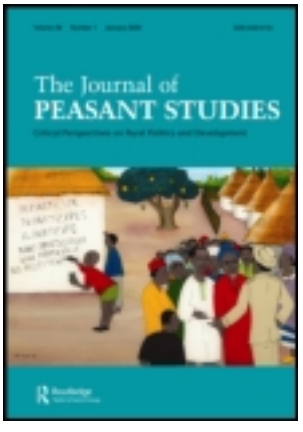

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Conservation practice as primitive accumulation

Alice B. Kelly

Protected areas appear to be examples of Marx's primitive accumulation, complete with acts of enclosure, dispossession, dissolution of the commons and accumulation. There are limits to these parallels, however. Though primitive accumulation generally involves the enclosure of a commons in favor of private property, protected areas generally create public, not private property. Protected areas that limit extraction are not being commodified, but are being taken out of the market. This paper shows that arguments against the parallels between primitive accumulation and the creation of protected areas may be confounded by the realities of conservation practice. The violent acts of enclosure and dispossession related to the creation of protected areas may lead to private benefit, and expand the conditions under which capitalist production can expand and continue. I show the mechanisms by which enclosure and dispossession take place, the consequences of these actions, as well as the acts of resistance against them.

Keywords: protected areas; primitive accumulation; conservation practice; enclosure

The number of national parks and protected areas continues to rise exponentially, particularly in the developing world. Despite heavy critiques of these conservation measures by scholars interested in the social impacts of protected areas (e.g. Neumann 1998, Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau 2006, Brockington *et al*. 2008), these exclusionary conservation interventions continue to be touted by multinational NGOs, national governments and conservation biologists as unequivocally good (e.g. Terborgh and van Schaik 2002, Conservation International 2010, World Wildlife Fund 2010). In trying to understand the persistence of these conservation measures, scholars have begun to reveal the economic benefits of protected areas, linking conservation with broader capitalist projects (e.g. Garland 2008, Li 2008, *Antipode*, 42(3), 2010). Building on these contributions, I believe that it is important to use Marx's concept of primitive accumulation to expose the underlying economic drivers of protected area creation that may be more obscure than those already studied by the scholars mentioned above. I argue that we must examine how protected area creation is a particular form of primitive accumulation that involves both enclosure and dispossession of land and natural resources. Using primitive accumulation as a lens of analysis, I hope to show how protected areas create and

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reproduce the means of capitalist production and, through neoliberal conservation practices, are able to become capital themselves in the form of environmental services, spectacles, and genetic storehouses. I will show that the creation and maintenance of these areas is a violent, ongoing process that changes not only economic relations, but social and environmental relations as well.

Though there is an enormous body of literature in peasant and agrarian studies that concerns itself with the development of capitalism via primitive accumulation and another large body of literature concerning the interactions between parks and people, there are relatively few studies that bring primitive accumulation into conversation with the creation of protected areas and other exclusionary modes of conservation (c.f. Whitehead 2002 or Buscher 2009). Links have been drawn between protected area creation and acts of enclosure (e.g. Peluso 1993, Brockington 2002, Neumann 2004), while at the same time the connections between conservation practice and capitalism have been well documented (e.g. Adams 2004, Chapin 2004, Dowie 2009, Brockington and Duffy 2010). Examining protected area creation as a form of primitive accumulation will allow a better understanding of the connection between protected areas, enclosure and capitalist production and may extend our understanding of the land question and the global land grab.

Engaging with the land question, which deals with the organization of, rights and access to, as well as the management over land resources, scholars have noted how the privatization and titling of land has often led to the expropriation and marginalization of smallholders, poor peasants, and those concerned with growing non-export crops while foreign investors and dominant landholding classes benefit (e.g. Amanor 1999, Berry 2002). For example, Amanor (1999, 141) shows that land relations within communities 'have evolved to reflect the commodification of land under export crop production and extractive industry. They reflect the interests of the dominant landholding classes and their relations with international and national capital rather than the solidity of the community'. Many recent scholars who are engaged with the 'land question' have focused on the 'global land grab' which consists of large scale land acquisition, most frequently for food or biofuel production by transnational corporations or foreign governments, which is touted by its proponents as 'making better use of underutilized land' (Li 2010, 282, Borras and Franco 2010, Zoomers 2010). Like those who analyze the 'land question', scholars like Tania Murray-Li (2010, 292) find that global land grabs often ignore or oversimplify existing power relations, which works to the detriment of poor or underrepresented land users. While some scholars like Benjaminsen *et al.* (2010), Ojeda (2010) and Zoomers (2010, 436–7) have cited the creation of protected areas as a part of this global land grab, these analyses seem mainly focused on the acts of displacement that occur from conservation land deals and acts of re-enclosure of existing protected areas. Using primitive accumulation in reference to the creation of protected areas allows us to understand the political economic mechanisms behind land grabs that, confoundingly, are taking land *out* of production for the sake of conservation. Using this analytical tool we are able to fit the creation of protected areas into the market-based logics driving more obvious or overt acts of accumulation by dispossession. It is in this way that we can understand, as Negi and Auerbach (2009, 89) put it, 'capital's efforts to enroll new people and places in its logic'.

