

Neoliberal Conservation, Garifuna Territorial Rights and Resource Management in the Cayos Cochinos Marine Protected Area

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Abstract

This case study contributes to the study of neoliberal conservation and indigenous rights through an interdisciplinary (anthropology and fisheries management) evaluation of the 2004–2009 management plan for Honduras' Cayos Cochinos Marine Protected Area (CCMPA). The CCMPA was established in 1993, in a region that has been inhabited by the afro-indigenous Garifuna for over 213 years. An evaluation of the CCMPA's 2004–2009 management plan's socioeconomic objectives is situated within the historical-cultural context of a long-standing territorial struggle, changes in governance practices, and related shifts in resource access and control. The article highlights the central importance of local social activism and the relative or partial success that such mobilisation can bring about for restructuring resource governance.

Keywords: neoliberal conservation, Cayos Cochinos Marine Protected Area, indigenous rights, Garifuna, Honduras

INTRODUCTION

In July 2007, residents of Garifuna communities reliant on the marine and terrestrial resources of Honduras' Cayos Cochinos Marine Protected Area (CCMPA) met at the home of the head of a local fishing cooperative to protest the filming of a popular Italian Reality Show called 'L'Isola dei Famosi' (The Island of the Famous). This Magnolia company production is modelled after the hit CBS show *Survivor*. Contestants were 'stranded' on Cayo Paloma, a key within the CCMPA, throughout the months of September and October. CCMPA conservation regulations for harvesting fish and shellfish—to which the Garifuna must comply—did not apply to game show contestants, who were afforded fishing rights within the reserve. Bait collection areas of the CCMPA were closed to the Garifuna throughout

the show's tenure during live transmissions. During the first year of filming, the local fishing population did not see any tangible benefits or compensation for lost income, or sufficient transparency of the approximately 560,000 USD in financial gains paid by Magnolia to the Honduran Coral Reef Fund (HCRF)—the non-profit managing agency of the CCMPA.

During the house meeting, Garifuna fishers drafted a Letter of Negotiation demanding compensation from the HCRF. Their concerns were raised to international audiences in September 2007, when the Inter-American Human Rights Court (IAHRC) deemed a 2003 petition contesting the lack of Garifuna participation in the planning of the CCMPA admissible to court. Public bulletins were also circulated to international human rights networks in 2008, calling for global action to address injustices committed against the Garifuna in the CCMPA. All of these events are a result of the convergence of neoliberal conservation efforts and the rise of international indigenous rights.

Our study contributes to the scholarship on neoliberal conservation and indigenous rights through an interdisciplinary (anthropology and fisheries management) evaluation of the 2004–2009 management plan of the CCMPA. The Cayos Cochinos are a set of two main islands and 13 smaller cays located 15 km off the Caribbean coast of Honduras,

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forming extensive coral reefs at the southernmost part of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef System (Harborne *et al.* 2001). The area has been protected since 1993 but a management plan was developed only in 2003, which was implemented for an initial five year period (2004–2009). In addition to specific conservation aims, the CCMPA management plan seeks to encourage ecotourism as an alternative livelihood strategy (to artisanal fishing) for the afro-indigenous Garifuna, inhabitants of the area since 1797.

In what follows, we situate our evaluation of the CCMPA's 2004–2009 management plan's socio-economic objectives within the historical-cultural context of a long-standing territorial struggle, changes in governance practices, and related shifts in resource access and control. Like other case studies of neoliberal conservation management approaches, our findings reveal heightened inequalities at the local level. Is it possible to reverse this pattern under neoliberalism, or at least etch out an alternative path towards socioeconomic sustainability? We draw on the World Commission on Environment and Development and adopt a broad definition of sustainability—to mean meeting the socio-cultural and economic needs of the present generation, while maintaining the wellbeing of the natural environment, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (United Nations 1987). We argue that Garifuna strategies of resistance that emerge within—and as a result of—the neoliberalisation of the environment provide opportunities for restructuring resource governance models to tip the scales in favour of community-based management.

NEOLIBERAL CONSERVATION AND ITS CRITIQUE

Neoliberalism is a political strategy that emphasises efficient economic markets, privatisation of public services, massive governmental deregulation, and limiting the role of the state (Edelman & Haugerud 2005). Over the past couple decades, a 'green developmentalism' (McAfee 1999) or 'green neoliberalism' (Hanson 2007) has emerged which involves a set of "institutions, discourse, and practices that facilitate objectification and commodification of nature's values... [making] efficient use and exchange of 'natural capital'" (Hanson 2007: 247–248). Biodiversity conservation efforts have been shaped by green neoliberalism and correspondingly a new literature on 'neoliberal conservation' efforts has emerged (e.g., Heynen & Robbins 2005; Büscher & Whande 2007; Castree 2008a, 2008b; Heynen *et al.* 2007; Igoe & Brockington 2007).

Neoliberal conservation models are framed in terms of efficiency of the market, a reduced role of the state, deregulation of labour and the environment, and titling and privatisation of property rights in land, forests, water, and fisheries (Liverman & Vilas 2006: 330). The emergence of these models in the 1980s coincided with a loss in faith that states could effectively manage their own economies (Lemos & Agrawal 2006: 302).

Proponents of neoliberal governance models suggest that

they can lead to increased democracy, as responsibility for environmental governance is moved from the state towards communities and local institutions (Lemos & Agrawal 2006: 319). Neoliberal conservation efforts draw on transnational networks for governance, and assume the generation of 'hybrid environmental governance' models that bring together states, businesses, NGOs, and communities to share the responsibility for conservation efforts (Lemos & Agrawal 2006). Proponents argue that conventional models where state or market forces lead the governance strategy typically fall short in capacity; the most effective strategy is that of the newly emerging hybrid governance models such as public-private partnerships or co-management strategies (Lemos & Agrawal 2006: 297). Such normative hybrid environmental governance models are said to build in social sustainability through an emphasis on democracy and equity. However, there is little evidence to date which demonstrates that increased democratic participation and equitable outcomes have resulted from hybrid governance models.

In addition to the bold promise that increased democracy and participation will result from the dismantling of restrictive state structures and practices, advocates of neoliberal conservation suggest that such models protect the land rights of rural communities and aid local communities in the development of conservation-associated business ventures such as ecotourism (Igoe & Brockington 2007: 434).

While the above are promises laid out through the neoliberal normative idea, in practice the picture is far more complicated. In his editorial reflection on the Society for Conservation Biology's 2007 Annual Meeting, Bram Büscher (2008) points out that what has transpired in the conservation world is that conservation biologists and social scientists have become too eager to realign themselves with the seductive nature of the neoliberal win-win scenarios, forsaking empirically-grounded analyses. Based on participant observation at the meeting, Büscher (2008: 229–230) found a 'discursive blur' surrounding presentations: presenters and participants often used "nice-sounding yet often empty words" (e.g., participation, ownership, good governance, better policies), and most demonstrated a tendency to always attempt to speak positively (even those offering critical interpretations looked for potential positives). This 'discursive blur' obscures the local reality of neoliberal conservation. The critical literature on neoliberal conservation demonstrates that unlike the rhetoric outlined by proponents of neoliberal conservation, such approaches do not automatically benefit local people and the environment, and in fact, more often than not, people are socio-economically disadvantaged (Igoe & Brockington 2007: 446).

