern and Southern Africa (Machumu and Yakupitiyage 2013, 370). Marine biologists maintain that the Mnazi Bay and Ruvula Peninsula area hold some of the highest diversity of hard and soft corals in all of East Africa (Machumu and Yakupitiyage 2013; Obura 2004). The terrestrial area of the park is also significant for conservationists and was declared an “Important Bird Area” in 2001, given the tremendous diversity of bird species that have been spotted within the marine park.

The Mtwara region, where the MBREMP is located, has historically been one of Tanzania’s most neglected, marginalized and impoverished regions, which many scholars have attributed to its political location on the periphery of the state (Liebenow 1971; Seppala and Koda 1998; Voipio 1998; Wembah-Rashid 1998). Poverty is an everyday concern for people living in coastal villages on the Mtwara peninsula. As such, the public narrative of the MBREMP purports to prioritize poverty alleviation and sustainable economic development in coastal villages through collaborative management strategies, ecotourism and alternative livelihood opportunities (MNRT 2005).

As I have mentioned, the establishment of the MBREMP is embedded in a current movement in Tanzania towards decentralized conservation management regimes, which emphasize increased engagement with local communities. Given the long history of ‘fortress’ style, ‘top-down’ conservation governance in Tanzania, and the well documented social consequences of these models, many social scientists who conduct research within and around parks and protected areas in Tanzania have called for a devolution of power in conservation-related decision-making to reduce the potential for marginalization of local communities (Brockington 2002; Brockington, Duffy, and Igoe 2008; Neumann 1998). The historical tendency for terrestrial protected areas in Tanzania to ideologically construct idyllic and ‘wild’ natural landscapes, in separation from human presence, has led to significant examples of forced displacement throughout many of Tanzania’s well known reserves and parks (Brockington and Igoe 2006; Neumann 1998). In contrast, the MBREMP aims to follow the example of the Mafia Island Marine Park (MIMP) on the Zanzibar archipelago in forging a new and inclusive model of conservation that integrates local resource users (Walley 2004). Several scholars, however, draw attention to significant barriers hindering the realization of a truly collaborative, ‘community’ based marine park in Tanzania (Katikiro, Macusi, and Deepananda 2015; Walley 2004). People living in coastal villages within the catchment area of the MBREMP have reported intensifying experiences of food insecurity and social suffering as a consequence of the increasing environmental regulations (Kamat 2014).

3.2 Msimbati Village

I lived in Msimbati village while conducting ethnographic fieldwork for this thesis. Msimbati is a seafront village located between Mnazi Bay and the Ruvuma river, directly within the

catchment area of the MBREMP⁷. According to oral accounts from some of the elders living in the village, Msimbati has been in existence for over 200 years, with its original inhabitants migrating from Mozambique. Historically, there has been extensive trade and movement of people across the Ruvuma River, some of which has continued today. This particular flow of people living on both sides of the river contributed to the formation of a unique ethnic and cultural identity among people living in Msimbati; village residents identify strongly as “Makonde” people, a tribal affiliation specific to southeastern Tanzania and northeastern Mozambique (Liebenow 1971). Based on their historical presence in coastal Mtwara for over two centuries, together with their Makonde tribal affiliation, people living in Msimbati strongly feel that they have customary rights to fish and harvest coastal and marine resources on the Mtwara peninsula.

Nowadays, most residents of Msimbati engage in hybridized contemporary livelihoods involving a combination of small-scale farming, artisanal fishing of coral reef fish, and shoreline harvesting of crustaceans. Some people in Msimbati, who have access to larger boats (*mashua*), fish for larger pelagic species, which they subsequently sell in the urban markets of Mtwara town. The majority of fishers in Msimbati, however, use dug-out canoes, basic nets and handheld short-lines to target reef fish. Given the high levels of salinity in the soil, large-scale agriculture is not possible in this area; people generally grow cassava, potatoes, tomatoes, onions, leafy greens, cashew nuts and coconuts (Kamat 2014; Woo 2012). Most people living in Msimbati depend on marine resources to some extent for food and livelihood security; fish catches play a variety of roles in Msimbati ranging from protein-rich relishes atop starch-heavy maize flour

⁷ Recently, parts of Msimbati village have been divided into the sub-villages of Mtandi and Ruvula. During my fieldwork, however, I lived in a part of the village that is still known as Msimbati.

based dishes (*ugali*), to significant sources of income via market sales in Mtwara town (Kamat 2014).

As I briefly described in the introduction, the village is situated within an expansive network of mangrove wetlands. As such, the topography of the village is directly shaped by coastal tides. When tides are high, the mangrove wetlands fill with water, separating the village from the rest of the Mtwara peninsula. An unpaved road connects Mtwara town to Msimbati via a small culvert that marks the formal entrance to the village. The road runs through the heart of the village, perpendicular to the ocean for about two kilometres. The MBREMP office is situated at the end of this strip of road, about 300 metres from the shoreline of Msimbati beach. At this point, the road veers left, parallel to the shoreline of the Indian Ocean and extends another eight kilometres to Mnazi-Bay.

The geographical layout of Msimbati extends outwards from the strip of road between the entrance bridge to the MBREMP office, which serves as the epicentre of economic activity in Msimbati. There are a range of shops situated along this road, including those that sell textiles, beans, rice and other non-perishable food items. During the day, women gather along the sides of this road to sell vegetables from their gardens, while men, who are not fishing, sit under the shade of neem trees playing board games. Loosely scattered along the road are several shipping containers, which have been converted into kiosks for selling cooking items, batteries, chargers, cooking oil, buckets, soda pop, snacks and other miscellaneous items for everyday life in the village. The road plays a crucial role in connecting village residents to Mtwara town where people can purchase a range of goods, and sell fish and produce in the urban markets.

The village is universally covered in sand, with neem and coconut trees dispersed throughout. On either side of the main road, there are hundreds of tightly clustered homesteads,

usually separated from each other with thatched palm tree fences. Following the implementation of a power generator in neighbouring Ruvula, some of these homesteads have been connected to an electrical grid, but overall, electricity in Msimbati is quite limited. Power lines run along the main road, with a few transformers spread throughout the village. Given the lack of formal employment opportunities in the region, however, the majority of households have been unable to afford the basic start up costs associated with electrification. This is compounded by the requirement that electrified houses must be constructed with concrete walls and tin roofs. The majority of households, however, are made from a combination of red clay, stone, sticks and thatched palm trees for yard fences and roofs, creating a stark juxtaposition with the few electricity poles and transformers in the village. Families who cannot afford electricity use candles for light at night, and four-pronged coal stoves for cooking. Relative to other coastal villages, however, Msimbati still has the most electricity of the seventeen villages on the Mtwara peninsula.