An obvious link exists between Marx's concept of primitive accumulation and exclusionary conservation practices, such as the creation of protected areas which

enclose land and exclude resident populations. According to Marx, '[t]he so-called primitive accumulation . . . is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production. It appears as primitive, because it forms the pre-historic stage of capital and of the mode of production corresponding with it' (Marx 1906, 431–4). Since Marx's original definition, hundreds of people have defined and re-defined primitive accumulation. Drawing on Marx's and subsequent theories on primitive accumulation, I define primitive accumulation as neither simply accumulation via violent means, nor a necessarily immediate process. By my definition, primitive accumulation involves the act of enclosure of a commons, whether that be the enclosure of land, bodies, social structures, or ideas. I argue that though primitive accumulation is an ongoing process and while at times it occurs rapidly and obviously, it can also be an extraordinarily slow and veiled process, with the act of enclosure sometimes well removed from the act of accumulation. This distance, whether it be in time or space, may render the relations between the act of enclosure and capital accumulation obscure. This accumulation may be diffuse as it lays the social, economic and infrastructural groundwork for future means of accumulation (De Angelis 2001). Primitive accumulation may also be the creation of capital for the first time through the commodification of things that previously lay outside of the realm of capitalism. Three major themes that seem to be emphasized in many definitions and redefinitions of this process that I will follow in this paper are: 1) primitive accumulation as an ongoing process with varying time frames rather than a static moment in history, 2) primitive accumulation as not only a change in economic mechanisms, but as a change in social relations and practices and 3) primitive accumulation as a violent act.

In this paper I will first outline how the creation of protected areas is an example of primitive accumulation. I will then address what might be seen as the limits to the application of primitive accumulation for current conservation practice and argue that these limits, though valid for debates surrounding theoretical conservation, do not apply to the realities of conservation practice. Finally, I discuss the repercussions of labeling conservation practice as primitive accumulation and how these acts are resisted by the people most affected by them.

Parallels between primitive accumulation and conservation: a historical perspective

The parallels between primitive accumulation and conservation begin with some of the earliest recorded conservation practices. Richard Drayton (2000, 243) in *Nature's Government* suggests that 'conservation, both within Britain and its colonies, began as Preservation: the claim of an exclusive right of exploitation of a limited resource'. The resources being exploited included timber, land, wildlife and minerals (Grove 1996). The economic benefits of conserving land for timber, plantations and mineral production are relatively straightforward. For example, James Scott (1998, 12–14) in *Seeing Like a State* shows how forest reserves were used by the early modern European state to ensure revenue and security.

Though the direct economic benefits of 'preservation' for the state seem obvious, the benefits of protecting wildlife are more indirect. Perelman's (2007) discussion of the imposition of game laws serves as an excellent example of these indirect economic benefits. These laws, which forbade the rural poor from hunting certain species, expanded over time and had the effect of depriving these people of an important means of providing for their own survival. Perelman (2007) shows how

the expropriation of an important part of rural people's diets was a form of primitive accumulation. These laws benefited the emerging capitalists of the day by forcing these impoverished people into wage labor in order to sustain themselves (divorcing the producer from the means of production). Further, by depriving the poor of weapons, the ruling elite (the capitalists and gentry) were able to suppress insurrection and maintain and expand the economic conditions favorable to capitalism: the poor 'could no longer resist drudgery' (Perelman 2007, 54).

The imposition of the game laws in Europe served as a basis for similar laws in European colonies in Africa, Asia and the Americas. For example, Fairhead and Leach (1996) show in *Misreading the African Landscape* that in the 1940s the Guinean forestry service established reserves in the hopes of forest reconstitution and preservation to provide for future timber and coffee production. Similarly, in *Imposing Wilderness* Roderick Neumann (1998) draws parallels between the acts of enclosure via game laws in Europe discussed by Perelman (2007) and E.P. Thompson (1975) and African dislocations due to conservation in the colonial period. Neumann (1998, 36) shows that a politically powerful capitalist class dominated property in England and East Africa through 'legalized seizure' of property in the form of protected areas. These protected areas were legitimated by narratives about the preservation and scientific conservation of wildlife and natural resources.

Not only did this capitalist class gain control over natural resources (e.g. land, timber, minerals, wildlife products), it also gained access to what Marx (1906, 699) would call an 'industrial reserve army'. For example, in his analysis of South African national parks, Ramutsindela (2003, 43) shows that 'Africans were prevented from hunting in order to force them to sell their labour under the pretext of protecting wildlife'. He cites the Transvaal Game Protection Association's (18 November 1903) complaints that 'the destruction of game by the natives enables a large number of natives to live on this means who would otherwise have to maintain themselves by labour' (Ramutsindela 2003, 43, TGPA 1903). Thus, those dispossessed of their land and/or means to subsistence by the creation of these protected areas were driven into seeking wage labor both in industry and on plantations. The use of conservation as a means of expanding capitalist production was not limited to Europe and Africa, however. For example, Grandia's (2007) analysis of historical and contemporary enclosures (some due to conservation) in Guatemala's hinterlands finds that controlling labor was as important to the ruling elite as controlling property. She shows that a key aspect of the dispossession of people was preventing newly dispossessed people from finding alternatives to wage labor while still keeping wages low.