As an example, one key characteristic of neoliberal conservation that has had stark implications on the Garifuna population within Honduras is the reregulation of community land. Following critical theorists such as Castree (2008a, 2008b) and Igoe & Brockington (2007), we employ the alternative label 'reregulation' in lieu of the process of deregulation that proponents of neoliberal models describe. Reregulation better captures the fact that under neoliberal land

reforms, like those discussed later in this paper, states transform previously untradeable things into tradable commodities, removing regulations that impede market competition (Igoe & Brockington 2007: 437). Two examples of the ways in which land can be reregulated include the privatisation of communal or state-owned property, and the distribution of collective land titles to rural communities, both of which have occurred in Honduras. Collective land titling programmes are used to bring rural communities into the market, enabling communities to enter into business ventures with outside investors (Lemos & Agrawal 2006: 437). The reregulation of land assigns new value to areas that had not been directly territorialised¹, creating real estate booms and other investment opportunities by non-local/external investors (Igoe & Brockington 2007: 437).

Such commodification and appropriation transforms the relationship local people have to natural resources, while aiming to formally protect and/or manage specific resources (Büscher & Whande 2007). Lemos & Agrawal (2006: 312) warn that unfortunately reregulation and decentralisation can easily be used by those in power to enhance their own political positions and landholdings. The critical literature on neoliberal conservation efforts demonstrates that these values typically become available to national and transnational elites (and tourists), while they are denied to local populations despite their historical presence (Hitchcock 1995; Fortwangler 2007; Igoe & Brockington 2007). However, proponents of these models counter that any inequities resulting from neoliberal conservation can be fixed through market-based solutions that are intended to bolster or improve the localised economy (see also Igoe & Brockington 2007). One popular solution is the expansion of ecotourism, a viable option for developing nations interested in entering into the global tourism business.²

To some extent, ecotourism enterprises have developed symbiotically with protected areas (West *et al.* 2006); yet such mutual dependency does not mean that the relationship is conflict-free. Numerous case studies detail the splintered effects of ecotourism in protected areas: inequities that arise from the unequal distribution of revenues among local populations due to the breadth and scope of social networks, class, or gender (Bookbinder *et al.* 1998; Vivanco 2001; Igoe & Croucher 2007); increased pressure on natural resources due to the presence of tourists (e.g., Puntunney 1990); the emergence of land-use conflicts (Bookbinder *et al.* 1998); and the emergence and effects of new ideas and practices surrounding the relationship between people and nature (West & Carrier 2004; Holt 2005). The general literature on neoliberal conservation mentions further negative effects: exponential increases of real estate prices that force locals out of their own environments (Fortwangler 2007); the devaluation of local environmental knowledge (Berlanga & Faust 2007; Fortwangler 2007); elite and/or foreigners gaining private titles to formally communal indigenous lands (Berlanga & Faust 2007); displacement and resettlement to accommodate commercialised environmental projects or conservation programmes (Büscher & Dressler 2007; Grandia 2007; Hitchcock *et al.* 2009); and, in some instances, violence against local protesters of neoliberal

projects (Igoe & Croucher 2007; Johnston 2007).

In summary, the key point is that neoliberal conservation does not need to benefit local people in order to be considered successful; in fact, it can and does thrive on the displacement of the local population (Igoe & Brockington 2007: 446). While productive conservation-development models may be possible, they are not common, and rarely stable (Büscher 2008).

Liverman & Vilas (2006: 356–357) conclude that despite the fact that there is little evidence that local people and the environment fare better as a result of neoliberal environmental policies, it is unlikely that such policies will be reversed because governments simply do not have the resources to renationalise land and water, or detach themselves from global trading networks. As such, constructive research endeavours might search for institutional solutions to help mediate the negative social and environmental effects of free trade and declining governmental roles (Liverman & Vilas 2006: 357). Moreover, as Lemos & Agrawal point out (2006: 442), negative assessments of what happens to local people are becoming increasingly dismissed as unproductive and destructive. Case studies need to be reviewed through a critical yet reflective improvement lens, to ask what policies and institutions are most appropriate to sustain societies, landscapes and livelihoods in particular locations (Liverman & Vilas 2006: 357). In this vein, our case study provides a narrative of active resistance to the problems associated with neoliberal conservation for Garifuna communities impacted by the CCMPA, identifying new possibilities for co-management and localised economic development within a market approach to natural resource protection. While this case study does not necessarily offer a counter-narrative to past critiques of neoliberal conservation efforts, it does highlight the central importance of local social activism, and the relative or partial success that such mobilisation can bring about. Of significance as well, is that in this case, Garifuna social mobilisation was made possible through neoliberal globalisation, the expansion of transnational networks, and adoption of international discourses on user rights, participation, good governance, and local ownership, which have developed alongside neoliberalism (see also Hale 2005; Anderson 2009: 141–159).

As this case study will illustrate, the failures of the CCMPA's initial management plan (2004–2009) coincided with the rise of indigenous rights, which provided a platform for increased recognition of indigenous ecological knowledge and indigenous rights to self-determination. The coalescence of the management plan's failures and the rise of Garifuna indigenous rights produced a dialogue, albeit tense, between local users, managing agencies, private interests, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and other stakeholders within the hybrid governance model, that eventually resulted in the formulation of a revised management plan that is more socioeconomically driven.

The original plan failed to achieve its stated socio-economic objectives because it was developed out of a preservationist model reacting to biological data collected by the Smithsonian Institute in 1992. This data highlighted substantial ecosystem damage and depletion of commercially important fish species

as a result of intensive industrial fishing during the 1980s. Although the plan incorporated this substantial ecological information, it gave little importance to the traditional economies provided to the local communities by the natural resources of the CCMPA. In fact, one of the key socio-economic objectives of the plan was to ‘diagnose the main economic activities’ of the CCMPA, illustrating the lack of understanding of the localised conditions by the managing agency (Andraka *et al.* 2004).

Additionally, although in essence the management responsibilities for the CCMPA follow a co-management arrangement (to be collaborative) between the managing agency, the Municipality of the Bay Islands and the Garifuna communities, in practice this arrangement allowed both the Municipality and the Garifuna to have a consultative role to merely fulfil the paper requirements of co-management. This lack of inclusion in management generated strong responses from the Garifuna communities. The managing agency unintentionally provided a platform for local protest action. Such exclusion and lack of stakeholder buy-in through effective participation has been well documented as a main cause of subsequent non-compliance and opposition by local user groups that have been displaced by management efforts (Pinkerton 1989; Pomeroy & Berkes 1997; Jentoft *et al.* 1998; Hoffman 2009).

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE GARIFUNA

The Garifuna are descendants of runaway African slaves, maroons, and native Amerindians (Carib and Arawakan) who were deported from the island of St. Vincent to the Central American coast in 1797. Honduras has the largest Garifuna population (estimated at approximately 250,000 or 2% of the country’s population), with 48 settlements stretching along the northern coastline and islands. Cultural practices stemming from West African and native Amerindian roots continue to be practiced in coastal communities including artisanal fishing, the cultivation of ‘yucca’, and ‘dugu’ religious practices such as shamanism and ancestor worship (for further description of such practices, see Kerns 1983; Foster 1987; Gonzalez 1988; Chernela 1991; Cayetano & Cayetano 1997).

Migration has long been a part of Garifuna society, beginning with seasonal migration in Central America in the 1800s and early 1900s, and expanding to include migration to the United States since the 1950s (Gonzalez 1988; England 2006). Many households have historically supplemented their income with some employment diversity in vending, construction, service, or as transnational wage labourers on fishing trawlers or fruit plantations. More recently, transnational economic and social ties extend broadly and deeply to connect many US cities to coastal communities (England 2006), and households within the MPA have become increasingly reliant on remittances.

