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“BEYOND SISTERHOOD THERE IS STILL RACISM, COLONIALISM AND IMPERIALISM!” NEGOTIATING GENDER, ETHNICITY AND POWER IN MADAGASCAR MANGROVE CONSERVATION

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the
College of Arts and Sciences
at the University of Kentucky

By

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Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Betsy Beymer-Farris, Assistant Professor of Geography

Lexington, Kentucky

2018

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

"BEYOND SISTERHOOD THERE IS STILL RACISM, COLONIALISM AND IMPERIALISM!"
NEGOTIATING GENDER, ETHNICITY AND POWER IN MADAGASCAR MANGROVE CONSERVATION

Understanding women's experiences of mangrove forest conservation in the Global South is important because mangrove forests are a crucial defense against climate change, and are also increasingly the targets of global climate change policies. The intervention of postcolonial feminist theory combined with feminist political ecology has the potential to bring forward women's seldom-heard experiences of climate change in these valuable ecosystems. This work supports previous feminist political ecology scholarship focused on understanding women's complicated relationships to the environment and the gendered effects of climate change policies, while challenging dominant conservation discourse around women as a monolithic group. This thesis focuses on women living in Madagascar's largest mangrove, particularly under current mangrove reforestation efforts and emerging blue carbon climate change policies. This project explores how the women in this mangrove forest are situated along axes of power differently, the implications of social divisions for conservation, and the ways in which current mangrove conservation projects reproduce power relations in the mangrove by failing to recognize difference.

KEYWORDS: Gender and climate change, feminist political ecology, mangroves, postcolonial feminism, Madagascar

Manon Lefèvre

22 May 2018

“BEYOND SISTERHOOD THERE IS STILL RACISM, COLONIALISM AND IMPERIALISM!” NEGOTIATING GENDER, ETHNICITY AND POWER IN MADAGASCAR MANGROVE CONSERVATION

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22 May 2018

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I am eternally grateful that on my first day in Antsahampano, I met a quiet but remarkable woman named Zita. Sitting at her kitchen table, I explained to her what I wanted to do in the mangrove forest and why I wanted to work with the women in the village. As she listened, and talked about her life in the mangrove forest, I asked Zita if she would gather some of her friends to meet with me, in the hope that they would be interested in working together. A few days later, on a hot afternoon in early June, I found myself sitting with Zita and a group of women on the floor of the school building. Terrified, I told the women who I was and why I wanted learn more about their lives. I said, “As a woman and a researcher, I think that women all over the world are understudied. Women are not asked often enough for their opinions.” They looked at me with apprehension, with amusement. Then one woman said, you can come work with me harvesting cacao in my fields. And another said, I'll take you in the mangrove forest to catch crabs. And we all laughed.

“There's one more thing I have to ask of you,” I said. “I have nowhere to live here. Would anyone be willing take me in?”

Only one woman spoke up. Her name was Voñy. Laughing, she said, “I live very far in the mangrove forest. My house is very small. Are you sure you want to live with me?” Of course, I accepted her offer. And I never looked back.

When I interviewed Zita later that summer, I asked her why she agreed to help me on that first day in Antsahampano. She thought for a moment, and replied, “You came here to ask us, the women, what we think. No one has ever done that before.”

This thesis is dedicated to the women of Antsahampano, Madagascar, who let me into their homes and lives for this research project. I am forever grateful to them. I could not possibly repay them, but I hope that this work allows for their voices to be heard. I am particularly grateful to Voñy and Zita, without whom this work would never have been possible. I am also indebted to my research assistant, Tahosy, an amazing woman and colleague whom I am lucky to call a friend.

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Ch. 1 Introduction

Global climate change threatens to devastate communities and ecosystems around the world. It is widely recognized that those in the developed world are primarily responsible for this global environmental crisis. Yet, communities in the Global South are often on the frontlines of climate change, struggling to adapt to a changing environment. Many climate change mitigation strategies and policies have emerged in recent years, as leaders and communities around the world take action against rapid climate change. However, the voices of communities in the Global South, and their experiences of conservation and climate change, are seldom reflected in these global climate change initiatives. Women's voices are a particularly glaring gap in these policies. While women in the Global South are among the most vulnerable to global climate change, they often have the least power and representation in decision-making in climate change initiatives.

When global climate change policies have considered gender in their analyses of climate change, and have taken steps to better address the uneven impacts of global climate change on women in the Global South, they often reduce women's complex experiences into a monolithic set of priorities and struggles. In many cases, these climate change policies fail to recognize the social and political differences that divide women in the Global South and the implication of those differences in women's participation in decision-making. These policies universalize third world women's experiences of climate change and environmental degradation. As a result, they render invisible the ways in which these differences affect women's experiences of climate change and participation in climate change mitigation. With this project, not only will I reveal and highlight the voices of women in the Global South, but I will demonstrate the importance of considering gender

through an intersectional lens in climate change policy. To do so, I travel to Madagascar, a place whose extensive biodiversity is under threat as a result of climate change, and where women are seldom heard.

As temperatures continue to rise, Madagascar has a lot to lose. Over 90 percent of the island's plants, mammals, reptiles and amphibians live nowhere else on Earth, making Madagascar one of the hottest "biodiversity hotspots" on the planet (Zachos and Habel 2011). Much of this biodiversity is concentrated in the island's coastal ecosystems, notably its mangrove forests. Mangrove forests provide an important defense against climate change, and they are under threat around the world. Mangroves provide important habitats for endemic birds and fish, furnish food and timber for locals, and protect the coastline from the threat of rising sea levels as a result of climate change. Additionally, mangrove forests store vast carbon stocks and sequester significant CO_2 from the atmosphere. Recognizing their importance, environmental conservation groups and global climate change policies have begun to target mangrove forests as in need of protection and restoration.

This research focuses on women living in an important and threatened mangrove forest in Madagascar that will soon be the site of a large climate change mitigation project. Up until now, conservation in this forest has consisted of large-scale paid mangrove reforestation carried out by women. Conducting ethnographic research with women in this mangrove forest, I discovered that a deep-seated social hierarchy exists among the women around ethnic identity and place of origin. This social hierarchy often determines who is included and excluded in paid mangrove reforestation projects. I argue that this ethnic division—which is rooted in long histories of slavery, colonialism, labor, and resulting

ethnic tension—fundamentally affects the ways that women participate in conservation. Notably, this social hierarchy shapes a discourse of blame for mangrove deforestation onto women who are considered social outsiders. This ethnic division affects women's experiences of landscape change and visions of the mangrove forest in the future. Yet, I contend that conservationists who have implemented these reforestation projects in the have largely ignored these existing divisions, their historical origins, and their link to mangrove forest conservation. In doing so, they entrench a politics of reforestation that empowers some women to participate in conservation while dispossessing others.

This thesis is situated within the field of feminist political ecology. Feminist political ecologists are broadly concerned with the ways in which constructions of gender and the environment are co-constituted. They illuminate the gendered dimensions of human-environment relationships and environmental change. Specifically, this research joins a growing body of literature on gender and climate change within feminist political ecology, which seeks to elucidate the ways in which climate change shapes gender dynamics and power relations. This work joins feminist political ecologies that draw on poststructuralist conceptions of gendered subjectivities as connected to other axes of identity, and is committed to postcolonial intersectionality in its analysis. It joins feminist political ecologists who call for a de-centering of gender within political ecology to consider women as placed within systems of gender, race, sexuality, and other constructions of identity.

This research also bridges feminist political ecology with U.S. Black and postcolonial feminist scholars to re-imagine global climate change policies that acknowledge and take into account the historically specific struggles of women in the third

world. It is framed theoretically within U.S. Black and postcolonial feminist theory, including the works of bell hooks, Chandra Mohanty, Audre Lorde, Angela Davis, Chela Sandoval, and Sara Ahmed. These feminist scholars have long troubled the ways in which Western discourses universalize women's struggles. Black and postcolonial feminists illuminate the complexity of third world women by exposing the ways in which they are positioned within exploitative systems that are rooted in colonialism and imperialism. These feminist scholars, Sandoval writes, "have long understood that one's race, culture, or class often denies comfortable or easy access to either category, that the interactions between social categories produce others within the social hierarchy" (Sandoval 1991, 4). This work draws on the framework of intersectionality, which counters dominant understandings of gender as separate from or more important than other axes of power.

