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Contested Community Participation in the Governance of Marine Resources in the Mafia Island Marine Park, Tanzania: A Political Chicanery

"Deception may give us what we want for the present, but it will always take it away in the end"—Rachel Hawthorne

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Abstract

It is almost two and half decades since the government of Tanzania established the Mafia Island Marine Park. Guided by the principle of participatory resource governance, this significant socio-economic move was expected to promote sustainable marine resource use and conserve ecosystem processes and biodiversity. However, this is contrary to what is befalling today. This qualitative study sought to examine how this cardinal governance rule was applied during the establishment of the park and how the nature of its execution could have a bearing on the current exhaustion and destructive course. The study used focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, life histories, and observations to collect data. Both, manual content analysis and software-aided qualitative data analysis (Nvivo—12) were applied to gain a sense of the data. The findings of the study indicate that the current unsustainable marine resource practices in the park are, in some measure, a result of inconsiderate, poor, and disingenuous participation exercised during and after the inception of the park in 1995. The study recommends a democratically genuine participatory process in which the most affected, collectively or individually, actively decide on the course of action to address their genuine concerns.

Keywords

Community Participation, Mafia Island Marine Park, Governance, Marine Resources Depletion, Tanzania

1. Introduction

The concept of "governance" has been one of Africa's highly promoted yet debated development aspects for over four decades (Lewis, 2019: Bagai, 2016). This is not disconnected from the incontrovertible findings upon which negative and positive sequels of governance have been exemplified. However, while the continent has so far minimally enjoyed its upsides, there is no shortage of proof pointing to how poor governance has contributed to Africa's underdevelopment. This plight has adversely affected many strategic development sectors,

including fisheries (Luhendeka, 2018; Mziray *et al.,* 2018).

Without getting into a debate on what is and what is not governance, as noticed in various developmental discourses, this paper adopts the UNDP's (2019) conception of the term, given its befitting nature that accords priority to participation. It considers participation a platform comprising the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. It poses that, for participation to yield meaningful results, it ought to promote the people's economic, social, political, cultural, and natural rights and needs in a pragmatic fashion. It anticipates that the needs and goals of the people offer policies and guidelines that make the deployment of products and services manageable, achievable, and implementable without compromising the present and future needs of society (UNDP, 2019; UNESCO, 2008; African Union Commission, 2015). Such fundamentals are vital in understanding the relationship between governance and the depletion of marine resources[1] in the market-oriented space in Tanzania. The question of good governance that embraced community participation has been at the centre of natural resource management and development discourses, particularly when issues of efficacy and sustainability are cogitated (UNDP, 2019; FAO, 2013). Several other participatory governance-related attributes are required in managing natural resources, particularly during the creation and development of Protected Areas (PAs) such as the Mafia Island Marine Park (MIMP). Such attributes include transparency, social justice, and equitability right from the inception to the implementation of such projects (UNDP, 2019). Fundamentally, the participatory aspect of good governance is meant to ensure that the resources are conjointly managed and that the benefits derived from such collaboration are allocated and distributed in an accountable and transparent fashion (ibid.). In this regard, priority is given to local communities that largely depend on the managed unit for their survival.

Before the establishment of the MIMP in 1995, the government, through the then Ministry of Tourism and Natural Resources, reported a decreasing trend in catches (URT-MIMP, 2007; Walley, 2002). According to government reports, the decline started in the 1960s and was caused by overfishing, seafloor damage, dynamite fishing, coral mining, and mangrove harvest, among many others. The lowest catch was experienced in the 1980s and 1990s, right before the park was founded. According to the government's and World Bank's time series data from 1950-2005 on marine fisheries catch in tones (t) for the Tanzanian mainland, the total marine catches over the last five decades ranged between 15—81,000 (t) between 1950—1979[2]. While a fluctuating trend was experienced in the catches from 1980-2000, with a slight increase of 48 per cent between 2001—2005, an average range of 65-58 (t) catch was registered (URT, 2017; World Bank, 2021a). This suggests shortfalls in the governance of marine resources.

Despite the noted achievements of the park[3], the MIMP General Management Plan (GMP) (2011)[4] reveals critical challenges. Some of these include; (i) Fishing pressure caused by

[1] Marine resources in this paper refers to seafood—fish and shellfish.

[2] The total amount of fish caught in the Indian Ocean in 1950 was 18.5 million metric tons, according to FAO (2020). That amount rocketed to 74.6 million metric tons in just two decades, an increase of about 400 per cent. Henceforth, fishing activities have never decelerated. Consequently, approximately 80 per cent of the world's endangered and rare species and the ocean's large fishes have been trawled.

[3] The reduction of illegal foreign fishers from Kenya (primarily Mombasa and Kisumu), Comoro, and Zanzibar by 47%, the inclusion of another four villages, making a total of 14 Marine Park villages, an increase in the collection of levies as a result of issuing permits and charging penalties and fines, and a significant decrease in

greedy foreign fishers assisted by locals who are promised a part of the catch or money; (ii) The use of unsustainable fishing gears and several other fishing malpractices; (iii) Increasing rate of mining of live sea coral resulting in increased sea and coastlines erosions, loss of coral reef habitats, and reduction of biodiversity and fish productivity; (iv) Unsustainable harvesting of mangroves for multiple developments by park residents, which disrupts the reproductive cycle and several species of invertebrates that reside in mangrove areas; (v) Unsustainable forest resource use, including the clearance of natural forest vegetation for farming, cutting of trees for extraction of poles and timber by residents which lead to loss of biodiversity and forest cover; (vi) The hunting of most endangered breeds and species, for example, marine turtles and dugong by local fishers who lay shark nets around breeding and feeding grounds which undermines conservation efforts. Whereas marine turtles are in high demand for their eggs, meats, and shells; dugongs are hunted for their delicious meat; and lastly; (vii) The overall low support from the local community on marine resources conservation and increasing poverty, among others, which undermine the conservation efforts by the government.