Upon their arrival in present-day Honduras in the late eighteenth century, the Garifuna communities of Nueva Armenia, Rio Esteban, Sambo Creek, and Corozal, built temporary dwellings on some of the cays in the CCMPA

for overnight fishing excursions. Over time, two of these settlements, Chachahuate and East End, were transformed into permanent resident populations. These permanent settlements long preceded the establishment of the CMMPA, and have been significantly affected by its establishment, as management plan regulations have impacted their livelihood strategy of fishing for subsistence and trade. Permanent residents of Chachahuate and East End are the most affected as fishing is their principal means of subsistence and income. Garifuna from mainland communities also keep temporary residences in each of the communities, as well as on nearby cays. From these locales, mainlanders supplement their household incomes via fishing.

METHODS

This paper draws on data collected through archival research on the territorial history of the CCMPA, its governance model, coverage of contemporary Garifuna internet activism, and a series of mixed ethnographic methods in the CCMPA communities of Chachahuate, East End, Nueva Armenia (the mainland sister community to Chachahuate), Rio Esteban (the mainland sister community to East End), and to a lesser extent, Sambo Creek and the city of La Ceiba.

Ethnographic methods included household surveys, open-ended interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and archival research. Household surveys were tailored to collect basic demographic, household income, and occupational data, but a range of other topics were also included, such as one’s knowledge and interaction with resource governance structures, levels of resource conflict, and decision-making in resource management. Within the CCMPA, we surveyed every occupied household—20 (of 43) households in Chachahuate and 3 (of 22) in East End. Many residents of East End were away on extended fishing trips at the time of our survey; due to the small survey sample from East End, we limit our focus in this paper to Chachahuate as representing a permanent CCMPA settlement. Of the 20 households surveyed in Chachahuate, 65% of respondents were female, and 80% of respondents were of Garifuna ethnicity.

In the mainland communities of Nueva Armenia and Rio Esteban, household sampling was based on a systematic sampling of every fifth household for a total of 50 households in Nueva Armenia and 48 in Rio Esteban. The head of household (usually female) was surveyed wherever possible. Surveys generally took 45–60 minutes. In Nueva Armenia, 80% of respondents were young females (18–30), while 76% of household respondents in Rio Esteban were middle-aged females (41–50). In Rio Esteban, 80% of respondents were Garifuna, as compared to 67% in Nueva Armenia, reflecting a more ethnically homogenous community.

Qualitative interviews and observations supplemented survey data, to provide contextual understanding of the cultural meanings Garifuna residents attached to shifts in livelihood strategies. In-depth interviews and focus groups were conducted with community leaders including members of the Patronato (i.e., the local governing system in Garifuna communities),

individuals listed as participants in the development of the management plan, fishers within cooperatives, independent fishers, and tourism workers (e.g., boat operators, women who board ecotourists). Interview topics included occupational decision-making, the economic impacts of migration, social cohesiveness of the communities, and generational differences in relation to the pursuit of traditional livelihood strategies (e.g., fishing and agriculture). All community leaders were adults and elders (ages 41–78) and placed great value on community cohesiveness and traditional cultural practices.

Focus groups were conducted with fishers in each community. Separate focus groups were conducted with representatives of fishing cooperatives and individual fishers. Cooperative fishers were often of a similar social and economic standing in each community (i.e., higher than individual fishers), resulting from their connections with the CCMPA managing agency, and the networks that this relationship opened for international funding for fishing equipment from a Japanese-funding project called MODAPESCA³, housing from US AID, and transportation for Operation Wallacea tourists.

The data we draw upon in this paper was collected by the authors over three summers of field research (2005–2007) as lead social scientists for Operation Wallacea (Opwall), plus Brondo's independent research on indigenous land rights in Honduras. Opwall is a private conservation and scientific research organisation that runs biological and social science expedition projects designed to achieve specific wildlife conservation aims. The organisation sustains its research through fees paid by student researchers who wish to join their expeditions. Opwall invites natural and social scientists to carry out research in protected areas through an exchange relationship: the organisation provides access and logistical support, and the researchers provide training for students interested in exploring conservation issues from a social science perspective. Opwall expeditions to the Cayos Cochinos began in 2004. Brondo partnered with Opwall in 2005 while writing her Ph.D. dissertation, which provided the opportunity to return to the field sites of her doctoral research and update her knowledge of territorial struggles within the region. Bown has worked as a social scientist for Operation Wallacea throughout her Ph.D. work, which is co-funded by the organisation. Bown's study seeks to assess the effectiveness of the CCMPA's management plan's socio-economic objectives as an adaptive co-management regime for fisheries management and conservation. Over three field seasons, we directed a total of 12 student researchers working on senior honour's and master's theses. This data collection was in addition, yet complementary, to our research agendas. Each field season, we split our time across the various communities affected by the CCMPA, living in home stays.

NEOLIBERALISATION OF NATURE, AND LOSS OF GARIFUNA RESOURCE CONTROL

In the momentum created by the 1992 United Nations RIO Earth Summit, and justified on biodiversity grounds based

on past research by the Smithsonian Institute, a group of elite businessmen and politicians from Tegucigalpa (the capital city) created the HCRF, and pushed forward the protected area agenda in the CCMPA. The HCRF began operating under the governance structure of the Honduran Corporation for Forest Development (COHDEFOR or Corporación Hondureña de Desarrollo Forestal), which was created in 1974 to take over the sole management of nationalised forests. In 1993, COHDEFOR became responsible for all natural resources—terrestrial, freshwater, and marine—when Honduras' National System of Protected Areas (SINAPH or Sistema Nacional de Áreas Protegidas en Honduras) and the Department of Protected Areas and Wildlife (DAPVS or Departamento de Áreas Protegidas y Vida Silvestre) were both established.

The creation of SINAPH and DAPVS came at a time when Honduras was adopting a suite of neoliberal economic reforms to bolster its failing economy. Tourism was becoming a national development priority and the Honduran Tourism Institute (IHT) (originally established in the early 1970s⁴) became a stand-alone entity of public law in 1993 under decree No. 103-93 (Honduran National Congress 2010). The IHT's principle mandate became the promotion of national tourism policy, regulation and zoning of tourism areas, and strengthening of the private sector in order to contribute to the economic and social development of the country (Contreras-Hermosilla 2000; Honduran National Congress 2010). The IHT and SINAPH were tied together in the 1990s by a conservation agenda, with the IHT advising DAPVS on tourist visitation issues to protected areas (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2002).

In 1993, DAPVS was given institutional responsibility for the management (or delegation of management) of protected areas and the natural and cultural resources which reside in them, and the facilitation of environmental education on sustainable use of resources in and around protected areas (Vreugdenhil *et al.* 2002). This governance framework applied a sustainable development design, complete with legislation that backed the continued practice of traditional human activities within a buffer zone around all protected areas. It also promoted elements of co-management arrangements as detailed in the introduction section of this paper, coordinating and encouraging community participation in the management of protected areas alongside NGO partners. Yet, without the personnel and resources in government agencies to successfully manage the enlarged responsibility, management of natural resources was literally auctioned off to private enterprises and NGOs, diverting profits from natural resources away from local communities and toward elite and foreign interests. The local communities were required to produce a development programme for land acquisition but did not have the expertise necessary to create such proposals. This move created a platform for apparent sub-government level corruption, in that, the weak government policy enabled private interests to operate outside the legal framework, ignoring traditional user rights of the *de facto* inhabitants of agricultural and coastal lands (Contreras-Hermosilla 2000).⁵ Such actions created a climate

of uncertainty in which tenure rights are ignored, over-ruled, or altered without notice.

