

## **Between Policy Intent and Practice: Negotiating Access to Land and Other Resources in Tanzania's Wildlife Management Areas**

Authors: Moyo, Francis, Funk, Sharissa, and Pretzsch, Jürgen

Source: Tropical Conservation Science, 10(1)

Published By: SAGE Publishing

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940082917744167>

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# Between Policy Intent and Practice: Negotiating Access to Land and Other Resources in Tanzania's Wildlife Management Areas

Tropical Conservation Science  
Volume 10: 1–17  
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sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav  
DOI: 10.1177/1940082917744167  
journals.sagepub.com/home/trc



Francis Moyo<sup>1,2</sup>, Sharissa Funk<sup>3</sup>, and Jürgen Pretzsch<sup>4</sup>

## Abstract

This article analyses how states and nonstate actors' efforts at sustaining natural resource lead to the exclusion of those who are most dependent on access to it. An access lenses review of Burunge Wildlife Management Area unravels the paradox between policy promise and practice. Situating our case in the context of neoliberal conservation that offers opportunities of patronage, rent-seeking, and capital accumulation to various state and private investors, we show that Wildlife Management Areas concentrate licit benefits to a few elites, while excluding the majority of rural peoples in accessing their customary lands and natural resources. This leads people to rely on illicit access mechanisms, and consequently, leading to violent confrontations between game scouts and people and protests and struggles to regain legal access. These conflicts erode rural peoples' trust and willingness to support conservation. The widely overlooked socioeconomic and political contextualization in conservation policy formation, often framed in apolitical and normative terms, acts as a vehicle for different meanings and practices that are mobilized by different actors to promote their own interests. Thus, state and nonstate actors, whose interests override ideals of an apolitical conservation vision, jointly produce an austere conservation regime that strips local people from access to resources.

## Keywords

Wildlife Management Areas, land, access, elite capture, conflicts

## Introduction

For the past two decades the discourse and policy negotiations in conservation-development nexus has been to harmonize compliance with conservation rules (Kahler & Gore, 2012; Solomon, Gavin, & Gore, 2015) and improve equality in benefits distribution (Belsky, 1999; Dressler et al., 2010; Miller, Minter, & Malan, 2011; Ribot, Lund, & Treue, 2010; Roe, Mohammed, Porras, & Giuliani, 2013). Policy documents and programs promoted greater inclusion of local communities in natural resource management and sustainable use of the resources for poverty alleviation (see World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987; International Union for Conservation of Nature/United Nations Environment Programme/World Wide Fund for Nature, 1991; United Nation, 1992; MDG, 2000).

The paradox is, however, that while policy level dialogue seems to favor community inclusion, developments

on the ground appear to further exclude communities from accessing land and resources (Green & Adams, 2015; Sachedina, 2010). This divide between policy intent and outcome can be explained by the way of how policy is formulated and implemented in apolitical and

<sup>1</sup>Technische Universität Dresden, Institute of International Forestry and Forest Products, Dresden, Germany

<sup>2</sup>The Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology, Arusha, Tanzania

<sup>3</sup>University of Copenhagen, Department of Food and Resource Economics, Frederiksberg, Denmark

<sup>4</sup>Technische Universität Dresden, Institute of International Forestry and Forest Products, Dresden, Germany

Received 6 July 2017; Revised 11 October 2017; Accepted 25 October 2017

## Corresponding Author:

Francis Moyo, The Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology, Arusha, Box 447, Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania.  
Email: francis.moyo@daad-alumni.de



normative terms (Benjaminsen, Goldman, Minwary, & Maganga, 2013; Humphries, 2013; Kiwango, Komakech, Tarimo, & Martz, 2015). While calls for good governance, transparency, and accountability abound, the political economy of patronage, rent-seeking, and elite capture is ignored rather than actively engaged and transformed (Sachedina, Igoe, & Brockington, 2010). Consequently, neoliberal conservation does not promote the principles of good governance, transparency, and accountability, but rather acts as a vehicle for practices of exclusion that are mobilized by different conservation actors in pursuit of their interests in the name of conservation (Moyo, Ijumba, & Lund, 2016).

In Tanzania, state and nonstate conservation actors<sup>1</sup> have, with substantial donor financing, promoted wildlife conservation outside of core protected areas through the implementation of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) on village lands<sup>2</sup> (Sachedina, 2010; Sachedina et al., 2010; Wilfred, 2010). WMAs, a community-based wildlife management policy, intends to foster wildlife conservation and promote local people's participation in the management of wildlife in their village lands (United Republic of Tanzania, 1998). However, the past two decades of WMAs policy implementation have so far not produced the intended socioeconomic outcomes (see ; Benjaminsen et al., 2013; Bluwstein, Moyo, & Kicheleri, 2016; Moyo et al., 2016; Pailler, Naidoo, Burgess, Freeman, & Fisher, 2015). Instead, various studies have shown how WMAs operate through top-down interventions that lack space for local peoples' meaningful participation (e.g., Baha & Chachage, 2007; Benjaminsen et al., 2013; Benjaminsen & Svarstad, 2010; Bluwstein et al., 2016; Igoe & Croucher, 2007; Loveless, 2014). The centralization of meaningful powers has led to technical planning that offers no room for the accommodation of local peoples' needs in the light of emerging socioeconomic developments (Moyo et al., 2016). However, a recent scholarship by Wright (2017) aptly assert that, WMAs creates spaces for community to collectively demand change and influence access decisions. Yet, Wright (2017) argues that in diverse communities with largely heterogeneous livelihoods strategies, averting top-down drawn access limitations might be less effective.

To illustrate how policy intent is translated into an exclusionary practice of conservation, we explored a prominent Tanzanian WMA, Burunge WMA. Burunge WMA is an interesting case because it is portrayed by its initiators—the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), as a model example of Community Based Wildlife Management (CBWM) (see AWF, n.d.; WWF, 2014), and the WMA training manuals and the proliferation of WMAs in Tanzania have been much based on reported Burunge successes. AWF's practical handbook for setting up and managing a WMA, for instance, refers to Burunge WMA as “one of the most well

managed WMAs in Tanzania and a source of many good practices” (AWF, n.d., p. 15). Burunge WMA is also located in an area with lots of tourism activities (Moyo et al., 2016), which is an ideal condition for realizing WMAs goal to promote activities that are less land dependent on land to such as ecotourism to reduce pressure on land (Goldman, 2003; Nelson, 2013). Yet a large body of literature exist that shows that Burunge WMA is rife with community grievances pertaining to access to land and others resources (see e.g., Bluwstein et al., 2016; Moyo et al., 2016; Igoe & Croucher, 2007; Sachedina, 2008). By employing mixed methods, but largely, ethnographic approaches, this study illustrates the discrepancy between policy promise and practice, and unfolds the underlying reasons for the observed access grievances across a wide range of people practicing different livelihoods strategies in Burunge communities.