For people living in Msimbati, the constraints of poverty are everyday concerns. None of the households in Msimbati have running water, though there are several wells throughout the village where fresh water can be retrieved with bucket and rope. People living in Msimbati sum up their experiences of impoverishment through the KiSwahili phrase, *maisha magumu*, a commonly used idiom in rural Tanzania, which translates into English as ‘life is hard’. For people living in Msimbati, poverty means feeling insecure about access to food, and being uncertain about where money will come from to pay for their perceived basic needs, like maize flour, clothing, medicine, basic household goods, and school fees for children. Most residents of Msimbati live in poverty and food insecurity is widespread. Travel-related infrastructure in Msimbati is very limited. Those who wish to travel to Mtwara town to purchase food and

supplies must travel by mini-bus (*daladala*) over very rough, unpaved roads for one and a half hours, often in extremely overcrowded vehicles, and in blistering heat. Breakdowns are a regular occurrence, and trips can take up to four hours on any given day. Alternatively, people can travel by motorbike to Msamgamku village on the other side of the peninsula, and travel by boat ferry to Mtwara town, though this route is much more expensive, and time consuming.

3.3 Methods

Prior to commencing ethnographic fieldwork in Tanzania, I enrolled in an introductory level language course in KiSwahili at the University of British Columbia. Following this, I undertook three months of intensive one-on-one language training in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. In total, I have spent eight months living in Tanzania since May of 2014 to facilitate full linguistic immersion. During this time, I communicated with people exclusively in KiSwahili and ultimately attained oral fluency.

I conducted ethnographic fieldwork for this thesis between August-October of 2014 and July-August of 2015 in Msimbati, where I primarily engaged in participant observation of everyday life. During this time, I sought to fully immerse myself in routine village life as much as possible, and I was fortunate to have the helpful guidance of my key informant, Salumu. I lived in Salumu's homestead while conducting my fieldwork in Msimbati, which was centrally located, approximately 800 metres beyond the bridge at the village entrance. Salumu is in his mid thirties and owns a shop along the main road of Msimbati, where he sells beans and rice. Compared to the majority of people living in Msimbati, he is relatively wealthy; his homestead was built using concrete, and the roof of his house is made of tin sheets. He also owns a motorbike, an aspiration of many young men in Msimbati. He lives in the homestead with his wife Asha and their three young children, Jumulia, Bilaya and Ali, with whom I spent many of

my days; we consistently cooked and ate two meals together per day. One of the primary fresh water wells for the village was located within the enclosed area of Salumu's homestead, and as such, many village residents would frequent it throughout the day to take water for drinking, cooking, bathing and cleaning. I spent many hours sitting on the porch outside my room, chatting with people while they filled their buckets and socialized with their neighbours.

Salumu often took me by motorbike to his mother, Mariam's homestead located within Mnazi Bay, where I had the opportunity to chat with local fishers. Everyone in the village knew Salumu and his family very well, which gave me privileged access to a very wide social network. I became particularly well acquainted with the extended members of Salumu's family, like Mama Amina, Salumu's aunt, who lived in a neighbouring homestead, and Mzee Abdalla, a close friend of Salumu who would often park his motorbike just outside my door. One of my closest friends in Msimbati was Issa, a young man around my age who lived in the room next to me and helped Salumu with the everyday upkeep of the shop and homestead. Issa and I spent many days walking along the coastline of Msimbati together, where I carried out many of my most significant observations of local resource users within the catchment area of the MBREMP.

Outside of the homestead, my observational focus tended to revolve around peoples' livelihood practices, as this was a significant component of everyday life in the village. I quickly established a daily routine for conducting participant observation. In the mornings, I often wandered with Issa along the foot paths adjacent to the mangrove wetlands on the northern side of Msimbati and chatted with people along the way. These paths bustled with activity, as people walked to and from Mnazi Bay via these trails. I regularly watched as men worked in this area to repair fishing boats, and women carried buckets on their heads to the beach, where they collected crustaceans from the shoreline.

On other mornings, I walked along the beach to Mnazi Bay, where I often stopped to chat with artisanal fishers who were preparing to depart in their dug-out canoes (*mitumbwi*) for the day. When the tides were out, young men patrolled the tide pools in search of juvenile octopus (*pweza mdogo*), which they collected with sharpened spears; octopus is available for harvest year round in coastal Tanzania, but shoreline accessibility depends on tidal cycles. I came to know many of these young men quite well, especially Abudulu, who I often conversed with on my morning walks. Abudulu was twenty-two years old and harvested octopus and small fish from the shallow waters along Msimbati beach with his own homemade spear. If the weather permitted, he occasionally paddled his dug-out canoe along the shoreline towards Mnazi Bay, where he fished for reef fish with a small net and handheld short line.

After visiting the shoreline, I often walked through the cashew farms to west of the village. There, I chatted with men tending to their crops and trees, and to women as they collected fallen tree branches for kindling to fuel their stoves. Many people frequented these farmlands to collect fallen palm tree leaves to repair thatched roofs and fences in their homesteads. In the afternoons, I regularly visited the shops that lined the main street of Msimbati to chat with Mohamed, a shopkeeper selling rice and beans. Occasionally, I sat with Issa and Salumu in the small café on the corner of the main road to eat French fries and eggs (*chipsi maiyai*), a staple roadside meal for many people in the village, given its affordability.

During my two rounds of fieldwork in Msimbati, the sun usually set around 6pm (*saa kamili na mbili jioni*). While some homesteads were connected to an electricity grid, at the time of my fieldwork, there were no public street lights in the village. Some of the bigger shops along the main road were well lit and remained open until around 10pm. The light from these shops illuminated a small area along the main road. The rest of the village, however, was completely

dark at night, save for the relatively few households that could afford private electricity. In the evenings, I often walked along the main road, where people sat on benches sipping cups of tea (*chai*) by candlelight. Young men, like Abudulu, often set up small roadside stands at night, where they sold freshly caught pieces of octopus for 100 shillings (*mia moja*) each, and a seafood soup, which essentially comprised salt, water and the residual fat from the chunks of octopus flesh that were boiled in it. Occasionally, depending on the availability of fish that day, certain stands offered small fried fish – usually juvenile parrot fish (*pono mdogo*) caught from the local reefs – for 1000 shillings (*elfu moja*) each. I often spent my evenings sitting on benches near these roadside stands, sipping chai with Mama Amina and other village residents and looking up at the vivid stars above. Some of my most meaningful conversations with village residents unfolded while sitting on these benches at night.

While conducting fieldwork, I spent many days closely observing coastal fishing practices, often through direct participation⁸. I often paddled out in dug-out canoes with young artisanal fishers in Mnazi Bay, as they used hand lines to fish for reef fish, and sat watching on the beach as young men dragged seine nets through the shallow waters just off the Msimbati shoreline. At dusk, I often joined groups of women as they walked out into the knee-deep water along the point of the Msimbati peninsula to collect shrimp, sea cucumbers, hermit crabs and other small crustaceans. On Sundays, I walked to Mnazi Bay with Issa, Salumu and other members of his family to help collect coconuts from the farmlands around Mama Mariam's homestead. On many of these daytrips, we planted coconut-leaf sticks in the sand, with short fishing lines attached to the ends in an attempt to catch silver-biddies (*chaa*) from the sandy

⁸ I was careful not to engage in any activities that were prohibited by the MBREMP.

seabed that extends out from the shore of Mnazi Bay. These diverse forms of participant observation “were rich sources of qualitative data”, and served as the cornerstone of my ethnographic fieldwork (Hoffman 2014, 122).