This critique does not apply to 'fortress conservation' alone, however. The creation of protected areas through Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRMs) and Participatory Conservation Projects (PCPs) is now being heavily critiqued as well. Although CBNRMs and PCPs are supposed to help local people rise out of poverty and become more financially independent, while at the same time protecting the environment in a 'win-win' scenario, scholars like Brockington (2002), Dressler and Buscher (2008), Buscher (2009), Benjaminsen et al. (2010), and many others not that this may not be the case. These authors have found that these projects 'pull resource users into new market economies' and at the same time relieve local people of their land and/or resources while forcing them to become dependent on an industry (often ecotourism) over which they have no control and from which they often earn very little money (Dressler and Buscher 2008, 454–5).

Limits

As I have shown above, it is easy to draw parallels between early conservation practices and primitive accumulation. Individual capitalists benefited from game laws and acts of 'preservation' by gaining a cheap work force and the raw materials of industry. It can be argued, however, that such clear lines between conservation and primitive accumulation cannot be drawn. Indeed, primitive accumulation generally involves the enclosure of a commons, a resource that is collectively managed (Ostrom 1990, 31), in favor of *private* property, the exclusive right to a resource by a single owner or group (Rose 1994, 28). In terms of state-held forest reserves and protected areas, it is *public* property (owned and managed by the state), not private property that is being created from the dissolution of the commons. These areas, and the revenues produced from them, are ostensibly for the public good rather than individual gain. Further, in the case of national parks and other protected areas that limit extraction, these areas are not being commodified, as they would be in classic cases of primitive accumulation, but are instead being taken out of the market as production and use of the land is banned or heavily curtailed. As Tania Li (2008, 124) points out, advocates of conservation see national parks as 'the ultimate noncommodity'. Given these discrepancies, how can we argue that conservation is akin to primitive accumulation?

Beyond theoretical conservation: conservation practice as primitive accumulation

In this section I will argue against the limits to parallels between conservation and primitive accumulation enumerated above. I believe that though these limits may be applied to theoretical conservation designs, in practice conservation via protected area creation continues to fulfill the definition of primitive accumulation that Marx and other authors lay out for us. Just as the enclosures discussed by Marx and others transformed land and resources that were previously outside of capitalism into commodities, I argue that, in the context of neoliberal conservation – defined by Igoe and Brockington (2007) as the commodification and control of nature through regulation and the collaboration of state, non-governmental organizations and for-profit organizations which often work to exclude local populations or profoundly change the way rural people live their lives – protected areas may be doing the same kind of work. Also, I will show that protected area creation, like primitive accumulation, is a violent, ongoing process that alters social relations and practices which can be defined by the enclosure of land or other property, the dispossession of the holders of this property and the creation of the conditions for capitalist production that allow a select few to accumulate wealth.

Creating and reproducing the conditions for capital production

Though Marx's description of primitive accumulation makes it seem static and fixed in a particular time period, many scholars argue that primitive accumulation is a continuous process that has been sustained even to present day (e.g. De Angelis 2001, Moore 2004, Glassman 2006, Grandia 2007). Though similar processes are involved in colonial and contemporary conservation, today different actors may be responsible for them. Instead of a single colonial state dispossessing local populations of their land, it is now often international NGOs, private individuals, for-profit tourism agencies, foreign nations and governing bodies that aim to create

protected areas by governing *through* national governments and local communities (Chapin 2004, Zoomers 2010, 436–7). The involvement of multiple actors and donors in current conservation practices creates the conditions under which capitalist production takes place in several different ways: 1) they expand the reach of the market economy, 2) they create the necessary conditions for capitalist production by ensuring a supply of cheap wage labor, a pliable workforce and the availability of necessary materials, and finally, 3) they may be responsible for maintaining the conditions necessary for capitalist production at the most basic level. David Harvey (2005, 147–8) argues in *The New Imperialism*, that capitalism needs ever expanding spaces where accumulation by dispossession can occur, allowing the market economy to spread. Protected areas, and their exclusion of resident populations to achieve a 'natural' and therefore pleasing environment for wildlife tourists, are an example of expanding capitalist production into new spaces. One of the best examples of national parks opening up new spaces for accumulation is ecotourism. Ecotourism is a means of exposing previously non-capitalist societies to capitalist influences, allowing the market economy to expand into previously unexploited territory (Castree 2008, Duffy and Moore 2010). As is shown in Buscher and Dressler's (2010, 9) discussion of conservation in South Africa and the Philippines, neoliberal conservation strategies (which may take the form of ecotourism) have placed pressures on local communities to commodify 'their resources so as to not be excluded from, or to participate in broader market and socio-political dynamics', pushing them out of the realm of subsistence and into market economies. Further, ecotourism opens up new local markets as the economic expectations of local people are raised by their interactions with capitalist consumers (e.g. eco-tourists), creating an increased desire for, and dependency on, purchased items (Place 1995, Foucat 2002, Leatherman and Goodman 2005). Paige West (2007, 634) in *Conservation Is Our Government Now* argues that such forms of conservation are designed to 'use products and production to integrate rural places into world markets'. In other cases, small-scale or localized commodification of natural resources may be criminalized in exchange for willing labor and commodification at a global scale (Li 2010, 125).