### Analytical Framework

To illustrate the discrepancy between policy intents and outcomes on the ground, we studied how the WMA access rules and the different actors have contributed to a restrictive conservation regime that changed the way local people access land and other resources. We employed Ribot and Peluso (2003) access theory as our analytical tool to assess the distribution of WMA benefits across different individuals and groups of actors. Ribot and Peluso (2003, p. 153), define access as the “ability [of an actor] to derive benefits from things”. Thus, following this definition, we set our mission to analyze what an actor actually can do with or without entitlements. Access theory, as an analytical tool, guides the unavailing of the actual distribution of WMA resources and benefits among different actors, and the multiple mechanisms underpinning that distribution, such as property rights (based on customary rights, formal rights, and legal rights), and the structural and relational mechanisms, such as capital, knowledge and skills, technology, markets, labor opportunities, and social identity and relations (see Barrett, Carter, & Little, 2006; Bebbington, 1999; Ribot & Peluso, 2003; Sen, 1997).

Yet, communities are not homogeneous units with a single or aligned interests (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999). Thus, different communities or actors may employ these mechanisms differently to keep access open to themselves or exert power over others (Neimark, 2010). Property rights, for example, may enhance licit access for holders of titles, permits, and licenses (De Janvry & Sadoulet, 2005; Odeny, 2013; Shivji & Kapinga, 1998), but capital, technology, and market opportunities may determine actors' power and influence over the resources (African Union, 2010; Latina, Piermartini, & Ruta, 2011; Prieger, 2013). On the other hand, social relations and culture may play a key role in mediating access to resources (Neimark,

2010). Thus, restrictive access rules (Myers & Muhajir, 2015; Peluso, 1993; Redford & Sanderson, 2000) and neo-liberal conservation approaches that promote property right (Igoe & Croucher, 2007) may drive those who depend on customary claims of rights to resort to illicit access mechanisms to sustain their livelihoods.

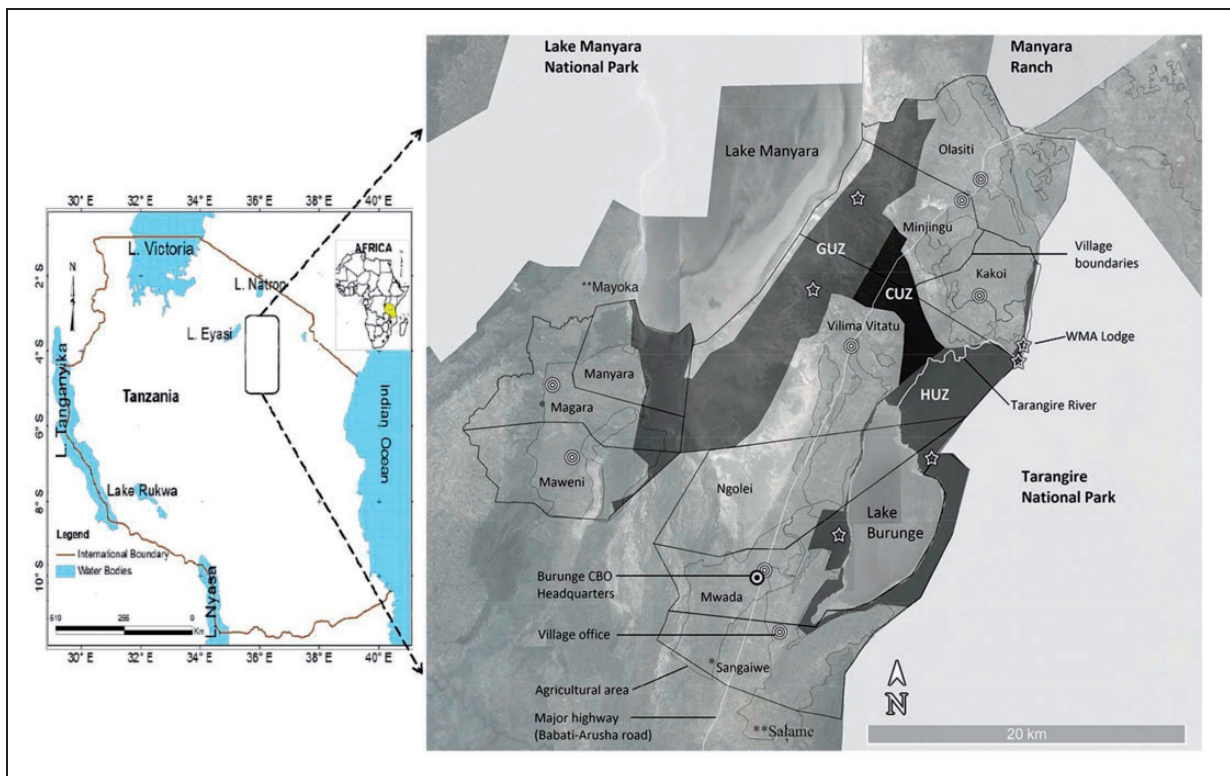
We, therefore, pay due attention to both licit or mandated rights, as well as to illicit actions to identify factors beyond the policy that influence benefits distribution (Ribot & Peluso, 2003). Through access theory lenses, we unveil how different people, depending on their livelihoods strategies, access resources through either contestations and compliance of WMAs rules, and identify actors *who* benefit or lose and *how*. As an analytical tool, access theory also helps to unravel the multiple interests and identities within participating communities and their relationships to external actors (Ameha, Nielsen, & Larsen, 2014; Blaikie, 1987; Belsky, 1999; Bandyopadhyay & Tembo, 2010; Bryant & Bailey, 1997; Forsyth, 2003). We show that different state and nonstate conservation actors assume mediating roles to translate WMA policy into conservation practice by following their own interests in the name of conservation. In this process of policy translation, the WMA policy notion of combining the agenda of rural

peoples' development and sustainable resource management is lost in the struggles over access to land and resources.

## Methods

### Case Study Area and Methods

Burunge WMA is located in Babati district, Manyara region in northern Tanzania (Figure 1). Burunge WMA was gazetted in 2006 as one of the first WMAs in Tanzania. It is managed by a registered community-based organization (CBO), comprising an elected representative from each of the member villages (Moyo et al., 2016). Initially, Burunge WMA consisted of five villages, which released 60,094 acres or 31% of their village lands for wildlife conservation. Between 2005 and 2009, the original five villages split into 10 villages. According to district officials, in response to the rapidly growing population in the area, the district divided the villages as a strategy to bring social services closer to local people (Moyo et al., 2016). Burunge dwellers livelihoods largely depend on agriculture and livestock (Funk, 2015). Agriculture is a primary source of livelihoods for the Mbugwe, Iraqw, Nyaturu, and Nyiramba who dominate



**Figure 1.** Burunge WMA, member villages, tourism investment, and the three use zones (modified from Bluwstein et al., 2016). GUZ = general use zone; CUZ = corridor use zone; HUZ = hunting use zone.



population in Mwada, Sangaiwe, Ngolei, Maweni, Magara, and Manyara villages. They mainly grow maize and beans for subsistence, and rice, sesame, and cotton to generate cash. Livestock are main livelihoods for Arusha and Maasai, ethnicities who are predominant in Minjingu, Kakoi and Olasiti villages, and for the Barbaig in Vilima Vitatu village. However, agriculture and livestock keeping in Burunge are under constant threats from wildlife from the Lake Manyara and Tarangire National Parks and The Manyara Wildlife Ranch (Sachedina, 2008; Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute, 2015) that engulf the villages (see Figure 1).