The Garifuna lived relatively autonomously in the CCMPA region in the period between Honduran independence and the emergence of the banana industry, occupying coastal and island territory with very little interference from the political and economic elite. Beginning in the 1950s, changes to the Honduran economy and corresponding population movements including the migration and resettlement of inland mestizos to the coast, altered their territorial control (Brondo 2010). In the 1980s, as coastal development opportunities shifted from bananas and agriculture to private investment in tourism and housing, the region's political and economic elite began to consolidate coastal landholdings. Correspondingly, the Honduran National Congress passed a series of neoliberal agrarian legislative acts that facilitated the privatisation of previously untitled communal lands and encouraged economic development via foreign investment opportunities. Lacking title to the majority of their ancestral territory, the Garifuna communities found themselves in a very precarious situation.

Two legislative acts were of particular consequence to the Cayos Cochinos settlements. First, the cays were re-zoned as urban land in 1992 under Decree 90/90, which re-classified all areas that the Ministry of Tourism designated to have tourism potential as urban land. Through Decree 90/90, foreigners became eligible to purchase coastal lands that were designated for tourism development. Previously, this land was protected under Article 107 of the Honduran Constitution which stipulates that only Honduran nationals could own land within 40 km of the coast. Second, the National Agrarian Institute (INA or Instituto Nacional Agrario) began a communal titling programme in 1993 to issue titles of *domino pleno* (definitive titles of ownership) to the 48 Garifuna communities; the majority of titles were delivered between 1993 and 2002. Problematically, the CMMPA territory had been privatised before the issuance of communal land titles.

There are two original landowning families within the CMMPA who have leased or sold portions of the islands to other parties. These parties include the HCRF, who currently own Cayo Menor, wealthy nationals and foreigners who use smaller cays for vacation spots, and a dive resort located on Cayo Mayor that is owned by US citizens. The original landowning families made a verbal agreement with the Garifuna communities, permitting them to remain on Chachahuat and Cayo Menor in East End as long as they did not extend their settlements. In 2001, East End, Chachahuat and Bolaños (Sambo Creek's fishing cay) were granted communal land titles by the INA. The original landowners contested the titles in court for five years based on the facts that, a) the Cayos Cochinos had been re-zoned as urban land in 1992 under Decree 90/90 and, b) the INA only has jurisdiction over rural land. Garifuna activists from the Fraternal Black Honduran Organization (OFRANEH or La Organización Fraternal Negra Hondureña), a grassroots organisation working to promote political and land rights of Garifuna communities brought the case to the IAHRC and in 2006, the Honduran Supreme Court ruled in favour of the

Garifuna communities, upholding the communal title (Brondo & Woods 2007: 7–9). Even so, the register of property at the municipality level neglected to inscribe and send the title to the community, because the alleged property owner continued to contest the legality of the title. This history of privatisation of territory that the Garifuna had occupied for more than a century prior to the first mainland families purchased or titled the islands and cays laid a foundational tension between the Garifuna population and Honduran mainlanders and foreign newcomers to the CCMPA. The preservationist management agenda further escalated these tensions from the creation of the CMMPA forward.

When Cayo Menor was sold to the HCRF in 1993, the Smithsonian negotiated a five-year contract to access the area and engage in conservation research. During this time, a moratorium was placed on fishing and a 24-hour Navy patrol and watch towers were established to enforce it. The Garifuna were implicitly (and at times explicitly) blamed for the environmental destruction that has since been linked to a long history of industrial fishing in the region (Anderson 2000: 225–226). Enforcement measures ranged from having equipment confiscated to arrest and injury by gunfire. In 1999, after over five years under the moratorium on fishing, successful mobilisation of national Garifuna organisations, and especially of OFRANEH, led to the lifting of the moratorium, and the Garifuna were permitted to return to subsistence fishing.

In 2003, the legislative decree 114-2003 re-designated the Cayos Cochinos as the only statutory Marine Protected Area in Honduras, and gave management responsibility for the area to the HCRF for the subsequent ten years (2004–2014). Once again, the Garifuna faced significant restrictions on their fishing activity. The 2004–2009 management plan (developed by the HCRF with assistance from the WWF) prohibited all commercial fishing activities within the MPA, and established restrictions on artisanal fishing and development activities as part of the conservation effort. Management was hierarchical, top-down for preservationist purposes, and conservation-driven. The Navy water patrols that began when the MPA was established in 1993 continued, and foot patrols of cay communities were added.

Alongside the development of the management plan were discussions over the introduction of entrance fees for visitors to the MPA. The tourist entrance taxes were developed with the intention of improving tourism opportunities both for the tourists (by ensuring conservation of the area) and for those who live within the MPA. We reviewed the meeting minutes and legislation proceedings from the October 14, 2004 meeting at the Secretaria de Estado en los Despachos de Recursos that led to the establishment of the park fees. The minutes stated:

It is very important for the success of the MPA that the communities that live within it and the influenced zones receive benefits from the conservation of the MPA. Promoting tourism as an economic alternative for the

communities is a good opportunity to share with local communities in the management and conservation of the MPA. With the proposal to promote community tourism initiatives, the foreign tourists that visit the MPA through tour operators from the communities within the MPA and its zone of influence, pay a reduced rate. (Secretaria de Estado en los Despachos de Recursos 2004) [authors' translation from Spanish]

According to the documents detailing the development of this tax, the group considered a number of items including: 1) the importance of Legislative Decree 114-2003, which assured the operating capacity and maintenance of the Marine Protected Area; 2) to protect and develop the tourism sector in agreement with the management plan; 3) to promote tourism opportunities for local communities; 4) to manage and control the impact of tourism; 5) to facilitate access of the national community to the MPA with education and recreation fines; 6) to implement the success of the tariff with a support base; and, 7) to promote self-sufficiency in the management of the MPA and the local economy (Secretaria de Estado en los Despachos de Recursos 2004).

The same document made note of the actors present at this meeting. Not one individual present represented the Garifuna community. Without Garifuna consultation, the tourist tax was passed and the collection of entrance fees began in January 2005. The entrance fee to the park has created controversy since its inception because the Garifuna communities believed that the money generated was intended to be directed towards them via alternative livelihood options, a sound conclusion based on the criteria listed in the documents.

However, the use of the money is at the discretion of the HCRF. The following two quotes are from a top official from the HCRF, responding to the same question about how the entrance fees were established and how the money would be spent—posed to him once in 2005 and then again in 2006.

His 2005 statement:

It should help guarantee the sustainability of the area. And it should also be used to help develop the communities, and by law it has to ... Due to the 2003 law, the money we collected cannot be touched until a national committee makes a decision as to where to invest it, assuring conservation of the area. We will present a list of projects and their associated budgets to the government, as to how we think the money should be used. [author emphasis added]

His 2006 statement:

In 2003, a new law for protected areas was passed...creating an entrance fee that would be used for the conservation of the protected area... The law states that the HCRF would collect the money and use it for conservation. Community development was not part of the law. The money was to

be spent on fuel costs, food for the demarcation of the protected area...navy patrol, [and] maintenance of the buoy for the mooring sites. [author emphasis added]

In the 2006 statement, note the removal of the HCRF's agency for determining how the money should be spent from the 2005 statement. In 2005, the official discusses the value of the fees to the communities, which appeared in written documentation leading to their establishment. In 2006, he simply notes that the HCRF is unable to use the money for community development, suggesting they would if they could, but the 2003 law forbids this. The HCRF's lobbying for the 2003 legislation goes unrecognised.