While acknowledging the various other political, economic, legal, and cultural factors contributing to marine resource depletion, this article argues that the recorded challenges in the MIMP above are inextricably linked with the issue of poor participatory resource governance. Specifically, community participation, which has widely been regarded as the epitome of community development (UNDP, 2019), has not been genuinely interrogated and considered in the marine resources management and exhaustion discourses in Mafia. This paper, therefore, attempts to examine the underlying process and mechanism from which MIMP was hatched. It does so by demonstrating how community participation played out in the process, the nature and composition of participants and committees involved in the process, the issue of transparency, and inherent power relations. The paper argues that the ill-realisation in any of the above governance domains has contributed significantly to what is today considered an unprecedented increase in destructive fishing practices and marine resource depletion in the park. (Mziray *et al.*, 2018; Luhendeka, 2018; URT-MSEP, 2019).

This paper is organised into the following sections. The first section provides an overview of the current state of marine resources and the background against which the MIMP was implemented. Additionally, the section briefly contextualises the issue of marine resources within the broader framework of natural resource governance, highlighting the lack of community participation as a central concern. The subsequent section outlines the methodological considerations employed to obtain the findings and arrive at the conclusion. The third section elucidates the contextual background and conceptual framework underpinning the establishment of the MIMP while highlighting how this framework hinders community engagement. The fourth section highlights the deficiency in community involvement during the initiation phase of the MIMP. The fifth and sixth sections illustrate the procedural aspects of the two significant workshops (held in 1991 and 1999) that served as the foundation for the MIMP initiative and how such workshops lacked substantial involvement from the local

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dynamite fishing, primarily from illegal foreign fishers, are among the successes that MIMP claim to have registered in Mafia—Read more: URT-GMP, 2011; & URT-MSEP, 2019.

[4] Last updated in 2010, the current MIMP-GMP was scheduled to be in use until September 2021. The ten (10) year (October 2021–October 2031) duration of the newly amended GMP was anticipated. However, the anticipated GMP has not yet been released. As a result, the 2011 version is still relevant.

community. The seventh section examines the systematic marginalisation of community members and their representatives in the development and execution of the MIMP. The eighth and final section is the conclusion which serves to reiterate the central topic under consideration, underscore the ramifications of failing to engage in genuine community participation in the context of marine resources management and proposes a preferred course of action based on the research findings for future endeavours.

2. Methodological Considerations

This study employed qualitative research methodologies to explore the relationships between the governance malpractices demonstrated throughout the process and the state of marine resource depletion in MIMP. This attempt is based on its credence and philosophical abundance in conveying the authentic voices of the commoners, which have largely been eclipsed and misrepresented in countless empirical studies on the subject. This unfortunate methodological flaw has aided in either amplifying or belittling the phenomenon depending on the politics of the day and also in prescribing inefficacious remedies.

The study was conducted in 2014 and 2020[5] in Mafia District in the MIMP[6], the largest marine resources-protected area in the Indian Ocean, covering around 822 square kilometres (URT-GMP, 2011). The park harbours a sui-generis complex of coral reefs, around 500 fish species, marine-channel ecosystems, and estuaries (ibid.). MIMP was chosen for the study fundamentally because the area is considered a model for marine resources conservation, management, protection, and multiple-use parks (URT, 1994, WWF, 2016). The nature of informants involved in this study included the heads of the households in all 14 villages within the park (Bweni, Jimbo, Kirongwe, Tumbuju, Kungwi, Mfuruni, Kilindoni, Mlongo, Utende, Chole islet, Juani islet, Jibondo islet, Kitoni, and Bwejuu islet), most of whom largely depended on the park for their survival. The study also involved village representatives, the elders, political and administrative leaders, the park's personnel, and Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) representative stationed in the area.

Informants were obtained through purposive sampling. This process involved physical and prior identification of all potentially informative informants. The amount of information and number of informants needed was reached following the attainment of a theoretical closure. The study was only interested in informants with experience or expert knowledge about the park, those who knew the history of the context and the park, and those who played a role in

[5] The study tackles one of the serious historical governance injustices that led to the MIMP's establishment and its ramifications on the current state of marine resource depletion in the area. In any case, the story would not have changed. The 2020 study was a validation study that intended to assess the magnitude of the problem of marine resource depletion in the area and whether the MIMP management tactics and fishing behaviours leading to the depletion have changed. There is nothing significant regarding the management tactics, fishing guidelines, and fishing malpractices, but the decreased enrollment to the water for new fishers (the youth), thus, de-escalating the problem. Instead of becoming fishers like their parents and grandparents, the youth are now considering migrating to the urban to search for unaccustomed and hard-to-get opportunities. This situation has heightened the relationship between the local community and the managers.

[6] MIMP is situated inside the Mafia Island district boundaries, about 120 kilometres south of Dar es Salaam, comprising four islets: Bwejuu, Chole, Jibondo, and Juani. Mafia people's life has long been intertwined with the ocean. Whereas the island and the park are known for their diverse coastal resources, local and international discourses report an unprecedented deterioration of marine resources in the vicinity despite being heavily and covetously guarded by government structures.

its establishment. The identification of such informants was made prior to and during field visitations. Thus, the study employed fourteen (14) focus group discussions (FGDs), one (1) in each MIMP village. Each FGD had ten (10) members comprising both old and current fishers. The study also conducted thirty-seven (37) in-depth interviews (IDIs), that is, fourteen (14) Village Executive Officers, one (1) in each village who were among the current MIMP villages representatives; nine (9) MIMP village representatives who attended the first workshop in 1991; nine (9) MIMP village representatives who attended the second workshop in 1999; one (1) WWF District representative; one (1) District Commissioner (DC); one (1) District Executive Director (DED); one (1) District Fisheries Officer (DFO) and one (1) MIMP Warden. For historical accounts (LH), which were essential for this study, five (5) narratives were conducted. The study also made several general and specific observations on events pertaining to marine resources exploitation, fishing gears and practices, MIMP protection measures and management, and people's livelihood.

The data obtained from written field notes, FGDs, IDIs, and life histories (LH) transcriptions were analysed using a combination of a special qualitative data analysis software—NVivo-12 and a manual but meticulous qualitative data analysis method—content analysis. This was to increase efficiency and avoid losing any valuable information due to technology use. Following the transcription process, specific and important themes, times, and events related to participation and the depletion of marine resources were determined in light of the research question. Later, the information was arranged according to the topics where opinions, arguments, and reactions showed similarities and differences. When informants described the same phenomenon, patterns of thoughts, concepts, behaviours, interactions, situations, terminologies, and words were established. Thereafter, these patterns were arranged into categories that made sense and summarised the text while highlighting who was telling the story, where it occurred, when it occurred, what was occurring, and why. After organising the patterns and linkages, the fit for each category inside a given research question was established and evaluated. In light of the theory supporting the research question, meaning, implications, and significance were attached to the information acquired to understand it. Data display included structuring and consolidating the information in such a way that inferences or further analyses could be drawn. Specifically, the analysis focused on aspects regarding participatory governance; people's socio-cultural, political, and economic situations; marine resources depletion; and livelihood in the context of MIMP.