This project's methodological approach also grows out of a Black and postcolonial feminist epistemology. In chapters four and five, I outline my commitment to feminist methodologies, drawing on feminist geographers' emphasis on positionality and reflexive knowledge production in research. Thus, in this work, I confront my implication in structures of colonial power as a Western feminist researcher working in the Global South, and acknowledge the limitations of this scholarship. This work also feminist scholars' assertion that part of the work of deconstructing the concept of third world women takes place within the research process itself.

I argue that illuminating women's complex experiences of mangrove deforestation and environmental change hinges on important social divisions within the community that are rooted in conceptions of homeland and ethnic identity. In Madagascar, ethnic identity is tied to one's ancestral homeland. In this community, a woman's status as a social insider

or outsider is rooted in her ancestral homeland, and thus, in her ethnic identity. Women who have migrated to the mangrove forest from other regions of Madagascar can never truly be social insiders, which impacts their ability to participate fully in conservation projects. In this project, I trace this ethnic tension in the mangrove forest through deep-seated legacies of slavery, colonialism, and capitalism that dates back centuries.

Having found the roots of this ethnic division, I connect the social exclusion of migrant women to their exclusion from mangrove conservation projects. Through interviews with women and conservationists, I illuminate the ways in which migrants who belong to outside ethnic groups are overwhelmingly blamed for mangrove deforestation. In order to understand this anxiety around migrants as threatening the landscape, I draw on postcolonial feminist scholar Sara Ahmed's theory on the othering of migrants, and Black feminist scholars who call for the recognition of all women's complicity in structures of power.

Finally, I draw on *vahiny* women's stories to contradict this discourse of blame and the narrative of *vahiny* women as uncaring of the mangrove forest. I argue that the exclusion of migrant women from conservation and this discourse of blame fundamentally shapes the way that migrant women experience environmental change and interact with mangrove forest conservation. By comparing the experiences of eight different women, I demonstrate that women who are insiders and outsiders in the mangrove have starkly different perceptions of mangrove forest change over time and the efficacy of conservation efforts. I draw on Black and postcolonial feminist scholars who call for intersectionality to deconstruct third world women as monolithic, who contend that we must position women along multiple axes of power, and who call for a recognition of difference among women

in the Global South.

Women in the Global South are not universal and passive victims of climate change. As I illustrate in this project, they have complex gendered and racialized subjectivities imbued in relationships of power. As Chandra Mohanty writes, "Beyond sisterhood there is still racism, colonialism and imperialism!" (Mohanty 1984: 64). It is imperative for postcolonial feminist scholarship to illuminate the ways in which legacies of colonialism and imperialism touch women's lives unevenly. I am greatly inspired by Mohanty's words: "It is only by understanding the *contradictions* inherent in women's location within various structures that effective political action and challenges can be devised" (Mohanty 1984: 62). By highlighting these differences, I contend that the social division around ethnic identity has important implications for ongoing conservation projects and future climate change policies in this mangrove forest.

Feminist scholars have long recognized that women in the Global South bear the brunt of globalization. As global climate change policies move forward, it is critical for feminist research to expand on policies' limited understandings of women's experiences of environmental change. This project attempts to understand how discourses around gender and ethnicity are produced and naturalized, both materially and discursively. It simultaneously pushes back against the ways in which those categories have been employed uncritically in scholarship.

In this work, I explore the daily material realities of women's lives to better understand the complexities of their relationship to the environment within relations of power around gender, ethnicity, and homeland. Through this project, I hope to intervene in impending climate change policies in this mangrove forest that fail to consider gendered

complexities. These policies must work to understand the inter-relatedness of gender, race, and class oppression among women, or risk reifying hierarchical power structures. By recognizing the ways in which Sakalava and migrant women actually share a common vision for the mangrove forest, conservationists could build solidarity among women. On the other hand, if they continue to ignore these power relations among women in the mangrove forest, they risk reifying these same social divisions among women that dispossess marginalized groups.

Beyond making interventions in scholarship and policy, this thesis envisions a new politics that embraces difference among women to combat sexist oppression. How might understanding difference among women in the Global South grow women's emancipatory political power? Audre Lorde teaches us that "difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged…difference must be not merely tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a raw dialectic" (Lorde 1983, 99). Illuminating the ways in which difference among women is used to reproduce patriarchy and other forms of oppression might lead to new possibilities for solidarity against the system of sexist oppression. As bell hooks writes, we must "call attention to the positive, transformative impact the eradication of sexist oppression could have on all our lives" (hooks 1984, 35). I hope that recognizing the complex realities of women, and confronting colonial and imperial structures exploitation, might open up possibilities to forge solidarity among women in the fight against climate change.

Ch. 2 Global climate change, gender and blue carbon

2.1 Climate change, blue carbon and mangrove forests:

Today, we are living in the warmest period in the history of modern civilization. Evidence overwhelmingly suggests that rapid climate change is caused by human activities, especially in the Global North. Communities all over the world have already begun to feel the effects of climate change. Global sea levels have risen nearly eight inches in the last century, with almost half of that rise occurring since 1993. And these levels are expected to continue to rise, up to four feet or more by the year 2100 (Climate Change Science Special Report 2017). Violent storm events are increasing in intensity around the world, as well as heatwaves, droughts and forest fires. As the 2017 Climate Change Science Special Report notes, "The magnitude of climate change beyond the next few decades will depend primarily on the amount of greenhouse gases (especially carbon dioxide) emitted globally. Without major reductions in emissions, the increase in annual average global temperature relative to preindustrial times could reach 9°F (5°C) or more by the end of this century." As such, it is critical that we take action to control global greenhouse gas emissions.

Deforestation and forest degradation are among the highest sources of global carbon emissions. These activities account for approximately 17 percent of global CO_2 emissions (UN-REDD Programme). Furthermore, forests are recognized as carbon stocks. They sequester carbon from the atmosphere and lock it in their biomass. Forests contain 80 percent of the Earth's above-ground terrestrial carbon, and 40 percent of the Earth's below-ground terrestrial carbon (Forest Carbon Partnership). The carbon stored in forests has value on international carbon markets. Within the fifteen years, the market-based climate change mitigation mechanism REDD+—or Reducing Emissions from

Deforestation and Forest Degradation—has emerged as a strategy to combat deforestation's role in global climate change. REDD+ "incentivizes developing countries to keep their forests standing by offering results-based payments for actions to reduce or remove forest carbon emissions" (UN-REDD Programme). Greenhouse gas emitters from the developed world, including corporations, individuals, and states, can then purchase carbon 'credits' to offset their own carbon emissions. In theory, those who purchase carbon credits offset their carbon emissions by paying local communities to enhance and protect the ecosystems, thus preventing CO_2 emissions from deforestation.

Madagascar has an existing framework for carbon offsetting through REDD. It is also a partner country in the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility. Its REDD+ policy is managed by a set of government institutions, and the REDD+ national strategy is under development by the Technical REDD Committee and the Ministry of Agriculture (IUCN and Blue Ventures 2016). While Madagascar is home to a number of REDD+ projects, none of these cover blue carbon ecosystems yet. Madagascar also has a revised Environmental Charter as of 2015 which acknowledges the realities and urgency of climate change and calls for coastal and marine resource management. The 2015 Charter commits to the "equitable benefit sharing" related to "environmental services" and to "carbon markets."[1]

Mangrove forests are increasingly recognized as a crucial ecological defense against climate change. Not only do these intertidal forests sequester significant CO_2 from the atmosphere, but they also store 'blue carbon' reservoirs. Blue carbon refers to the vast carbon stocks that mangrove forests hold in their biomass both above ground in their

[1] Loi n2015-003 portant Charte de l'Environnement Malagasy actualisé

trunks, stems, and leaves, and below ground in their roots and rhizomes, as well as in their carbon-rich sediments. Of the carbon stored in mangrove forests, at least 50% is stored in soils below ground (The Blue Carbon Initiative). As such, they are among the most carbon-rich forests in the tropics (Donato et al. 2011). It is estimated that their carbon sequestration rate averages between 6 to 8 Mg Co_2e/ha (tons of Co_2 equivalent per hectare), at a rate that is two to four times greater than global sequestration rates of mature tropical forests (Murray et al. 2011).