CLASSIC PATTERNS OF A PRESERVATIONIST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

This section briefly summarises some of the problems that emerged out of the 2004–2009 CCMPA management plan. The observations we make here are consistent with patterns found in the co-management literature (Pinkerton 1989; Pomeroy & Berkes 1997; Hoffman 2009), but in this case were fuelled by the distrust the Garifuna population had of outside resource managers, due to the long-standing territorial struggles within the region. In order to understand some of the complexities in implementing the management plan in the Cayos Cochinos, a description of the variation among the MPA-reliant Garifuna communities is in order.

Chachahuate occupies the largest of the cays in CCMPA. There are approximately 43 households with a maximum population of 200 during the peak fishing season, and an average resident population of 90 people. There is some tourism development with USAID and WWF sponsorship of a restaurant and cabanas, and the island is advertised in the national tourism guide 'Honduras Tips'. Of the 20 households surveyed in Chachahuate, 80% of households reported fishing as their primary source of income, but all also reported additional activities to supplement this seasonal activity; 80% of households were engaged in two or more occupations for income (typically combining fishing with tourism or construction⁶).

East End is a settlement of approximately 22 permanent residents living in 19 households on the north side of Cayo Menor. The population peaks at about 90 during the fishing season (April–September). East End has the only primary school available to CCMPA children, and some tourism development (i.e., cabanas and a communal restaurant funded by the USAID and WWF in 2007–2008, which now run as a community cooperative).

The mainland communities of Nueva Armenia, Rio Esteban, Sambo Creek and Corozal demonstrate a stark contrast to the island communities in terms of livelihood occupational structure and sources of income. Nueva Armenia (sister community to Chachahuate) is a relatively large Garifuna settlement on the north coast mainland, approximately 40 km from La Ceiba. The community has an estimated 3,000

inhabitants dispersed into distinct neighbourhoods, with two schools up to secondary level, a medical centre, several churches and a fish freezing plant (although this has not been operational since 2005). There is a moderate level of tourism with two hotels and three restaurants, and organised boat trips out to the Cayos Cochinos. The community is also used as the main transportation hub by some tourists (primarily backpackers and Opwall students and researchers) wishing to travel to the CCMPA.

Of the 50 households surveyed in Nueva Armenia, only 12% were engaged in traditional fishing activities as their primary source of income. Several men participate in a fishing cooperative that is strongly supported by and well-connected to the HCRF. Sixty-six percent of households reported non-traditional occupations as their main income source (38% remittances, 28% construction). This reflects the greater range of employment opportunities available on the mainland, and especially for Nueva Armenia which has greater proximity to La Ceiba.

Rio Esteban is the furthest CCMPA community from La Ceiba, located approximately 12 nautical miles from the CCMPA, and is the least accessible to outside visitors. Access requires an off-road vehicle to navigate through a river bed during the dry season, and during the wet season the river bed is prone to flooding, preventing all access to or from the community. Similar to Nueva Armenia, of the 48 households we surveyed, only 10% of households relied on traditional fishing activities as their main source of income. Sixty-two percent of households were employed in non-traditional occupations (42% relied on remittances, 12% engaged in construction, and 8% were mechanics). While a substantial number of households are involved in non-traditional livelihood activities, this does not mean that alternative forms of employment are plentiful. Rather, Rio Esteban households have become increasingly reliant on remittances supplied by migration out of the community, in order to provide a household income. Until its ban in 2004, a substantial number of residents were engaged in scuba fishing for Spiny Caribbean lobster (*Panulirus argus*). Today, a handful of community members are still illegally involved in this trade.

The two other mainland communities, Sambo Creek and Corozal, have property rights to small cays within the CCMPA as temporary dwellings for fishermen during overnight fishing trips. These communities are the closest to La Ceiba and residents have considerably more employment opportunities available to them, including wage labour in the expanding coastal tourism industry. Several restaurants and hotels are spread along the beachfront outside of the settlements, there is a newly built zip wire facility in the adjacent rainforest, and retired fishers offer boat trips out to the Cayos Cochinos from the communities.

In what follows, we draw upon our survey data, individual and focus group interviews and data, to assess the varied impact of the management plan regulations on CCMPA-reliant communities. There was a general consensus across all communities that fishing practices were greatly affected by the

management plan. Moreover, recovery and expansion of this traditional livelihood strategy has been further threatened by migration and lack of interest by the youth to participate in Garifuna traditions.

The 2004–2009 management plan explicitly prioritised conservation over socioeconomic well-being. Following the protected area model, there was no acknowledgement that human-environment interactions could be potential conservation measures (Brockington 2002; Igoe 2003; Hutton *et al.* 2005). Consistent with the neoliberal development model, human-environment relationships were restructured, such that they generated capital in manners consistent with protective legislation. Ecotourism and the informal economy thus became the only areas where the local population could become incorporated, neglecting the Garifuna's long history of managing local resources.

The subprogrammes (Table 1) included: 1) educational promotion of the notion of 'without a trace' tourism (Objective 4); 2) building relationships with universities for research (Objectives 4 and 6); and, 3) providing local incentives and direct benefits to the local population through tourism promotion, capacity-building for tour guides, logistical support, and research assistance (Objective 8). Significantly, all of these proposals presupposed that local people would want to and are able to move from a traditional fishing economy to ecotourism.

The hospitality-type tourism activity offered in the CCMPA has been supported through a number of recent developments. Opwall provides home-stay opportunities for over 200 people per week for an eight-week period during the summer months, supporting the tourism industry in Nueva Armenia in 2006–2007, but these opportunities were subsequently relocated to Rio Esteban (2008–2009). Current home-stay opportunities outside of the Opwall season are somewhat limited. In 2007, the HCRF secured funding from the WWF to build a 'hotel' to house overnight visitors to the CCMPA. The WWF and USAID also funded the development of a communal restaurant, cabanas to house overnight visitors, and a tourism centre on East End in 2008. These developments outwardly benefit the economic growth of the communities, but there is uneven internal distribution of wealth between community members, reflecting power hierarchies within each community. This is because cooperative members had been identified by the HCRF early on as those most dependent on the CCMPA for income, and as a result have received focused attention to reduce the impacts of the management plan. Funding for tourism initiatives was only made available to the fishing cooperatives.

Similarly, in the late 1990s, a number of fishers in cooperatives within the Department of Atlántida received donated boats from MODAPESCA, the Japanese government funded programme mentioned earlier. Many of these cooperative members have since diversified into tourism-related activities and are using their fishing boats to transport tourists out to the Cayos Cochinos. The fishing cooperative members' ability to capitalise on tourism opportunities has created tension and social divisions within some of the communities. In Nueva

