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Abstract:

Political ecologists have considered the social and economic impacts that nature reserves, national parks and other forms of protected area can have on neighbouring communities, and how this can generate conflicts between them. This paper analyses such conflicts through the lens of territoriality, considering how the way protected area territories are created, delineated, and defined is linked to the social impacts experienced by local people. Conflicts between locals and conservation authorities over protected areas are about rival attempts to define the boundaries of protected areas, who the land should belong to, what it should be used for, and what its purpose is. Yet the ability of local people or conservation authorities to impose their meaning is unequal. It illustrates these processes with the example of a scientific reserve in the Dominican Republic, and a decades-long conflict to define what the reserve should mean, what it should look like, and who it should belong to.

Keywords: conservation, protected area, territoriality, political ecology, Dominican Republic

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, national parks, reserves, and other forms of protected area have expanded across the world, currently covering more than 12 percent of the earth's land surface area. This expansion has involved the creation of new territorial entities and new rules over the use of these places. This often creates considerable conflict between protected areas and resident and neighbouring communities over the meaning of these areas, what purpose they serve, whom should they benefit, and who gets to decide all this, particularly when conservation regulations negatively affect the wellbeing of local people. These conflicts have been the subject of numerous studies within political ecology, and have been analysed through various theoretical lenses, including post-colonialism and neo-colonialism (Butt, 2012; MacDonald, 2005; Neumann, 1998; Roth, 2004), everyday resistance (Benjaminsen and Svarstad, 2010; Norgrove and Hulme, 2006; Robbins et al., 2006), and new forms of neoliberal governance (Buscher and Dressler, 2007; Fletcher, 2010; Sachedina, 2010; Vacanti-Brondo and Bown, 2011). This paper argues, following Roth (2008) and Corson (2011), that protected areas are projects of territorialisation, and conflicts over protected areas are in large part battles to define and defend territories, and therefore territoriality provides a useful lens for understanding conflicts over protected areas. Territoriality is "the attempt to affect, influence, or control actions, interactions, or access by asserting and attempting to enforce control over a specific geographic area" (Sack 1983, p55). Territorialisation involves delineating a particular space, determining what behaviour and activities are and are not allowed within it, giving it particular political and social meaning, and communicating this delineation and meaning to others. It is a political process, serving particular social, political, or economic ends, pursued to make control over space easier.

Territorialisation is a useful lens for understanding protected areas for two reasons. Firstly, protected areas are attempts to create new spatial units, with new meanings, and are therefore acts of territorialisation. Whilst all struggles over natural resources involve an element of territory, as different actors compete to access, define, and own, resources, this is more pronounced with protected areas, where struggles are strongly grounded in clearly defined spatial units (Roth, 2008). Secondly, territorialisation illuminates key processes occurring in and around protected area which have been analysed by political ecologists, in particular how protected areas impact local communities and their economy, society, and culture, and how these communities in turn try to reshape and redefine protected areas to their liking.

The paper begins by exploring protected areas as products of state “internal territorialisation” (Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995), showing that territorialisation is a useful concept in political ecology analyses of conservation, particularly on the social impacts of protected areas and resistance to them. It then describes a decades-long conflict between a protected area and local populations in the Dominican Republic. It explores the variety of strategies used to assert and defend territorialities, such as violence, legal-judicial means, everyday resistance, and discursive strategies, and demonstrates the relative success of reserve authorities and local people in asserting control over various areas. This paper adds to the political ecology literature on the social impacts of protected areas by providing a detailed case study of power, territorialisation and resistance around one scientific reserve.

1.2 Territorialisation, political ecology and the social impacts of protected areas

Protected area territorialisation is best understood through internal territorialisation (Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995), where states sub-divide their territory, creating territorial units within national boundaries, defining these and determining what happens within them, in particular deciding who gets access and use rights to resources, and how these are realised. This is done firstly in abstract form, as state institutions create maps of a terrain, its people and resources, and use these to delineate different territorial units such as protected areas in maps, laws, and official documents such as management plans, ascribing political, economic, social and cultural meanings to these places. Subsequently, these are defined more concretely, by enforcing land uses in reality. Internal territorialisation allows states to justify coercing its own citizens, and the rights to use the newly defined and created territories can be allocated to private entities as well as the state (Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995). States sometimes create protected areas to extend their control over remote or ungovernable parts of their country, particularly during frontier expansion or for geostrategic reasons (Roth, 2008, Aageson, 2010, Ybarra 2012, Monterroso and Barry, 2012). Conservation NGOs sometimes provide political, technical, financial, and discursive support for state internal territorialisation of protected area, part of global shifts to neoliberal forms of conservation which emphasise civil society's role in saving biodiversity in place of the state (Corson, 2011, Sundberg, 1998, 2003). NGOs are particularly influential the global south, where states are often unwilling or unable to invest in biodiversity conservation (Corson, 2010, 2011, Igoe and Brockington, 2007, Sundberg, 1998, 2003). Territorialisation happens in protected areas under all forms of governance, but this paper deals with state and NGO managed protected areas rather private or community areas, which have distinct territorialisation processes (Corson, 2011).

Below I identify three ways in which territoriality adds to political ecology research on such interactions between protected areas and local people. It does not claim to show universal processes but rather to illustrate some phenomena involved, particularly around stricter, state protected areas.

Firstly, protected areas have historically followed the binary distinction between nature and human society dominant in much of Western thought. There is often a clear separation in both discourses and policies on protected areas between places for nature and places for people. Protected areas become designated as places for nature, and most human activities within them (other than certain legitimate activities such as tourism and research) are deemed illegitimate, inappropriate and out of place. Regulations and policies restricting the presence of illegitimate people from a protected area's territory are backed by popular and policy discourses that see protected areas as people-free places. The early history of US conservation attempted to create protected areas as wildernesses, places untrammelled by human hands, based on a binary distinction between society and nature, although to establish such people-free territories, resident populations of Native Americans and European settlers had to be removed (Cronon, 1996; Jacoby, 2001; Spence, 1999). . Ironically, "uninhabited wilderness had to be created before it could be preserved" (Spence, 1999, p4) - a new, historically problematic, meaning had to be imposed in the territorialisation of a protected area, discursively, legally, and physically. Similarly, imperial authorities in British East Africa created protected areas as people-free places, yet in order to do so, resident populations had to be removed against their will, with widespread state violence characterising the creation of these areas, and their maintenance in subsequent decades (Neumann, 1998; 2001). Neumann (2004) shows how media discourses legitimise state violence in current conservation practice based on ideas of protected areas as people-free

places. There are also contemporary cases of eviction for conservation, which may be linked to the rising influence of international conservation NGOs promoting western ideals of protected areas as people free places (Brockington and Igoe, 2006; Chapin, 2004; Sundberg, 2003).