Globally, mangrove forests are disappearing at an alarming rate. Thirty to fifty percent of mangrove forests have been lost globally in the last fifty years alone, and the world continues to lose mangroves at a rate of 2% per year (Donato et al. 2011). This global loss of mangrove forest means that more communities are vulnerable to coastal storms and erosion, and suffer the loss of water filtration, building materials, fuelwood, and important fisheries. Not only does mangrove deforestation threaten this ecosystem's ability to sequester carbon and mitigate climate change, but it also releases significant levels of greenhouse gases. When mangrove forests are degraded or deforested, the carbon locked in their soils are released as CO_2 into the atmosphere and ocean. Emissions from mangrove deforestation "can be as high as 10% of total emissions from deforestation globally, even though mangroves account for only 0.7% of tropical forest area" (Donato et al. 2011). Current annual mangrove deforestation has been estimated to emit 240 million tons of carbon dioxide, equivalent to emissions from the use of 588 million barrels of oil or from 50.5 million passenger vehicles (UNEP 2016). Thus, protecting mangrove forests has implications for climate change from multiple fronts, by both pulling and locking in CO_2 from the atmosphere, and by cutting CO_2 emissions from mangrove deforestation.

Introduced in 2009, 'blue carbon' initiatives make much of the importance of coastal and marine ecosystems in mitigating climate change. According to the Blue Carbon Initiative[2], "Blue carbon now offers the possibility to mobilize additional funds and revenue by combining best-practices in coastal management with climate change mitigation goals and needs." These policies recognize that coastal ecosystems' high carbon sequestration potential has economic value on the same international carbon markets designed for terrestrial carbon offsets. Blue carbon assigns economic value to the carbon captured and stored in coastal ecosystems.

In the Global South, where the majority of the world's coastal ecosystems remain, conservationists increasingly herald blue carbon markets as one solution to global climate change. As international policy bodies develop blue carbon as a mechanism for climate change mitigation, voluntary carbon markets have emerged as a promising source of financial support for blue carbon projects that conserve and protect mangrove forests. Mechanisms like Reducing Emissions through Decreased Deforestation (REDD+) and National Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) "are emerging as means for developing countries to access international carbon mitigation financing streams and to implement programs and policies on the national level" (The Blue Carbon Initiative). Further, local Clean Development Mechanisms (CDMs) "are being developed to help fund climate mitigation actions that may include coastal ecosystem conservation" (The Blue Carbon Initiative). In 2014, a Blue Forests Project was created under the United Nations Environment Program, "to demonstrate how the values of carbon and other ecosystem

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[2] a global program working to mitigate climate change through the restoration and sustanaible use of coastal and marine ecosystems (thebluecarboninitiative.org)

services values can be harnessed to achieve long-term blue carbon protection" (UNEP 2016). Significant to this project, the Blue Forests Project includes a national blue carbon strategy in Madagascar.

Blue carbon policies for climate change mitigation are under development in Madagascar. Since 2011, British marine conservation organization Blue Ventures has assessed the feasibility of a blue carbon payment mechanism in Madagascar's mangrove forests (UNEP 2016). The organization has two blue carbon projects as part of the UNEP/GEF Blue Forests Project: a12,000-hectare VCS (Verified Carbon Standard) project in the Ambanja-Ambaro bays mangrove forest and a 1,300-hectare Plan Vivo carbon standard project in the Bay of Assassins. So far, Blue Ventures has developed management plans over 11,000 hectares of mangrove forest in Madagascar, and have transferred five marine protected areas to coastal communities (UNEP 2016). In addition, over 45 hectares of mangrove forest have been restored through community replanting projects (UNEP 2016).

While Blue Ventures first initiated its Blue Forests project in 2011, the organization has yet to sell blue carbon credits on the carbon market. Up until now, Blue Ventures, along with other conservation groups, have focused on mangrove reforestation as a method to conserve mangrove forest in order to mitigate climate change. The actors involved in planning and implementing mangrove planting projects are the Antsahampano Communauté Locale de Base (CLB) and several conservation NGOs, including Blue Ventures. While there have been several large-scale paid planting projects in recent years, the CLB also carries out volunteer planting throughout the year.

2.2 Blue carbon policies and gender:

Central to this project, recent evidence suggests that women disproportionately experience the effects of climate change (UN Women report 2018: 21). The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change writes, “Women commonly face higher risks and greater burdens from the impacts of climate change in situations of poverty, and the majority of the world’s poor are women. Women’s unequal participation in decision-making processes and labor markets compound inequalities and often prevent women from fully contributing to climate-related planning, policy-making and implementation.” In 2017, the UN FCCC established a gender action plan to increase “gender-responsive climate policy” as well as an increase call to gender in global climate change adaptation, mitigation, and implementation policies (Decision 3/CP.23 2017: 13). However, more work remains to be done to strive for gender equality in decision-making around global climate change action and policy implementation. Further, more research is needed on the gendered dimensions of climate change. It is critical for researchers to understand how women experience global climate change differently around the world, and how their voices have historically been marginalized in global climate change policies.

Feminist political ecologists have long studied the gendered dimensions of environmental degradation and globalization. In recent years, some feminist political ecologists have begun to study the gendered experiences of climate change (Brody, Demetriades and Esplen 2008, Nelson et al. 2002, Dankelman 2010, Sultana 2014). These scholars question the policy discourses and scholarship on climate change as “largely ungendered,” while recognizing that “the impacts of climate change are acutely felt along gender lines and adaptation to climate change is a gendered process” (Sultana 2014, p.

373). Further, through a discourse analysis of existing policies, I question the absence of intersectional gendered analyses within climate change policies. Feminist political ecologists likewise argue for a more complex consideration of gender in climate change initiatives (Nelson and Stathers 2009, Demetriades and Esplen 2008). Not only must scholarship must pay greater attention to the experiences of women in climate change debates, but "greater attention is needed to how gender is intersected by other axes (e.g. class, caste, age, etc.) as well as a relational analysis of both women and men across social categories in a changing climate" (Sultana 2014, p. 374).

Understanding women's experiences of mangrove conservation in the Global South is important because mangrove forests provide benefits for communities, are a crucial defense against climate change, and are also increasingly the targets of global climate change policies. Mangrove forests provide at least $1.6 billion each year in ecosystem services (Polidoro et al. 2010). In addition to serving as an important source of food and timber, they also protect the coastline from the threat of rising sea levels as a result of climate change, prevent shoreline erosion, regulate coastal water quality, and provide habitat for commercially important fisheries and endangered marine species (The Blue Carbon Initiative).

While blue carbon policy frameworks underscore the importance of measuring their impact on communities, these policies do not go far enough to consider the importance of gender in blue carbon ecosystems or the complex experiences of women that go beyond gender identity. Although the United Nations Environmental Program's language includes the need to assess the impact of blue carbon on communities, and specifically calls for analysis on the gendered impacts of blue carbon, its engagement with issues of gender is

superficial. In a 2014 report outlining principles for coastal carbon projects, the UNEP and the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) recommended that those planning blue carbon projects "ensure community engagement, including gender-focused engagement" (UNEP and CIFOR 2014). The guidelines point to the significance of gender roles in land tenure, which it identifies as "the most ambiguous yet crucial potential impediment to the success of blue carbon projects" (UNEP and CIFOR 2014). As a 2015 IUCN report notes, it is necessary to "address power relations between men and women in the communities and implications for blue carbon payments. This is especially important in the regional context where the gender roles with respect to mangrove use differ, and benefits (payments) could differentially accrue to each group based on use or ownership of the resource" (Herr and Pidgeon 2015). Importantly, the IUCN's language suggests that international climate change policy-makers are invested in addressing issues of gender relations in mangrove forest conservation and blue carbon.