Methodologically, we used both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. Quantitative methods were used to capture information about licit or mandated benefits. Data were collected over a period of 11 months.<sup>3</sup> Ethnographic approach following Thomas, Gavin, and Milfont (2015) was used to collect information about illicit activities or extralegal access mechanisms. The longer duration spent in the field helped us to build trust and establish rapport with local people, hence reducing chances of nonresponse and social desirability biases (Nuno & John, 2015). Twelve villages were surveyed—10 WMA villages and two non-WMA villages. The two non-WMA villages serve as control or comparator villages, whereby information collected from the two non-WMA villages is used as a mirror to filter out access challenges which are not related to WMA interventions. Selection of villages of non-WMA was based on (a) the village being adjacent to a WMA village, (b) a non-WMA village borders a National Park, and (c) a village not involved in any wildlife conservation project that requires it to surrender part of their village lands to conservation. The underlying assumptions were that, residents in neighbouring villages are more likely to have similar livelihood strategies, and a non-WMA village bordering a National Park face a more or less similar wildlife nuisances and tourism potentials like a WMA village. The similarities in socioeconomic and ecological conditions in the study villages make possible the analysis of the impacts of policy on access changes (Noe & Kangalawe, 2015).

We used a semistructured questionnaire to conduct 33 in-depth interviews and 50 focus group discussions, and participated in 13 events, including village assembly meetings, CBO committees, village game scout (VGS) camp and ranger posts (Table 1). Prior to the interviews, we explained the aim of our research to the prospective respondents to obtain their informed consent and promised them anonymity. Participants in focus groups discussions were asked, among other things, to evaluate how village residents abide to the WMA access rules. Using village households register,<sup>4</sup> we selected respondents based on their knowledge of the village socioeconomic and political situation, gender, livelihood

activities, leadership position and specific experiences, and relationship with rule-enforcing agents. To minimize biases associated with this purposive sampling techniques, we repeated the same questions to different respondents, and conducted follow-up interviews with the same respondents and through snowballing sampling to triangulate responses. We carefully observed respondents' facial expressions and gestures to capture the real meaning they wished to convey. All interviews were conducted in Kiswahili by the first author. Kiswahili is a native language for the first author, which is also spoken by almost all residents in Burunge area and in Tanzania.

## Results

This section documents access conflicts and grievances in Burunge WMA, and show how different actors and segments of the Burunge community, a congregation of villages and people bound together by a WMA, navigate WMA access rules to gain or restrict others from accessing WMA resources. It also focuses on unveiling the effectiveness of different resistance mechanisms as practiced by different groups of people and actors. Later on, we mirror the experiences of WMA villages to that of non-WMA villages residents. By doing so, we are able to show how WMAs processes offer very minimal space political space or democratic processes to influence change. Rather WMA process creates spaces for elite capture and incite conflicts among participating communities.

### *De facto Common Pool Resource Access*

Burunge WMA hosts valuable livelihoods resources, such as potential land for agriculture, settlements and livestock grazing, building poles, dry firewood, wood for charcoal production, tourism income, wildlife, as well as thatch grasses and other nontimber forest products (NTFPs). The CBO, which manages the WMA on behalf of the local communities, with the support from the state and nonstate conservation actors (WWF and AWF), has put forward a set of rules in the General Management Plan (GMP) that guide *where*, *how*, and by *who* a particular resource shall be used (Burunge-GMP, 2010). The GMP categorizes the WMA lands into three use zones: corridor use zone, general use zone, and hunting use zone (see Figure 1).

Dry firewood and NTFP collection is permitted in corridor use zone and general use zone, through a free permit issued by the CBO. Yet, none of the residents had applied for one. The CBO office is located about 5 km away from the nearest next WMA village and the furthest village is about 25 km away (one day travel by foot). The distance and the associated transportation

**Table 1.** Type of Survey and Sampling Intensity.

Survey type	Respondents	Number/frequency	
		WMA villages	Non-WMA villages
Focus group discussions	Village leaders	10	2
	Women	10	2
	Herdsmen	10	1
	CBO representatives	3	
	Farmers	10	2
In-depth interviews	VGS	7	
	VGS spouses and relatives	7	
	CBO leaders	8	
	District game officer	1	
	District natural resource officer	1	
	District cooperative officer	1	
	Regional natural resource officer	1	
	VGS injured in access struggles	2	
	Longest serving CBO representatives	3	
	Residences fined for trespassing WMA areas	2	
	Participant observation	Village general assemblies	2
CBO committees meetings		2	
VGS meeting		1	
VGS ranger posts		5	
VGS camp		1	

Note. WMA = Wildlife Management Area; CBO = community-based organization; VGS = village game scout.

costs discourage residents from obtaining the free permits. The VGS' role is to enforce access rules, but they seem to "understand and accept" the situation. They let residents to collect dry firewood and NTFPs without permits, making it de facto a common pool resource in certain areas (see Table 2). The lax enforcement could be attributed to (a) the fact that the permit is free of charge and (b) state actors and transnational conservation non-governmental organizations (NGOs) funding WMAs do not consider collection of dry firewood and NTFP as a threat to conservation, and thus do not put emphasis on its control as in control of livestock gearing, tree felling, and agriculture (see sections that follows). This implies that access rules are only enforced when revenues for the WMAs (and state) and conservation interests are thought to be jeopardized. Yet, permits are useful tools for collecting information about natural resource use trends (Reinganum & Stokey, 1985; Schlager & Ostrom, 1992)—thus Burunge WMA misses useful data for management planning.

### *Restricted Access and Contestations Patterns*

Burunge WMA regime allows livestock grazing in the general use zone only. Cattle are seen by state actors, transnational conservation NGOs funding WMAs and tourism investors as a source of landscape degradation (Goldman, 2009), and disturbance to tourism: "Tourists don't come all the way from Europe to see cattle" (interview with a campsite investor, 2015). Agriculture, tree felling, permanent settlements, and charcoal production are also viewed as the driver of environmental degradation and disjointed conservation (see WWF, 2014), and are therefore prohibited in all the three use zones. However, persistent old grievances and changes in socio-economic factors (Moyo et al., 2016) have led Burunge residents to systematically contest and neglect WMA access rules.

Contestation of access rules largely follows a combination of geographical positioning of the village and land use zonation and residents' livelihood strategies.

**Table 2.** Burunge WMA Access Rules Contestation/Acceptability.

Products/service	Restrictions are broadly accepted and adhered to	Restrictions are obeyed by some/not always	Restrictions are generally (but not openly) ignored	Restrictions are openly contested and ignored
Dry fuel wood collection				
Tree felling (poles for house construction)		Four agricultural villages and two pastoral villages	One agricultural village and one pastoral village	All villages ( <i>de facto</i> free access) Two pastoral villages and one agricultural village <sup>a</sup>
Collecting NTFPs				All villages ( <i>de facto</i> free access)
Charcoal burning	Four agricultural villages and two pastoral villages	Three agricultural villages and one pastoral village		
Livestock grazing		Five agricultural villages	One agricultural village ( <i>migrants herders from other areas</i> )	Four pastoral villages ( <i>host the hunting use zone</i> ) Three agricultural villages ( <i>lucrative wetlands for rice production</i> )
Agricultural land	Five pastoral villages ( <i>host the corridor use zone or share boundary with Tarangire national park</i> )	Two agricultural village		
Permanent settlements	All villages except one agricultural village			One agricultural village <sup>a</sup>
Temporary settlements	All villages except, one pastoral village			One pastoral village ( <i>allegedly Barbaigs newcomers</i> )
Local hunting		All villages		

Note. WMA = Wildlife Management Area; NTFPs = nontimber forest products.