Evicted populations suffer from long-term economic and social disruption and deprivation, and resentment and opposition to this can last many decades (Craig et al., 2012; Stern, 2008). Even where people are not physically removed from their homes, the creation of people-free protected areas can have considerable negative social impacts, as long-standing livelihood activities are banned or greatly restricted, or as people are removed from culturally important places. The impacts of protected areas are often unequally distributed by gender, class, caste, or ethnicity (Adams and Hutton, 2007; Holmes and Brockington, 2013). There can be positive benefits from this territorialisation process, such as when evictions come with sufficient compensation (Beazley, 2009; Kabra, 2009), or when the new legitimate activities such as tourism bring new sources of income, although such benefits are often subject to elite capture (Ojeda, 2012; Vacanti-Brondo and Bown, 2011;). Not all protected areas are spaces for people-free nature. Some protected areas, particularly community and indigenous areas, are intended as places for local people, formalising and strengthening their control and rights over a place, and combining this with biodiversity conservation. This is still problematic when people and activities are excluded when they are seen as insufficiently indigenous or local (Cardozo, 2011, Sundberg, 2006). Mollett (2010) shows how state attempts to create simplistic distinctions over which ethnic groups had a legitimate presence in different parts of the Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve in Honduras, in place of more complex and shifting identities and spatialities, led to hardships and increased inter-ethnic conflict. Additionally, the process of formalising and codifying customary titles in written form during the reserve's

creation disenfranchised certain groups, particularly women. Secondly, many protected areas still contain resident human populations, despite this being illegal (Lasgorceix and Kothari, 2009), due to a lack of will or ability to sufficiently enforce regulations – an incomplete territorialisation. Many protected areas are subdivided into sections which allow greater or lesser amounts of human activity, particularly the Biosphere model found throughout Latin America (e.g. Mollett, 2010; Sundberg, 2006), which contains a strictly protected core surrounded by a buffer zone allowing limited resource use. One protected area can contain several clearly delineated sub-territories, each with their own designated purpose and ownership.

A second link between how protected areas are territorialised and their social impacts is that, excluding community or private areas, they tend to be demarcated and managed in a centralised and top down manner by a distant authority, mainly the state, but increasingly with involvement from international conservation NGOs and aid agencies. States and their allies often claim to be representing a much broader constituency than local people, saving biodiversity for its intrinsic value on behalf of all of humanity, or for the economic wellbeing of the whole country. This implies that ownership and control of protected areas and their resources should reside with them, rather than local people (Grandia, 2007; Ojeda, 2012). The creation of global maps and models identifying priority sites for conservation actions, and of global targets for protected area coverage, has allowed protected area planning to operate at a global scale (Brooks et al., 2006; Grandia, 2007; Rodriguez et al., 2007). Grandia (2007) shows how conservation NGOs devised plans to create a Mesoamerican Biodiversity Corridor, transcending national boundaries, which argued that these same NGOs were the only organisations with sufficient resources and expertise to manage such a project.

Sundberg (1998; 2003) shows the considerable power of international NGOs in Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve, and their role in imposing exclusionary and top-down conservation models which are more accountable to distant donors and funders than to local people. Even where programmes to devolve control to local communities exist, state actors may recentralise power to capture income from tourism (Nelson and Agrawal, 2008; Ojeda, 2012,). The increasing integration of protected areas into global capitalism, through industries such as tourism or carbon sequestration, can also place control with distant actors, leading to charges of land-grabbing (Kelly, 2011).

Delineation and definition at a distance affects local people in various ways. Firstly, any benefits from protected areas may be reallocated to distant authorities and away from local people, particularly if these distant authorities write the regulations, management plans, and contracts defining the protected area in a way that they retain control and benefits (Nelson and Agrawal, 2008; Hoffman, 2009). Residents in Tayrona National Park in Colombia were deemed illegitimate and evicted in order to develop a tourism sector whose main beneficiary were the state and its allies (Ojeda, 2012). Secondly, distant authorities may not fully understand or recognise local land uses and relationships with the land contained within a protected area, and may consequently create an area whose boundaries and regulations greatly disrupt them. Protected areas produce relatively homogenous economic and political spaces, defined by singular and relatively static maps and management plans, in place of more complex, overlapping, and flexible spatialities that local people may have (Roth, 2008). Global, regional or national cartographic models used to identify sites for protected areas are often blind to local politics (Smith et al., 2009). The Mesoamerican Biodiversity Corridor's top down design prevented the emergence of alternative, locally produced plans for biodiversity and development (Grandia, 2007). Even protected areas with buffer or multiple

use zones create only two or three categories of land, whereas previously there may have been many more. As a consequence of such a disconnect, local people may find longstanding livelihood practices restricted, access to important resources limited, with long term social, economic, and cultural impacts. The geographical and political distance between people living near protected areas and the institutions which control it limits opportunities for local resistance, as explored below.

Following directly from the previous two links, a third link between protected area territorialisation and social impacts is that changes in territoriality are never smooth, but contested (Sikor and Lund, 2011). The territorialisation of protected areas does not impose meanings on an empty landscape, but rather attempts to insert and maintain new definitions and meanings in dynamic social, political and cultural landscapes, where local people have their own territories, structures, and definitions. Sometimes, a protected area's establishment is a subtle change, evolving from previous territories (Rangarajan, 2001), but some entail radical changes to resource ownership and use (Roth, 2008; Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995; West, 2006). New meanings and territories may conflict with previous ones, and protracted disputes may result. Acts of hunting become redefined as poaching, resource use is redefined as theft, access is redefined as trespass, and humanised landscapes are redefined as wilderness. Rather than new meanings displacing the old, there is a process of negotiation, where the state and local people each try to shape the protected area's boundaries, rules, and meanings. This negotiation can be violent, as protected area regulations are enforced by armed guards backed up by legal and juridical measures, and local people in turn use violence against guards to assert their own land uses (Norgrove and Hulme, 2006; Orlove, 2002). Other times resistance is more subtle, such as through non-cooperation and acts of petty