Madagascar contains approximately 2% of the world's mangrove forests, and it holds Africa's fourth largest extent of mangrove forests (Jones, Ratsimba et al. 2014). The island will be the site of a blue carbon policy framework within the next few years, focused on its mangrove forests. Up until now, however, mangrove forest conservation in Madagascar has overwhelmingly consisted of reforestation projects. In this project, I investigate the gendered dimensions of current conservation projects in order to intervene in future blue carbon policies in Madagascar's mangrove forests. I contend that current conservation efforts in Madagascar largely fail to consider gender in their analyses or policies. Furthermore, because these current mangrove forest conservation projects do not consider gender adequately, they do not understand women's complex participation in

these projects. By illuminating these shortcomings and their causes, this work hopes to intervene in future blue carbon policies that risk rendering women's experiences invisible in similar ways. As blue carbon arrives in Madagascar, it is critical for policy makers and implementers to understand the specific gendered dimensions of climate change in the country, and to address gender in blue carbon policies.

Ch. 3 Feminist political ecology, Black feminist thought, and postcolonial feminist theory

3.1 Introducing political ecology and feminist political ecology

Political ecology scholarship broadly examines the relationships between political, social, and economic dynamics that shape human-environment interactions. During the 1970s, political ecology emerged as an intervention of apolitical ecological studies. The field drew inspiration from cultural ecology, community ecology, cybernetics, and systems theory (Walker 2005, Odum 1970, Bateson 1972, Greenberg and Park 1994). As political ecologists Piers Blaikie and Harold Brookfield wrote in 1987, "The phrase 'political ecology' combines the concerns of ecology and a broadly defined political economy. Together this encompasses the constantly shifting dialectic between society and land-based resources, and also within classes and groups within society itself" (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987: 17). In the 1970s, political ecologists used a structural approach to link colonial and postcolonial global market economies to local-scale human-environment interactions, and "focused on unequal power relations, conflict and cultural 'modernization' under a global capitalist political economy as key forces in reshaping and destabilizing human interactions with the physical environment" (Walker 2005: 74).

Much of political ecology scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s focused on biophysical changes in landscapes. However, the field shifted in the 1990s, as political ecologists worried that the discipline's focus on ecological analyses and political economy did not adequately address the power relations imbued in landscapes. Thus, political ecology turned toward a poststructuralist approach to studying environmental politics (Watts 1997). This turn in political ecology brought attention to "discursive and symbolic

politics, and the institutional nexus of power, knowledge and practice" (Walker 2005: 75). This second wave of political ecology considered the ways in which humans the environment are co-constituted, and the importance of understanding the role of social and historical processes in uneven environmental degradation. At the same time, some political ecologists critiqued political ecology's lack of accounting for gendered power relations in human-environment relationships. In the 1990s, political ecology "opened up the category by giving greater salience to the ethnic identities, gender roles and relations, institutions, governance apparatuses, political involvements, and other social factors" (Paulson, Gezon, Watts 2003). For the first time, feminist political ecology emerged as an effort to bring gender to the forefront of political ecology research.

Bina Agarwal was among the first to call for a feminist approach to political ecology that centered "women's and men's relationship with nature [as] understood as rooted in their material reality, in their specific forms of interaction with the environment" (Agarwal 1992, p. 126). Agarwal argued that women are "victims of environmental degradation in quite gender-specific ways," and "active agents in movements of environmental protection and regeneration" (Agarwal 1992, p. 119). For feminist political ecologists, understanding the 'real' differences in gendered experiences of nature meant understanding the interaction of social conditions, physical biological processes, and place (Rocheleau et al. 1996). Further, feminist political ecology seeks to understand the ways in which women's decision-making process, access to resources, and livelihoods strategies actually shape ecological processes. These scholars advanced the notion that gendered roles, labor and resource use are both shaped by and actively shaping the physical environment.

Feminist political ecologists have long studied women's survival, health, conservation, and restoration, as well as environmental degradation and exploitation. They have shown that the political marginality of women, gendered land and resource rights, and the survival of the family are all social-ecological issues that affect women and shape the environment (Rocheleau et al. 1996). Feminist political ecologists were the first to enumerate the relationship between gendered notions of labor, resource access, and environmental change (Carney 1993, Carney and Watts 1990; 1991, Agarwal 2001). Like many feminist scholars, feminist political ecologists questioned the role of 'expert knowledge' and positionality, the researcher's relationship to her research subject and her complicity in structures of power (Harding 1986, Haraway 1988, Rocheleau et al. 1996).

3.2 Feminist political ecology's turn to poststructuralism and gendered subjectivities:

Feminist political ecologists rendered the gendered dimensions of environments visible, recognizing women as agents of environmental change, including both environmental destruction and resistance to environmental destruction. They studied "poverty, social justice, the politics of environmental degradation and conservation, the neoliberalization of nature and ongoing rounds of accumulation, enclosure and dispossession" (Elmhirst 2011: 1). Yet, some scholars critiqued feminist political ecology scholarship as thinking uncritically about constructions of gender, inadvertently essentializing women's experiences. As Andrea Nightingale wrote, "the emphasis within feminist political ecology, however, has largely remained on women and, indeed, in places in Rocheleau et al.'s book 'gender' seems synonymous with 'women'" (Nightingale 2006: 169).

In recent years, an increasing number of feminist political ecologists have

considered the ways in which women's relationships to the environment are constructed in very particular ways through everyday practices that are wrapped up in relations of power around gender, race, and class (Elmhirst 2002, Gururani 2002, Sundberg 2004, Harris 2008, Nightingale 2006, Sultana 2009, Nightingale 2011, Lau and Scales 2016). These scholars trace the material and discursive ways through which gendered subjectivities and ideas of 'nature' are co-constituted. They echo the concern that "many people continue to treat gender, ethnicity/caste, class and race as separate processes that produce particular kinds of social inequalities, and nature, of course remains elusive" (Nightingale 2011: 153). These feminist political ecologists understood that if feminist political ecology aims to understand women's social struggles, it was imperative to study women at the intersection of multiple processes and power relations. Only then could feminist political ecologists bring to light the ways in which sexist oppression is not only inextricably entangled in other kinds of power relations and oppression, but also in particular understandings of the environment.

Feminist political ecology's poststructuralist turn drew on theories of performativity in order to question how human-environment relationships are mediated through constructions of gender. Judith Butler critiqued the heteronormative category of 'woman' through her theory of performativity. In her groundbreaking work, *Gender Trouble,* Butler contends that gender identity is constructed and reproduced through corporeal acts that mark bodies. She also posits that there is no common women's subjugated experience (Butler 1990: 4). Butler challenges us to consider the ways in which "identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (Butler 1990: 25). Embodied performances of gender become naturalized through

repeated stylization of the body (Butler 1990: 33). Gender markers are written on and through the body in a way that simultaneously constructs gender and justifies its construction. Butler writes that power regimes of patriarchy "seek to augment themselves through a constant repetition of their logic, their metaphysic, and their naturalized ontologies" (Butler 1990: 32). The acts that create the performance of 'woman' are used to justify this essential 'womanhood'. Thus, gender conceals its genesis (Butler 1990: 140). Butler also argues that "the category of 'women', the subject of feminism, is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought" (Butler 1990: 2). A feminism that does not challenge its own category of analysis reifies the gendered power structure that it wishes to expose and undermine. While feminist political ecologists are concerned with the many ways in which women are situated within patriarchal systems, they must also consider the ways in which women are situated unevenly along axes of power that similarly reproduce themselves through corporeal actions in order to justify their logic.