3. The Modernization Standpoint: The Context

Inspired by the urge to transform the poor socio-economic situations of her people and the struggling economy, Tanzania wasted no time adopting the modernisation doctrine after independence (URT, 2014). Among the sectors most targeted for improvement in this regard included tourism (ecotourism) and fisheries (World Bank, 2015; 2021b). These were regarded by the government of the day as some of the strategic avenues that would bring in more foreign currency to stimulate other development sectors and revamp the ailing economy. The government became even more desperate when the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), among others, encouraged it to shift its economic and political philosophy in the mid-1980s. The adjustments resulted in trade liberalisation, greater privatisation of economic sectors, and limited government involvement in economic undertakings (Wangwe & Charle, 2005). This also meant sharing its ultimate control of the critical economic sectors such as tourism and fisheries with the private sector through corporate partnerships. By pursuing multiple political and economic reforms to modernise the two sectors, the country gained strong ties with international financial institutions and developed countries and profited from

foreign investments, loans, and more international tourists (World Bank, 2021b). However, given the importance of the sectors, except for the business component, most of the decisions in terms of policies, facilitation, regulations, and modus operandi are still under the government wing through its respective ministries, departments, and agencies such as the MIMP (World Bank, 2015). Therefore, the decision to establish MIMP as an ecotourism venture that would strategically combine the two sectors for maximum economic and management gains ought not to be divorced from this socio-economic logic of the day.

Ecotourism is particularly important for the development of many economies worldwide, a more ecologically conscious form of tourism (Shasha *et al.,* 2020; Place, 1995). It increases economic output, generates employment, improves the nation's infrastructure, and fosters a sense of cultural interaction between locals and visitors. Furthermore, it provides a sizable number of employees across various sectors. Such employment opportunities are frequently found in the education, health, communication, and agricultural sectors, in addition to the tourist industry (Shasha *et al.*, 2020). As is the case for MIMP, governments that rely on ecotourism for a sizable portion of their fiscal revenue would do anything to safeguard it. They would want more visitors to visit their nations for socio-cultural and economic gains. In these situations, most governments in the South are frequently self-compelled to disregard and forgo some of the local community's needs in favour of what they regard to be the greater good (Brooks & Francis, 2018; Strong, 2008). In an ideal context where genuine community participation is exercised, the government is worried about risking its economic interest and plans particularly when competing interests exist between the community and the government (Francis, 2018). The tendency to sideline communities has drawn serious criticism from local communities and human rights advocates (Brooks & Francis, 2018).

Although the modernisation theory places a significant value on internal forces and drivers for economic growth, including formal education, a market-driven economy, and democratic political institutions, it does not entirely exempt external drivers of economic progress (Huntington, 1971; Gerardo, 2018). However, of all the external influences, science, through "knowledge and technology transfer" from most developed jurisdictions and protocols, is more highly regarded and proposed than local knowledge and interests (Mazrui, 1968; Oppong, 2013). In other words, the importation of the terms "ecotourism" and "marine park" from the North, as new approaches for managing and profiting from the marine resource, but also the involvement of many foreigners against the locals in the process, was never an accident but a crucial part of the modernisation logic.

This theory, however, appears to be oblivious that a great deal of the scientific knowledge and technology necessary for the country's progress and competitiveness are protected and specialised private properties that one needs to buy or get in the form of consultations (Gerardo, 2018). However, most of this form of expertise has been found to be problematic, not context-free and specific, and above all, disruptive of existing cultural, social, political, and economic arrangements in the exported contexts in developing countries (ibid.; Cherill, 2016). Fundamentally, modernisation theory suggests a universal, vertical, and one-way development model that holds true to all settings, times, and identities (Huntington, 1971; Gerardo, 2018). Similar principles apply to the creation, fabrication, diffusion, and manifestation of knowledge (Huntington, 1971). In this hierarchical development paradigm, the nature of knowledge produced is by and large alien to the contexts and culture in which it is utilised, as in the case of Mafia.

4. Community Participation in the Inception of MIMP

Since its debut on the international stage about 50 years ago, the concept of "community participation" has become almost an inevitable theme in development discourses. This concept became so popular in the 1970s and 1980s as a means of achieving equity and sustainability, especially for poor rural communities (Kelly, 2017; Lane, 2015). Such approaches have, however, extended further to various other development fields, including natural resource management. Community participation in natural resource management entails a democratic and responsible engagement in which citizens meaningfully participate in all matters affecting their lives and resources right from the beginning (Wright and Nelson, 2015; Hussein, 2016; Kelly, 2017). However, this is not how the idea of MIMP came to life.

Generally, the rationale behind the adoption of 'community participation' was founded on what is widely considered as its ability and potential to inspire a tremendous sense of creativity, ownership, promotion of democratic tendencies in the community development arena, sustainability, commitment, and cooperation among all stakeholders (Lane, 2015; Agarwal, 2007; Lyons *et al.,* 2018). However, for the case of Mafia, apart from the gains above for them, participation was vital since the decision to introduce MIMP was directly targeting their primary source of lifeline (Mambosho, 1998; Mayers and Rumisha, 1992; Institute for Coastal and Marine Resources, 2018). Furthermore, even though the MIMP priority fundamentally revolves around the aquatic environments, community members perceived the "ownership" and "use" of the aquatic-terrestrial milieu on an equal footing and made no substantive difference between the two. The local community in Mafia did not imagine nor believe that one could utilise any of such properties, especially when it carries a cultural significance in a manner that the owner or "new owner" in this case deems fitting regardless of the suffering it could generate as the exterior wisdom would appear to suggest.