<sup>a</sup>This particular agricultural village is home to fishermen who cut trees to establish dwellings close the shores of Lake Manyara.

In Burunge, villages located along the corridor and hunting use zone are predominantly pastoralist. Historically and prior to the WMA, the abundance of fodder for livestock in these areas attracted Maasai, Waarusha, and Barbaig agropastoralists to settle in. These ethnic groups depended on open access to livestock grazing areas, mainly governed by a communally managed<sup>5</sup> access mechanism to sustain their pastoral-based livelihoods. The introduction of WMA, however, has changed access to grazing lands from communal to a private control. Corridor use zone is seen by state actors and transnational conservation NGOs as an important land needed to connect Tarangire and Manyara National Parks, and the hunting zone is leased to a private investor who has sole use rights. As a result, grazing restrictions in these two zones are highly enforced by VGS and guards hired by private investors to protect their now private property. These changes in property rights impel dwellers in these villages to resort to illicit mechanisms, and openly contest grazing restrictions through violence. Access to agricultural land is openly contested in villages where WMA areas host lucrative wetlands for rice production and have less wildlife that could nuance agriculture production (Moyo et al., 2016). The predominant population in these villages also happens to be Mbugwe, Iraqw, Nyaturu, and Nyiramba who have historically exploited their lands for agriculture. Contestations for other natural resources perceived equally important across the different segments of the Burunge communities were more or less similar across the villages (Table 2).

The manifestation of access struggles along the lines of the largely ethnic-based livelihoods strategies deepens existing societal division between pastoralist and farmers (see Benjaminsen, Maganga, & Abdallah, 2009). While farmers see the absence of wildlife in their areas as an opportunity to advance agriculture, pastoralists believe agriculture pushes away wildlife. An elder Maasai man said: “you will only see wildlife in Maasai villages, we take care of them” (Focus group interview with pastoralists, 2015). The divergent interests among the different segments of the community block the opportunities for a community-level collective action against state and conservationist NGOs. The Burunge case also affirms Benjaminsen et al.’s (2009) assertion that, in Tanzania, conflicts pertaining to access to land and natural resources result in policy and conservation interventions failures to consider historical and past land use experiences.

The restrictive conservation regime also has negative outcomes on wealth generation in WMA communities. A parallel study (conducted by the second author) has shown through a quasi-experimental impact evaluation design that since WMA was established, poor WMA households have, on average, experienced a slower growth in wealth compared to similar non-WMA households (see Funk, 2015). Therefore, we devote the

remaining part of this article in unravelling the struggles and unveiling the mechanisms employed by different actors to gain, maintain access, and restrict others from accessing WMA resources. Although we focus on demonstrating access mechanisms in WMA villages, we use the information gathered from the two non-WMA villages as a mirror to eliminate access challenges that are not originating from the WMA interventions (nonintervention nuisances). Throughout we demonstrate that although policy intent is to improve local peoples’ access to land and resources, state and nonstate conservation actors’ efforts at realizing the policy goals lead to the very negative outcomes they strive to abate.

### *Access to Land for Cultivation and Settlements*

Agriculturalists and individuals seeking to establish permanent dwellings often use political maneuvers and bribe village officials to influence WMA rule enforcement. They avoid any form of violent confrontations, which could trigger their immediate eviction, because dwellings are permanent and crops need to grow for at least one agricultural cycle (mostly more than 3 months until they are harvested). Their sedentary nature, therefore, requires “good” relations with village officials, assuring their very existence. In one of the WMA villages, for example, about 13 individuals (some of them district officials) possess documents which show that between the year 2001 and 2005,<sup>6</sup> the village council offered them land in the area now pertaining to the WMA. The documents issued by the then village executive officer granted each of the individuals about 10 to 30 acres of lucrative wetlands for agriculture. The documents, however, do not meet the legal requirements, as they were not accompanied by village assembly or village council minutes of consent as required by the Village Land Act No. 5 of 1999 (URT, 1999). Village council members whose signatures appear in the documents also disowned them.<sup>7</sup> Yet, the costly and slow legal processes make the village government less effective in reclaiming the lands. The village chairman argued: “[ . . . ] every day [frequently] we [village leaders] have to go to the police, they tell us to bring this, bring that, but there is no action.”

In another WMA village, the village leadership was protective of people who have established themselves in the WMA area. In July 1, 2010, the then Babati district commissioner ordered the village to evict all individuals who were seen by the CBO to be encroaching on the WMA area. Part of the district commissioner’s order read: “By authority rendered to me by the Prime Minister’s Act of 1962, Section 182 C, I order that all people from the [name] village and other areas, to vacate the WMA lands within seven days.” Village leaders, however, ignored the order, arguing that they do not have alternative land or funds to offer as



compensation. Also, the district authorities were silent thereafter; most likely because (a) this particular village has less wildlife and therefore is less important for the generation of WMA revenues and (b) some of the farms in this village are “owned” and cultivated by district elites who use their office affiliation to suppress actions taken against them (Moyo et al., 2016). On the other hand, in areas such as a hunting use zone and areas where tourist campsites are located, those encroaching the WMA lands have been immediately evicted or taken to court.<sup>8</sup> These areas generate all the income for the CBO (except for income from NGOs donations) and state. This implies that lack of potential revenues for the CBO and state, and absence of wildlife and private investors’ interests in some parts of the WMA lands, offers opportunity for less violent access mechanisms such as political pressure and mimicking behind powerful district elites mistakes to be effective. However, the lax enforcement lessens opportunities for ecological restoration in the areas thought as “less valuable WMA areas,” which if properly managed through land enclosures,<sup>9</sup> vegetation regeneration would allow wildlife to comeback.

### Access to Grazing Land

Traditionally, pastoralists organize themselves and work in groups to exploit communal land rights that provide them access to shared grazing areas. But some Burunge residents feel that WMA rules infringe on their grazing access (Funk, 2015). They thus use their customary organization structures, such as *Morans*, groups of young Arusha and Maasai warriors, to demand and gain access to grazing areas. This is different from the way in which pastoralists contest access restrictions: Rather than employing political pressure (like how agriculturalist do), pastoralists have often physically confronted VGS and guards hired by private investors. Pastoralists can move their herds of cattle quickly to avoid fines and confiscation for illicit grazing access. Thanks to this, and their ability to organize and work in groups, they are more effective in using physical confrontation to demand access. In early 2015, pastoralists in one of the villages where the hunting use zone is located attacked two guards hired by a private investor in an attempt to force their way into hunting use zone where grazing is prohibited. Village leaders, who were aware of the incident and of the perpetrators, refused to take action and instead used the incident to pressure the investor to agree to their customary claims of rights to graze in the hunting use zone which is also the only source of fodder for their livestock during the dry season. They argued: “If he [the investor] wants peace in his business he should allow us to graze there [hunting use zone], as no one will attack his guards, we will protect them.” (interview with a village leader, 2015).