Recent work in feminist political ecology troubles the category of 'woman' as given in analyses of women and the environment. This scholarship explores the complex and particular practices that construct gender in specific places (Nightingale 2011, Harris 2006, Sultana 2009). As Sultana writes, "gendered subjectivities are socially and discursively constructed but also materially constituted; subjectivities are produced through practices and discourses, and involve production of subject-positions (which are usually unstable and shifting)" (Sultana 2009: 428). These feminist political ecologies draw on Judith Butler's theory of performativity, to emphasize that "social difference is understood as emergent and produced out of everyday practices" (Nightingale 2011: 155). Gender is thus

"reconceptualized as a process" (Nightingale 2006: 165). Nightingale writes, "by recognizing the continual production of social difference, essentialist notions of identity are undermined, and it is possible to illuminate how subjectivity is ultimately a contradictory achievement with subjects exercising and internalizing multiple dimensions of power within the same acts" (Nightingale 2011: 155). Thus, drawing on theories of performativity and poststructuralist understandings of gender, feminist political ecologists reveal women's complex, and at times contradictory, subjectivities.

Feminist political ecology has also expanded on Butler's theory of performativity by expanding it to constructions of nature. These scholars have troubled the ways in which landscapes are imbued with everyday practices that construct gender, as well as simultaneously constructed through these practices. As Shubhra Gururani writes, "Forests, like other places of nature, are dialectically constituted by local politics of place, history, and ecology and are constitute of social relations. Forests are more than a source of fuel or a 'natural resource': they shape myriad social relations that are locally specific and respond to the ecological and geographical contexts of a place" (Gururani 2002: 231). With this turn in feminist political ecology, scholars argue that women's embodied and material practices produce meaning in relation to their environment.

In 2011, Rebecca Elmhirst wrote of 'new' feminist political ecologies: "new in part because each paper considers the implications for gender-environment research of recent, embodied, performative and/or post-structural theorisations of gender, and new because of the extraordinary conditions in which contemporary gendered lives and livelihoods are being reworked" (Elmhirst 2011: 3). These new feminist political ecologies use poststructuralist approaches to gender and power, "placing the 'decentered subject' at the

heart of many debates" (Elmhirst 2011: 6). Decentering gender means placing more emphasis "to an exploration of multi-dimensional subjectivities where gender is constituted through other kinds of social differences and axes of power such as race, sexuality, class and place, and practices of 'development' themselves" (Elmhirst 2011: 6). I follow the lead of Elmhirst and others who locate 'gender' as bound in other axes of power and the role of embodied practices in constructing complex gendered subjectivities. These feminist political ecologists draw on feminist theories, including Black and postcolonial feminism, to untangle the ways in which women are positioned differently at the intersection of gender, race and power.

The poststructural turn in feminist political ecology drew on U.S. Black and postcolonial feminist theories to consider race and ethnicity as entwined in gender relations. Feminist political ecologists have thus called for work that recognized "racial power as mutually constitutive of gendered subjectivity" (Mollett and Faria 2013: 117). Rather than privileging gender in analysis, feminist political ecologists, including call for a focus on the legacies of colonization, patriarchal domination and racism as mutually imbued within human-environmental relationships (Gururani 2002, Nightingale 2011, Agarwal 1992, Elmhirst 2011, Harris 2006). These scholars and others contend that feminist political ecology must "interrogate intersectionality with respect to social difference and environment, which would more meaningfully connect gender to class, ethnicity, livelihoods, and other key factors" (Harris 2006: 204). As I will explore next, this commitment to intersectionality in feminist political ecology very clearly grows out of U.S. Black and postcolonial feminist theories.

Following these scholars and others, this thesis uses postcolonial intersectionality

as a framework for analysis. They call for a postcolonial intersectionality within feminist political ecology scholarship that "acknowledges the way patriarchy and racialized processes are consistently bound in a postcolonial genealogy that embeds race and gender ideologies within nation-building and international development processes" (Mollett and Faria 2013: 120). For decades, feminist political ecologists have used postcolonial intersectionality to study the construction of gender as embedded within other axes of identity and systems of power. This lens of analysis places feminist political ecology in conversation with Black and postcolonial feminists who have long challenged gender as separate from other structures of oppression, including racial inequality.

3.3 Black feminist thought and intersectionality:

During the third-wave feminist wave of the 1980s, U.S. Black feminist thought emerged as an intervention in dominant feminist theory that had, up until that point, largely failed to recognize the ways in which a politics of gender could not be separated from politics of race, sexuality, and other forms of identity. The epoch's dominant feminist theory and scholarship fought for the oppression of white women without considering the particular racialized experiences of U.S. Black women as interconnected with their experiences of sexist oppression. Black feminists exposed sexism as connected to racism, classism, and other systems of power domination, which "divide women from one another" (hooks 1984: 61). They contended that it is not enough to challenge the ways in which women are subject to gendered oppression, but that feminist theory must also point to the ways in which all women uphold power inequalities, including sexism, by repeating an internalized patriarchal order. They claimed that dominant feminist thought spoke on behalf of women

without thinking critically of the ways in which women experience oppression differently.

As Audre Lorde wrote in 1984, "By and large within the women's movement today, white women focus upon their oppression as women and ignore differences of race, sexual preference, class, and age. There is a pretense to a homogeneity of experience covered by the word *sisterhood* that does not in fact exist" (Lorde 1984: 116). The radical feminist shift toward Black feminist epistemologies grew out of the concern that "U.S. Black women's experiences as well as those of women of African descent transnationally have been routinely distorted within or excluded from what counts as knowledge" (Collins 1990: 251). A wave of Black and other non-white feminist scholars emerged whose work sought to illuminate and center the experiences and knowledges of Black women, simultaneously de-centering white hegemony within dominant feminist thought.

Black feminist theorists also challenged feminist scholars to rethink their implication in structures of power. bell hooks also challenged women as "divided by sexist attitudes, racism, class privilege, and a host of other prejudices" (hooks 1984: 44). hooks challenged feminist scholars to "expose, examine, and eliminate sexist socializations within ourselves" (hooks 1984: 47). As such, Black feminist theory called for more intentional positionality among feminist scholars. Black feminism recognized the dynamic and shifting ways through which structures of power are entangled. As Patricia Hill Collins wrote of U.S. Black feminism, "race, class, gender, and sexuality constitute mutually constructing systems of oppression" (Collins 2000: 227). In 1989, U.S. Black feminist scholar and lawyer Kimberlé Crenshaw first theorized the concept of 'intersectionality' as an intervention in feminist theory's "problematic consequence of the tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis" along a single-

axis framework (Crenshaw 1989: 139). Through a legal framework, Crenshaw critiqued feminist theory as excluding Black women because this discourse was "predicated on a discrete set of experiences that often does not accurately reflect the interaction of race and gender" (Crenshaw 1989: 140). Crenshaw pushed back against single-issue analyses of women's experiences, illuminating the depth and complexity of U.S. Black women's lives and oppression.

Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality inspired other feminist scholars to consider gender as entwined with race and other facets of identity. As Patricia Hill Collins wrote, "the knowledge gained at intersecting oppressions of race, class, and gender provides the stimulus for crafting and passing on the subjugated knowledge of Black women's critical social theory" (Collins 1990: 8). Black feminist thought emerged as an epistemological framework to studying social inequalities. As Angela Davis wrote, "In my opinion, the most effective versions of feminism acknowledge the various ways gender, class, race and sexual orientation inform each other" (Davis and Martinez 1993). bell hooks wrote, "feminism as a movement to end sexist oppression directs our attention to systems of domination and the inter-relatedness of sex, race, and class oppression" (hooks 1984: 31). Intersectionality provided a lens of analysis that would not only illuminate Black women's complex experiences of sexist and racist exploitation, but an approach to understanding structures of power as operating along multiple axes. Feminist intersectionality allowed scholars to better understand how globalization, colonialism, and imperialism reify sexism and hierarchical power structures. As hooks writes, "one system cannot be eradicated while the others remain intact" (hooks 1984: 35). Collins described a *matrix of domination* to describe the "social organization within which intersecting oppressions originate, develop,

and are contained" (Collins 1990: 228). Like Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality, Collins' matrix of domination offered a paradigm that placed race, class and gender as interconnected social stratifications.