resistance (Benjaminsen and Svarstad, 2010; Heatherington, 2001; Holmes, 2007; Norgrove and Hulme, 2006; Scott, 1985; Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995). Both local people and the state try to assert discursive hegemony, to get their version of the area's definition and purpose accepted as standard, and undermine the legitimacy of the other's (Nygren, 2004). For example, in many Latin American protected areas, local people claim local or indigenous rights to have greater legitimacy over state conservation efforts (Ojeda, 2012; Sundberg, 2003; Vacanti-Brondo and Bown, 2012). State mapping and cartography delineating protected areas can be met with counter-cartographies, such as local counter-mapping of alternative meanings for these places (Hodgson and Shroeder, 2002; Peluso, 1995), or the moving or replacement of official markers delineating protected area boundaries (Geisler et al., 1997; Neumann, 1998; Norgrove and Hulme, 2006). Importantly, the ability to shape and define a protected area is not distributed equally. The state has considerable resources to determine and defend the territoriality of protected areas: a monopoly on violence through armed park guards, legal-judicial processes, financial resources, and the possibility of mobilising discourses on a large scale. Local people lack these resources, and also have to combine actions to reshape protected areas with maintaining livelihoods on a day to day basis (Holmes, 2007). Consequently, opposition and resistance to protected areas tend to be petty, subtle, disorganised and low level (Benjaminsen and Svarstad, 2010; Holmes, 2007).

The above describes a dichotomy between two sets of actors: a top down, distant state (or its allies) creating protected area territories, and local communities trying to reshape these territories to their liking through village scale micro-politics. Such a binary indicates the importance of the scales at which decisions over protected areas are made. People living in and around protected areas have limited abilities to shape them, and find it almost impossible to "jump scales" (Smith, 1996), to transcend the local and participate in arenas where

protected area policy is decided. Local opposition to protected areas tends to stay local. People living in and around protected areas are often amongst the most marginalised in society, disconnected from national arenas of power (Adams and Hutton, 2007; Buergin, 2003). Where local people have jumped scale to have their voices heard at a higher level, it is often because there has been a bridging organisation facilitating this, such as a NGO or campaigning journalist (Almudi and Berkes, 2010; Beazley, 2009). More generally, studies of struggles over environmental resources in Latin America have shown how local people can jump scales and become empowered by tapping into national discourses on identity (Haarstad and Floysand, 2007), or through national scale organisations which coordinate local or indigenous concerns (Hennessey, 2012). In contests over protected areas, there tends to be stark inequalities in different actors' ability to be politically active at different scales.

The above discussion identifies four trends; protected areas are produced by internal territorialisation; this territorialisation can be linked to the social impacts of protected areas; it is a contested process; and these struggles are uneven, particularly because the actors involved operate at different scales. The case study of Ebano Verde scientific reserve outlined below shows how territorialisation and resistance played out over a twenty year period in a small scientific reserve in the Dominican Republic.

2.1 INTERNAL TERRITORIALISATION AND THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Dominican Republic is an interesting place to study protected area creation and enforcement, as it has one of the highest percentages of land under strict protection of any country, despite being relatively poor and densely populated (Holmes, 2010). Protected areas here have long been implicated in wider processes of state internal territorialisation. The first protected areas were created during the first US occupation (1916-22) to protect the

watersheds of rivers which irrigated lowland sugar and tobacco agriculture (Moya Pons 1995; Turits 2003). A principle aim of the occupation was to repay foreign debts and to secure water supply for export agriculture, along with complete restructuring of land tenure and property rights, were key parts of this (Franks, 1999, Moya Pons 1995; Turits 2003). The protected area system expanded during the Trujillo dictatorship (1930-61), particularly as large national parks were established in the forested central highlands to increase state (and therefore the Trujillo family's) control over land and timber resources (Bolay, 1997).

Trujillo's kleptocratic rule used state apparatus to extend his family's domination of the economy, described by Moya Pons (1995, p359) as "a regime of total plunder organized to furnish him with total control of every economic enterprise existing in the country". During the Trujillo era, the state's control finally extended to the whole country – historically, the mountainous centre was beyond colonial and subsequent government control, a place to which refugees from state or warlord oppression fled (Turits, 2003).

Protected area expansion was greatest during the Balaguer presidencies (1966-78 and 1986-1996), particularly the second period, as a well-connected elite within Balaguer's highly centralised government pushed for the creation of protected areas (Holmes, 2010). These areas were strongly protectionist, emphasising strict prohibitions imposed by a top-down state with no community participation, with regulations enforced by *Foresta*, the notoriously violent quasi-military forestry police (Geisler et al., 1997; Holmes, 2010; Rocheleau et al., 2001; Roth, 2001). Planning was minimal, boundaries were not clearly delineated, and many areas created during this time still lack management plans (Geisler et al., 1997; Holmes, 2010). Consequently, the protected area system covers over a fifth of the country, but it is poorly planned, lacks resources, and provokes considerable opposition from people living nearby. The ministry of environment retain centralised control because of a lack of resources

to devolve management to communities or other organisations, and a desire to retain control (Holmes, 2010). Whilst Balaguer's motives for creating such a large protected area system remain opaque, the reclassification of land as protected did, like his wider land reform programmes, allow him to dispossess political opponents of their property and reward supporters through selectively applied compensation schemes (Ferguson 1992; Holmes, 2010; Moya Pons, 1995). Whilst many other Latin American countries have strict protected areas enacted without consultation which have severe social impacts on local communities, the Dominican Republic is unique because it has no populations of pre-Columbian descent, and large international NGOs have a notably thin presence there (Holmes, 2010).

2.2 The Creation of Ebano Verde Scientific Reserve as a Process of Territorialisation.

The case study site, Ebano Verde Scientific Reserve, is a small category Ia area (the strictest level of protection, prohibiting all resource uses except scientific research) in the central highlands, protecting 30km² of montane cloud forest since 1989. The reserve is, unusually for the Dominican Republic, relatively well defined, well financed, and administered by an NGO. The reserve's history shows it to be an attempt to create a new territory, with defined borders and particular meanings, in an area where local people have their own territories and meanings, resulting in nearly two decades of sustained and dynamic conflict to define territories. The evolution and outcomes of this conflict reflects the unequal abilities of protected area authorities and local people to define and defend the boundaries and the meaning of the protected area.