While conducting participant observation of everyday life in Msimbati, I focused my ethnographic gaze on the ways in which the MBREMP had become a source of conflict in Msimbati. I wanted to understand why the people of Msimbati contested the MBREMP, and what forms of resistance they employed to mobilize their opposition to the park. Based on my readings of the works of Holmes (2007) and Hoffman (2014), I became particularly interested in acts of noncompliance to the conservation regulations of the MBREMP, and the manner in which these acts could be interpreted as forms of resistance. Many scholars draw attention to the significant role that such acts can play in undermining the overall success of conservation projects (Hoffman 2014; Holmes 2007; Holmes 2013; Kull 2004; Western 1994). On many occasions, I did indeed observe people engaging in prohibited activities, such as extracting live mangroves, harvesting sea turtles, using banned fishing nets and even practicing dynamite fishing. These observations played a fundamental role in shaping the central arguments of this thesis; I will expand on some of these key “ethnographic vignettes” in the subsequent section (Hoffman 2014, 126).

Importantly, I feel it necessary to explicitly state that my intention is not to represent village residents in a singularized and criminal way. I would maintain that most people in Msimbati fish and extract resources in sustainable ways that adhere to the conservation regulations of the MBREMP. In this thesis, however, I selectively highlight these particular instances of noncompliance to conservation regulations. In doing so, I do not intend to negatively represent village residents; my primary goal is to offer an explanation for the nuanced reasons

why people engage in such activities. While it is a sensitive subject, I believe it is a crucial one that can only effectively be addressed through participant observation and ethnographic fieldwork.

For the people of Msimbati, the conservation regulations within the MBREMP directly undermine their customary rights to fish and harvest coastal and marine resources. Despite the restrictions on these practices inside the MBREMP, these activities have historically been socially normative parts of everyday life. Furthermore, income-generating opportunities in rural Mtwara are scarce, especially for those with limited formal education. For many families in Msimbati, fishing is the primary source of income, supplemented slightly by small-scale farming. This is particularly significant for families with school-aged children, given the relatively high costs of formal education for people living in rural Mtwara. Thus, there a number of different reasons why village residents do not always comply with the conservation regulations. As I will elaborate on, the motivations for these actions can be material, moral or political. By observing people during both the daytime and evening, I noticed that some acts of noncompliance took place in the open, while many others were carried out in discreet manners, often at dusk, to avoid direct confrontations with park authorities. While these hidden acts could easily be overlooked, I will emphasize their significance later in this thesis.

Coupled with my observations of everyday life in Msimbati, the empirical data for this thesis also derive from in-depth interviews and FGDs conducted with village residents. In consultation with village leaders, interviewees and focus group participants were recruited based on a convenience sampling method, whereby people were able to participate in the study on their own accord. Interviews were carried out in KiSwahili with the assistance of my two field assistants, Abdalla and Mariam, and generally spanned around forty-five minutes to an hour. In

total, we interviewed twenty males and twenty females of mixed ages, and carried out four FGDs, each comprising six same-sex participants (two male FGDs and two female FGDs).

During interviews and FGDs, we asked village residents about their general dispositions towards the MBREMP, their livelihoods, and their everyday lived experiences of the conservation regulations. Specifically, we asked respondents and participants how their relationships with the environment had changed since the establishment of the MBREMP. In KiSwahili, the word *mazingira* translates literally as ‘the environment’, and is used as an umbrella term to encompass landscapes, plants, animals, seascapes, fish and other marine and terrestrial resources. It is also used with reference to peoples’ context and surroundings. We also asked respondents to describe any advantages or disadvantages they believed to be associated with the MBREMP. The interviews and FGDs were semi-structured and maintained this central focal point, though respondents were encouraged to discuss anything they felt to be of particular significance in their daily lives. Interviews and FGDs were recorded via audio recorder and transcribed into written KiSwahili. Mariam then translated the transcriptions into written English. The empirical basis of this thesis thus stems from peoples’ narrative responses elicited during these in-depth interviews and FGDs, as well as from my observations of everyday life in Msimbati.

4. MARINE PARK OPPOSITION IN MSIMBATI

In the following sections, I examine the ways in which the MBREMP has become a source of conflict in Msimbati. In sections 4.1 and 4.2, I address the question of why village residents contest the MBREMP. In sections 4.3 and 4.4, I then discuss the various forms of resistance employed by village residents to mobilize opposition to the marine park.

4.1 Environmental Protection and Social Vulnerability

According to the MBREMP's stated goals, marine conservation in coastal Mtwara should be of direct benefit to the people of Msimbati; the marine park aims to safeguard the same marine resources that are essential for village residents' livelihood security. Thus, the rhetorical implication is that the promotion of productive ecosystems through the protection of marine biodiversity should directly improve village residents' experiences of health and well-being. Indeed, the hypothetical benefits of environmental protection resonated strongly with many study participants, especially among artisanal fishers, who are highly dependent on coral reef fisheries for livelihood. Many had fond recollections of the initial proposition of commencing a large-scale marine conservation effort in their coastal waters. When asked about the potential benefits of the MBREMP during an interview, Musa, a male elder in Msimbati responded, "When the marine park first came to this village, we were so happy! We clapped our hands!", recounting his feelings of enthusiasm at the prospective conservation effort.

Many other study participants also recalled feeling positive about the MBREMP when it was formally gazetted, hopeful that marine conservation would entail a collaborative effort to protect the coral reef fisheries in their coastal waters. During my fieldwork in Msimbati, several people in the village explained to me that they initially expected to benefit significantly from the establishment of the MBREMP, stemming from the collective belief that their perceived needs

and well-being would be included in the management priorities of the marine park. Indeed, the publically available General Management Plan (GMP) for the MBREMP seemed to align with this expectation, as it emphasized the importance of integrating the voices of local resource users into the governance model overarching the MBREMP. One of the objectives stipulated in the report states that people living in coastal villages within and around the catchment area of the marine park should be, “involved in all phases of the planning, development and management of that marine park, share in the benefits of the operation of the protected area and have priority in the resource use and economic opportunity afforded by the establishment of the marine park” (MNRT 2005, ix). Based on this rhetoric, many study participants commented that they were initially supportive of the overall notion of marine conservation and the associated claims that development would follow in its wake.