For instance, one of the issues that caused misunderstanding between Chole Islet's local residents and the owner of *Chole Mjini Lodge* was the blockage of what was conceived as a customary footpath by the local community. When the Chole islet Village Executive Officer (VEO) was asked if the "owners" could thwart other community members from traversing their private land, he responded with incredulity, *"how is that possible?"* He explained that in their culture, even when one was compelled to block an accustomed footpath, it is deemed indispensable to devise a substitute walkway to minimise the potential unreasonable burden to others. This phenomenon was also necessary to ensure that social interaction and bond among community members, as a means of livelihood, was maintained at all times. The discrepancy in the conception and practice between this particular nature of "ownership" and much more technical, academic and market-driven viewpoints played an integral role during the zoning exercise under MIMP. None of such vintage points cared to listen or substituted a pleasant alternate pathway. This worry, among others, underscores the current state of contention between the users and the managers of marine resources in Mafia. Stated differently, for the local and coastal resource-dependent community in Mafia, the worth and successful exploitation of coastal resources is achieved when they can keep their freedom and flexibility in exploiting the resources in a way that could inspire their creativity but fundamentally assures their survival.

Although there is increasing inclusion of the poor in various development processes in the developing world (Lyons *et al.,* 2018; Hussein, 2016), the question is whether their engagement amounts to what could be regarded as *genuine community participation* and whether such participation contributes to enhancing their capabilities to shape and command their destiny. The various modes employed by those regarded as promoters or experts of development have been widely condemned for not translating into successful implementation and enhancing people's freedoms and capabilities (Chambers, 1994; Floridia, 2017).

Since 1968, there have been discussions in Tanzania about marine parks, especially in the Mafia region, given its distinctive marine resources nature and the value it could bring to the development table (UNEP, 2002). With the Fisheries Act of 1970, Tanzania made its first attempt to manage and protect coastal resources through "protected areas" in 1975. These areas have been established in seven small reef areas, including Tutia Reef and Chole Bay in Mafia. Their inability to transform local fishing systems and strengthen and support diverse livelihood options resulted in such reserves becoming "paper reserves" devoid of any functioning administrative system (UNEP, 2002; WWF, 1991; Ngoile *et al.,* 1992).

However, at the turn of the 1980s, motivated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to transmogrify Tanzania's centrally planned economy into a market-oriented economy, Tanzania was yearning to promote the tourism industry as one the main contributors to economic growth (Joseph, 2019). As a result, the introduction of MIMP fitted neatly into both international and national development concerns.

Established in 1995, MIMP is the country's first park focusing entirely on coastal resources. It encompasses roughly a quarter of the Mafia's administrative boundaries and the majority of the open sea and islets (URT-MIMP, 2007; URT, 2013). The basis for establishing this nationally and internationally funded park was to create a prototype for an innovative type of natural site that intended to promote both sustainable development and conservation largely dependent on ecotourism. Owing to its scientificity[7], the park was primarily planned by donor agencies (mainly internationals), ecologists, marine scientists, and environmentalists in collaboration with the Tanzanian government through its experts. By their professional orientations, such experts, by and large, belonged to either of the former groups. In the later stage, inexpedient participation of the coastal resource-dependent communities was in response to criticisms rendered over the exclusionary and non-participatory nature of the conservatory measures exercised in wildlife parks in Tanzania (Walley, 2004).

A series of scientific studies, funded by Shell Petroleum Development Limited-Tanzania, was launched by the Marine Science Institute (MSI) in Tanzania in collaboration with the Frontier-Tanzania project in 1988 to provide baseline information upon which Tanzania's first marine park would be developed. Consequently, marine, socio-economic and biophysical information was collected and analysed, and the Southern Mafia area, covering ten villages, was resolved for the establishment of the MIMP. This determination yielded a consultative technical meeting organised by the responsible Ministry in February 1991 to explore further and interrogate the concept of a "marine park" in Dar es Salaam. The outcome of this rendezvous led to the formation of a "select committee" that was tasked to recommend and create a framework for implementing and governing the MIMP (Ngoile *et al.,* 1992). After consultations and information-sharing between the select committee, Tanzanian Frontier-Tanzania experts, and the international conservation community, the concept of a "multiple-use park" involving the surrounding communities was born.

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[7] Designing marine protected areas (MPAs) is a complicated process that frequently involves a variety of stakeholders and necessitates finding a middle ground between competing goals. However, science is of utmost importance. The ecological efficiency of MPAs gets threatened when science is disregarded. This attitude played a huge role in the inclusion and exclusion politics of MIMP. Read more: WWF, (1998). *Sustaining the Mafia Island Marine Park* [Project Funding Document for Submission to DFID under the Joint Funding Scheme]. Gland, Switzerland.

According to the MIMP warden, the committee identified the need for two fundamental activities while developing and preparing a proposal for a protected area. The first was forming a forum where various stakeholders, including the Mafia community, could share their views on the park's viability. The second was, evaluating the prevailing legal framework governing "protected areas" and preparing draft documents and recommendations for any required new laws. Although loosely sketched, this account is also found in URT-GMP (2011) and Greg (2010). The former activity was implemented through the first workshop, sponsored by WWF, held on the island on 20th-25th October 1991. As a result, a plan for establishing the park was prescribed. This plan served as the foundation upon which the MIMP's GMP was founded. The draft GMP generated a series of other workshops conducted in Dar es Salaam (without local representation) and was completed in 1993. The plan resulted in the drafting of the Marine Park and Reserves Act (1994) and the gazettement of the park in 1995 (Ibid). Part of the plan's mandated roles includes developing short and long-term development plans, zoning, and playing managerial and administrative functions. However, according to the WWF district representative, excessive and unwarranted control, bureaucracy, authoritarianism, and marginalisation have, so far, been experienced in implementing such roles. In Greg's (2010) and Joseph's (2019) opinions, the GMP was ambitious and prescriptive. Despite the overwhelming claims of local community engagement, the plans for whichever mandated undertaking had not been shared with local stakeholders. Similarly, according to the retired Community Liaison Officer in the district, be it during the discussions or development of the GMP, nowhere did the drafters or the document ever acknowledged that, fundamentally, most community members around the park were heavily reliant on marine resource the same for their daily needs and wants.