To study the area, I spent 5 months in 2006-2007 living on the reserve's borders, with an additional month in the Dominican capital, Santo Domingo. During this time, I interviewed

40 actors in Dominican conservation, from government, NGOs, activists, and aid organisations, as well as constructing detailed oral histories of the two villages on the reserve's border using multiple semi structured interviews with 56 villagers, and a livelihoods survey of all village households. Two participatory exercises on farming practices were conducted with local men. Multiple semi-structured interviews were conducted with all 7 reserve guards, the reserve administrator and the director of the NGO administering the reserve. Throughout this time, interactions between reserve staff and villagers were observed, along with those between villagers. Together, this allowed a detailed picture to emerge of the reserve's creation, its effect on local people, and the evolution of the relationship between them. Accessing villagers and reserve authorities was straightforward. One of the villages (El Arroyazo), where most of my work was concentrated, had seen two Peace Corps volunteers spend extended periods living and working there, including one less than a year prior to my arrival. As such, villagers were accustomed to outsiders living within the village. I was always clear about my identity as an independent researcher, and there were no signs that I was associated as working for the reserve, the state, or any other party by any research participants.

The reserve is located at approximately 1000m in altitude. The surrounding area was first settled in the 1950s following the creation of a logging road to service a short lived lumber mill – the island's indigenous population were exterminated by the Spanish by 1550, and the central mountains were only re-colonised in the mid-19th century (Moya Pons, 1995; Turits, 2003). The forest feeding the mill was declared as state owned open access land, and settlers claimed surrounding land as private property, receiving formal titles. They practiced traditional *conuco* shifting cultivation of manioc, plantain, sweet potato and beans on private land but mainly on the open forest, occasionally selling excess to distant markets. Villagers

frequently stated that the purpose of state property is to provide for its citizens and that consequently peasants had a right to earn a living from the forest. As such, they argued that Foresta recognised and tolerated subsistence activity, even as it strictly prohibited and harshly punished other infractions such as cutting lumber for sale. The forest was also used for keeping animals and as a source of timber, primarily for subsistence use but also to sell to dealers, particularly pine (*Pinus Occidentalis*) and Ebano Verde (*Magnolia Pallenscens*), an attractive hardwood highly valued by cabinet makers, endemic to the reserve site and another small patch of forest 40km away. Cash was also gained through occasional day labour in nearby coffee plantations. Whilst no titles were granted for land in the forest, villagers reported that they recognised each other's temporary ownership over land whilst in cultivation, without any conflicts. By 1989, two villages – La Sal and El Arroyazo - had been established on the forest periphery, each with approximately 50 households (see map). Each family farmed on average some 1.25 hectares of forest, an amount suitable for feeding a family and limited more by the labour needed to maintain it than availability. The sloping land inside the forest was preferred as it was better suited to traditional subsistence crops than the flatter and wetter private land outside, with some 92% of families from El Arroyazo farming there.

The reserve's creation results from the well connected elite controlling Fundación Progreso (FP), the NGO administering the reserve. Established in the early 1980s, FP's president is a prominent banker, and its board of directors includes Roman Catholic cardinals, former newspaper editors and senior judges (Holmes, 2010). Others within the fractious Dominican NGO sector resent FP's status, with one interviewee describing them as "elitist millionaires" (interview, Santo Domingo, December 2006). In the late 1980s, FP's president grew concerned about the plight of the Ebano Verde tree, threatened with extinction because of

logging, compounded by its limited range and slow growth. The wider forest ecosystem, which includes other endemic plants, was considered threatened by shifting cultivation. Using his close connections to Balaguer's regime, he successfully proposed creating a reserve to protect the forest, which was established by government decree in November 1989, encompassing the state owned forest and some private properties specially purchased from large landowners using funds from a debt-for-nature programme. Uniquely for the Dominican Republic, whilst the reserve remains state property, FP were granted full responsibility for managing and financing it, holding the land in trust. This reflects their political status, and gave them considerable autonomy. Here, FP are a proxy actor subcontracted to do the state's work, able to use the fundamental tools of the state - their guards had a local legitimised monopoly on violence, able to enforce reserve regulations at gunpoint. Unlike other discussions of NGO involvement in protected area territorialisation (e.g. Corson, 2011) this is not due to shifts towards neoliberal governance but to the peculiarities of Balaguer era politics (Holmes, 2010). FP, like the state, have a strict protectionist view of conservation (Holmes, 2010, Armenteros, 1989) – the reserve policies, decided upon in the capital, emphasise banning activities, enforced by harsh punishments, rather than local participation or giving local people incentives to conserve. The reserve, as it is run by a well connected and relatively well funded NGO rather than the state, is relatively free from party politics, clientelism, and corruption commonplace in the Dominican state, but also from democratic accountability. A senior official within the Protected Areas Directorate described the reserve as “a private plot.... where they do what they want to do” (interview, Santo Domingo, November 2006), where his department has no authority. FP have more money than the grossly underfunded state areas, and consequently, the reserve was assessed as the best managed protected area in the country (Abt Associates, 2002).

The discussions over creating the reserve were conducted entirely in Santo Domingo between FP and the government, with no communication with local communities, save for some brief contact between villagers and biologists contracted to survey forest flora. Within four weeks of the reserve's legal establishment, the villagers were informed by Foresta officers that the forest was now a reserve, and they had one month to stop using it, but that there would be agricultural outreach projects, education programmes, and new economic opportunities through tourism, which villagers understood as promises of compensation for lost resources. Despite the very significant livelihood implications of abandoning the forest, villagers acquiesced without resistance for three reasons. Firstly, the perceived promises of compensation gave many villagers an initially positive view of the reserve. One resident of La Sal commented that the reserve was "welcomed" by the community because of them (fieldnotes, March 2007), whilst a housewife in El Arroyazo commented that, in contrast to current antagonistic relationships, the commitments meant that "we saw the other side of their face" (fieldnotes, January 2007). Secondly, villagers were fearful of violence from Foresta – within the villages, stories of harsh punishment and violent enforcement of regulations by Foresta were common (see Rocheleau et al., 2001; Roth, 2001). One old farmer explained how he and his neighbours stopped farming the forest because of Foresta's history of violence "people would die [in punishments from Foresta].... it is better to leave all you had than to die" (interview, El Arroyazo, January 2007). Even as the reserve began to employ their own guards after a few months, the villagers retained their initial fear of violence because they "respected the uniform" (interview, El Arroyazo, February 2007), meaning they associated the new guards with Foresta. Thirdly, villagers considered any project led by the state, a corporation, or other powerful outsider, as impervious to the peasantry's challenges, and consequently resistance was futile. Explaining why he acquiesced to the reserve's demand that he abandon his farmland, one farmer commented that "the big dog always eats