Soon after the establishment of the MBREMP, however, village residents’ expectations of the benefits they would accrue from the project began to diverge from their actual experiences of the highly regulated model of conservation within the marine park. These misalignments led to the corrosion of their support for the MBREMP. During an FGD, Athumani, a male artisanal fisher, explained how village residents’ feelings towards the MBREMP began to change after its initial establishment,

At the beginning, the marine park was ours. But now, it is not. The marine park is like a snake that we unsuspectingly let into our house, and now the snake has come to bite us. I say this because at first, we accepted the project in our village, thinking that they would protect our environment. But now we know it is actually the enemy of the people of Msimbati.

In this response, Athumani mentions how village residents initially accepted the project, given their enthusiasm for the notion of state-assisted environmental protection. As he describes, however, the people of Msimbati did not foresee the MBREMP undermining their customary

rights to coastal and marine resources. Metaphorically speaking, people did not realize that the MBREMP was actually a dangerous snake that they had unsuspectingly allowed into their home.

The full gravity of this metaphor is only ascertainable when situated in relation to cultural context. During my second stay in Msimbati, in 2015, an elderly man living in a coastal village on the Mtwara peninsula was bitten by a snake, while hurriedly riding his bicycle to witness the presidential inauguration of the new Mtwara ferry. Despite attempts to rush him to the hospital, he died soon after. For people living in Msimbati, the potential lethality of snake bites is a very serious concern, and one that instills widespread fear; snakes have symbolic power over life and death. Thus, Athumani's metaphor of people bitten by a snake in their own home paints a very grave portrayal of their troubled relationship with the MBREMP. This metaphor is crucial for understanding why village residents oppose the MBREMP, as it signifies the widespread sentiment among the people of Msimbati that the marine park has attempted to protect marine biodiversity at the expense of village residents.

Contrary to the claim that coastal villages would benefit economically through the establishment of the MBREMP, people living in Msimbati have experienced no direct improvements in their everyday lives. Most study participants maintained that despite the publicized narrative of benefit-sharing, the marine park has been designed and implemented in a way that serves the state with little attention to the economic conditions of coastal villages. Hasan, a male artisanal fisher, was particularly vocal about his discontent with the state-driven model of marine conservation during an FGD,

The marine park was brought by the government. At first, we thought they were going to help us, but the conditions in our village are still so poor. Now we have no hope (*imani*) that the government will help us because of the things that have been done to us.

As Hasan's comment reveals, people in Msimbati resent the lack of development they have experienced, despite the initial claims that their village would share in the economic benefits associated with the establishment of the MBREMP. Village residents like Hasan resent how dominant the government has been in determining how the marine park should be implemented; people in Msimbati feel that they have been neglected throughout this process. Their frustrated expectations and lived experiences of marginalization have left village residents feeling hopeless about the prospect of ever benefiting from the MBREMP in the future.

While living in Msimbati, I often conversed with Issa, Salumu and other village residents about how they felt about the MBREMP and marine conservation in general. During some of these conversations, one particular story often resurfaced in peoples' everyday discourses. Several people, with whom I spoke, recalled a particular confrontation between park authorities and village residents that arose when a group of people in Msimbati tried to take sand from the beach to repair a pothole in the main road. Park rangers immediately intervened, explaining that this extractive practice was environmentally destructive. Village residents disagreed, explaining that they had historically used sand for a variety of purposes in Msimbati. In the end, however, the rangers forced them to return the sand to the beach.

This story is significant because it reveals the collective sentiment among village residents that the MBREMP has limited their potential for development by constraining their abilities to utilize marine resources. By prioritizing the protection of marine biodiversity through the formation of the marine park, village residents feel that the state has neglected their needs. Contrary to the proposed local economic benefits of establishing the marine park, people in Msimbati feel that the MBREMP actually further impoverishes village residents by disabling them from improving village infrastructure. The contention surrounding the purported

destructiveness of the act of extracting sand from the beach also highlights concerns among village residents about the opaqueness of the decision-making processes that determined how marine resources should be used within the marine park; people in Msimbati are uncertain about what the actual benefits of the conservation regulations truly are. The exclusion of village residents' voices and traditional ecological knowledge from these processes of valuating resources and selecting the management priorities of the marine park has led to collective experiences of deprivation in Msimbati.

In public discourses, however, these experiences have been overshadowed by the dominant hegemonic narrative of 'environmental protection' that informs the model of conservation in the MBREMP. In the context of marine conservation, environmental protection involves the preservation of marine biodiversity and the maintenance of productive ecosystems. It is important, however, to ask critical questions, such as 'protection for and from whom?' and 'protection at what cost?'. During an in-depth interview, Saidi, a male farmer and fisherman living in Msimbati raised some of these key questions in narrating his criticisms of the MBREMP,

Since the marine park came to this village, my relationship with the environment (*mazingira*) has changed in so many ways. The marine park is about protecting the environment. This is a good thing! But the most important question is how will you protect it? How can you protect something which you own together with other people? How are they affected by this protection?

In this response, Saidi alludes to the fact that the MBREMP is based on a socially constructed ideology of environmental protection that mobilizes the conservation effort, but with little heed to the people of Msimbati, who are also directly implicated in the process. As he implies, the stand-alone mandate of environmental protection is positive, but the way in which it has the potential to exclude village residents is very problematic. In Msimbati, people feel that the

ideology of environmental protection in actuality constructs village residents as separable from the marine resources upon which they are dependent. While framed in public discourses as a project focused on protecting the environment, people in Msimbati contrarily interpret it as one that increases social vulnerability. This collective perspective stems in part from the frustrated expectations of village residents, who had initially hoped that the MBREMP would support their development and protect their needs together with the environment. Ali, another male fisher and farmer in Msimbati articulated during an interview that the MBREMP has not helped village residents at all, despite their initial support for project,

The villagers accepted the marine park and agreed to protect the environment, but the marine park has failed to fulfill their promise to improve the lives of people in the village. So life is very difficult for us now. We don't get any benefit from the marine park. We continue to be weak.

In this narrative, Ali expresses resentment at the broken promises made by park officials, lamenting that they have not fulfilled their responsibility to improve the lives of people living in Msimbati. While village residents cooperated during the initial stages of the MBREMP's implementation, they quickly discovered that their own security and well-being had not been integrated into the management priorities of the marine park. Instead of empowering village residents and enabling them to maintain stewardship and rights to marine resources, the MBREMP neglected and even excluded them. Ali's phrase, "we continue to be weak", reflects the widespread feelings of vulnerability that the MBREMP has instilled in village residents, and echoes the common refrain voiced by many of the study participants: that the MBREMP's public rhetoric of benefit-sharing masks significant discrepancies in power, which enable the state to unabatedly determine how costs and benefits associated with the marine park will be distributed (Farmer 2005).

4.2 Perceptions of State Power and Control

Many study participants perceived the MBREMP as an assertion of state power, epitomized by the government's decision to introduce conservation regulations inside the MBREMP that directly constrain local resource users. As Juma, a male fisher, commented during an in-depth interview, "Now, everything I do is under government supervision, so I am forced to obey the laws of the marine park!", revealing his resentment for the way the MBREMP facilitates increased state surveillance and control over peoples' everyday lives.