Table 1
Conservation objectives and the role of people in resource management

Conservation Objective*		Role of People
1	To conserve the ecosystems of the archipelago of the Cayos Cochinos as coral reefs representative of the Caribbean Sea and the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef, including marine ecosystems, tropical forests, mangrove swamps, sandy beaches, rocky beaches, and the species that inhabit them.	Absent.
2	To maintain examples of natural communities, ecosystem s, landscape, and geography to protect the unique diversity of the region, and especially to assure the presence of local species in environmental management.	Absent.
3	To conserve genetic material as elements of their natural environments, avoiding loss of species in the MPA, especially in areas that are of importance to sport fishing, artisanal and scientific fishing, and industrial fishing that is practiced outside of the area.	Participation in conservation unacknowledged, although effects of conservation noted as significance to fishers. Note that sport fishing is positioned first, ahead of artisanal fishing.
4	To promote means and opportunities for education and research to monitor ecological processes and cultural presence.	Outward-focused, expert driven educational opportunities. Participatory, community-based research not included within this objective.
5	To provide opportunities for recreation and low impact ecotourism within limits of acceptable change, and use of natural resources in a manner that serves an ecotourism model that is in harmony with the natural and cultural characteristics of the protected area.	Tourist-focused, not locally focused.
6	To generate information to demonstrate the effects and impacts of the MPA on the ecological balance within its area of influence, with the objective of providing supporting evidence for the management plan decisions.	Expert-driven research in support of management plan. (Linked to Objective 4).
7	To permit normal development of customs and way of life of the ethnic groups living within the MPA, respecting their traditions and ecological knowledge, and all the heritage that contributes to the execution of new development initiatives for these groups, within the law (decree 114-2003 regarding protected area management).	Garifuna cultural practices protected, but only in so far as they do not contradict the protected area legislation.
8	To develop mechanisms to incorporate the population located within the MPA and its area of influence (and other relevant actors) such that they contribute towards a dynamic of sustainable development.	Unspecified support for local population to become involved in sustainable activities within the MPA.

*Conservation objectives from Andraka *et al.* 2004: 36. [authors' translation from Spanish]

Armenia, these men have become known as ‘los milionarios’ (the millionaires).

Access to funding opportunities for fishing and tourism-related activities presents significant inequality both within and between communities. In addition to the attention cooperative members received from the HCRF, COHDEFOR also restricted funding to cooperative members, who receive legal recognition from COHDEFOR as a microenterprise. Pre-existing community groups have thus benefitted from projects such as MODAPESCA, while those fishers working as individuals have been excluded. This is in part due to their lack of interest to work as part of a group, but also the result of a social power hierarchy within the communities preventing individuals from accessing the information necessary to apply for funds. Several individual fishers from Nueva Armenia, who were generally younger men aged 18–30, shared that they were not made aware of the benefits of forming cooperatives, and consequently held deeply antagonistic opinions of both the HCRF and cooperative fishers within their own community. These young fishers believed that they were deliberately excluded from partaking in the development and implementation of the management plan, and reported that their economic situations worsened as a result of the management plan regulations. While the HCRF encouraged the development of alternative income sources in Nueva Armenia, individual

fishermen saw these benefits going primarily to cooperative members and their families, and not being evenly distributed throughout the community.

Additionally, the vast majority of funds allocated for artisanal fishers (by MODAPESCA, PROCORREDOR⁷, World Bank) have been made available only to those communities within the Department of Atlántida because this contains the majority of fishing communities on the north coast of Honduras. In the case of the CCMPA, this restriction places an immediate disadvantage on the fishers of Rio Esteban, who reside in the Department of Colón. Regardless of the fact that Rio Esteban is considered by the HCRF and DIGEPSCA to be the most highly organised community with two functioning fishing cooperatives, it receives the least financial assistance because of its location.

Another problem with the 2004–2009 management plan was a deficient community participation process. The economic and ecological destruction caused by Hurricane Mitch in 1998 had created a change in the governance structure of Honduras. Key priorities of the new development agenda included improved high level governance, anti-corruption measures and improved transparency. One of the methods employed to improve national development was the introduction of a participatory process to the governance regime. This openness to participation had been implemented throughout all

government agencies, including a reform of COHDEFOR and its management structure, which was supposed to have trickled down through the HCRF in managing the CMMPA. Yet classic patterns of selective inclusion of partial and/or compromised individuals, lack of women's involvement, and treatment of the 'Garifuna community' as a homogenous entity were observed (see also Cernea 1991; Ferguson 1994; Guijt & Shah 1998; Nelson & Wright 2000; Stonich 2000; Cooke & Kothari 2001; Mosse 2004, 2005). As noted above, each of the five MPA-reliant communities have distinct livelihoods strategies, and there is significant variation in reliance on fishing, presence of tourism, receipt of remittances, quality of basic infrastructure, and feasibility and interest in alternative livelihood strategies. Each community also has its own local governing system (i.e., Patronato) in place to represent community interests. These issues were not recognised in selecting representatives of the Garifuna community to help formulate the management plan. Those who were involved in the process were hand-picked by the HCRF and heavily weighted towards members of mainland fishing cooperatives.

Participation in resource management remained a problem throughout the 2004–2009 time period, because the HCRF did not draw adequately upon the strong networks of formal and informal groups and organisations, and instead relied on the communication of management plan regulations to formal groups typically dominated by cooperative fishers. Within Garifuna communities, at the formal level, decisions are made collectively during community meetings led by the Patronato. Substantial informal networks exist alongside formal governing structures allowing for wide dissemination of information. The majority of residents questioned during household surveys reported an egalitarian and open information gathering and awareness process (Chachahuate 65%; Rio Esteban 53%; Nueva Armenia 44%). However, these same individuals also reported that meetings concerning specific environmental issues—such as the HCRF's informational meetings on fishing regulations—were only held with a select and invited set of participants, usually the fishing cooperatives. The President of Patronato from one of the mainland communities discussed his frustration with this process, when asked about the relationship between his community and the HCRF:

Not many people have any relationship with the Foundation [local reference to the HCRF]. When decisions are made concerning the fishers, the only contact is between the Foundation and Celeo [a pseudonym for the head of their fisher cooperative]. The rest of the fishers are rarely consulted when decisions are made. The Foundation only deals with Celeo, as the fishermen are working for their own interests and do not see the need to get the Patronato involved, even though my position is higher than Don Celeo... (2006).

Lack of transparency by management elites—a common occurrence documented in the conservation management

literature (e.g., Cochrane 2001; Mikalsen & Jentoft 2001; Kaplan & McCay 2004)—has caused significant distrust of the HCRF, especially with regard to financial expenditures. The MPA tourist tax that was implemented in 2004 has been a constant source of tension because the communities believed they would receive a percentage of the revenue. René (a pseudonym), a 29-year-old fisher from Chachahuate reflected:

The Foundation collects 10 USD from each tourist. Where does it go? They seem to take money and show the tourists Cayo Menor (location of HCRF research station) and Cayo Mayor (location of foreign-owned Plantation Beach Resort), but not Chachahuate. It would be far better if we collected the 10 USD from the tourists when they arrive on the island, instead of the Foundation taking it on behalf of us... If the Foundation gave us the money, we would plant trees on the island, and build a communal kitchen, and buy rakes to clean the beaches. But the Foundation does not contact us... (2006).

The above comments suggested that MPA residents might use the tourist taxes to invest in their island in ways that would improve tourists' experiences. Residents of the MPA communities felt that the intended uses of entrance fee money were not clearly communicated to them, and therefore, the majority of community members perceived the HCRF personnel as dishonest and to be 'lining their own pockets'. As a result of these lines of communication failing (or having already failed), and the propensity of the HCRF to communicate solely with members of the fishing cooperatives, the wider community had a disincentive to participate in environmental protection.

GARIFUNA RESISTANCE, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR GOVERNANCE

In October 2003, OFRANEH submitted a petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) alleging that the State of Honduras is responsible for violating the rights of the Garifuna community of the Cayos Cochinos. Specifically, OFRANEH claimed that the rights enshrined in Article 1 (the obligation to respect the rights and freedoms of all persons without discrimination), Article 8 (the right to a fair trial), Article 21 (the right to property), and Article 25 (the right to judicial protection) of the Convention were violated (IACHR, basic documents, 2009).