the small dog” (interview, El Arroyazo, February 2007). During two separate conversations with groups of villagers in El Arroyazo, who were agitatedly explaining how the reserve’s creation devastated their livelihoods, I asked why they had not tried to reclaim their land. On both occasions, they indicated the impossibility of this, replying: “imagine, what can you do with an organisation like that?” (fieldnotes, January 2007). This was compounded by the minimal notice given to villagers before the reserve was created, preventing organised or coordinated resistance – one farmer explained that the reserve “grabbed us by the throat” (interview, January 2007).

From the villagers’ perspective, the reserve’s initial establishment represents rapid, top down, unilateral territorialisation. Almost overnight, a new territorial entity was created, taking a forest farmed by villagers, albeit without owning it, whose purpose was understood by villagers as providing them with a living, and reclassifying it as strictly protected, firmly belonging to the state and its allies, where villagers’ presence was banned. The only legitimate activities were research and ecotourism, both non-consumptive and easily controlled by the reserve, although neither produces more than a handful of visitors annually, and villagers have no means to benefit from them. Losing access to the forest had severe and immediate livelihood impacts: at present, 43% of households in El Arroyazo own no land, and 26% own fewer than 0.4 hectares. These households are reliant on often precarious waged labour in coffee plantations and commercial agriculture in neighbouring communities. All families but one sold their livestock, as grazing was scarce, and resources previously part of the subsistence economy, such as timber for building houses, now had to be purchased at considerable expense. The transition from subsistence to market dominated economy had more than just an economic impact, but also socio-cultural effects. Several villagers argued that life was “better” (*mejor*) prior to the reserve because they were self-reliant, rather than needing to sell produce or labour to purchase things (basic foodstuffs, building materials)

which they previously produced for themselves. They were clear that this “better” life was a socio-cultural evaluation, different from a more “comfortable” (*comodo*) life, meaning more material comfortable with electricity, piped water, and better transport, which all appeared subsequent to the reserve’s creation, in unrelated developments (fieldnotes, January-march 2007).

The process of unilateral territorial re-writing continued throughout the reserve’s first year. Promised compensation did not arrive, assistance programmes were cancelled after a few months or failed to appear, and regulations were tightened – for example, villagers were required to sign a register each time they entered the reserve, and some were refused entry. This, and the construction of watchtowers at key entrance points, increased the reserve’s surveillance powers. The social impacts experienced were linked the process of territorialisation, particularly the redefinition of land from a lived environment whose purpose was to support the citizenry, to an empty place for biodiversity, and the top down process of creation which prevented local people from presenting their own vision for the reserve, compounded by a fear of violence and a sense of impotence.

In 1990 FP declared a buffer zone encompassing all privately owned land within approximately five kilometres of the reserve’s periphery, roughly doubling the area they claimed a right to control, including the entirety of the two villages. This unilateral act had no legal basis, as buffer zones were not established in Dominican law until the late 2000s, although villagers were never aware that the buffer zone was a *de facto* construct of FP rather *de jure* legal structure. FP and the guards used it to intervene in everyday farming practices on private property, gradually banning common procedures such as fishing for river crabs and

burning stubble in fields, and preventing any tree felling, under threat of arrest. As FP's director explained, "we played a little game" with villagers, telling them the buffer was part of the reserve to justify intervening in private land, as he considered that Foresta were not sufficiently regulating harmful farming practices. He argued that the goal of protecting the forest justified the means used to achieve it, stating that "it doesn't matter how, or the methods used to protect [the forest], because once it is gone that is it" (interview, Santo Domingo, December 2007). Private farmland became part of the reserve's territory without owners' consent, and its meaning changed accordingly. The ability to declare and attempt to enforce a buffer zone despite having no legal basis shows the significant territorialisation powers that FP possessed, and further demonstrates the reserve's top-down nature.

2.3 Resistance and counter-territorialisation

Within a few years, villagers began to resist the reserve due to rising discontent at strict regulations and lack of promised compensation, and because villagers began to realise that guards, whilst harsh, were not as violent or corrupt as Foresta, and were therefore not to be similarly feared. This resistance was an attempt to renegotiate the boundaries and meanings of the reserve.

Firstly, various villagers who had the skill to do so would enter the reserve to harvest wood or feral crops, in what Kull (2004) calls implicit resistance – knowingly breaking rules whilst challenging the rules' legitimacy. For example, walking down the road one evening in El Arroyazo, I struck up conversation with a villager who was waiting for dark so he could move some timber, freshly cut from the forest, down to the road without detection.

Explaining that he was going to sell them to a nearby wealthy farmer to use as poles supporting crops, he acknowledged that his actions, whilst illegal, were justified because he

needed to earn a living, and that “the poor person has to live” (fieldnotes, March 2007). In his view, conservation regulations impinged the peasantry’s long standing moral right to sustain themselves using wild nature, and that his fellow villagers shared this view and tacitly supported such actions by not reporting him. On another occasion, a conversation with a farmer in his field turned to the subject of the peasantry’s right to “defend themselves” and earn a living, and how the reserve had infringed this by preventing him from farming in the forest. The farmer angrily exclaimed “Progressio want to stop us from living. If a poor man can’t work his little bit of land, what do they want us to do, steal?” (fieldnotes, March 2007). It was common knowledge within the village which residents would remove wood and other resources, and many perpetrators admitted to it. One explained to me that he cut timber on request for farmers or furniture makers, and detailed how he avoided detection, such as entering the reserve on certain days when he knew there were fewer staff around. He expressed indignation that guards sided with their employers rather than fellow peasants and their moral economy “The reserve people are talkers. When they find something they don’t do what they are supposed to do and keep quiet, they go and tell Foresta” (interview, El Arroyazo, December 2007). Villagers frequently stated that they preferred Foresta’s regulations to FP’s, because although they were more violent, they recognised the peasantry’s right to subsistence by allowing limited farming or woodcutting.