Similarly, one of the government officials in the fisheries department in the district revealed that, since 1994, several technical and consultative seminars and workshops have been conducted in Dar es Salaam and Coast regions and Mafia district regarding the welfare of the park. Of all such engagements, it is the 2010 two-day GMP review workshop which is alleged to have at least invited one participant from each MIMP village. The meeting was attended by over 90 stakeholders from different walks of life. The rest of the sessions either happened without MIMP village leaders' representatives, which was the most common practice, or one of them (village leaders) gets hand-picked by the warden to represent others. Apparently, however, this unequalled meeting was more of an academic gathering in which the 2011 GMP was deliberated on and approved. Despite visible complaints from local representatives, no deliberate efforts were made to inquire about or accommodate their opinions but a series of presentations by experts as if they were all peers. In this context, the local people had little influence, given the modality and nature of the discussion and the subject matter.

According to the GMP (2011), four (4) noticeable changes were made in the 2004 document. One significant change, which in the opinion of many local participants who attended the workshop, raised heated debate during the discussion and approval and still does even today, was the proposal to increase the Marine Park area from 741km² to 822km² and the number of Marine Park Villages from 10 to 13 (today the number has been increased up to 14). In line with the park warden, the primary drive behind this review was "the need for updating and strengthening current strategies and clarifying certain explanations to various stakeholders". Almost everything in the new document has remained pretty much the same. Unfortunately, when one cares to interrogate whether or not community members were genuinely engaged in the actual establishment of the park, the 1991 and 1999 workshops loom large. While the park warden passionately shared the conductions of workshops as the

centrepiece of "community participation", the same feeling was not shared among the community members, even by some other local elites.

5. MIMP Preparatory and Planning Workshop (1991)

The planning workshop held in October 1991 was a result of the *select committee* selected by the then-Minister of "Tourism, Natural Resources, and Environment" in February 1991. This committee consisted of marine scientists from Marine Science Institute, the parliamentarian for Mafia, the Fisheries Division, the WWF country and local (based in Mafia) representatives, the Regional Natural Resource Office (Coast Region), and the Wildlife Conservation Society for Tanzania (WWF, 1991; 1998; 2016; Walley, 2004; Mwaipopo, 2008). Given the roster of attendees above, it is evident that neither a representative from any villages where the project was planned to be effected nor fishers directly affected by its execution were present. Argued differently, the local residents in Mafia, who were one of the key stakeholders, only became officially involved in deliberations about the park in the 1991 workshop, which took place in Mafia— "Mafia Island Lodge."

According to WWF (1991), the primary objective of this workshop was to assess the feasibility and worthiness of establishing a marine park in Mafia. The workshop convened different stakeholders, including state officials at all administrative levels; international environmental NGOs' delegates; a member of parliament (MP-Mafia), the academia community specialising in marine and natural resource sciences; and the chairpersons and secretaries of all villages incorporated in the park. Despite attending the workshop to oppose the proposal for establishing the park as initially planned, the four village leaders (from Jibondo, Mlongo, Bweni and Tumbuju), who were among those who attended, attested that they eventually adopted a new affirmatory position. This was after they had received the assurance from their MP that "the community" and not just leaders' participation within the park would be made mandatory, and the establishment of the park was fundamentally aimed at combating the use of dynamite. Furthermore, community leaders were also assured that far from the widespread rumour, the park would create many jobs through ecotourism and not the opposite. The inception process not only lacked transparency in its execution but also exhibited a sense of compulsiveness, as revealed in the excerpt below:

> The Office of the District Commissioner sent us the summons letter through the Ward Executive Officer. I, for one, received the letter on Saturday evening and was required to attend the workshop on Monday morning at the Mafia Lodge Hotel. I was supposed to attend my mother, who was admitted to the District Hospital at Kilindoni, but given the instructions in the letter, which required only the chairman and the secretary to attend, I was compelled to attend. Fellow leaders and I never got time to consult, and the letter did not openly mention Marine Park; it only said conservation meeting. But because we had heard rumours about the coming of Marine Park, we knew it was about it [...] They also already knew the position of community members and what we would say, so they decided to fool us by using English. We had planned to abscond from the meeting during lunchtime despite their allowance. However, after they assured us of the wider community participation, employment [opportunities to the residents] and smearing out foreign and dynamite fishers, we decided to stay over (IDI: Former Village Chairperson; Juani Islet Village, 13.01.2014).

The MIMP evaluation report of 2007 hailed the workshop's outcome as positive. The Ministry published the proceedings though they were in the English language (the workshops' official language). Nevertheless, records in all participating villages show that this report was never availed to local residents or the leaders who participated in the workshop. More importantly, in an attempt to ascertain the content and local people's knowledge of what was discussed in the workshop, all of the former village representative attendees attested that the workshop dwelled much on technical issues already drafted on paper. Yet, quite often, some participants discussed such matters in a foreign language (English) despite the convener insisting the participants also clarify in Kiswahili (local and national language). Nevertheless, having conceded defeat, what the village leaders emphasised during the workshop was the involvement of all community members of the villages they represented before the actual implementation of the idea began.

Although many local residents had serious misgivings concerning the establishment of the park and were particularly concerned about the contents of future regulations, the nature of the park's politics (in particular, who will be responsible for ascertaining, executing, and overseeing the implementation of these rules, and at whose expense), the main subject they all understood and shared was that the introduction of the park was the response to massive dynamite fishing, an issue which community members unanimously wanted to be contained. The presence of WWF and other International (predominantly white) representatives in the workshop further reinforced their belief and assurance. This was because of their profound historical disbelief in the government officials, given their track record. However, what they did not understand, much less bothered about, was the level of external engagement.

The foregoing discussion and analysis demonstrate how deceitful the project was to local residents, who depended largely on the waters for livelihoods. Furthermore, different from what the workshop had been initially set for—feasibility assessment, several other issues unrelated to feasibility, for example, "zoning", took centre stage. Three former village leaders who attended the workshop admitted to having frequently heard about the term "zoning" during the discussion, and maps were shared in the workshop's documents. Given that the whole conversation was technical and on paper, it limited their understanding of what was actually being discussed. This attempt further exemplifies that the intention to set up the park was already predetermined and that there was no backing down, regardless of the community's wishes. Therefore, this suffices to conclude that this six-day workshop was partly a convenient way of doing away with community claims of not being involved in the planning and implementation process. Such a conclusion is widely shared in Agarwal's (2007) and Kelly's (2017) analyses of failed community participation in developing countries.

6. Ecotourism Workshop— (1999)

In discussing the second workshop, termed an "ecotourism workshop", in 1999, the paper uses Walley's (2004) detailed account of the said workshop and respondents' testimonies in arguing the case. Christine Walley is an American Anthropologist who participated in Mafia when the workshop was conducted as one of the invitees.