In another WMA village, a resident was fined about US\$500 by Tarangire National Park authorities for bringing 100 cows to the National Park. The cattle were grazing in the hunting use zone when they were “pushed to the National Park by guards hired by a private investor” (interview with the village resident, 2014). Park authorities are stricter than VGS and have a well-equipped paramilitary unit, which local people cannot easily challenge. A number of court cases involving Burunge pastoralists and the CBO, and relating to illicit grazing access, were also reported. These cases consumed money and time of both pastoralists and the CBO (see Table 4). A former village leader accused of spearheading pastoralists to graze in the hunting use zone, for example, sold a cow to pay lawyers to fight the criminal charges he was facing at Babati district court: “I travelled every day [frequently] to Babati [Court]. I sold a cow to pay the lawyer, at the end, the court said it is not true [charges were dropped], but who is going to pay me? my money is gone” (interview with a village resident, 2015).

Burunge pastoralists also have an association (Nkaiti Herders Association) that ostensibly represents their interests across the villages. Yet Maasai and Waarusha, who are the majority ethnic groups in villages hosting the hunting use zone, vowed to put their lives on line in order to maintain dry season grazing access in this restricted area. A village leader argued:

Although investor’s guards [guards hired by private investors] patrol with guns, we are not afraid of them, we will not leave our cows to die. If they want peace they have to let us graze there [hunting use zone] when we need (interview with a village leader, 2015).

Maasai and Waarusha, who are the majority in Minjingu and Kakoi villages, share traditions and speak a more or less similar language. They view themselves as “native” to the area and consider the Barbaigs, who are the majority in Vilima Vitatu village, as newcomers and rival competitors for the grazing resources. Thus, they do not cooperate with or comprehend Barbaigs’ efforts to fight for grazing restrictions. VGS also reported that Barbaigs are more aggressive against VGS of Maasai origin. Barbaigs believe Maasai VGS are harsh on them but merciful toward Maasai and Waarusha. In previous years, attempts to resist WMAs’ restrictions to access grazing lands led Maasai and Waarusha pastoralists to destroy WMA infrastructure, such as roads leading to tourism campsites and VGS ranger posts, and attack guards hired by private investors. Barbaigs pastoralists on the other hand selectively attacked VGS of Maasai and Waarusha origin. It is important also to note that, of the 30 VGS positions, none is Barbaig. The Mbugwe hold 12 VGS positions followed by Maasai who hold 5 positions and other minorities share the remaining

13 positions. CBO and village leaders also refer to Barbaigs as newcomers and intruders (Moyo et al., 2016).

The narrative described earlier suggests that in Burunge, access to grazing areas is regulated through social ties and ethnic identities. This defies the notion that WMAs would foster community ties to aptly offer opportunity for communal-level action to influence change (see in Wright, 2017). Rather, it demonstrates that conservation territorialization and zonation (Bluwstein & Lund, 2016), and the tendency of conservation programs to ignore historical and cultural land uses (Benjaminsen et al., 2009), exacerbate community divisions, inflict loss of wealth to individuals, and cause community to resent conservation.

### *Access to Poles for Construction*

Tree felling is prohibited in WMA areas. The WMA regulations state that,

any person who fells trees in a WMA commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding one million [Tanzanian] shillings or to imprisonment for a term not less than six months and not exceeding one year or both such fine and imprisonment. (URT, 2012, Section 54 (4))

Yet, in-depth interviews revealed that collection of poles is tolerated outside the hunting use zone where a private investor has a sole use right. VGS turn a blind eye toward individuals who collect poles for personal use in other use zones. Thus, residents collect poles in small quantities, over a period of time, until their demand are fulfilled. In some villages, residents felled big trees and used branches for livestock fencing, leaving the rest to dry for firewood. In other villages, piles of poles were seen outside some of the dwellings. The owners reported having collected them from the WMA areas. Residents of the villages where the hunting use zone is located reported that poles of good quality are found in the hunting use zone, where restrictions are enforced by both VGS and guards hired by a private investor from outside Burunge villages. This demonstrates that although property rights regimes are more effective in eliminating others from accessing common resources, when property rights are not directly transferred to a particular individual, social and relational access mechanism can still be effective.

### *Access to Bushmeat*

Restrictions for wildlife hunting are not a new phenomenon attributable to the WMA policy implementation. The Wildlife Act of 1974 and its amendment in 2002 barred wildlife hunting without a permit issued by the wildlife department, regardless of where it occurs

(URT, 1974, 2002). WMAs, therefore, mainly seek to garner the support of rural people living close to wildlife in preventing wildlife poaching. Burunge communities, however, seem to have taken on the role of a “watchman” who regulates access to wildlife based on social relations. In the first 6 months of the year 2015, for instance, VGS reported two poaching incidents involving Burunge residents. VGS arrested two Burunge residents in connection with the killing of a giraffe and a wildebeest. But most residents defended the suspects and blamed it on nonresidents. VGS also reported that local residents tend to alert them if they see or suspect a non-resident poaching, but not if fellow residents are committing the crime. In early 2015, for instance, the residents of Vilima Vitatu village called VGS to arrest “four unfamiliar men with motorbikes chasing zebra” (VGS focus group discussion, 2015).

In-depth interviews revealed that VGS behavior also favored local residents. Before VGS would arrest a suspected local poacher, they assess the suspect’s economic situation and consider the type of wildlife poached. Poor local residents seen with small wildlife, such as rabbits or warthogs, are given a verbal warning and left to walk free. VGS believe that poor individuals are desperate and therefore compelled to poach for subsistence. Arresting a poor resident who is trying to find “food” would cause community members, who often tend to side with the poor, to disapprove VGS’ work, and refuse to cooperate with them. VGS argued: “we don’t arrest poor old men, if you arrest [name of an old man seen with a rabbit], people will get angry” (VGS focus group discussion, 2015). In Burunge, therefore, access to bushmeat is regulated through social identity and relations. Although CBO leaders and transnational conservation NGOs funding the implementation of WMA policy in Burunge do not accept or condone any form of wildlife poaching, Burunge residents together with VGS use the opportunity of being the primary protectors of wildlife in WMA areas to open access to bushmeat for their ‘poor’ while at the same time eliminating access for outsiders.