Tatu, a female elder, who harvests crustaceans from the shoreline of Msimbati for subsistence, said during an interview that village residents were immediately opposed to the proposed regulations, knowing that they would directly restrict peoples' livelihood practices,

When the marine park came to this village, they explained their restrictions on what we were allowed to do. We did not agree to these restrictions, but the marine park forced us to accept them anyway. Now we suffer because of these restrictions.

Tatu's response reveals how village residents felt coerced into accepting the conservation regulations, knowing that the restrictions on fishing and harvesting would undermine their customary rights to resources, and negatively impact their everyday lives. Many study participants asserted that the regulations were designed to benefit the state, at the direct expense of the people of Msimbati. During an interview, Ahamadi, an elder fisherman in the village, articulated his stance that the government uses the regulations to exercise control over coastal and marine resources,

The marine park protects some areas, but they took those areas from us. This project benefits the government (*serikali*), not us. In the past, I had a net of 1 ¼ inches [mesh size]. I got fish with this net, which I sold so I could buy 1kg of maize flour and continue with my life. But now I can't because they took my net and did not replace it.

Ahamadi's narrative highlights his assertion that the MBREMP benefits the government and not the people of Msimbati. Village residents particularly resent the confiscation of fishing nets, which have significant negative impacts on peoples' material well-being. While park rangers are required to replace confiscated nets with ones that are deemed sustainable by marine biologists, Ahamadi went on to describe the fundamental problem with this process for village residents,

Sometimes, they give a net of 4 inches [mesh size]. But these nets can only be used in deep waters, and you cannot fish in deep waters with small boats. We cannot afford to buy big boats, so these big nets are useless to us.

The repossession of fine-mesh fishing nets hinders fishers from accessing shallow water fisheries, delimiting their economic mobility and ultimately 'displacing them in place' (Lubkemann 2008; Witter 2014, 407). While the expert knowledge of marine biologists demonstrates that regulating the kinds of fishing gear that are used in inshore fisheries can serve to reduce local anthropogenic pressures on marine ecosystems, most village residents cannot afford to buy fishing equipment that is deemed sustainable in accordance with the conservation regulations. Those without access to adequate boats are disproportionately affected by these restrictions on fishing net mesh sizes, as they are unable to effectively utilize the larger nets. As such, the acts of repossessing fine-mesh nets can serve to deepen pre-existing inequalities by unfairly increasing the economic burden on those who are already impoverished.

When asked directly how the MBREMP has affected village residents' relationships with the environment, artisanal fishers responded passionately during interviews, conveying the deep emotional impacts of the fishing gear regulations. When asked this question, another male fisher, also named Juma replied,

When you ask me this kind of question, my heart breaks and I feel like weeping. The marine park came to this village only to make our life difficult.

Other study participants repeatedly voiced similar sentiments. During an FGD, one male participant named Abdalla said, “The marine park is not a project for improving peoples’ lives, it is a project for destroying peoples’ lives!”, expressing the deep burden that artisanal fishers must bear as a consequence of the fishing gear regulations.

The negative social impacts of these regulations ripple throughout the families of fishers. Somoye, an elder woman in Msimbati, explained how the increased regulation of fishing gear has in turn hindered her grandchild from attending school,

The marine park does not have any benefits for us, it has only disadvantages. My son is a fisherman. He depends on fishing activities to get income and pay his child’s school fees. One day, when my son went fishing, they caught him and took his nets. This meant that he lost his source of income. At school, the teachers asked for the school fees so that his child could write exams. Because he could not pay, the child was not able to write exams...this is a loss for the child and for the whole family.

Somoye’s narrative depicts the ways in which the confiscation of fishing nets affects entire families, both economically and socially. While the confiscation of nets has immediate economic impacts, it also carries significant socio-economic consequences for future generations, as income generated from fishing contributes to educating children, ultimately preparing them for formal employment in adulthood.

In addition to the fishing gear regulations, the MBREMP has also restricted the use of mangrove products; to buffer against potential coastal erosion and promote healthy nursery grounds for juvenile fish, the MBREMP has prohibited the extraction of live mangroves from coastal wetlands. While fishing activities are crucial for the majority of households in Msimbati village, mangrove products are essential universally. They are commonly used as building materials for houses and pit latrines, and as firewood for cooking. As such, almost everyone living in Msimbati has been affected by the prohibition of mangrove extraction, given the

general lack of affordable alternative materials for building and cooking. Many study participants described feeling subjugated by the increasing constraints on their traditional ways of life. During an FGD, a male elder named Issa was particularly tenacious in this assertion,

A large percentage of people here live in houses made from trees. We inherited them from our parents a long time ago. Nowadays, people use cement blocks, but it depends because only some people can afford them. For example, I have a family and children. I need a house, so I have to go to the wetlands to cut mangroves so that I can build a house. If the marine park rangers catch me, they take all the mangroves, so I can't build a house, so I don't know what the aims of the marine park are. They want people to move around like goats without having houses! If you stop me from using mangroves, then provide me with cement blocks so that I can build a house. Everyone wants to live in a good home, so there is no advantage from this project.

Issa's response reveals his deep resentment for the restrictions on mangrove harvesting; he is disillusioned by the increasing top-down regulation of his livelihood activities and way of life. He does not see any benefits associated with the MBREMP because of its inability to provide alternative livelihood opportunities to replace those which have become prohibited to promote conservation. From his perspective, the restrictions on mangrove harvesting, and the overall increase in environmental regulation, have left village residents without any feasible options for basic subsistence.

4.3 The Risk of Overt Rebellion and the Fear of State Violence

The year prior to my arrival in Msimbati, in May of 2013, tensions surrounding the MBREMP had escalated to a point of visible conflict. As I mentioned in the introductory pages of this thesis, several individuals planted dynamite inside the marine park office in Msimbati and vandalized the park signs located along the main road of the village. In doing so, they made a clear statement that the people of Msimbati would not willingly submit to the states' coercive influences over their everyday lives. Mzee Ahmed, a respected elder in Msimbati, reflected on

the event during an interview, offering his explanation for why the individuals decided to bomb the office,

The bombing was caused by the marine park because they don't have a good relationship with our community. They put too many restrictions on us, so people decided to sabotage the project. People don't know where to find the person in charge so that they can explain their problems. This caused people to decide to sabotage the project. People feel great pain because when the marine park came, they took our land and fishing areas. So people destroyed the office because of the bad relationship between the marine park and people of Msimbati.

Mzee Ahmed's explanation illustrates that the office bombing has become a resonating symbol of the troubled relationship between between village residents and park authorities. While he does not condone the actions of the individuals who bombed the office, he maintains that village residents had nowhere to voice their feelings of pain over the dispossession they have experienced as a consequence of the MBREMP. As he clearly states, the bombing was "caused by the marine park", signifying his perception that the MBREMP must also be held responsible for the event because of its oppressive relationship with the people of Msimbati.