The petition states that:

OFRANEH claims these violations arose when, with the stated aim of protecting the natural resources, found on the cays and the maritime waters surrounding them, the Government of Honduras used legal provisions and public force to promote the establishment of environmental protection organizations. However, since these organizations' programs were not drawn up with

any consideration toward those who have traditionally inhabited the cays, they have led to the displacement of members of the Garifuna communities, who need to secure their means of subsistence from the land of the cays (farming and gathering) and from the surrounding waters (fishing and collecting seafood). This has consequently endangered those communities' survival. The petitioner claims that the situation has worsened with the uncertainty that has arisen regarding the challenged title deeds to three plots of land in Cayos Cochinos, with the shortcomings in the investigations into one person's disappearance, with the shooting of another individual, and with the abandoning on the high seas of two people, all of whom were members of the cays' Garifuna communities. (Inter-American Commission on Human Rights 2007) [author emphasis added].

Within the petition, OFRANEH details the Garifuna's historical control over the territories of the current-day MPA and reliance on the habitat for economic, subsistence and religious purposes. Their case makes clear the relationship between the maintenance of cultural traditions and access to traditional territories, which is protected and affirmed through the 1989 Convention (No. 169) Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries of the International Labour Organization (commonly referred to as ILO 169), and more recently the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by the United Nations in September 2007.⁸

OFRANEH's petition to IACHR details the lack of participation in the planning of the 'environmental protection' of the CCMPA resources, and the displacement of, and threat to, the communities' cultural survival, that have resulted from the state's use of legal force to adopt a neoliberal conservation agenda, that brought external private environmental management agencies into the CCMPA. The state's response was to argue that the petition was inadmissible because domestic remedies had yet to be exhausted. The Commission ruled it admissible in July 2007, and the case currently awaits a hearing.

At the national level, OFRANEH made a series of demands on behalf of the Cayos Cochinos Garifuna community, including 1) recognition of the Garifuna's land rights; 2) revision of the management plan with complete and informed participation of the various Garifuna communities in the area; 3) demilitarisation; and 4) a redesign of security measures, with Garifuna participation.

At the local level, the Garifuna protested against the filming of the Reality Show mentioned in the opening of this paper. In July 2007, representatives from each affected community (except Sambo Creek) met at the home of the head of the fishing cooperative in Nueva Armenia. Eleven fishers from fishing cooperatives were present to act as representatives of their respective communities; one of the authors (Bown) was present. The meeting was chaired by Tony Ives, the director of Grupo de Apoyo al Desarrollo, a NGO focused on education, conservation, and sustainable economic development along the

north coast. During the meeting the group drafted a letter of negotiation ('carta de negociacion') demanding compensation from the HCRF over the filming of the Reality Show. The meeting was dominated by two women, one from a traditional lobster fishing family in Rio Esteban, and the other a social activist from Nueva Armenia (not a fisher). Both of these women presented the reasons why the filming of the Reality Show was unacceptable for all communities, and instigated the majority of the demands written in the letter.⁹ Consensual agreement of the contents of the letter was reached between all the fishers present.

The resultant petition reminded the HCRF that the Garifuna who live within the region are the 'owners of the local resources, and the Foundation is only the manager of them'. Of particular concern was that the contract with Magnolia did not include any compensation to the Garifuna, and blatantly violated MPA regulations by allowing contestants fishing access to the reserve. The group's specific demands included: transparency of the contract between the HCRF and the Reality Show; investment in tourism-related training and infrastructure; the creation of a small loan programme to encourage local entrepreneurship; co-ownership of MPA tourism developments; employment of locals for services provided to the Reality Show; respect for human rights; replacement of the current Reality Show negotiating committee with one that included members of the local community; and, assurance that the environmental impact caused by the Reality Show is minimal.

Local-national-global networks converged in this struggle on February 14, 2008 when a public bulletin was circulated among human rights networks, ignited by a letter/call for help authored by a 73-year old fisher from Chachahuate. The letter, entitled 'The Right to Food and the Lie of Conservation' describes the HCRF's prohibition of Garifuna on Cayo Paloma, a place the fishers from Chachahuate had traditionally obtained fishing bait; the silence of the HRCF on the effect of sedimentation and global warming on the reefs, while they continue to permit foreign groups (e.g., Opwall researchers, game show contestants, ecotourists), to visit the protected area at the same time that the Garifuna suffer from 'the armed repression' of the Navy patrolling the MPA. The letter was circulated with a call for action from FoodFirst International and Action Network Honduras, an international human rights organisation that presses for the realisation of the right to food, asking supporters to send letters to the President of Honduras.

The call for action added additional key details and language associated with their protests, including 1) the HCRF's facilitation of 'the filming of 'reality shows' for Colombian, Spanish, and Italian businesses in places where the Garifuna, the historic inhabitants of the Cayos Cochinos, are now prohibited'; 2) specific mention of Enrique Morales Alegria, the President of the HCRF's economic interests in the conservation agenda, noting that 'a businessman from San Pedro Sula, temporarily received this area to protect it, not to prompt massive tourism and damage the ecosystem that supposedly is under its protection'; and, 3) a call to supporters

to remind the State of Honduras that ‘it should not be forgotten that the owners of this paradise are all Hondurans, and especially the communities that have historically inhabited the area’ (FoodFirst International and Action Network Honduras 2008).

Concerns over the basic human right to food and the usurpation of traditional resource management strategies by outside environmental organisations were broadly shared amongst CCMPA residents, and particularly among males from Chachahuat. Raul’s (a pseudonym) comments (2006) are illustrative:

I would like the Foundation to become more understanding of our position. I understand that lobster is prohibited, but they must realize that we need it to feed our kids. If they catch us, they take our boats and kit. They need to stop being prejudiced toward our community. If one of our community members gets ill, we will catch lobster to pay for help on the mainland. That is life....One part of the management is being protective of the resources, and I believe our way of fishing does that. We use natural ways of fishing, using nets and minimal engine use. So our methods are fine for the environment. It is the big boats that come in bringing 3000 lobster trays per boat, whereas our community doesn’t even use 1000 in the whole season (April to August).

The sense of ownership—and protection—of the marine resources of the CCMPA by the Garifuna community became adversely affected by the introduction of a top-down management approach that transformed a community-based resource management regime to a privatised and commodified environmental protection system. Captured in Don Buelto’s statements about the contradictory practices of the HRCF (i.e., the lack of dialogue with the community over the impacts of global warming while restricting Garifuna fishing, and the permission of foreign visitors to the cays while denying the Garifuna access to the area) was the lack of trust in the CCMPA managing agency (the HRCF) and disapproval of its capital-driven environmental protection. The effect was that the Garifuna’s sense of environmental protection became misaligned with management plan regulations, even when those regulations may be necessary for the health of the resources (e.g., no-take zones and closed seasons). This disengagement with the environment was exacerbated by the loss of responsibility for natural resources since the introduction of the management plan. Without a sense of involvement in the decision-making process, and the enforcement of those decisions, both the fishers and wider community felt that the environment was no longer theirs to maintain. Patronato priorities turned towards more immediate social needs including healthcare, education and provision of basic services, and setting new long-term visions to generate economic stability from non-traditional activities such as construction, mechanics, and tourism.