In the 1990s, Black feminist scholars used intersectional analysis to explore U.S. Black women's particular struggles and resistances as connected to non-white women around the world. As Collins wrote, "Black feminist thought's identity as a critical social theory lies in its commitment to justice, both for U.S. Black women as a collectivity and for that of other similarly oppressed groups" (Collins 1990: 9). While U.S. Black feminism centered Black women's experiences, it also shifted its gaze outward, to forge solidarity across borders. As Collins wrote,

"All of these groups of women thus are positioned with situations of domination that are characterized by intersecting oppressions, yet their angle of vision on domination will vary greatly" (Collins 1990: 232). Black feminist thought simultaneously recognized differences in Black women's experiences of subjugation around the world, while calling for a solidarity to combat sexist and racist domination.

This project is heavily inspired by U.S. Black feminist theory, and in particular its lens of intersectionality. This work draws on intersectionality as a way to push back against gender as disconnected from other axes of identity and power, namely ethnic identity. Like Black feminist scholars, it refuses to treat gender and ethnicity as separate processes, but rather seeks to untangle the ways in which relations of gender and ethnic identity affect women's daily material realities. Furthermore, this work posits that understanding differences among women reveals the ways in which some women reproduce power inequalities over others.

3.4 Postcolonial feminist theory:

This transnational turn in Black feminism was closely connected with postcolonial feminist thought. Postcolonial feminist theory also emerged during this third-wave feminist shift toward Black feminist thought. Importantly, this theoretical paradigm grew out of the work of postcolonial theorists like Frantz Fanon, who wrote of the legacies of colonialism and imperial domination on colonized people in the 1960s, and Edward Saïd, who critiqued Western othering of the Global South through the concept of orientalism in the 1970s. Postcolonial thought was at once an epistemological framework, an ethical concern, and a political project to expose the legacies of colonial violence and Western subjugation of communities in the Global South. It confronted the Western appropriation of subaltern knowledges, as seen in the work of Gayatri Spivak, and the ways in which colonial legacies linger in contemporary geopolitics, as seen in the work of Derek Gregory.

Although many U.S. Black feminist theorists were also postcolonial scholars, the field of postcolonial studies had remained largely male-dominated. Postcolonial feminist theory emerged as a critique of the lack of feminist voices centered within postcolonial theory, and to pressure mainstream postcolonial theory to more fully consider issues of gender in postcolonial scholarship. In the introduction to their *Feminist Postcolonial Theory* reader, Reina Lewis and Sara Mills write of "the marginalization and exclusion of a separate trajectory of feminist thought about race, power, culture, and empire" within postcolonial studies (Lewis and Mills 2003: 2). The authors write, "Feminist postcolonial theory has engaged in a two-fold project: to racialize mainstream feminist theory and to insert feminist concerns into conceptualizations of colonialism and postcolonialism" (Lewis and Mills 2003: 3). Feminist postcolonial theory echoed Black feminist scholars'

calls to confront racism in Western feminist theory, including bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Angela Davis, and others. These epistemological paradigms were closely related in their commitment to an intersectional feminism that centered women's complex identities. Further, postcolonial feminism followed that "Feminist anti-racist politics was born out of recognition of the differences between women and out of the anti-imperialist campaigns of 'first' and 'third' world women" (Lewis and Mills 2003: 5). Like Black feminists, postcolonial feminist theory sought to recognize and confront difference among women across borders in order to re-situate women's complex experiences of oppression.

The boundary between U.S. Black feminist theory and postcolonial feminist theory is blurred. As Black feminist Audre Lorde famously wrote, "We have, built into all of us, old blueprints of expectation and response, old structures of oppression, and these must be altered at the same time as we alter the living conditions which are a result of those structures. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (Lorde 1984: 123). Lorde's foundational essay contends that feminist thought must address the ways in which the lingering structures of colonialism and imperial domination subjugate women today. Patricia Hill Collins also writes of the transnational implication of Black feminist theory: "Due to the particular combination of the legacy of African cultures, a history of racial oppressions organized via slavery, colonialism, and imperialism, and an emerging global racism that, assisted by modern technology, moves across national borders with dizzying speed, women of African descent encounter particular issues" (Collins 1990: 232). For Collins, U.S. Black feminism should be seen "as part of an 'intercontinental Black women's consciousness movement' that addresses the common concerns of women of African descent" (Collins 1990: 234). Collins' words suggest that Black feminist thought

and postcolonial feminism blend together to advocate for transnational feminist theory around the experiences of women of color, and women of the Global South, whose lives are so entwined with legacies of colonial violence.

Beyond an intersectional approach to scholarship, Black and postcolonial feminisms call for solidarity among women across borders. As Angela Davis writes, "Black women scholars and professionals cannot afford to ignore the straits of our sisters who are acquainted with the immediacy of oppression in a way many of us are not. The process of empowerment cannot be simplistically defined in accordance with our own particular class interests. We must learn to lift as we climb" (Davis 1989: 9). Here, Davis bridges Black and postcolonial feminist theories. She challenges feminist thinkers and scholars to examine their own positionalities along axes of power, and to think transnationally to the women who experience the legacies of colonial violence in their daily material realities, so that their voices may be heard. For these scholars, difference among women should not divide, but should forge solidarity. As Audre Lorde writes, "difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged" (Lorde 1984: 99). Postcolonial feminism emphasized transnational solidarity that exposes the particular axes of power and matrixes of domination that different groups of women experience every day.

In 1986, Chandra Mohanty emerged as a prominent figure in postcolonial feminist thought through her use of transnational feminism, seen in her essay, *Under Western Eyes*. Like U.S. Black feminists, Mohanty also challenges Western feminist scholarship and scholarly practices as existing within relations of power. In this text, Mohanty argued that colonization implies "a relation of structural domination and a discursive or political

suppression of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question" (Mohanty 1986: 49). Mohanty interrogates the ways in which women of the Global South have been constructed through Western colonial discourses as universal and passive victims of globalization. Like Black feminists, she challenges feminist scholars to illuminate the daily material practices of women in the Global South in order to understand contextually specific oppressions and struggles.

Postcolonial feminist theory further contends that women of the Global South are positioned along axes of power. To ignore or homogenize these differences in scholarship reifies the essential Third World Woman. Mohanty writes, "It is only by understanding the *contradictions* inherent in women's location within various structures that effective political action and challenges can be devised" (Mohanty 1986: 62). In her later work, *Feminism Across Borders,* Mohanty emphasizes the importance of a "plural or collective consciousness" that "requires understanding multiple, often opposing ideas and knowledges, and negotiating these knowledges" (Mohanty 2003, 80). Thus, while it is necessary to investigate the structures of oppression that shape the struggles of women of color, it is also necessary to understand the ways in which women are positioned differently within these systems. Mohanty asks, "How do questions of gender, race, and nation intersect in determining feminisms in the Third World?" (Mohanty 2003, 44). She re-imagines the feminism of the Third World Woman as one that is historically specific and dynamic but based on a 'common context of struggle'. She introduces the notion of the "*common context of struggles* against specific exploitative structures and systems that determines our potential political alliances" (Mohanty 2003, 49). The 'common context of struggle' re-politicizes the Third World Woman, with the understanding that women the

Global South are situated within exploitative systems are rooted in colonialism and imperialism.