While many study participants maintained that the state utilizes the MBREMP as a means of asserting social control over village residents, the office bombing is a clear sign of the individual and collective agency that the people of Msimbati also hold in their abilities to actively resist the coercive influence of state power. Some individuals in Msimbati emphatically contest the purported 'unidirectionality' of the top-down flow of power inside the MBREMP. During an FGD, Athumani, who I mentioned earlier, was particularly outspoken about the power that village residents also wield in the face of state dominance. Once again, Athumani used a snake metaphor in his narrative response. This time, however, he depicted the people of Msimbati as the snake, and the MBREMP as the victim,

Let me give you an example of a snake called a puff adder. This kind of snake seems very calm, but if it decides to, it may bite your leg. The people of Msimbati are like this snake. Because this kind of snake seems calm, you may step on it, but then it will get angry and bite you. This is like the people of Msimbati. The people of Msimbati now have poison for the marine park and we are ready for anything.

In this response, Athumani provides a significant commentary on the agency of village residents, and their abilities to individually, and collectively, take action in opposition to the MBREMP.

The metaphorical representation of village residents as a deadly snake highlights his belief that despite the coercive influence of state power, village residents also hold power in their abilities to resist these forces. Athumani continued to explain, with vigor, that the people of Msimbati are not simply passive victims of structural constraints, but are actively engaged agents who are willing to fight for their autonomy and self-determination,

We don't want the marine park in our village! We have made efforts to make sure this project is gone from our village. President Kikwete will hear that we chased out this project. If he gets that information, I know he will send an army to beat us, but we are prepared to fight. Anything can happen, but we are not ready to die of hunger due to the marine park project.... We destroyed the whole office of the marine park and it has not been repaired... Our aim is to eliminate the marine park project.

Athumani's response clearly depicts the fearlessness, and willingness to fight, that characterize the dispositions of some people in Msimbati. While state power is tangible and subjugating in its manifest forms of land appropriation and conservation regulations, his response reveals that some individuals are still willing to openly contest its coercive influence over their lives. By destroying the park office, the involved individuals targeted a visible symbol of state authority to openly declare their opposition to the states' attempts to constrain their everyday lives.

Throughout my fieldwork, I observed many other overt forms of resistance employed by village residents to mobilize opposition to the MBREMP, all of which orbited around the conservation regulations. While living in Msimbati, I spent many mornings walking along the

shoreline between Mnazi Bay and the Ruvuma River with Issa and Salumu where I often stopped to chat with Abudulu and other local fishers as they prepared to depart for the day in their dug-out canoes. On one particular morning, I stopped to speak with Abudulu who was searching for octopus in the shallow tide pools that formed during low tides. As we began chatting, we were interrupted by a loud ‘boom’ from the ocean, and I looked up to see a huge splash adjacent to a small boat about 200 feet from the beach. At first, I was confused, thinking that a whale had breached directly next to the boat. As I continued to watch, however, one of the two young men in the boat stood upright and casually tossed a stick of dynamite into the water next to them. The surface once again erupted like a small volcano. “*Wanatumia baruti*”, Abudulu whispered to me: “they are using dynamite”. While I would argue that this destructive form of fishing is primarily driven by poverty and structural constraint, I also assert that it reflects a blatant disregard for the conservation regulations of the MBREMP, given the location of the act inside the catchment area of the marine park. Thus, I also interpret it as an acute expression of individual power and agency, set in rebellious opposition to the state-driven marine conservation effort of the MBREMP.

I continually observed many other overt violations of fishing gear regulations along the shores of Msimbati. The use of beach seine nets (*juya*), for example, is prohibited within the MBREMP, given its detrimental impacts on soft corals and other sensitive substrates. Despite these bans, however, I regularly observed small groups of men using beach seine nets along the shores of Msimbati, by dragging them through shallow waters and up onto the beach. Groups of women, who are also actively involved in the coastal fisheries within the MBREMP, continued to use cloth dresses and fine mesh-size nets, such as mosquito nets, to catch small fish (*dagaa*) in knee-deep water. These kinds of re-appropriated fishing nets are referred to as *tandillo* nets (or

kutanda), and are considered to be destructive because they indiscriminately target juvenile fish. As such, the use of *tandillo* nets is also banned inside the MBREMP. Despite these prohibitions, however, large groups of women still openly use these nets along the shores of Msimbati. Given the constraints of poverty that shape village residents' everyday lives, I firstly maintain that these acts reflect attempts to secure the basic resources necessary for the fulfillment of their material needs. Further to this, I also interpret them symbolically; I would argue that they simultaneously reflect moral statements about their customary rights to marine resources and, given the public visibility of these acts, overt forms of resistance signifying open opposition to the MBREMP.

For the majority of people living in Msimbati, however, the fear of potential repercussions for visibly opposing the MBREMP in this manner is far too great. This fear has been stoked by the states' response to the office bombing, and the responses by park authorities to violations of fishing gear regulations. Immediately following the office bombing, the state sanctioned the army to restore order in Msimbati. Uniformed soldiers swiftly arrived in the village the same night, and proceeded to beat people who they believed to be involved in the incident. People in Msimbati recall being terrified that night as they ran into the mangrove wetlands and bushes to escape. By using physical violence in this way, the state highlighted the potential consequences of not adhering to state authority, re-instilling fear among the people of Msimbati. The beatings, many of which were inflicted upon innocent individuals, can be interpreted as visible demonstrations of state power intended to reinstate control over citizens and maintain social order. In the same way that the act of protest was overt and acute, so too was the response by the state, but with greater force.

Many study participants vividly remembered the bombing and subsequent violence. Mzee Ahmed recalled the event solemnly during an interview,

The marine park has caused many terrible problems for us. When people destroyed the marine park office with explosives, the army came to this village to beat people. Many people got injured, and many others ran into the bushes because they were so afraid... The army even beat people who did not participate in planting the explosives.

For most people in Msimbati, these feelings of fear have become etched into memory. During my fieldwork, several people in Msimbati also told me stories of being beaten by park authorities because they used fishing equipment that did not comply with the gear regulations. Several youths in particular described to me instances where park rangers had threatened them with wooden sticks in an attempt to elicit information about dynamite fishers. These experiences of physical violence are deeply traumatizing for people in Msimbati, who must remain vigilant about the potential for state-sanctioned violence in their everyday lives. As such, many people in Msimbati instead engage in covert acts of noncompliance to the conservation regulations. As Holmes (2007) asserts, these acts can serve to undermine state authority, and the efficacy of the conservation effort, while avoiding the risk of open confrontation.