Subsequent to the planning workshop held in 1991, a sequence of technical meetings ensued, culminating in the establishment of the GMP. This led to the creation of the Marine Parks and Reserve Act (1994) and, ultimately, the official declaration and execution of MIMP in July 1995. However, four years after its implementation, another workshop, this time, a somewhat wide-ranging meeting with just about the similar composition as the first workshop, was convened at the Mafia Lodge by the park officials. Leaders who represented the ten (10) villages included in the park ruefully noted that the "1999 Ecotourism seminar" was the first

formal and informal marine park-related meeting in which the leadership of those villages got the invites since the early planning workshop held in 1991. The meeting was in response to one of the recommendations made by WWF, which then acted as a crucial channel for the government and other funding agencies to access technical competence for the construction of the park. The meeting primarily aimed to identify and chart the way forward on various current and potential setbacks associated with ecotourism in the Park (URT-GMP, 2011).

However, despite a broadened base of participants, the problem of the number and nature of participants, which first emerged in the 1991 workshop, resurfaced. As articulated by Walley (2004), participants included ministerial, regional, and district bureaucrats; researchers and academicians; environmental NGOs and organisations (local and international); tour operators; a fair number of international(s) (largely the Northenists); and two representatives (village chairperson and VEO) from each village on the island. This meant that only 20 representatives came from villages affected by MIMP, and 24 came from villages that had not been considered part of the MIMP then. However, this number was small compared to the 104 participants who belonged to the rest of the groups. To a greater extent, this tyranny of the majority and the nature of content affected the involvement and weight of the message the locals wanted to convey, as evidenced by this narration:

> When we reached the hotel, most of us were shocked due to the huge number of people who had come to the workshop. We were promised in the first meeting that there would be a huge meeting for local residents and a few outsiders, but the opposite was apparent. This situation scared most of my colleagues. Nevertheless, some of us were arduously able to air our complaints" (IDI: The 1999 Village Representatives; Jibondo Village, 18.01.2014).

Considering the participants' canonical characterisation, they can be categorised into three main groups: Mafia local community representatives, government and non-government personnel, and foreign and international organisations representatives (mostly Euro-Americans). Such compartmentalisation seems analytically distinct and commonsensical at first glance and correlates to local, national, and international domains. However, in reality, such categorisations are foraminous with crosscutting rivalries and alliances (Hussein, 2016: Lane, 2015). For instance, even though the two latter groups, collectively comprising marine scientists, conservationists, tourists, researchers, academicians, tour operators, and political elites, engage in vehement discussions with each other, they often share the same practical and philosophical grasp of the concept of "development" as well as "nature" as generically construed in the modernisation discourses. This is because, even though almost all-powerful international agencies are "Euro-Americans" in origin, most of the participants in these two groups are loyal followers of the conventional school of thought. Their mental frameworks have been systematically oriented towards a 'global' science regarding what qualifies to be christened "proper conservation of nature" and how nature should contribute to "development" through their formal training. These subjects are constantly employed in development, tourism, and conservation-related departments, NGOs, and institutions (Richardson, 2019; World Bank, 2015). They frequently exchange concepts, language, and medium, resulting in an international-national space to which the non-conventional cultures, interpretations, and needs, particularly those of the Mafia local community members, rarely have access.

Yet again, the issue of language used during the meeting posed a serious hindrance to local people's participation. This finding is consistent with numerous testimonies reiterated during the FGDs and in-IDIs. Whereas the two influentially dominant groups could fluently

speak English—a medium considered "a marine park language", the overwhelming majority of the locals could only speak Kiswahili, leading to systematic marginalisation of the locals.

Furthermore, different from what is stated in the various government documents, for example, in URT (2000a) and URT (2000b) on the value of local people's knowledge and institutions concerning the conservation and utilisation of nature, clearly, the whole process of introducing the park ignored this worth. For the park warden, local people's involvement in the seminar was a strategy to educate them on various issues that impinged on the development of ecotourism and protection of marine resources in the area, including dynamite fishing, which he circuitously claimed to have also been caused by them. When interrogated why he thought Mafians could as well engage in dynamiting while this was one the fundamental reasons they had accepted the coming of the park in the planning workshop of 1991, the warden argued:

> We included locals in the process because they are unaware of the effects of dynamiting and other destructive fishing methods on the aquatic environment and its endowment. What could otherwise be the justification?" (IDI: MIMP Warden; Mafia, 15.01.2014).

Nevertheless, such remarks were utterly discordant with the detailed accounts that community members repeatedly shared with the researcher on the effects caused by dynamiting and other illegal fishing gear on the reefs. During the FGD in Jibondo islet, a place that had experienced the highest primary school dropouts since the 1990s, participants elaborated on how dynamiting negatively impacted the marine resources in the area:

> Many villagers are outraged by the use of dynamite predominantly by Dar es Salaam-based fisherfolks operating on the island. The blasts generate undersea quakes that could kill all types and sizes of fish and destroy coral reefs. Marine resources then ascend on the surface and are scooped up by watercraft, allowing them to collect more catches with little effort and minimal investment(IDI: MIMP Warden; Mafia, 15.01.2014).

Clearly, the usage of the language of "participation" by the park warden, among many other professionals, aligns well with the modernisation perspective that considers formal education an antidote and panacea for "underdevelopment" in developing cultures like Tanzania (Chachage, 2001; Richardson, 2019). In their view, for the park to succeed and realise both national and international expectations, the specific and specialised form of knowledge necessitating the need for "experts" to educate was inevitable. Against this background, the local communities' vast knowledge and practical experience of ecosystems and biodiversity were disregarded. Under such circumstances, the Mafia's divergent perspective on the factors contributing to depletion and potential solutions, as opposed to the implementation of the park, which primarily revolved around concerns related to corruption within the fisheries sector, hostile policies, preferential treatment towards non-natives, poverty, neglect of the community's socio-cultural welfare, and the political dynamics on the island, conveniently receded. The idea that local communities had little and sometimes no knowledge of marine resources and, therefore, needed to be undemocratically governed contradicts the doctrine of good governance preached in the new conservation architecture. This ethnocentrically-loaded and unfounded viewpoint has been a source of tension between

managers and users (Poto *et al.*, 2022). The apparent outcome has been an increasing rate of carelessness towards marine resources, thus, their depletion.