What occurred in the CCMPA in its first phase of

management—due to weak state governance and unfostered community participation—is that businesses and NGOs obtained control over the local resources, including monitoring and enforcement. A neoliberal tourism agenda was interpreted in this instance as a mechanism by which to provide medium-term economic sustainability for the managing agency, by allowing an elitist foreign tourism activity to use the CCMPA and its resources. This removed both ownership and responsibility from the state and the local communities, resulting in a situation where conservation efforts became undermined. In essence, neoliberalisation of nature re-regulated and assigned new values to the CCMPA’s natural resources, making them available to national and international elites while denying the Garifuna their traditional access, despite their historical presence.

Yet the other side of neoliberalism includes the spaces opened for resistance through the emergence of ‘neoliberal multiculturalism’. The label ‘neoliberal multiculturalism’ was coined by Hale (2005: 13) to refer to ‘an emergent regime of governance that shapes, delimits, and produces cultural difference rather than suppressing it’. Hale (2005: 13) argues that national elites have embraced ethnic rights at the encouragement of multilateral institutions, defining them carefully within politics and programmes to not challenge the neoliberal paradigm of progress. While cultural rights might be defined in ways consistent with elite development interests, the discourses inserted on participation can be picked up and used to articulate a counter argument. Anderson’s (2009: 138–151) analysis of Garifuna activism against the World Bank’s 2004 Proyecto de Administración de Tierras de Honduras (PATH) programme, offers an excellent example of how Garifuna activists from OFRANEH turned the World Bank’s emphasis on ‘participation’ back on them, leveraging their concerns to debunk the PATH programme. In the Cayos Cochinos, we are witnessing a similar strategy. Activists are turning the promises of good governance, environmental stewardship, and local participation back onto the HRCF and WWF to resist their original management plan and advocate for a revision.

CONCLUSION

In their introduction to a special issue on neoliberal conservation in *Conservation and Society*, Igoe & Brockington (2007: 447) called for more grounded studies of neoliberal conservation, while setting up the challenge for local populations like the Garifuna to construct a path within the neoliberal development context. We asked ourselves what cultural (re)configurations are possible within a neoliberal development model, that could enable the Garifuna to recover their right to self-determination and control over their economic development within their communities? How might the CCMPA management be renegotiated to become more socioeconomically sustainable? The 2007 local-global protests by fishers in the MPA and national Garifuna activists offer an example of potential reconfigurations of resource control under neoliberal models. Following these actions—

and other smaller-scale dissent vocalised to the HCRF by Garifuna actors, NGOs, and researchers working with the Garifuna population—the management plan was restructured for the second phase of management to tip the scales more in favour of a balance between conservation and socioeconomic objectives. The 2008–2013 management plan¹⁰ is more socio-economically driven, including a smaller no-take fishing zone, and fewer temporally closed areas. Although the re-zoning of the protected area coincides with a five-year ecological dataset to suggest the recovery of specific stocks within the MPA, the process of revising the management plan was dominated by social activism by the Garifuna communities. Officials from the HCRF admitted that the old version of the management plan was ‘based in science and expert knowledge’, but that the new version is ‘based in cultural, local knowledge, with more weight... given to ancestral and community knowledge’. The Garifuna protest against the Reality Show also led to its unprecedented inclusion within the new management plan, with the communities dictating where and when the filming may occur. If this plan is implemented fully, it might lead to rapprochement between Garifuna rights and tourist development, falling more in line with a hybrid governance model that distributes equitable responsibility for conservation and ecotourism development among all CCMPA stakeholders. Yet the verdict is out.

As Büscher (2008) notes, while positive conservation-development models are possible, they are rarely stable. The degree to which Garifuna voices are indeed equitably incorporated under the current decentralised governance model must be further examined, and if proven successful, the newly emerging avenues for local participation need to be better understood and mined for best practices. Our concern is that the hybrid environmental governance models which emerge under neoliberalism result in the establishment of new lines of institutionalised authority (Lemos & Agrawal 2006: 304). In the Cayos Cochinos, the HCRF, as the NGO representing civil society, has become the institutionalised environmental management authority. The primary user group—the Garifuna—now must integrate into this newly legitimised environmental governance model represented by the private-public-private partnership of the HCRF, its international funding agencies, and the Honduran state. The Garifuna local protest that developed as a result of the negative effects of neoliberalism may well have raised the visibility of Garifuna concerns, opened channels for communication, and improved the distribution of the benefits of ecotourism projects and HCRF contracts, but the end result was assimilation into protected area management. Because our 2004–2009 evaluation found that Garifuna participation was limited to a minority group of community elites, we remain sceptical as to whether history will repeat itself under the new management plan.

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Notes

1. Territorialisation is defined as the marking of territories “within states for the purposes of controlling people and resources” (Igoe & Brockington 2007: 437).
2. Büscher & Dressler (2007) argue that this desire to become competitive within the global tourism market creates an urgency to develop protected areas.
3. MODAPESCA is a Japanese project investing in the artisanal fishery along the north coast of Honduras, which has been administered by the Honduran Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture (DIGEPESCA or La Dirección General de Pesca y Acuicultura) since 1998.
4. The IHT had originally been promoted under the Tourism Promotion Act (*Ley de Fomento del Turismo*) of 1962, but its direction and budget fell under Ricardo Zúñiga Augustinus, a close political ally backing the coup of 1963 that put Colonel López Arellano in power. During the civilian elected administration of Ramón Ernesto Cruz (1971–1972), the IHT took a new path with its first Director, Jacobo Goldstein, who maintained charge of the institution until 1971. Under Goldstein, the IHT favored Black Honduran culture, evidenced by the financing of the Festival de Danzas Garifuna en La Ceiba during the city's Carnaval (el Gran Carnaval de la Feria Isidra) in 1972 (Euraque 2004: 238–239). With the coup of 1972, and subsequent military governments, national development visions became aligned with capitalistic endeavours, and the IHT was restructured under the Ministry of Culture when it was established in 1975 (Euraque 2004: 238–239). Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the military continued to exert its influence in political and economic matters, and the current generation of neoliberal policies.
5. Corruption and a weak governance system permeated all state-centred enterprises in Honduras during the 1990s, resulting in a legacy of stakeholder disputes, unrealistic development strategies, and a climate of mistrust among local users.
6. Tourism has brought increased employment in construction, including hotel facilities, rental units, and other tourism infrastructure.
7. PROCORREDOR is the Project for Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and Watershed in the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor in the Honduran Atlantic. PROCORREDOR is part of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Honduras (SERNA or Secretaría de Recursos Naturales y Ambiente).
8. Honduras became a signatory of ILO 169 in 1994, ratifying it into law and creating a legal mechanism through which the Garifuna could make claims to both currently and traditionally occupied territory, as well as officially declared the state's role in securing land rights for

the Garifuna, and ensuring traditional law and rights be protected. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognises a wide range of basic human rights and freedoms, including the right to unrestricted self-determination, and an inalienable collective right to the ownership, use and control of lands, territories and other natural resources. Like ILO 169, the Declaration also provides for fair and mutually acceptable procedures to resolve conflicts between indigenous peoples and the state (United Nations 2007). The Declaration was adopted on July 24, 2007, three months after the IACHR petition was deemed admissible by the commission, and four years after it was submitted to the IACHR (on October 20, 2003). As such, the Declaration is not invoked within the petition itself, although it will now serve as another vehicle for the Garifuna to contest the human rights abuses that have occurred within the CCMPA.

9. It is not surprising that women were at the head of this local movement; the centrality of women in Garifuna activism has been noted in a number of other publications. See for example: Thorne 2004; Safa 2005, 2008; Brondo 2007.
10. Notably, the next phase of the CCMPA management should have come out under a 2009–2014 plan, but the plan was rolled out a year early, as the situation was extremely tense between the local population and the managing agency.

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