As West *et al*. (2006, 257) state, neoliberal conservation 'needs biodiversity or nature to become commodities and natives to become labor'. But how do protected areas create laborers? According to Geisler and de Sousa (2001) there may be 14–24 million people in Africa displaced as a result of exclusionary conservation today. Divorced from their homelands and their means of subsistence, these 'conservation refugees' are forced to turn to wage labor (if they can find it) for survival (Dowie 2009, 31). For example, Fairhead and Leach (1994, 506) show how 'off-farm employment' is encouraged in the buffer zones of Guinean protected areas to reduce pressures on these areas, converting segments of local populations into wage laborers who are integrated into a cash economy.

As in the colonial era, capitalist industries and agriculture may benefit from a cheap 'freed' labor force made up of dispossessed populations. Permanent wage laborers are not the only group created by 'freeing' a population from its means of production and subsistence. Those landless, often impoverished and hence mobile populations that are created through acts of enclosure form what Marx (1906, 728) calls 'the light infantry of capital'. This 'standing army' of wage laborers is ready to move from one capitalist mode of production to another, making nationally- and

internationally-driven seasonal agriculture and industries producing cheap commodities economically viable. Ojeda (2010, 23) shows one mechanism by which such a moveable workforce is created in her analysis of Tayrona National Park, Colombia. Here she shows that while some fishermen who were evicted from beaches in the national park, 'decided to move to other beaches in the park, at least temporarily, most of them are now in Santa Marta [a nearby town] looking for a way of making a living'.

States may also agree to create and enforce sites of exclusionary conservation in order to protect natural resources for future use. These natural resources can range from genetic materials to oil and mineral extracting rights (e.g. Laird *et al*. 2004, Finer *et al*. 2010). Peluso (1993, 201) also notes that states 'have an interest in maintaining central control of territories containing valuable resources, and of people with contradictory claims'. Using Le Billion's (2005) examination of resource-rich nations, we may understand this compulsion, not simply because the control over valuable natural resources may benefit the state or individual agents within these states, but because this control may make rebellion less feasible. Thus, protected areas do the double work of reserving important resources for the purposes of production and maintaining a willing and/or submissive workforce.

Finally, the forms of accumulation that occur in association with the creation of national parks are not always obvious or immediate. I believe that the concept of primitive accumulation can be applied to the creation of protected areas if we think about these enclosures in a global context. O'Connor (1998, 151) states in *Natural Causes: Essays in Ecological Marxism* that 'conditions for production may be created through environmental protection'. Indeed, the enclosure of land and resources for the sake of conservation may be contributing to the production of the conditions under which capitalist production can expand on a national, and sometimes global scale. Not only are these strategic acts of conservation creating the conditions under which cheap wage labor is produced, it also seems apparent that environmental services (water cycling, watershed protection, carbon sequestration, biodiversity, etc.) that are supposed to be preserved by protected areas are also maintaining the conditions for production, for what capitalist society can function without air to breathe or water to drink?

Protected areas as capital

Protected areas represent one of the key elements in the process of accumulation by transforming formerly non-capitalist spaces and resources into commodities. Though many studies describe primitive accumulation, or accumulation by dispossession, as being closely associated in time and space with capital accumulation, works like Stuart Banner's (2005) *How the Indians Lost Their Land* show us how dispossession can be separated from accumulation by long stretches of time. Though historically protected areas may have been created for ulterior political motives such as controlling unruly or recalcitrant groups, creating a willing and subdued industrial workforce, and protecting valuable natural resources (e.g. Peluso 1993, Duffy 2000), it is only relatively recently that these areas have become forms of capital in themselves. In the context of neoliberal conservation, protected areas as sites for ecotourism, genetic storehouses and environmental services have been created and transformed into the raw materials of capitalist production. Here we see that private property is not necessarily a prerequisite for private accumulation.

By linking publicly owned and protected lands with privately controlled forms of property rights like the rights to operate ecotourism industries, the appropriation and privatizing of rights to genetic resources, rights to photographs and other images, etc., we are able to see how private individuals or organizations are able to benefit from public spaces.

Ecotourism in protected areas transforms these formerly non-capitalist spaces into commodities to be consumed in the global marketplace (West and Carrier 2004, Duffy and Moore 2010, Igoe *et al.* 2010). Protected areas are not exploited in the material ways timber or minerals would be, but in non-material ways (e.g. experiences and photographs) which may bring in similar, if not higher, revenues. The market values of ecotourism are high. For example, in Tanzania tourism makes up 17% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and accounts for a similar percentage of exports (through exchange earnings) from the country (Honey and Krantz 2007). Here we see foreign and domestic tourism agencies benefiting enormously from state-held property.