### *WMA Revenues*

Burunge WMA hosts five tourist campsites and a hunting block, which are the main sources of income for the WMA (Table 3).<sup>10</sup> Other sources of income include fines, NGOs’ donations, and research fees. The campsites are privately owned, and a hunting block is leased to private investors who are from outside Burunge villages. The state collects campsite and hunting fees and remits part of it to the CBO based on the 2012 wildlife regulations (URT, 2012), which direct the state to retain 20% of the campsite fees, and remit 65% and 15% to the CBO and district council, respectively. For the hunting fees, which include block and permit fees, the state retains

**Table 3.** Reported Burunge WMA Income (in US\$).

Income category	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
Opening balance	15,210	39,212	106,611
Campsite fees	263,949 <sup>a</sup>	197,142	295,703
Game hunting	–	50,237	85,425
Fines	231	277	56
NGOs donations and other <sup>b</sup> sources	3,728	38,282	651
<b>Total</b>	<b>283,118</b>	<b>325,151</b>	<b>488,447</b>

Note. NGO = nongovernment organization; WMA = Wildlife Management Area.

<sup>a</sup>Hunting and campsite fees were available as a single entry.

<sup>b</sup>“Other” sources include research fees and unidentified sources.

25% of the block fee and 85% of permit fees. Originally, the director of the wildlife division of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism held discretionary powers to decide on how the WMAs income should be shared (see URT, 1998, p. 19). In the 2012 regulations, this power was shared with the CBO for some parts of the incomes, providing some assurance to WMAs in terms of financial planning (WWF, 2014). Yet in the same year, 2012, the revenue collection was taken over by the state actors again, reinforcing state control over WMA resources, and resulting in diminishing transparency in revenue collection and delays in disbursement of the same to the villages (Funk, 2015).

The CBO uses 50% of its income to run the WMA and distributes the remaining half to its member villages, as stipulated in the CBO constitution. The villages use the income to fund village development activities (e.g., village office building, schools, water pumps, etc.). Later we narrate how different actors gain and maintain access to WMA revenues. Through these narratives, we demonstrate how the WMA process concentrates illicit financial benefits to local elites by virtue of their position in CBO or WMA ranks. We also show how state and transnational conservation NGOs attempt at improving revenue sharing between state, private investors and local communities (and within local communities), lead to exclusion of the communities and the emergence of local elites.

### Accessing WMA Revenues Through VGS and Other CBO Employments

Burunge CBO locally recruits 30 VGS, one accountant, one office assistant, and one attendant who receive a monthly salary and other allowances (Table 4). Accountancy and office assistance are professional full-time jobs for maintaining CBO financial records and office, respectively. VGS patrol WMA areas to enforce WMA rules. They are required to work day and

**Table 4.** Burunge WMA Expenditures (in US\$).

Expenditure category	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
Member villages' share (10 villages)	141,030	124,275	135,260
VGS salaries and allowances	30,834	34,725	31,053
CBO office staff Salaries	7,664	2,024	1,842
CBO office running cost	4,338	6,445	8,880
Meeting allowances	44,445	26,622	26,640
Travel allowances	7,481	8,424	12,343
Leadership allowances	5,850	4,337	3,349
WMA patrol cost	1,634	3,801	2,830
WMA infrastructure and assets	10,694	1,489	9,364
Maintenance of assets and infrastructure	633	1,120	7,573
Conflicts resolution (legal fees)	7,500	12,587	8,372
CBO members gratuity	–	–	14,259
Other <sup>a</sup>	1,564	2,928	6,287
<b>Total</b>	<b>263,665</b>	<b>228,777</b>	<b>268,052</b>

Note. WMA = Wildlife Management Area; CBO = community-based organization; VGS = village game scout.

<sup>a</sup>“Others” include condolences, VGS health care, guest entertainments and uncatagorised expenditures.

Source. Compilation based on CBO office financial records.

night—throughout the year—and receive wages of about US\$80 per month. VGS job requirements imply that they have no free time to carry on other livelihood activities. Yet, VGS and their spouses are proud that their work protects wildlife and the environment, and consider the monthly wages as an appreciation of their work. In reality, however, VGS have informal arrangements that free them from their patrol duties, alternately offering themselves breaks. This gives VGS chances to continue with regular income-earning activities such as agriculture and livestock keeping while maintaining access to WMA income. The CBO, for example, requires two VGS to be positioned at a ranger post to monitor tourist entry and exit in the campsite<sup>11</sup> at all times, but we observed that only one VGS was carrying out the duty. VGS agree informally to work on shifts, one during the day and another at night or on a weekly rotation. The special anti-poaching VGS unit, comprising 10 VGS, also frees three of its members daily to carry on other livelihoods activities (participant observation). CBO leaders and residents tolerate these informal arrangements, but yet most of the residents refute VGS' claims of service to the community. To them, VGS

positions are an income-earning opportunity that also give VGS members an excuse to skip social responsibilities, such as contributing manpower to community development activities and participating in social events without being officially or socially sanctioned.

Burunge residents claim that VGS positions are income-earning opportunities that are substantiated by an increasing number of individuals aspiring for VGS and CBO positions. According to individuals who served in the CBO since its initiation, previously village assemblies had to plead with residents to fill these positions. Today, since residents have learned about the associated personal benefits, such as salaries and allowances, competition has emerged. In 2014, the CBO announced one VGS vacancy to be filled by a resident of Mwada village (VGS positions are divided equally among member villages). More than 30 young people from Mwada responded to the call. In March, the same year, elections for CBO representatives in Burunge WMA member villages saw a surge of aspirants and voters. Election assemblies were packed and participation in terms of questioning aspirants' motives was relatively high (personal observation).<sup>12</sup> Although issues related to access rights dominated questioning sessions, voting decision was much based on how WMA incomes are spent. CBO representatives seeking reelection were seen as "individuals representing their own stomach" (interview with a village resident, 2014). Thus, of the 34 seeking reelection,<sup>13</sup> only 13 were reelected. When we asked residents why they did not reelect a CBO representative who was also a CBO leader, residents pointed to the wealth accumulated while in power: "[name] was not rich before, just a few years after becoming a WMA leader, [name] started to build a big house, where does [name] get all the money? They eat [steal] our money" (interview with a village resident, 2014).

### *Accessing WMA Revenues Through CBO Membership and Leadership*

The CBO consists of 40 representatives, 20 village leaders (village chairpersons and village executive officers), 3 ward executive officers, and 3 district officials. They access WMA incomes through allowances for attending CBO meetings, training, and other WMA-related duties. In a period of 3 years (from July 2012 to June 2015), the CBO has spent an average of US\$32,568 and US\$9,416 as meeting and travel allowances per year, respectively, together corresponding to 17% of average total expenditures (Table 4). The allowances cover members' costs when attending CBO general meetings, held at least three times a year and involving all CBO members, village, ward, and district officials. They also cover costs for CBO executive committee and finance committee meetings, comprising ten and five individuals,

respectively, selected among the CBO representatives, held at least once a month. In addition, the CBO speaker, deputy speaker, and the secretary receive a leadership allowance of about US\$110 per month. There can also be frequent additional consultation meetings involving CBO representatives, and other benefits, which give them increased access to WMA income. In 2014, for example, each CBO representative received a gratuity of about US\$356, for their 3 years of service (CBO representative positions last for 3 years). In total, the 40 members received US\$14,259 (5.3% of total expenditures in 2014–2015), which is more than the amount remitted by the CBO to the individual member village annually.