Secondly, villagers would submit petitions to the reserve authorities asking them for help, such as agricultural assistance, housing repairs, or community projects such as repairing the road running through the village. Villagers felt that the reserve had a moral debt to them, as similar assistance promised when the reserve was created had not arrived, and because the villagers had sacrificed their use of the forest to allow its creation – as one villager stated “if you give something to someone, you expect something in return” (interview, El Arroyazo, March 2007). Requests for help were always refused by FP, yet villagers persisted in asking,

albeit at a declining rate. When questioned about why they persisted, one housewife explained that there was an informal understanding that FP have an obligation to help the villagers (interview, El Arroyazo, April 2007). During another conversation, a farmer in El Arroyazo likened FP to the Haitian immigrants who had first arrived in the area in the last 15 years, in that villagers provided assistance or loans yet this would not be reciprocated, adding “Progressio are worse than Haitians, at least Haitians say thank you” (interview, El Arroyazo, February 2007). Villagers argue that the forest had belonged to the nation, and therefore its purpose was to support its citizens, but this was removed without sufficient compensation. The minimal help, such as some initial outreach projects, helping repair one house, and employing some locals, was considered grossly insufficient – one resident argued that “What they take away from us is much more than what they give” (interview, El Arroyazo, April 2007). During one conversation with a group of farmers, the man who had his house repaired exclaimed that “three houses wouldn’t have made up for what I lost in the forest” (fieldnotes, March 2007). Others contrasted FP lack of support with outreach provided by various rural development programmes and organisations. FP argue that because the forest belonged to the nation, it should provide benefits for the whole nation, such as conserving biodiversity and preserving watersheds, rather than being ruined to support a few families. Furthermore, as the head guard stated, the forest was “lent” to the villagers, not owned by them, and as the reserve had not confiscated property, it has no moral obligation to compensate (interview, El Arroyazo, February 2007). Many residents of El Arroyazo acknowledge that the reserve have helped by protecting the forest, and therefore the watershed for the small river which flows through the village, yet still argue that the reserve has an unpaid moral debt, and that they would prefer it to disappear.

Thirdly, at least in El Arroyazo, there was a rise in more obvious forms of resistance. Forest fires were occasionally set on the edge of the reserve, particularly immediately after the introduction of a new reserve regulation. Villagers explained that such action against the core reserve area was angry, spontaneous, and unplanned, rather than a strategic move to abolish the reserve. One farmer admitted to setting some fires in the mid 1990s, but said that he and his neighbours did so out of anger at the impacts of regulations, rather than any expectation that the reserve would disappear. He viewed this as impossible, stating that “the state can do what it likes and the *campesino* doesn’t matter”, adding that he stopped setting fires because it was futile (interview, El Arroyazo, March 2007). Buffer zone regulations were viewed differently and as potentially challengeable. Attempts to impose regulations there were sometimes met with violence, with both villagers and reserve authorities reporting that there were frequent fights between guards and villagers, constraining guards’ ability to enforce regulations in the buffer zone. Guards were unable to patrol the village because they would be attacked with bottles and stones. The extension of the reserve’s activities into the buffer zone was viewed as illegitimate, as it was private land, not the reserve. One farmer explained that guards were “messing in things that were not theirs”, and that he fought consequently fought them because their heavy-handed regulations were “abusive” (fieldnotes, February 2007). Other villagers recalled incidents where attempts to regulate certain practices in the buffer zone led to standoffs between guards armed with guns and villagers armed with machetes.

Villagers’ resistance attempted to create a counter-territorialisation of the reserve. Firstly, their actions and discourses around implicit resistance were an attempt to assert their version of the meaning and purpose of the forest, as a source of subsistence for local people. The claims for help and compensation compliment this, by further asserting their moral right of

access to the forest, and their entitlement to compensation should this be impinged, with the reserve presenting a counter-discourse. It was not an attempt to remove the territorial entity of the reserve in its entirety, but rather to redefine it. Finally, the violence and accompanying discourse represents villagers' attempts to assert their private property rights over the reserve's claimed right to regulate activity in the buffer zone. This resistance is largely about territory, a contestation over social relations, legitimacy, and moral economy grounded in specific spaces.

This resistance had a mixed impact. Firstly, no overt resistance, such as violence, was possible in La Sal. As La Sal was considered a hotspot of woodcutting, the reserve focused its initial activities there, recruiting a number of local men as guards, intending to turn poachers into gamekeepers – discouraging locals from cutting trees by giving them waged employment in protecting them, although senior staff such as the head guard and reserve director were recruited from the lowlands. Consequently, the guards enforcing reserve regulations were the neighbours, relatives, and friends of those accused of breaking them, and intra-village social ties became a key part of how villagers in La Sal interacted with the reserve. Social norms in the villages emphasised avoiding conflict with neighbours, and so villagers felt unable to fight back against the guards imposing regulations – one former resident of La Sal ventured that former residents didn't resist because they “were embarrassed or scared”, and another emphasised that “people want to avoid punches” with people they know (fieldnotes, April 2007). The guards themselves acknowledged the importance of this trend – one explaining that it is easier to patrol their home village because “people always listen to their friends” (interview, February 2007), and consequently they could verbally reprimand someone committing an infraction rather than needing to be more confrontational. The strength of this social norm of avoiding conflict with ones neighbours, even when it affects individual

livelihoods, is illustrated by several other examples where conflict has occurred or been avoided in El Arroyazo. La Sal no longer exists, for reasons explained below, but social dynamics within El Arroyazo provide a good insight into how La Sal might have operated, as the two villages are only 10 kilometres apart, and interview data from residents of both villages, including former residents of La Sal who now reside in El Arroyazo, indicate that the social and economic relations in both sites were broadly similar. Firstly, the arrival of Haitian migrants in El Arroyazo to work in coffee plantations and commercial agriculture in recent decades has increased social tensions, with Haitians accused of depressing wages and increasing crime. There is widespread prejudice against Haitians throughout Dominican society (Howard, 2001; Wucker, 1999). Haitian migrants are highly transitory, spending a few months in the area, own no property, and few speak Spanish. As such, villagers have few social relations with migrants, other than encounters at village shops, or when they are both hired to work in plantations. Villagers do not blame plantation owners for this influx, but rather three of their fellow villagers who rent single room shacks as accommodation to the migrants. Whilst villagers let these landlords know their displeasure anonymously and indirectly through village rumour and gossip, they avoid conflict by avoiding direct confrontation. One villager in El Arroyazo explained that whilst she was deeply unhappy that her neighbour rented out a shack, she never discussed it with him because “If I went to confront someone about this, it would become my problem” (interview, El Arroyazo, March 2007). The neighbour in question knew his neighbours disapproved, but said both parties were happy to avoid confrontation, adding “if people don’t bother me, then I don’t bother them” (interview, El Arroyazo, March 2007). A second example concerns two examples from El Arroyazo of conflicts between siblings over the unequal distribution of inherited land. In one, the inequality was contested, resulting in a complete social rupture between siblings, who do not speak over to one another, even a decade later. In the other, the inequality was

tolerated as the brother who received less land decided that contesting it was not worth the inevitable lost social capital, as he relied on his brother, one of the few car owners in the village, to take his produce to market.