Further, as Brockington *et al.* (2008, 194) point out in *Nature Unbound*, protected areas are not just consumed when visited by eco-tourists, but turn into what Guy Debord (1995) calls 'Spectacle'. Drawing on Tsing's (2004) discussion of spectacular accumulation, Brockington *et al.* (2008, 195) show how mainstream conservation allows people to identify and associate certain environments with particular products, experiences and celebrities, each connected with various forms of accumulation. Thus, images of conserved nature are used to market everything from coffee to visa cards, Disney products to SUVs (Brockington *et al.* 2008, 195). Here, again, accumulation is removed from the national parks making it possible. Those benefitting privately from these public spaces are often distant from them, many never having visited the protected areas that increase their profits and provide them with lucrative marketing strategies.

Protected areas also represent means for private accumulation through the privatization and patenting of their genetic resources and biological processes. Bioprospecting deals between large pharmaceutical corporations and international conservation NGOs are brokered to meet these ends. Mark Dowie notes that '[a]ll of the BINGOs [Big International Non-Governmental Organizations] broker bioprospecting deals. They regard them as a unique way to bring some economic benefit to conservation, both for indigenous peoples and themselves' (Dowie 2009, 219). Laird *et al.* (2004) show that the drugs and compounds developed from bioprospecting can earn billions of dollars annually for pharmaceutical companies. Though there exist guidelines for benefit sharing with local communities and agreements about access to these genetic materials and compounds, as Dowie (2009, 219) notes, these interactions seem to be mainly 'beads-and-trinkets transaction[s]'. In the case of bioprospecting we see primitive accumulation at work at a landscape and a genetic scale, dispossessing people of their rights over and use of natural resources and their biological processes (Mansfield 2009, Prudham 2009).

Environmental NGOs committed to the creation and maintenance of protected areas reap enormous donations from people who seek to preserve environmental services – these services include the pollination of crops, the maintenance of soil fertility, purification of water, and the stabilization of the climate. Again, whereas these services previously lay beyond the realm of the market economy, environmentalists have placed values on these things. For example, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has placed a nine million dollar value on the waters flowing

from Lore Lindu National Park in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia (TNC/USAID 2010). Igoe *et al.* (2010) show that by commodifying environmental services, multinational NGOs are able to make these services as exchangeable as other commodities. This exchangeability allows for enormous accumulation on the part of multinational conservation organizations. By encouraging large donations for protected areas from large corporations such as Shell Oil and ExxonMobil to 'offset' the environmental damage caused by their industries and avoid sanction, conservation NGOs are able to garner large sums of money (Brockington *et al.* 2008, 3–4). For example, the creation of Campo Maun and Mban et Djerem National Parks in Cameroon was used to offset the environmental effects of the ExxonMobil Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline (Brockington *et al.* 2008, 3–4). Such conservation practices do double work for encouraging capitalist accumulation. Not only do environmental NGOs benefit from providing what Chapin (2004) labels a 'green fig-leaf' for environmentally harmful corporations, these conservation organizations allow environmentally destructive companies to continue their current modes of production, saving them the enormous expenses that would be required of them to clean up their acts.

Who accumulates?

Though in theory conservation actions like the establishment of national parks are supposed to benefit the public rather than individuals, in practice the opposite seems true. A select group of people seem to benefit from the creation of national parks: namely corrupt politicians and state agents, the captains of international industry, and the heads of multinational environmental NGOs.

Individuals within the state may benefit directly from national parks but, as Tania Li (2008, 138) argues, the costs and benefits of conservation are often separated by power. Thus, though powerful politicians or state agents may turn a profit from protected areas, disenfranchised local groups may lose out. Mark Dowie (2009, 254) reasons that corrupt politicians, what he calls 'state kleptocrats', like Omar Bongo, former president of Gabon, would not agree to the creation of national parks at the expense of potentially lucrative logging and mining concessions without an extraordinary economic payoff. Leaders like Bongo and Argentina's President Menem may agree to international conservation programs or large land purchases for private protected areas that pour money into state coffers and, thereby, their own pockets while stripping local people of their means of survival (Zoomers 2010, 236–7, Dowie 2009, 254). At a smaller scale, local elites like park managers and regional chiefs may accumulate relatively large sums of money through the sale of illegal permits to collect natural resources, fish, or graze livestock in national parks or the collection of fines from people who do these things without permission.[1]

Though the state plays a large role in the production and reproduction of capital, as well as accumulates from it, it is important to note that capital is not solely lodged in state apparatuses, but is a diffuse project that is woven into cultural and social structures that aid in its reproduction in myriad ways. Through a variety of mechanisms, privately-owned organizations and private individuals may benefit from the creation of protected areas through ecotourism and hunting operations as

[1]Fieldwork conducted by the author between the months of October 2010 and May 2011 in the Extreme North Province of Cameroon.

has been discussed above. Finally, (also discussed above), multinational conservation NGOs such as Conservation International and World Wildlife Fund accumulate millions and millions of dollars in a very competitive funding environment through the creation of national parks (Igoe *et al.* 2010). In current environmental policy paradigms, the creation of protected areas is a visible and tangible sign of success, one that these large conservation NGOs can use to draw in more funding (Mosse 2004, 2005).