### *Member Villages' Access to WMA Revenues*

The average member village annual income in the past 3 years was US\$13,352 (Table 4) or US\$3.90 per person per year (based on villages population estimates of 2012). Residents do not, however, receive cash payments equal to their share. Rather, the money belongs to the village and decisions on how to spend it are made by the village assembly (where individuals older than 18 years can participate). Most often the money is used for public service projects, such as village office building, schools, and infrastructure improvements. Previously, these were cofinanced through individuals' contribution and state grants. Individual contribution was adjusted to the residents' level of wealth and the number of adults in the households. With WMA revenue now financing these projects, the wealthier households, and households with many adults, are implicitly favored, since they used to pay more in village development contribution.

Residents also complained about WMA funds misappropriation at the village level. In one of the villages, residents argued: "the [village] chairman and the village executive officer used our [WMA] money to build [hand] water pumps in their hamlets [where the two leaders reside], we never agreed to build water pumps, [but] they decided by themselves" (interview with a village resident, 2014). Rules governing WMA income expenditure are not as strict as those governing the use of state grants. State grants are allocated for a specific activity and the district council would provide direct supervision to ensure villages comply with rules governing the use of state funds. This leaves no or less room for manipulation by village officials as compared to WMA income, whose expenditure is mainly determined by village officials who, according to the residents, collude with service providers to hike prices, and use most of the WMA income to pay themselves allowances. Elected village officials are working on a voluntary basis (no monthly salaries), gaining mostly honour and respect in return. Yet, their responsibilities, such as that of a village chairman, often demand substantial amounts of time. This creates costs since this



time is then lacking for engaging in other livelihoods activities. Therefore, village officials might regard the WMA revenues as a welcome opportunity to compensate themselves for the time and effort they invest in serving the community (Funk, 2015).

### *Accessing WMA Revenues Through WMA Tourism Investments and Other Labor and Business Opportunities*

In Burunge, all tourism investments such as campsites and a hunting blocks are owned by nonresidents. Tourism investments require a substantial amount of capital and knowledge (Chachage, 1999; Salazar, 2009; Temu & Due, 2000), which most Burunge residents do not have. WMA income opportunities for regular residents are therefore limited to sales of crafts and souvenirs and providing labor to investors. But souvenir business is not a new income opportunity, as it existed prior to the WMA, and still, residents maintained access to natural resources in all parts of their village lands. Moreover, in-depth interviews revealed income from tourism-related activities, such as income from sales of crafts or souvenirs benefited only a few villagers who live around the National Parks entrance gates that are popular with tourists entering the National Parks, mainly in Olaiti and Kakoi villages. Sale of crafts and souvenirs are therefore not necessarily related to the WMA implementation, but rather to the direct proximity to the National Park entrance gates, which are frequently used by tourists.

Burunge residents also lack skills to work as tour guides, chefs or other “well paid” positions in tourist campsites. Previously, few residents worked as guards for private investors. Yet, access struggles made these positions socially risky and professionally difficult. Strict enforcement against fellow residents presented them as obstacles to their communities’ livelihoods strategies; thus, they acted leniently. In response, investors started to replace locally hired guards with individuals from outside Burunge to increase security. One investor argued: “I was employing local guards, my generator was stolen and it was found within one day, but they [locally hired guards] don’t care about cows being close to my hotels, it is not good for tourism” (interview with tourist campsite investor, 2015). This implies that the notion that WMAs would attract external capital to diversify local peoples’ income opportunities is a simplistic idea. It ignores past experiences in community-based conservation, where issues of elite capture and profit-seeking behaviors are common (see e.g., Brooks, Waylen, & Mulder, 2013; Green & Lund, 2015; Lund & Saito-Jensen, 2013; Lund & Treue, 2008; Platteau, 2004), and when conservation dwells on restrictive access rules, local enforcement becomes ineffective as rural communities would apply social pressure on VGS and rely on relational access mechanisms.

### *Mirroring WMA Residents’ Access Experiences Against non-WMA Residents*

In the preceding sections, we have largely narrated how WMA rules have affected WMAs residents’ access to land and other resources and how different segments of the WMA community have responded to restrictions. In this section, we contrast those experiences to non-WMA residents who either refused to join the WMA or were not included (by the WMA initiators) in the program (see Moyo et al., 2016). By not surrendering parts of their village land to WMA, the non-WMA residents maintain access to all parts of their village lands. Although this means the villages miss potential WMA incomes that would have ostensibly reduce individuals’ burden for financial contribution to community development projects (and at the same continue to experience wildlife nuisances like WMA vilages), there were no access conflicts. Non-WMA residents felt free of conservation “oppression” and frequently referred to conflicts about access to grazing and agricultural lands in WMA villages as something that “eats” the people in WMA villages. A resident in one of the non-WMA village, where villagers refused to join the WMA, for example, argued: “we had good leaders otherwise we would be suffering like those in Vilima Vitatu [a WMA village]”. In another village, residents viewed WMAs’ access limitations rules in a neighboring Sangaiwe village, a WMA village, as domination and an oppression to the people who offered their lands to the conservation of wildlife. The general sentiments were “Sangaiwe people are not free” (interview with a village council member non-WMA village, 2015) and “we don’t want to be prisoners in our own land like those in Sangaiwe” (interview with a female resident in non-WMA village, 2015).

WMA is thus perceived as state’s attempt at retaining control over wildlife resurces and village lands, and effort to discipline local people to comply with conservanists’ NGOs as well as global investors’ interests. This matters because WMA success hinges on the participating communities’ positive percetion toward the policy intention to improve their livelihoods and access to reources. The dissatisfaction in WMA villages communities and the negative thinking toward WMA access rules in non-WMA villages thus showcases a policy failure to impact a sense of conservation ownership and attract local communities to participate in wildilfe conservation. As a result those who have accepted WMA resort to a host of illicit access mechanims, which are likely to jeorpadize conservation efforts. On the other hand, those who refused or are yet to accept WMAs become more skeptical of the conservation approach.

### **Dicussion**

Using access theory analytical framework, we have explored Burunge WMA to demonstrate access struggles



in community based conservation (CBC). We have shown how state and nonstate conservation actors' efforts at sustaining a natural resource base for all lead to the exclusion of those who are most dependent on access to it. By mirroring WMA residents' access experiences against non-WMA residents, we were able to eliminate many other processes such as "land grabbing for large scale agriculture" that are taking place in Tanzania (Funk, 2015), that would have impact on access changes. Access struggles in WMA vilages show that state actors and conservationists NGOs promotion of conservation by territorialization and zonation of WMAs lands (Bluwstein & Lund, 2016) incite access and land use conflicts. The categorization of community lands into *go* and *no go* zones curtails local peoples' access to land and natural resources. The process denies them their customary use rights and claims to resource.

On the other hand, WMA success hinges on the neoliberal conservation thinking, which assumes that by attracting external capital to be invested in ecotourism activities in village lands (now WMAs lands), local peoples' livelihood strategies will be diversified, consequently reducing pressure on land (Igoe & Croucher, 2007; Green & Adams, 2015). In reality, however, neoliberal conservation transfers communal lands to private individuals. Specifically, it privileges actors who have access to large amounts of financial capital and connections required to invest in the lucrative tourism businesses (Chachage, 1999; Salazar, 2009; Temu & Due, 2000) and disadvantages poor rural people who endure the losses caused by wildlife nuisances (Moyo et al., 2016) and forgone interest such as access to land for agriculture and livestock grazing (Noe & Kangalawe, 2015).