4.4 Everyday Resistance and Subtle Noncompliance to Conservation Regulations

One evening, while walking back from Mnazi Bay, the sun set quicker than I had anticipated and darkness swept over the beach. To my surprise, however, two men began patrolling the beach on motorbikes, repeatedly riding slowly in a small circuit, parallel to the beach. I later discovered, through conversation with Issa and Salumu, that they were searching for sea turtles; hawksbill and green turtles were known to come ashore to lay eggs in that area. The harvest of sea turtles is illegal in Tanzania, and yet hundreds of turtle shells are littered across the shoreline of Msimbati, often tucked haphazardly into bushes after the meat has been removed. Since the establishment of the MBREMP, park authorities have re-emphasized prohibitions on harvesting sea turtles, and yet this practice has persisted.

This experience highlighted to me the importance of the degree of discretion exercised by local resource users in choosing to act in ways that either blatantly or discreetly undermine the conservation regulations. In this case, these men decided to search for turtles at night, knowing that their actions would be less visible. In this way, these acts closely reflect Scott's (1985) notion of 'weapons of the weak'; under the veil of darkness, village residents avoid the direct gaze of park authorities. Thus, I would argue that by choosing to carry out these acts at night, village residents avoid top-down surveillance, disabling the state from exercising control over their everyday lives.

These kinds of discreet activities are very common in Msimbati. At dusk, I often noticed men quietly cutting mangroves, despite the bans on live mangrove extraction. On some evenings, I watched as groups of women and children collected crustaceans inside the no-take zones of Mnazi Bay. While these kinds of activities are officially prohibited inside the MBREMP, they are considered by village residents to be socially normative parts of everyday life. As I have already mentioned, the vast majority of people in Msimbati feel that they are morally entitled to practice basic subsistence-based livelihood activities, including the small-scale extraction of coastal and marine resources. The fear of physical violence, stemming from the states' militarized response to the office bombing, together with the history of beatings inflicted by park rangers upon local resource users who do not comply with conservation regulations, however, deters most people from engaging in overt acts of protest against the MBREMP. Instead, many people have resorted to undermining the MBREMP through these subtle acts of noncompliance to the conservation regulations; these acts fulfil material needs, while also making significant moral statements about customary rights to resources (Holmes 2007). I would also interpret these acts as symbolic forms of everyday resistance, which undermine the marine conservation effort,

while avoiding direct confrontations with governing authorities (Hoffman 2014; Scott 1985).

While seemingly insignificant, the sustained consistency of noncompliance to conservation regulations in parks and protected areas has the power to corrode the overarching conservation effort and even force changes in legislation (Kull 2004; Peluso 1993; Western 1994).

Many people in Msimbati continue to discreetly practice prohibited livelihood activities, such as harvesting mangroves and crustaceans, instead of openly advocating for their rights to do so. Yusuf, a male farmer and fisherman, discussed these subtle acts during an in-depth interview,

In this village, there are no bushes for cutting trees. Our bush consists only of mangrove wetlands, so when the marine park put restrictions on the use of mangroves, we were confused because we use mangroves for firewood and for building houses. We use it for everything! But we still use mangrove products. We usually check first to make sure the marine park people are not around. If the environment is safe, then we go cut mangroves. Some villagers cut mangroves during the night because at night you are not easily seen by the marine park people.

Yusuf's response highlights the significance of mangroves for village residents' material well-being. Thus, despite the restrictions, people continue to harvest mangroves at night, when their actions are less visible to park rangers. While it is important not to interpret such acts in separation from their potential material benefits, I would also argue that they reflect subtle moral statements about the rights of village residents to harvest mangroves. These acts can also facilitate political mobility by directly undermining the success of the conservation effort inside the MBREMP, in turn disenabling the state from governing village residents' relationships with coastal and marine resources. Thus, I would interpret the acts of harvesting mangroves and crustaceans at dusk as implicit forms of resistance because the moral and political motivations for the acts are married with pragmatic livelihood functions. As such, this form of resistance is fundamentally different from the overt act of bombing the park office, which was an explicitly political act targeting a dominant symbol of state control.

The discreet use of banned fishing nets inside the MBREMP epitomizes this implicit form of resistance employed by many people in Msimbati. As Yasmin, a female elder explained during an in-depth interview, many fishers in Msimbati continue to use prohibited fishing gear out of economic necessity,

We continue using fine-mesh size nets, even though the marine park put restrictions on this because we have so many financial responsibilities, like paying school fees for children and buying household supplies. For these reasons, we will continue to use the nets of 2 inches [mesh size].

Yasmin's response emphasizes economic hardship as a driving cause of noncompliance to the fishing gear regulations. Her perspective mirrors that of many other study participants, who also alluded to the conditions of poverty that shaped their everyday lives. As such, it is important to contextualize acts of noncompliance to the conservation regulations in relation to peoples' lived experiences of poverty, and the way that such socioeconomic conditions can constrain agency.

Yasmin discusses the important considerations that factor into private calculations of the material benefits of noncompliance, such as the cost of school fees for children and household supplies. Put differently, there are potential individual economic benefits to not adhering to conservation regulations, in stark contrast to explicit acts of protest that are characterized solely by the potential for political mobilization.

At the same time, however, it is important not to underestimate the implicit symbolism of these subtle acts of noncompliance. While focused on the economic drivers of such actions, Yasmin also went on to criticize the purported legitimacy of the fishing gear regulations. In doing so, she suggests that the decision to continue to use prohibited nets also reflects an understated commentary on the rights of village residents to utilize marine resources, and thus a subtle form of protest,

Even if the marine park catches a fisherman today and takes his net, the next day that same fisherman will buy another net, so there is no end to this. The problem is with the marine park because they restrict the fishermen, and yet offer no alternatives. So this will continue.

By stating that “the problem is with the marine park”, Yasmin implies that peoples’ decisions to continue banned livelihood practices are legitimate, while the restrictions on such practices are not. In her view, people are not committing wrongdoings by not adhering to the gear regulations, as they are exercising their right to engage in basic acts of subsistence to provide for themselves and their families. Thus, Yasmin is making a clear statement about the moral economy of subsistence in Msimbati. The vast majority of people in Msimbati feel that they should be entitled to privately farm, fish and harvest coastal and marine resources, as these are fundamental components of their livelihood and way of life; from the perspectives of village residents, engaging in such practices is a moral right, while overly regulating them is immoral and unjust. Thus, village residents simultaneously make an assessment of the potential material gains of noncompliance, while also exercising their community defined moral entitlement to engage in basic subsistence practices. In this way, these subtle acts of noncompliance to the conservation regulations can be both morally and materially motivated. In the following section, I conclude this thesis by synthesizing my primary arguments and discussing their wider implications in relation to the pre-existing literature.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

As I have demonstrated, village residents were initially supportive of the notion of marine conservation in their coastal waters, hopeful that they would benefit from the establishment of the MBREMP in a number of ways. Based on their customary rights to fish and harvest coastal and marine resources, and their dependence on these resources for security and well-being, artisanal fishers were particularly passionate about the project at its outset. Further to this, people in Msimbati believed that the establishment of the MBREMP would lead to improved village infrastructure through trickle down revenue from park-related ecotourism. These expectations aligned with the the formal management plan of the MBREMP, which became publically available in 2005.