Mechanisms of the primitive accumulation:

Ellen Meiksins Wood (2002, 36) argues in *The Origin of Capitalism* that 'the ''primitive accumulation'' of classical political economy is ''so-called'' because capital, as Marx defines it, is a social relation and not just any kind of wealth or profit . . . what transformed wealth into *capital* was a transformation of social property relations'. In this section I will examine, drawing on Gramsci's concept of hegemony as contingent on the use of coercion and the production of consent, the social and epistemological mechanisms by which primitive accumulation via conservation is pushed forward by national and international actors. While Igoe *et al.* (2010) do an excellent job of analyzing the development of the historic bloc and the spectacle of nature that led to the dominance of global conservation, here I will look at the specific mechanisms associated with protected area creation as they relate to Gramsci's concept of hegemony and lead to acts of primitive accumulation.

Peter Linebaugh (2008, 102–25) argues in the *Magna Carta Manifesto* that primitive accumulation, through the expropriation of the commons, not only changes social relations, but also has 'epistemological effects – how you see the world, what you know of the world'; it changes common sense. Drawing on Gramsci's (1971, 210–18) concept of common sense in the 'manufacture of consent', Igoe *et al.* (2010) and Caedmon (1999) note that dominant world views that are focused on abstractions such as exchange values and environmental services rather than use values such as fodder for livestock or land for agriculture are produced in several different ways. In some cases 'organic intellectuals' whose ideas and understanding of nature come from lived experience are silenced by the elite western 'techno-scientific thought' that has become hegemonic, legitimating the subjugation of local people's needs to conservation and accumulation (Igoe *et al.* 2010). Just as Coronil (1997, 360) shows that 'as black gold, petroleum gave power to those individuals who possessed it, transforming, by virtue of its power to confer power, the nature of power in society and the human capacity to define collectively the possible and the desirable', I argue that conservation can do the same thing. Those who control conservation are able to define what is possible, what is desirable, and who will benefit by identifying or rendering 'stakeholders' invisible and determining the rules of use of a protected area (Li 2007). The lack of obvious or even immediate accumulation from protected areas allows their proponents to argue that these areas are not for individual use, but for the collective good, or in Tania Li's (2008, 125) case of Lore Lindu national park, that these spaces are 'the property of the world'.

Another means by which 'organic intellectuals' are silenced is by the redefinition of land and resources themselves. Whitehead (2002, 1364) argues that the transformation of space from a lived, understood reality to a geometric abstraction of bio-data 'symbolizes the potential for future land appropriation. Abstract space here becomes an instrument of primitive accumulation'. Thus, the division of areas

into eco-zones, watersheds, land conservation units and the like lays out a road map of future enclosures and the justification of those enclosures. The manufacture of consent can only go so far, however. Coercion, along with consent, is an integral part of Gramsci's concept of hegemony.

Primitive accumulation is, by definition, achieved by violent, coercive actions. As Harvey (2005) states in *The New Imperialism*, accumulation occurs 'at other people's expense'. Sylvia Federici (2004), in *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the body and primitive accumulation,* shows in sometimes graphic detail how violence was used in acts of primitive accumulation, including the enclosure of women's bodies. She notes that in most cases, violence is 'the main lever, the main economic power, in the process of primitive accumulation' (64). Violence is also a major theme in Hannah Arendt's (1966) descriptions of primitive accumulation via imperialism in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, as well as 'accumulation by dispossession' as related in Harvey (2005).

Primitive accumulation via the creation of protected areas is no exception to the violence discussed by the authors above. In some cases this violence is overt. In his chapter in *Violent Environments,* Neumann (2001) shows that the violent enforcement of exclusionary conservation laws has continued from the colonial period into present day. He outlines the violent implementation of Mkomazi Game Reserve in 1988 where people who complained about being evicted from their lands were threatened with guns, beaten and had their homes burned by the government militia (Neumann 2001, 313). Further, he discusses how 'the Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism . . . had issued a shoot-on-sight directive to rangers in 1997 for ''bandits'' found in the park' (Neumann 2001, 313). This directive led to the deaths of 50 villagers in Serengeti National Park in Tanzania in 1998 (Neumann 2001, 305). Similarly, Duffy (2000, 52–5) focuses on the use of armed violence to control recalcitrant groups in the name of conservation. She finds that the influx of international aid may actually contribute to the use, or possibility of use, of armed force in conservation contexts. Duffy (2000) cites an example where WWF funded the purchase of a helicopter subsequently used to kill 'poachers' from the air. Similarly, Peluso (1993, 208) demonstrates how 'aircraft, radios, vehicles, night-goggles, and other anti-poaching equipment' were used by the Kenyan government to violently enforce anti-poaching laws. Igoe (2002), in outlining conservation methods in the Central African Republic where an American physician and his private paramilitary force were given control over the Chinko River Basin by President Patasse, notes that this special force has the authorization to shoot on sight and at the time of writing had already killed three poachers and arrested many others.