Many feminist political ecologists rely on postcolonial feminist theory to investigate the effects of colonization and imperialism on women's lives in the Global South. They illuminate legacies of power and position women within those systems. They push back against essentialism of women's lives in scholarship and popular discourses. They illuminate women's oppression across borders while highlighting differences among women. With this thesis, I join these feminist political ecologists. I rely on feminist postcolonial theory not only to question women's positions of power in this mangrove forest, but to call out the homogenization of third world women's lives in conservation.

3.5 Conclusion:

This project grows out of postcolonial feminist theory and its influence in feminist political ecology. In this work, I trace the legacies of colonization and early capitalism to current relations of gender and ethnic identity in the mangrove forest. Furthermore, I untangle the ways in which women are placed differently along axes of power as they relate to conservation. By doing so, I hope to push back against current conservation projects' homogenization of women's experiences of environmental change and reforestation. By illuminating difference among women and the ways in which power relations shape their experiences of conservation, I follow postcolonial feminist scholars who challenge the Western construction of women in the Global South as monolithic. Ultimately, I envision a paradigm of environmental conservation that works across difference to build solidarity among women.

U.S. Black feminist thought, postcolonial feminist theory, and the analytical lens of intersectionality have all contributed greatly to the field of feminist political ecology. Feminist political ecologists who draw on Black and postcolonial feminist thought have worked to understand the gendered dimensions and effects of land use and change, labor, environmental degradation, and more. These scholars contend that women cannot be separated into categories of identity, and that doing so homogenizes difference and reproduces social inequalities. Through the framework of postcolonial intersectionality, feminist political ecologists can better question how women in the Global South feel the effects of globalization, environmental change, and climate change differently.

Ch. 4 Employing feminist methodologies

"Fieldwork is mediated and messy. There is value in working through the messiness, engaging in fieldwork in a careful manner, rather than writing it off as too fraught with difficulties and dangers. Imperfect engagement is better than no engagement, or a paralyzing angst."

-Jennifer Hyndman 2001: 265

4.1 Positionality in feminist geography:

This project is inspired by feminist scholars who have long stressed the importance of intentional positionality in research, challenging hegemonic structures of power and masculinist notions of objectivity in research (Haraway 1991, 1997, McDowell 1992, Gibson-Graham 1994, Rose 1997, Nagar and Geiger 2007). Donna Haraway called it "situated knowledges" (Haraway 1988). Sandra Harding called it "strong objectivity" (Harding 1980). Feminist reflexivity understands knowledge as situated and partial; it purports that "all knowledge is produced in specific circumstances and those circumstances shape it in some way" (Rose 1997: 305). These scholars and others have argued that feminist research must be grounded in women's uneven and embodied experiences. As Juanita Sundberg writes, "An alternative feminist perspective on objectivity calls for an understanding of knowledge as a social process that is fully imbricated in the webs of power relations we call 'society'" (Sundberg 2003: 182). Feminist epistemologies teach us that research that does not attempt to destabilize uneven power relations reproduces patriarchy and sustains hegemonic patriarchy. Thus, it is critical to think carefully about the power structures we reproduce as researchers, especially if we have privilege (for example, I am a cis, white, heterosexual, able-bodied woman). In this project, I work to subvert the power dynamics of academic research by paying attention to voice, calling out

colonial structures of power, and committing to building relationships of trust with research participants.

As J. K. Gibson-Graham write, ‘‘I am situated by one of the most powerful and pervasive discourses in social life (that of the binary hierarchy of gender)... This subject position influences my entry into social interactions and the ways I can speak, listen, and be heard’’ (Gibson-Graham 1994: 219). Just as I attempt to untangle the complex gendered subjectivities of the women with whom I worked, and challenge assumptions of the ‘third world woman’ (Mohanty 2003), I must also work to untangle my own gendered subjectivity and implication in relations of race, class, and beyond. I can never be outside my gendered body when conducting research. A feminist geographer’s position within this binary hierarchy of gender has particular and important implications for her relationships with research subjects, her ability to be in ‘the field’ and in certain spaces, and her access to institutions and communities. Following other feminist geographers, it is important that I situate my own positionality in this research project, in an attempt to avoid reproducing colonial structures of power.

My positionality and identity while conducting in this research project resulted in important limitations to this work. My positionality as a white French woman makes me acutely aware of my own entanglement in colonial legacies. My identity also presented me with particular challenges. In certain cases, the women I encountered met me with distrust or contempt. In order to build relationships of trust with my research participants, I had to reconcile the fact that some women saw me in the role of the colonizer.

At times, my positionality also resulted in unsafe or uncomfortable working conditions in ways that significantly altered this research project. Most notably, I did not

conduct any interviews with men living in the mangrove forest, because I experienced extreme, near-daily sexual harassment from the men in my study area. Their comments and actions undeniably shaped my experiences of fieldwork, and in some cases my ability to conduct research effectively or safely. My experiences also undoubtedly shaped my understanding of the mangrove and my research subject itself. Yet, the challenges I encountered also illuminated the potential for solidarity with Malagasy women. As a feminist geographer concerned with creating embodied and emancipatory knowledge, I think it is important to situate these experiences of harassment and solidarity in my academic work.

It is important that I acknowledge that not all men that I encountered treated me with disrespect. However, many of the men in my study area were a source of personal discomfort and fear for me. Their words and actions, and the potential threat they posed me, often dictated the places I could go, the people I spoke with, the interviews I conducted, and even the place I lived. However, some women also participated in the harassment. Navigating this tension meant recognizing that women can uphold sexist oppression just as readily as men. For them, as a *vazaha* (foreigner), I represented wealth, colonial power, and privilege. There is no way to escape the very material remnants of that colonial history.

4.2 Politics of knowledge production in feminist geography:

This project's methodological approach also grows out of feminist geographers' explicit commitment to confronting structures of power within the research process itself. Feminist post-modern and post-structuralist work on gendered subjectivities challenges "concepts of self and knowledge implicit in the Cartesian understanding of subjectivity" (Gibson-

Graham 1994: 206). I am inspired by feminist post-structuralist epistemologies that critique scientific research that is positivist and essentializing, and who instead emphasize embodied and situated knowledge-production.

Postcolonial feminist research privileges the voices of her research subjects, and situates scholarship "within the colonial frameworks of social science" (Coddington 2017: 315). In particular, feminist researchers place an emphasis on illuminating seldom-heard, marginalized voices. This attention to voice is particularly true of postcolonial feminist knowledge production (Robinson 2003). Yet, as postcolonial feminist scholars demonstrate, emancipatory research must go beyond voice as a means of empowerment. It must also consider the power structures inherent to knowledge production. As Coddington writes, "the production of disciplinary knowledge is shaped by the context of imperial legacies; ongoing settler colonial relationships; unequal class, race, and gender divisions" (Coddington 2017: 316). A feminist epistemology necessitates thinking through the power relations that linger in the research process today.

In conducting feminist research, Audrey Kobayashi challenges us, "Who speaks *for* whom?" (Kobayashi 1994: 75). Kobayashi asks questions the "'politics of representation,' and warns, "the answers will not be found in a retreat into the myth of scholarly detachment, but in pushing the margins of critical analysis" (Kobayashi 1994: 76). These words echo those of feminist scholars who call for a shifting of feminist methodologies and epistemologies from margin to center (hooks 1984). Thus, in feminist scholarship, an attempt to engage with the 'politics of representation' is linked to a careful attention towards emancipatory and political knowledge. Feminist geographers undertake research for political change by position themselves along axes of power. As Kobayashi suggests,

feminist research must also work to employ "feminist methods that stress mutual respect and involvement, shared responsibility, valuing difference, and nonhierarchical ways of achieving ends" (Kobayashi 1994: 76). Feminist scholars have long stressed the responsibility that the researcher has to her research participants. Feminist methodologies thus work to build relationships of trust and respect through the research process.

In this work, it is important that I confront my own implication in power relations inherent to the research process. As a researcher, I arrived in a community to do fieldwork, collected data about participants' lives, and have been given the authority to describe my research participants' lives on their behalf. Thus, I recognize that as a researcher, I occupy a position of power over my research participants. However, I also recognize the agency of the women with whom I worked. They also occupy a position of power in this research project. I recognize that the success or failure of this research hinged on the full participation of the women in my study area. This research would not have been possible without the access that these women granted me into their lives. Navigating this power relation reveals the ways in which this researcher-participant dynamic is complex, and runs in both directions.