Soon after the establishment of the MBREMP, however, village residents quickly realized that the management priorities of the marine park did not adequately address their perceived needs and well-being. This stemmed from an exclusionary model of conservation governance that did not effectively integrate the perspectives of village residents into significant processes of conservation-related decision-making. As Bennett and Dearden (2014a) discuss, ineffective environmental governance can significantly hinder the success of marine conservation projects both socially and ecologically. As a consequence of this form of social exclusion, many study participants described feeling marginalized and neglected by the implementation of the MBREMP. This aligns with Voyer, Gladstone and Goodall's (2012) assertion that inadequate assessment of social context in MPA planning can "alienate local communities" and ultimately compromise the success of MPAs (432). This disconnect between the perceived needs of village residents, and the actual management priorities of the marine park led to the corrosion of local support for the MBREMP in Msimbati. This finding closely

resembles Bennett and Dearden's (2014b) argument for why local communities do not support marine conservation – namely, that ineffective governance and management of marine protected areas can be associated with community perceptions of significant livelihood impacts that seemingly outweigh the development benefits associated with the establishment of MPAs.

My ethnographic fieldwork in Msimbati reinforces Katikiro, Macusi and Deepananda's (2015) assertion that the MBREMP has “failed to reconcile community interests with conservation objectives from the outset” (227). In taking the results of their study one step further, my fieldwork reveals that people in Msimbati have come to associate the marine park with significant discrepancies in power, stemming from their marginalization throughout the conservation process. Recognizing the significant role that the national government has played in the establishment of the marine park, people in Msimbati have come to equate the MBREMP with state power; many study participants perceived the MBREMP as a political tool utilized by the state to exercise control over the resources of Mtwara and the people of Msimbati. This perception closely reflects Peluso's (1993) argument that nation-states can potentially utilize the ideology of conservation as a mechanism for controlling resource users within “the state's declared jurisdiction” (199). While an analysis of the perspectives of state agents and park authorities is beyond the scope of this thesis, my findings highlight the importance of engaging ethnographically with the lived experiences of people residing in coastal communities within and around marine protected areas to shed light on how power is distributed across stakeholders in marine conservation projects.

The increased top-down surveillance of village residents, together with the introduction of conservation regulations within the catchment area of the marine park have galvanized the collective belief in Msimbati that the state asserts top-down power over village residents through

the MBREMP. People in Msimbati perceive these processes as direct attempts by the state to control, regulate and increase constraints on their everyday lives. These perceptions fit the works of Agrawal (2005) and McElwee (2016), who maintain that processes of environmental regulation can constitute techniques of the state intended to increase the governability of individual subjects, and facilitate the management of society as a whole. In line with their analyses, I assert that village residents' lived experiences of the marine conservation effort within the MBREMP neatly reflect Foucault's (2009) notion of governmentality. Thus, I maintain that in Msimbati, village residents oppose the MBREMP firstly as a consequence of the manner in which they were initially excluded from significant processes of conservation-related decision-making, and ultimately because they have since come to associate the marine park with a top-down flow of state power that constrains their everyday lives and undermines their customary rights to coastal and marine resources.

In response to these increasing constraints on their everyday lives, some village residents choose to exercise their agency through overt acts of resistance against the MBREMP, such as bombing the marine park office and defacing park signs. As I have observed, some people in Msimbati convey open opposition to the MBREMP through blatant violations of fishing gear regulations. As Holmes (2007) discusses, these kinds of activities can be interpreted analytically as politically charged forms of resistance, once they have been labelled by marine park authorities as transgressive acts. The fear of physical violence in Msimbati, stemming from the states' militarized response to the office bombing, together with the history of beatings inflicted by park authorities upon individuals believed to be using prohibited fishing gear, however, deters many village residents from engaging in overt acts of protest against the MBREMP. Instead,

many people in Msimbati have resorted to discreetly undermining the marine park through subtle acts of noncompliance to the conservation regulations.

This finding parallels previous conservation case studies, such as the works of Brockington (2002) and Neumann (1998), which document the subtle, but defiant behavior of people living within and around terrestrial protected areas in Tanzania, given the situational risks inhibiting open, organized protests. Holmes (2007) and Hoffman (2014) extrapolate from Scott's (1985) canonical works on peasant resistance to interpret these kinds of defiant acts as 'everyday forms of resistance'. Many people in Msimbati choose to engage in similar forms of everyday resistance by exercising discretion when violating conservation regulations; people often carry out prohibited activities at night to avoid the direct gaze of marine park officials. According to Scott (1985), these 'weapons of the weak', though seemingly inconsequential, can serve to systematically dismantle existing power structures through increased frequency. Many scholars have drawn attention to the way that such acts can directly undermine the success of conservation projects (Hoffman 2014; Holmes 2007; Holmes 2013; Kull 2004; Western 1994). These subtle forms of resistance also avoid the risk of open conflict with governing authorities, mitigating the potential for violent repercussions. By carrying out banned livelihood practices at night, residents of Msimbati are able to simultaneously undermine the conservation effort and avoid top-down surveillance, thus disabling the state from controlling their everyday lives (Foucault 2009; Hoffman 2014; Holmes 2007).

Given the socioeconomic context of such acts of noncompliance, however, it is important to also remain cognizant of the underlying material benefits of these acts. For most people in Msimbati, poverty is an everyday concern that significantly constrains their everyday lives. Furthermore, most village residents feel morally entitled to engage in subsistence-based

livelihood activities given their customary rights to fishing and harvesting, which they have exercised for roughly 200 years. Thus, village residents' subtle acts of noncompliance to the conservation regulations can perhaps be most accurately interpreted as "implicit resistance, as the political and livelihood functions are mixed" (Holmes 2007, 193). In Msimbati, these acts can be materially, morally or politically motivated.

Based on my ethnographic fieldwork, I conclude that the marine conservation effort in Msimbati is currently failing as a consequence of village residents' vehement opposition to the MBREMP. While the primary goal of the project is to protect marine biodiversity, this objective has become marred by conflict, as village residents continue to resist the perceived top-down flow of state power within the catchment area of the MBREMP. The various forms of resistance employed by village residents to mobilize opposition to the marine park directly corrode the success of the project. Increased top-down enforcement of the conservation regulations, however, would only deepen the current, widespread perception among village residents that the regulations represent attempts by the state to control and subjugate the people of Msimbati. To effectively address this problem, marine park authorities must re-cultivate their troubled relationship with village residents in such a way that the people of Msimbati feel included in significant processes of conservation-related decision-making. Ultimately, the people of Msimbati may willingly renew their support for the project once they feel that the management priorities of the MBREMP represent their perceived needs and well-being. This essential and significant step could rekindle their enthusiasm for the prospect of marine conservation in their coastal waters, and in turn brand the marine park a social and ecological success.

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