In other cases, coercion may not be as overt, but may inflict just as much, if not more, pain and suffering upon those who are dispossessed of their land and resources by conservation. Neumann (2001, 308) defines conservation-driven acts of enclosure as forms of violence, even those that may not have overtly used force, because '. . . states have rarely provided equivalent livelihood alternatives or adequate compensation for evictees'. Like Marx, Neumann sees the separation of the producer from the means of production as a violent act. Schmidt-Soltau (2003) enumerates other forms of violence visited upon people who are resettled due to exclusionary conservation, noting that they are faced with increased risks of landlessness, joblessness, loss of subsistence, marginalization, homelessness, food insecurity, loss of access to common property, death, and social disarticulation. She notes that though organizations like the World Bank specify that people who are

displaced deserve resettlement assistance, conservation project managers often do not grasp the fact that in many cases there is no unoccupied land where displaced populations can be resettled (Schmidt-Soltau 2003). Resettling people in lands that are already occupied may lead to increased violence and conflict amongst people for whom this was previously not a concern.

So what?

Now that I've gone through pages and pages of discussion showing that protected areas are, indeed, a form of primitive accumulation, I am left with the question: so what if it is? What does this do except put a new label on a process that already exists? In this section I will show the contribution of the primitive accumulation concept to the theoretical analysis of the protection of the environment. Further, I will show how analyzing the creation of protected areas in the context of primitive accumulation allows us to better understand the violent reactions to these enclosures and the environmental impacts of these reactions. Here we will see that conservation by dispossession may actually threaten the environment more than it preserves it.

The creation of protected areas and the 'protection of nature' in general has been analyzed from many different angles. While Peluso and Watts (2001) address environmental issues using violence as a unifying theme, authors like Zerner (2000) think about the cultural characteristics of markets and commodities which are derived from the environment. The analysis of conservation areas has been approached from the angle which engages with the broad literature of the enclosure of the commons, the political-economic drivers behind these enclosures, the mechanisms by which these enclosures have taken place, and the effects of these enclosures on the societies of those who once used the commons (e.g. Thompson 1975, Grandia 2007, Perelman 2007). There have also been extensive critiques of fortress conservation which stress the social and political marginalization of people living on land slated to be 'conserved' or 'preserved' (e.g. Neumann 1998, Brockington 2002).

Neumann (1998) and Jacoby (2003) show that when traditional practices were criminalized by the imposition of national parks and reserves in Tanzania and the United States, and 'scientific resource management' was imposed, rural people's ways of interacting with each other and their utilization of the environment changed. Institutional actors at a local level who were involved in the collective management of certain natural resources were weakened and altered by colonial conservation regimes and continue to be altered by conservation laws today (Neumann 1998). Further, Neumann (1998) shows that demarcating 'wilderness' areas effectively erased the history and natural resource rights of the people who had once used and/or lived in these areas. The loss of a sense of rights and ownership over the land and the related management of that land threatens the environment these parks are ostensibly intended to protect. Such critiques show the violent (whether overt or not) nature of these displacements, the changes in moral economies and social practices.

The above mentioned groups of theorists engage with other groups of literature which show how crisis narratives are used to drive the 'protection of nature' while at the same time hiding ulterior hegemonic motives (e.g. Rocheleau *et al*. 1995, Leach and Mearns 1996, Ribot 1999, Carswell 2003) and present conservation initiatives as 'win-win' situations (Igoe and Brockington 2007). Other narratives are used to reinforce and create new forms of property and/or accumulation. As Mansfield

(2009, 9) shows in her analysis of property and the re-making of nature-society relations, 'attempts to privatize nature are premised on a fictional notion of nature as a unique object that can be atomized into bits to be owned'. Narratives are used to create these fictions and thereby new markets.

I argue that using primitive accumulation as an analytical tool to look at the creation of protected areas links these important groups of literature together to give a rich political-economic understanding of the explanatory, and often hegemonic, narratives which lead to the enclosure of the commons through fortress conservation. In a sense, the concept of primitive accumulation helps us see the 'whole story' as it engages with the narratives surrounding acts of enclosure via the production of protected areas, the consequential violence of that enclosure (in socio-cultural, physical and economic terms) as well as its social and economic effects both for those displaced and those accumulating. Understanding the creation of protected areas as a form of primitive accumulation situates these processes in the ongoing and unfinished project of capitalism. Adding the component of time and acknowledging the sometimes long periods between acts of enclosure and dispossession and accumulation allows us to see how protected areas as forms of primitive accumulation are constantly engaging with, and taking advantage of, newly emerging forms of property rights like the privatization of genetic resources or the creation and sale of carbon credits.

Like other political ecologists and scholars who are critical of protected areas, I would argue that to tout national park creation as an unadulterated and uncomplicated good (as many conservationists do – e.g. World Bank Group 2006, Bullock and Lawson 2008) is misleading and may lead to further enclosures and dispossessions. From an environmental standpoint, it seems as though the means by which protected areas are created, maintained and commodified may actually lead to increased environmental degradation through lost rights and land. I argue that the changes in social relations resulting from acts of primitive accumulation are dangerous to the environment and only by understanding these changes and the mechanisms behind them will we be able to make policy recommendations that actually protect the environment and local people. We must recognize that while capitalism (driven by actors both within and outside of the state) may benefit from these enclosures, society and the environment may not.