Following their unwillingness to fight back, villagers in La Sal acquiesced to regulations until livelihoods were so constrained that outmigration was the only option. One former resident of La Sal explained that “it was easier to leave than to fight” (interview, March 2007). A key point was Hurricane George in 1998, during which the concrete bridge connecting La Sal to the outside world was swept away, leaving the village isolated. Eventually, a wealthy aspiring politician funded the construction of a fragile wire suspension bridge, but unlike the previous bridge this allowed only pedestrian and not vehicular access. This made transporting goods in and out of the village much more difficult, accelerating outmigration until by 2003 the village was completely abandoned. Most residents moved to lowland cities, although some married into families in neighbouring villages. Presently, most fields have been reclaimed by the forest, although some families who remained in the area maintain small coffee plantations there, which require only sporadic visits. Former residents of La Sal blame FP and the reserve for this predicament, one stating that “they [FP] ended the community”, and another that “they threw us out” (interviews, Paso Bajito, March 2007). They accuse FP of not contributing to reconstructing the bridge in order to induce them to leave. The head guard argues that it is preferable for the reserve that no one lives in La Sal.

During the time when regulations led to outmigration in La Sal (1990s and early 2000s), there were no social ties between reserve guards and villagers in El Arroyazo. As a result, this opened up a space for resistance, often violent, which allowed villagers to retain control over private land in the buffer zone. In an oft-recalled incident in 1998, a guard tried to prevent

some farmers burning stubble in their field in the buffer zone. The farmers, incensed at the latest of many interventions in their livelihoods, chased the guard away with their machetes, nearly catching him, which could have been fatal. Both FP and local villagers explained that following this incident, the guards refrained from intervening in the buffer zone around El Arroyazo, turning a blind eye to many practices and, only in the most serious of incidents, calling in Foresta to intervene on their behalf. Villagers now openly cut small trees and burn stubble, knowing that guards will not intervene. As the head guard explained, they “want to avoid situations of conflict with the community” (interview, El Arroyazo, March 2007). Violent resistance successfully limited FP’s attempts to create and define a buffer zone, at least around El Arroyazo.

In the subsequent decade, conflict declined for three reasons: Firstly, whilst villagers remain adamant that they would like the reserve to disappear, their anger has diminished with time— one villager stated that they have “forgotten about the forest”, and how much they depended on it (interview, El Arroyazo, April 2007). Local people now put minimal pressure on the reserve, and the forest is recovering. Villagers still consider that removing the reserve entirely is impossible and beyond their abilities. Secondly, whilst villagers initially struggled to sustain themselves on the small amounts of private land using traditional subsistence crops, the rise of intensive commercial floriculture in the mid-1990s in El Arroyazo allowed farmers to support themselves using relatively small amounts of land. One farmer commented that “If we didn’t have land outside, the reserve would have finished us like La Sal” (fieldnotes, March 2007). Floriculture arose because the unique micro-climate of the area is sufficiently cool and wet to grow European flowers such as roses and lilies, and because the paving of the road to the lowlands allowed these highly perishable crops to reach market. The road also allowed commercial agriculture to enter El Arroyazo, with outside companies buying land and constructing two greenhouses growing tomatoes for the urban market. These industries,

like the transient Haitian populations, post-date the reserve's creation and have no interaction with it. Thirdly, from around 1998 onwards, a few villagers in El Arroyazo began working for the reserve, despite the low wages paid, allowing non-confrontational interactions between local people and guards. At present, there is a stalemate where the guards enforce the reserve and the buffer zone, excluding the area around El Arroyazo. There, residents and guards mutually avoid each other – one villager explained “they [the reserve] are and we are here....If you don't offend them, they don't offend you” (interview, El Arroyazo, March 2007). With the exception of guards originally from El Arroyazo, no FP staff socialise in the village, despite their headquarters being one kilometre up the road. As La Sal lies abandoned, El Arroyazo prospers through floriculture. Whilst the reserve regulated and imposed meaning on the core reserve area and the buffer zone around La Sal, to minimal challenges from villagers, in El Arroyazo villagers successfully challenged the reserve's regulation and definition, and imposed their own meaning.

This history of conflict and antipathy does not appear in outside representations of the reserve. Compounding their resentment at the lack of compensation and promised assistance, some villagers are angry that FP produce literature and other media claiming that help and compensation had been provided. One housewife exclaimed that “I have seen them on television saying that they gave bicycles to all the children so they could get to school. I ask you if you can find a child in the community who has received a bicycle” (interview, El Arroyazo, December 2006). FP's director claimed that substantial assistance had been provided; “we made an aqueduct, we improved all the latrines. We improved all the stoves. We improved the houses, and we helped improve the school, which only went to third grade” (interview, Santo Domingo, December 2006). Former residents of La Sal contradicted this, claiming that only limited standpipes had been provided. Furthermore, FP's director stated that former residents abandoned La Sal “voluntarily and freely” to live in communities with

electricity and telephone connections, which contradicts former residents' accounts. More importantly, FP put active barriers preventing villagers' accounts from reaching outside audiences. For example, in 2007 the government required FP to write a formal management plan for the reserve, after nearly two decades of working without one. A consultant was contracted to undertake participatory planning activities with villagers, yet the attendees were selected by FP, who ensured that, as the reserve director put it, only "key actors", who are "leaders" and "open minded" were invited, meaning people who wouldn't criticise the reserve, rather than those who were "closed minded, who don't understand the issues" (fieldnotes, April 2007). Consequently, the meeting was attended by only 4 people from El Arroyazo: 1 man who was the only person in the village to be universally positive about the reserve, and 3 women. 12 women and 3 men from villages further away were also present. The gender divide is important as agriculture is highly gendered – only 3 women (2 widows and 1 married but independent-minded individual) in El Arroyazo are directly involved in cultivating family owned land, none of whom were present. All other women work as housewives or paid labour, though some prepare flowers for market once they have been harvested. This ensured that discussions were limited to issues such as domestic sanitation, rather than access to resources and farmland. Similarly, villagers' petitions for help are always directed to the head guard and the reserve director, rather than FP's head office in Santo Domingo or to board members, as villagers have no way of accessing them. Guards claim that FP's directors almost never visit the reserve. The net result is that FP are portrayed to government and donor agencies as generous and benevolent to local people, and no mention is made of conflicts, injustices, the illegality of buffer zone regulation, or the hardships local people endured.