7. Bureaucracy and Exclusionary Politics of Local People's Participation

Proceeding from the nature of participation reflected in the 1999 seminar, without a doubt, the MIMP was never unscrambled from the bureaucratic tendencies that have long existed in most government projects, which hinder participation, thus, causing the failure of many development projects (UNDP, 2019; Walley, 2004, Chachage, 1998). Whereas bureaucracy is created by governance as a means of institutionalising equality and meritocracy in the eyes of the law (Weber, 1947), equally, it produces an elite of knowledgeable professionals impervious to the power and control of the rank and file. The workings of bureaucracy and exclusionary politics were well demonstrated in the decision-making structure, the use and choice of terminologies, and information control, among others.

While delving into the park's bureaucratic operations, it is crucial to notice how the rhetoric of "participation" veiled a deeply hierarchical management structure that kept the local Mafians out of any genuine and meaningful decision-making authority. Overall, MIMP is organised generically. The managerial structure of the park, like all other bureaucratic organisations premised on generalised principles, was not born out of the specific dynamics and experiences of the African continent, Tanzania, or Mafia in particular. Instead, the park's structure was adapted from the governance framework of the Australian "Great Barrier Reef National Marine Park" and modified from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) guidelines (Walley, 2002; Mathew, 2018). The park's wider developmental and conservational objectives, aspirations, and priorities are reflected in the conventional strategy and framework that had risen to prominence within WWF and several other international nature conservation-related organisations, including those under the United Nations. Such influential organisations have been working and collaborating closely with national and regional natural resource-oriented institutions in generating generic conservational frameworks which could potentially be implemented in a variety of cultures, regardless of the socio-economic, historical, and political contexts (Fernandez, 2017; Christopher, 2018), as was for the case of the MIMP.

Apart from being a generic framework, the MIMP's structure is highly hierarchical to be pigeonholed as a "participatory" venture. The skewed power structure exemplified in the governance and management of the park presents a flagrant breach of the moral codes encapsulated and widely acknowledged in all two (2000 & 2011) GMPs. In essence, it is this moral, democratic, and survivability pledge that inspired the people of Mafia to support the establishment of the park.

The park's organisational structure, amounting to earlier prophylactic national parks, is centred around a designated warden with enormous power prescribed by the Marine Parks and Reserves Act 1994. Under the law, the park's superintendent (warden) is chosen by a governing board nominated by the "Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism" and is directly responsible to that board. Unfortunately, there is no seat for a local representative on the board, but all have been allocated to international and national repute elites. In reply to the absence of local representation, the warden argued that:

> Appointing a Mafia resident as a member of the board of trustees will be inappropriate given that according to the law, the body is mandated to oversee all existing and future marine parks and reserves in the whole country (IDI: MIMP-Warden; Mafia, 15.01.2014).

That notwithstanding, surprisingly, the governing board (board of trustees) had reserved a seat for a marine park-related business representative, even though the interests of most business people would not be to conserve and manage but exploit for maximum profit (Chachage, 2001).

By the law, despite being facilitated by an advisory committee in discharging his/her mandated responsibilities, the park warden is only responsible to the governing board. The advisory committee has no supervisory jurisdiction over the warden and only serves to "advise," as the title indicates. Of the 10 to 13 members constituting the advisory committee, only two positions were allocated to local community members' representatives. Even so, it was the Ministry's Permanent Secretary who was to appoint all the committee members. Put differently; local community members were not permitted to nominate one of their own, as the marine park's good governance requires (FAO, 2013); thus, their genuine representation could hardly be guaranteed. In such circumstances, the role of the local community in park governance, essentially in decision-making, remained prescribed and primarily symbolic. The practice has remained hierarchical, favouring a few with organised conventional education but with less lived experience.

In addition, every village incorporated in the park was legally mandated to constitute a "marine park committee". The advisory committee required village marine park committees to submit their detailed suggestions in writing about any contested specific park issue. The village committees had no power to influence or make any decision, small or big, on any matter regarding the park, to the extent that, during the period of this study, none of their suggestions had ever been implemented, let alone considered. For any of their recommendations to reach the governing board (board of trustees), the GMP mandated the village committees to channel their opinions or grievances through the statutorily all-powerful park warden, who always frustrated their efforts. Since no other legally recognised channel has been furnished to them, most of their concerns have remained on the fringes. To worsen the situation, the park's by-laws require that the park warden or his/her representative be invited to all the park village committees' meetings. Apart from responding to some aired concerns, his presence minimised their freedom to argue against the park management and also ensured that no serious actions were aforethought. The warden frequently rejected the village committees' concerns under the pretext that they were born out of illegal meetings, which he had deliberately refused to honour their invitation. The not-uncommon power imbalance in most participatory-oriented African programs prevailed in the park.

Similarly, the term "stakeholders", which has received broad popularity in development programmes at the local and international stages in the recent past, signifies a substantial impact on community participation. In line with the GMP (2000; 2011), stakeholders were recognised as all coastal resource users and managers with genuine interests in the marine resources and participation rights within and beyond the park. Although this term evokes democratic values, it is essential to understand how the concept of stakeholders was exercised during the workshops. The organisation of the two workshops assumed co-equality existed between the locals and the rest. Thus, the notion of stakeholders aided in obfuscating actual hierarchies and power dynamics that prevailed throughout the two workshops. The stakeholders' notion, therefore, implied that the Mafia's local community, the business community, development and conservation experts, and government officials all enjoyed and shared the same social, political, economic, and intellectual power and interests. In other words, this meant that the local community was expected to contribute and behave the same way as the rest of the groups, thus shrouding the authority and power exerted by elites and the government. Furthermore, such rhetoric occluded multiple agencies' diverse economic,

educational, and social influences, which mostly curtailed the locals' capacity to exchange and interact with the rest in equal measure, as demonstrated in all workshops.