In some cases the reactions against lost rights and resources have been public, sudden and violent, as in the case of mass slaughter of lions and elephants in Kenya culminating in the spearing of a tourist by Maasai people who were frustrated with the loss of their land and property to national parks (Western 1997, 93–129). More frequently, the reactions against lost commons and changed social relations are clandestine, subtle and less violent. For example, Robbins *et al.* (2005) note that despite park regulations and sanctions, there is still widespread illegal use of protected areas by local populations for agriculture, grazing, timber harvesting, and hunting. These acts of resistance are widespread. In central sub-Saharan Africa studies have shown that 70–100% of national parks are being used by local people for a variety of practices and resources (Cernea and Schmidt-Soltau 2006). In South Africa there is even a word for this, *ukujola,* meaning 'taking by stealth or cunning that which is rightfully yours' (Fabricius and de Wet 2002).

Though the continued use of protected area resources may help sustain local populations in the short term, the loss of rights and collective management strategies and the need to carry out their subsistence activities secretly may cause

environmental damage. The preliminary findings of my research in Waza National Park, Cameroon, seem to show that many people officially excluded from their former grazing, hunting and fishing grounds use park resources in a less sustainable manner. They note that when they go into the park they take as much as they can, making the most of time spent at risk of imprisonment, injury, death or fines at the hands of park guards.[2] At the same time, because these populations no longer feel a sense of ownership over the park and its resources, or feel unable to defend it as they could their own property, people from Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Central African Republic, Sudan and other parts of Cameroon have begun using the park resources in a similarly unsustainable manner (Fieldwork 2010–2011). The results of this are clear. According to scientists, local people and others, there seems to be a dwindling number of resources within Waza National Park left to protect. Ecologists note that large mammal and bird populations within the park have dropped drastically (Thiollay 2007, Tumenta *et al.* 2009). Many people living on the periphery of the park have also noted a drop in animal populations.[3] Tour guides and park guides make the same claims, one saying, 'ten years ago I could promise every tourist that we would see an elephant or a lion within the park. Now I can promise nothing but birds and possibly some giraffe'.[4]

People who are driven into other regions by exclusionary conservation, like refugees from war or other conflicts, often cause environmental problems when they are resettled. They 'may have a short-term perspective, reducing incentives to handle resources in a sustainable manner; they may lack information about fragile ecological balances in the area . . .' (Urdal 2005, 422). While newcomers may cause environmental destruction due to their lack of understanding of the environment, in other cases, poorly planned resettlement schemes may result in an increase in the populations (many now disgruntled over their lost land) surrounding a protected area, which may increase pressure on this area and its natural resources (e.g. Li 2008, 128). A rise in human population may cause increased pressure on the park's natural resources not only because there are simply more people, but because newcomers 'may be regarded as competitors from the point of view of original inhabitants' (Urdal 2005, 422). Thus, competing groups may try to use the same resources before others are able to, leading to the increased loss of natural resources within park limits. Those driven from their rural environments who cannot find places to settle near their old lands are often are forced to move to cities in search of work (Dowie 2009, 31). This migration may help fuel the need for wage labor in these urban environments, but may also add to the environmental pressures put on these areas. Finally, in his analysis of culture/nature boundaries in Kenya, Goldman (2001) finds that bounding the landscape (e.g. sedentarization of pastoralists in certain areas to keep other areas 'wild') may lead to new threats to an ecosystem (erosion, exotic plant invasion, etc.).

Despite the social and ecological evidence against protected areas, the ability of conservationists and participating governments to use environmental arguments to dispossess people of their land and resources has allowed this form of expropriation to rise at an alarming rate. Indeed, the number of national parks in the world has

[2]Fieldwork conducted by the author between the months of October 2010 and May 2011 in the Extreme North Province of Cameroon.
[3]Fieldwork 2010–11
[4]Fieldwork 2010–11

grown by 500% in the last 30 years (Wittemeyer *et al*. 2008). Though there may be a lack of immediate or obvious commodification of land or resources by national parks, it may be precisely this delay or obscurity that makes it possible for states, conservationists and other interested parties to present parks as benign land use and a common good. Protected areas, regardless of their types of administration, are land controlling mechanisms. As I have shown in this paper, these territorial enclosures may change form over time, at moments creating and reproducing the means of capitalist production by supplying much needed labor to industry, suppressing rebellion, supplying or safeguarding important natural resources for exploitation, and at other times becoming capital themselves in the form of environmental services, spectacles and genetic storehouses. To recognize the ulterior economic and hegemonic motives of protected areas as forms of dispossession and enclosure, complete with the narratives driving these enclosures, the social, political and economic mechanisms by which these enclosures are formed, and the subsequent environmental, economic, social and political outcomes of these enclosures and the accumulation from them however hidden and however seemingly unconscious, is a step towards improving conservation policy. This recognition may make conservation efforts if not ideal, at least more effective (in terms of actually protecting threatened resources), equitable and transparent. Further, by understanding these mechanisms and consequences we are better able to understand how the creation of protected areas fits into broader socio-economic and political patterns involving the control of the environment and natural resources such as the global land grab, the privatization of genetic resources and the commoditization of carbon credits.

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