2.4 Territoriality and resistance around Ebano Verde

The creation of Ebano Verde Scientific Reserve demonstrates three features common to many accounts of processes of internal territorialisation and the creation of protected areas – the designation of protected areas as people-free places, imposed top-down by a distant state, which was resisted by counter-territorialisation by local people. Here, the Dominican state and FP created a new spatial entity – a reserve - with new delineations on maps, new land use restrictions written into statute. These were communicated and given meaning by armed guards using the full legal and juridical force of the state on people challenging these meanings. FP successfully imposed a top-down definition of the reserve as a place for nature, not people, removing and de-legitimising local people's presence. FP's power to create was such that they could create and enforce a buffer zone in some areas, over-riding private property rights, despite such buffers having no legal status. The territorialisation of the reserve and buffer greatly disrupted the uses and meanings local people had for these spaces. Local resistance was an attempt to assert counter-meanings to the reserve territory, challenging who owned local natural resources, who had access to them, what their purpose was, and decides this. This is expressed in both the actions taken and the accompanying discourses. The net result of this tension between local and state/NGO territorialisation was an arrangement combining aspects of both. Firstly, there is a reserve demarcated on maps and on the ground through signage, designating it as a place for nature, conserving biodiversity and water sources for all Dominican citizens, entrusted to an NGO. This is widely considered to be ecologically successful, with forest expanding and endangered species recovering in number (Abt Associates, 2002). Secondly, this is surrounded by a buffer zone where human activity is technically allowed and where land is privately owned, but in reality land use is subject to strict conditions, and *de facto* control lies with FP. Here forests are expanding into

many of the abandoned fields. Thirdly, around El Arroyazo local people have asserted their ownership and right to decide what happens, and where the purpose of natural resources is to support local residents' livelihoods. Importantly, whilst these territories have remained relatively static in recent years, there is no assurance that this will continue.

This case, like many others (Adams and Hutton, 2007; Brockington, 2004; Brockington and Igoe, 2006; Holmes, 2007), shows that organisations creating and running protected areas frequently have much greater abilities to define and defend territories than local people. FP operate at the national scale, they are well connected to government (as the head guard explained “[our directors] can phone up the [presidential] palace if they need to” – interview, El Arroyazo, March 2007), and they use the state's legal-judicial power and legitimised monopoly on violence. They can unilaterally shape outsiders' understandings of the reserve, and they have sufficient resources to finance their operations. This gives them freedom and authority to create regulations, even without sound legal basis, and the resources to weather long term resistance. Villagers were unable to make their discourses of injustice and the peasant's right to the forest and claims for compensation spread beyond the village, initially because of a fear of violence reprisals (see Neumann, 2001, Holmes, 2007), and later because they lacked a conduit or bridging organisation (see Almudi and Berkes, 2010, Beazley, 2009) that would allow them to operate in the same arenas as Fundación Progreso, as villagers' own statements on their impotence attest. Their distance from decisions was such that they were not even aware of the discussions to create the reserve. Even participatory workshops, supposedly a way for their voice to be heard, were ultimately controlled by FP. This powerlessness should be seen as part of a continuing historical marginalisation of the peasantry in the Dominican Republic, a product of centralisation of power and the peasantry's lack of power, wealth, and influence (Moya Pons, 1995; Turits, 2003). Unlike FP, the residents of La Sal and El Arroyazo lacked access to political arenas, personal

connections to decision makers, knowledge of political processes, land laws, and their legal rights, or the financial resources to mount a legal challenge to their predicament. The result of this, an acquiescence to the reserve in many respects, combined with some everyday resistance, is both a continuation of how peasants in the Dominican Republic have responded to state intervention in their livelihoods and a similar story to that of many protected areas in Latin America and elsewhere (Holmes, 2007; Moya Pons, 1995; Norgrove and Hulme, 2006; Ojeda, 2012; Turits, 2003)

3.1 CONCLUSION

This paper adds to existing literature exploring the territorialisation of protected areas, and the insights this provides to debates on the social impacts of protected areas and local resistance to them. Conflicts over protected areas are long term, evolving, yet often uneven struggles by different parties to define and defend their version of the territory. The case of Ebano Verde adds to other case studies of Latin American protected areas which demonstrate state and NGO-led processes of top-down territorialisation which redefines places as largely people-free landscapes, disrupting local relationships with the land, and leading to protracted resistance (Cardozo, 2011; Grandia, 2007; Mollett, 2010; Ojeda, 2012; Sundberg, 1998; Ybarra, 2012).

Despite rhetoric about decentralisation, decision making for protected areas often remains centralised with the state or transnational conservation NGOs, a top down process, isolated from local people (Corson, 2011; Holmes, 2011; Nelson and Agrawal, 2008; Sundberg, 2003). As this and other cases demonstrate, the creation of buffer zones as part of attempts to

integrate local land ownership and land uses into protected areas, to create co-benefits for biodiversity and local people, can in turn become further sites for contestation.

Yet recent years have seen indigenous and community conserved areas come to prominence in conservation discourses and policies – protected areas owned, managed and designed in large part by the people who live in and around them (Berkes, 2008). This acts as a counter current to top-down territorialisation, but remain rather neglected within the geography literature. As well as these bottom-up protected areas, there should be consideration of the processes which allow local people’s voices to impact upon protected area policies. Indeed, the “disobedient knowledges” produced by academic critiques of conservation may be such a process, and this paper should be read in such a light (Igoe, Sullivan, and Brockington, 2010).

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