One of the most common methods in which bureaucracy is weaponised to settle dominant cultural, political, and economic scuffles or deny one's rights involves the strategic utilisation and framing of wordings to control information as well as harass, exclude, and draw in stakeholders (Christopher, 2018). In 1995, for example, the then interim marine park warden objected to the Kiswahili language-translated version of the "Marine Parks and Reserves Act (1994)", as well as the WWF's efforts to make sure that each village had been furnished with a copy of GMP and the Act for ease reference. Although the approval was granted after a long battle and foreign interventions since 2006, deliberate attempts to make it a delicate and scarce resource have been sustained. According to Young (2009), such efforts evidenced during the introduction and management of the park mirrored the wider political-institutional complexities:

> The legal system of Tanzania is, in essence, similar to that of the *Eastern Bloc*; therein, legislations and several government actions are immune to the same degree of public appreciation, disclosure, and due diligence as in common and civil law cultures. The dissemination of presidential decrees and legislative acts is always dubious and scattershot, even within the government. Only a handful of government departments and agencies have printouts of the most fundamental laws, such as the Constitution. Laws prohibiting or mandating actions of civil servants are frequently ineffective because the vast majority of those who are mandated or prohibited will never respect the law (ibid.:16).

The unwillingness to ease accessibility of the laws denies the community from understanding their power, rights, and responsibilities and mostly creates an increasing ambiguity of the law, eventually inspiring a rising sense of corruption and personal power for those entrusted to enforce them.

Therefore, given the ill-participation reflected in all workshops, the bureaucratic structure and the continual perpetuation of the same in various operational circles of the park put the current and future state of marine resources in a quagmire. As a result of ill-participation, key stakeholders whom the managers had slotted into a "spectator" position and thought had minimal influence on its existence have now turned into their number—one enemy. While the locals maintained that marine resources belonged to them and God, they also protested that the government had forced its way into their space without prior permission or information. On the other hand, the government argues that natural resources belong to all Tanzanians while claiming its constitutional mandate to safeguard the interests of all citizens, including the Mafians (URT-GMP, 2011).

Consequently, owing to structural and individual barriers, community members, through their leaders, were not genuinely informed on the concept of the "park", how exactly it was going to function, who was going to be affected, and how they were going to be affected, among other, which led to anxiety on the part of users. But because of being enticed by guaranteeing them employment, financial support, more participation, and halting of dynamite and massive fishing, ignorance of such aspects did not seem important to users until later in 1999 when the concept of zoning started to be implemented. From thereon, zoning has been one of the points of contention between the users and managers. Whereas the users complained of being deceived by the managers regarding where, when, and how they were supposed to fish under the new arrangement, the Park officials maintained that they were only

discharging their responsibilities as per the law. This situation has resorted in the invention of new fishing tact and the use of power by both sides. For the local community, this includes using destructive fishing gear, among others, to ensure a large harvest using minimal time and to avoid being apprehended by park officials. In the process, this has defeated the purpose for which the park was created and, instead, contributed to the depletion of marine resources.

> When the first meeting was held in 1991, our representatives did not tell us that the proposed park had planned to divide our sea. We were told in the village meetings that Marine Park was our saviour from dynamite fishers, but this is not what they are doing now. That meeting was just a ploy to make us cooperate, but diving the seas was their main agenda from the start, and they knew our leaders could not have agreed to this. Initially, after our leaders had refused to accompany them in the zoning exercise, we were told that Marine Park was going to provide gears, vessels, engines, and ice-box to every fisher for a free-interest loan to enable them to fish in the deep sea, and they were asked to convey that message to every fisher in the village. Besides, we were told that only a few areas would be affected. During the first village council meeting, the Marine Park officials told us that the sea was to be divided into three parts; the core, specified, and general use zones. The core zones were not to be used until six months, when they would be opened for fishing for three months. In the specified zones, only customary angling techniques, for example, fish fences and traps, ring nets, lines, and fish nets from 2.5 inches mesh size, were to be utilised, while in the general zone, every type of gear was to be used. But after the zoning exercise was complete, Marine Park officials changed the uses without informing us. Today, no local fisher is allowed to fish in the designated core areas except for tourists and other foreign fishers. While in the specified and general zones, only traditional gears, ring nets, lines, and fishnets from 3.0 inches mesh size are allowed. However, even those who had tried to use these gears were either being pursued, apprehended, fined and/or their gears confiscated. To cut a long story short, Marine Park is determined to kill us by hunger. Since the sea is only open to the 'affluent', foreign and big fishers under the pretext that they use acceptable gear and have permits, some of our fishers have decided to fish by force "come what may" and by using any method possible(IDI: First Chairperson-Kirongwe Village Council; Kirongwe, 21.01.2014).

Notably, what was intimated by the chairman about zoning, and the promises attached to it, was found to be the only information people knew about zoning, and it was familiar to all local residents in all 14 villages. Responding to the issues of zoning and 3.0 inches mesh size, the warden indirectly admitted to having installed such mechanisms without prior or proper information to local stakeholders. In an interview with the DC, she was concerned that despite good government intentions, the operationalisation was fraughted with dishonesty. She believed that honesty should have been the best approach from the get-go.

Overall, the park's promises to cooperate with local communities in a "participatory" fashion in the governance of marine resources never eventuated. Contrarily, through their leadership, community members were cunningly obliged to endorse the workings of the park with very little and superficial knowledge of what it was about and ought to function. The nature and types of guidelines that would guide the park's operations and how they would be implemented remained unclear to the local community.

8. Conclusion:

Community participation is a fundamental aspect of effective natural resources governance. This article has demonstrated how the participation of the local community has been ill-executed in the entire process of establishing and implementing MIMP to the point of escalating other than addressing marine resources depletion and destruction. The analysis has revealed that since the inception of MIMP, the governance of marine resources in Mafia has been characterised by deception and tricking of the local community. The lack of genuine participation of the local community in the governance process has produced nothing but mistrust between the users and managers, strained relationships, power struggles, and the unsubtle politically successful management plan. Consequently, unprecedented cases of marine resource depletion have continued despite the presence of the park. The study concludes that the current unsustainable marine resource practices in the park are, in some measure, a result of deceptive, inconsiderate, poor, and disingenuous participation exercised during and after the inception of the marine park in 1995. Unless the participatory course is altered and local concerns are genuinely addressed, MIMP will likely continue to experience marine resource depletion. This study is a contribution to the already burgeoning literature on natural resources governance but with a specific focus on the fishery sector. It shows how deceptive engagement and consistent downplaying of citizens' demands can endanger marine resources even in protected areas. It, therefore, recommends that resolving marine resource enigmas requires a plan that genuinely incorporates the needs, expectations, responsibilities, lived experience, and core competency of the most involved and affected population, which MIMP has failed to uphold thus far.

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