WMAs processes also create spaces for elite capture by local elites. It concentrates licit benefits, such as income opportunities to those who hold official positions such as CBO leaders, representatives, and VGS. These individuals pocket a large share of WMA income through allowances and salaries. By reassuming powers to collect WMA fees, and thereafter remit part of it to the CBO, the state also amplified its control village lands. Thus, instead of empowering local communities to benefit from natural resources, WMAs processes legitimize transfer of land and natural resources from the hands of local communities to the state and elites (Benjaminsen & Bryceson, 2012; Noe & Kangalawe, 2015) and consolidate resource control powers to the state and create space for elite capture (Benjaminsen et al., 2013; Igoe & Croucher, 2007).

Implicitly, WMAs policy implementation supports platforms for capital accumulation by wealth investors and elite capture by local elites. The process leaves the majority of poor rural people, whose livelihoods largely depend on access to natural resources, to rely on illicit access mechanisms. As a result, in Burunge, communities

have employed a wide range of access mechanisms such as social and relational mechanism to demand or gain access to lands and natural resources. Different actors and segments of the community have exerted remarkable determination and political perspicuity, knowing especially when to adopt covert and more diplomatic means or adopt overt, forceful means such as destroying WMA infrastructure. While these mechanisms seem to have worked successfully on providing local people access to land and natural resources such as grazing and agricultural lands, the direct incomes generated by WMAs remain in the hands of the few elites. This raises alarm on the WMA capacity to promote equity in natural resources management and on its long-term impact on the protection of wildlife corridors and biodiversity. It thus necessitates the need to revisit the WMA policy design and implementation processes, which are currently firmly built on the domain of state and conservationist NGOs agendas (Benjaminsen & Svarstad, 2010; Sachedina, 2008), to refocus its emphasis on meeting community needs and ensuring equity in sharing benefits accrued from conservation activities. Yet in Burunge, the implementation of WMA policy reveals typical state and NGOs' behavior, where state institutions tend to focus on land control while retaining a necessary level of legitimacy, while NGOs often focus on accountability toward their donors (Mosse, 2007; Myers & Muhajir, 2015; Sachedina et al., 2010). Although state actors' and transnational conservation NGOs' narrative is to promote good governance, transparency, and accountability, the practice is at odds with the policy goals and local participating communities interests. WMAs policy is implemented without considering local people's livelihoods needs and aspects of costs and benefits sharing. By not recognizing rural people's customary claims to land and resource use (Myers & Muhajir, 2015), the official policy prescriptions of inclusion becomes ineffective.

### Implication for Conservation

This article shows that different actors view conservation success differently. State and donors consider income at community level as a measure of success, while the community's measure of success is individual incomes and access to resources deemed vital to support their livelihoods. This misjudgment in policy design and implementation processes, or failure to align the various actors' interests, makes conservation unprofitable and unattractive to rural people (Belsky, 2009; Benjaminsen et al., 2009), and leaves "black holes" for local powers to colonize and turn the intended outcomes to different ends (see also Scheba & Rakotonarivo, 2016). State and donor attempts' to empower and promote local communities to participate in conservation has led to (a) strengthening of states' power to collect and retain revenues accrued from conservation

activities (Benjaminsen et al., 2013; Brockington & Schmidt-Soltau, 2004; Igoe & Croucher, 2007), (b) creation of property rights to elites who then use these rights to alienate others from accessing common resources (Benjaminsen & Bryceson, 2012; Lund & Saito-Jensen, 2013), and (c) emergence of local elites who through leadership positions and employment in conservation projects pocket a significant share of conservation income that would otherwise be used for community development (Lund & Saito-Jensen, 2013). This leads to protests against conservation, and attempts to regain access, resorting to violent struggles against state and private investors. Consequently, the conflicts created by the failed states' and donors' attempts at inclusion erodes rural peoples' trust and willingness to support conservation, in areas where previously, people coexisted with wildlife and collaborated with private investors in conservation and tourism activities (Benjaminsen et al., 2013).

It shows that rural the peoples' need to access natural resources has come to an age in which "the unthinkable has become, frankly, inevitable." It posits that some of our best minds remain anchored in older ways of "seeing and thinking" leading to "repeated misjudgments" about new realities. It shows that the integrity of conservation and the willingness of rural communities to support conservation and trust that CBC programs understand their needs-or, for that matter, CBC programs are telling the truth about access rights—is leaching away. The situation leads to the emergence of a violent wave of protests and struggles against conservation, a change that a few years ago, many thought of as "unthinkable" in communities where historically rural people "harmoniously" shared landscapes with wildlife. Thus, state and conservationists' NGOs attempts' to eliminate conservation challenges must better acknowledge the inherent trade-offs of natural resources conservation and livelihoods and take into consideration the local situation. We argue that conservation policies and program should come into terms with, and embrace, reality that conservation success is fundamentally driven by and is no longer immune to local socioeconomics dynamics. We call states, conservanists NGOs, and the private sector, each at their capacity, to provide conducive and friendly environments that iteratively learn from and incorporate new local experiences that would assure that the long-term policy goals on conservation and community amity are secured.

### Acknowledgments

We thank the people of Babati for welcoming us to conduct research in their communities, and Jens Friis Lund and Jevgeniy Bluwstein for helpful comments.

### Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

### Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: Francis Moyo acknowledges financial support from The Rufford foundation (RSG I.D: 14298-1).

### Notes

1. By non-state conservation actors we refer to transnational conservation NGOs or agencies
2. Village land means a piece of land owned by the villange and all decisions pertaining to sell or change land use are taken by the village council or village assembly.
3. Field work was divided into two field visits. January to June 2014 and February to June 2015
4. The register was first updated by asking village leaders and council members to add new households and remove those which are no longer existing.
5. The management of dry season grazing was headed by village elders who used social sanctions to protect common property.
6. The villages had already set aside the areas for establishing WMA but were not officially recognised until 2006 when Burunge was registered
7. First author has in possession copies of statements signed by individual council members at the village assembly on 28th November 2013 to disown the signature in the documents.
8. In 2013, CBO and state agencies burned temporary herdsman dwellings in one of the WMA areas (corridor use zone) needed by a tourist investor for game rides ("Kijiji Chachomwa Kumpisha", 2013).
9. A system where land is closed for all human activities to allow vegetation to regenerate.
10. Complete records of WMA income and expenditure were available for the period of three financial years, starting from July 2012 to June 2015. Currency exchange rate was adjusted at end of each fiscal year.
11. Since 2012 the wildlife department collects campsite fees. VGS records are therefore used by CBOs to reconcile incomes reported by the state and the actual number of tourists who visited the campsites.
12. First author attended other village assemblies that discussed issues related to education and election of members of primary school board, where residents were less interested and members of the school board were simply nominated.
13. Two individuals did not seek re-election and Minjingu village refused to conduct election as the village does not recognise the WMA.

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