4.3 Challenging notions of 'the field' in feminist geography:

Feminist geographers have long questioned the separation of 'home' and 'field' in feminist research, destabilizing notions of 'the field' to subvert the extractive tendencies of Western scholarship (Katz 1994, Kobayashi 1994, Nast 1994, Staeheli and Lawson 1994, Gilbert 1994, Hyndman 2001, Till 2001, Sundberg 2003). As Jennifer Hyndman writes, "the demarcation of home and field is a device that makes possible the world-as-exhibition. The

field-worker demarcates herself or himself to enflame… the field" (Hyndman 2001: 264). The separation of the 'field' from the 'home' in research reproduces the Cartesian separation of mind and body, the same exploitative power dynamics in scientific knowledge production feminists have long criticized. The methodological effort to resist the researcher's masculinist power over the research participant means redirecting the "academic gaze" by "inverting power relations between the researcher and the researched" (Hyndman 2001: 263).

Not only have feminist post-structuralists challenged popular understandings of 'the field', they have also confronted the embodied complexities and challenges inherent to conducting fieldwork. Kobayashi writes, "Every discursive field is a site of negotiation and struggle for power, and the politics of doing fieldwork will inevitably come up against the politics of the field" (Kobayashi 1994: 79).

As Hyndman writes, "The field-worker, like the travel writer of the past, is changed by exposure to new places and insights, and she or he returns to a changed place (Blunt 1994). The field, then, is both here and there, a continuum of time and place" (Hyndman 2001: 265). Further, a researcher's experiences in the field do not just shape their understanding of the place; they shape the research itself. The field, as these feminists argue, becomes a continuum that follows the feminist researcher throughout the research process.

In my own work, I am inspired by feminist geographers who break down conceptions of 'the field'. To complete this research project, I relied on two months of ethnographic fieldwork in the Ambanja-Ambaro bays mangrove forest. While immersed in the field, I collected important data and made many key discoveries for this research

project. After conducting field work, I returned to my home institution in order to sort and analyze the data collected in the field, to make conclusions, and write and present my findings. Much of this research process takes place out of 'the field'. Yet, I am inspired by feminist geographers' claim that our experiences in the field simply do not remain there. As Cindi Katz famously wrote, "I am always, everywhere, in 'the field'" (Katz 1994: 72). Challenging the separation of 'home' and 'field' is intricately linked to my feminist commitment to embodied knowledge production.

4.4 Data collection methods:

4.4.1 Participant observation and the extended case:

For this research project, I conducted participant observation in one village in the mangrove forest, Anstahampano, for eight weeks. Participant observation is an ethnographic field method that involves "researchers moving between *participating in* a community… and *observing* a community" (Cook 2005: 168). The researcher's participation in the community means "deliberately immersing themselves into its everyday rhythms and routines, developing relationships with people who can show and tell them what is 'going on' there, and writing accounts of how these relationships developed and what was learned from them" (Cook 2005: 168).

Participant observation is fully immersive. Within this method of research, the researcher's life becomes continuous with her research. The researcher's 'fieldwork' takes place through her daily life participating in

and observing the community in which she works. Through this approach, I performed women's informal and formal work, which provided me with unique insight on their lives first-hand. See Appendix B for the list of tasks I participated in as part of participant observation.

Further, this thesis is inspired by the 'extended case method,' "which deploys participant observation to locate everyday life in its extra-local and historical context" (Burawoy 1998: 4). This method involves grounding participation in histories and global processes, and "rooting ourselves in theory that guides our dialogue with participants" (Burawoy 1998: 5). The extended case, grounded in theory, follows the tenants of feminist reflexivity and extracts larger structural processes from observation of unique places. Research conducted in the extended case method 'extends out' from the field while remaining grounded in particular and situated experiences (Burawoy 1998).

4.4.2 Semi-structured interviews:

During my time in Antsahampano, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with 22 women. To protect their identities, their names have been changed. I relied on semi-structured interviews, taking "a conversational, fluid form, each interview varying according to the interests, experiences and views of the interviewees," "a dialogue rather than an interrogation" (Valentine 2005: 111). Although I had prepared questions, I remained flexible and open to allow for a fluid conversation rather than rely on a rigid

questionnaire. See Appendix A for interview questions. All interviews were recorded and transcribed, unless the research participant chose not to be recorded. I also conducted seven interviews with conservation stakeholders working in the mangrove forest:

1. Madame Anita, President of the Communauté Locale de Base (or CLB), the village-level conservation and environmental management organization. As I will explain in the Area Study, the CLB is responsible for implementing all reforestation projects in the mangrove forest.
2. Joseph Paulet, Chef de l'Environnement, de l'Ecologie et des Forêts d'Ambanja (head of the Malagasy Department of Environment, Ecology, and Forests of Ambanja). Joseph and the Department of Environment, Ecology, and Forests serve as the intermediaries between the CLB and the Malagasy state.
3. Michelin, head of the Groupement des Opérateurs Touristiques du Sambirano (GOTS) (Tourist Operators' Group of the Sambirano). GOTS leads ecotourism groups in this mangrove forest and works with the women's organization *Tsikivy.*
4. Clara, 99 and Zo, three conservation scientists from UK-based marine conservation organization Blue Ventures. Blue Ventures is responsible for recent replanting projects in the mangrove forest and a number of other conservation initiatives.
5. Raymond Mandigny, head of CRADES, Comite de Reflexion et d'Action pour le Developpement et l'Environnement du Sambirano

(Committee of Reflection and Action for the Development and Environment of the Sambirano). CRADES established many of the CLBs in the mangrove forest, and primarily works around issues of charcoal production and livelihoods.

4.4.3 Recruitment:

To recruit research participants, I relied on 'snowballing', using one contact to help me recruit another, who then introduced me to another, and so on. This method of recruiting "gains momentum, or 'snowballs' as the researcher builds up layers of contacts" (Valentine 2005: 117). As gatekeeper, Anja was my original contact and my first interview. I spent my first week in the mangrove experiencing the work she and other women perform every day: fishing, collecting shellfish, taking care of the household, fetching water, and gathering wood. I was careful to make sure to recruit women of different ages, from different ethnic groups, with different work, different family structures, and who lived in different places around the mangrove. I began by interviewing women who lived on or around the mangrove itself. I recruited these participants through word of mouth, and by walking through the mangrove to find women at work. I then recruited women in the main village of Antsahampano, exclusively through word of mouth. Anja also introduced me to the woman's association to which she belonged, the *Association de Femmes Tsikivy* (tsikivy means "never give up"). I made a concerted effort to recruit women from outside

of the association who belonged to other ethnic and social groups. See Appendix C for list of research participants.

4.5 Limitations to research:

Madagascar has two official languages: French and Malagasy. Although I am a native French speaker, and have studied Malagasy, I was not fluent enough in Malagasy at the time of this fieldwork to conduct interviews alone. As such, I required a field assistant to help me with language interpretation. I am cognizant that language is an obvious limitation to this research project and data collection.

Working with a research assistant necessitates a thinking-through of power dynamics, both in terms of her relationship to me and to our research participants. Field assistants also operate along axes of power and have their own complex and situated subjectivities. It is important to recognize that "involving others [in research], such as interviewers generally and translators specifically, alters the nature of the research" (Temple 1997: 607). Working with an interpreter altered my research and my perspective in a profound way, as I relied on her interpretations of language during semi-structured interviews. The translator herself must navigate the difficulties of interpretation. Since "the translator is faced with a dazzling array of possible word combinations that could be used to convey meaning," she must continuously negotiate ways in which to best translate the experiences of other (Temple 2002: 3). For this reason, and in the interest of continuity, I relied on the same field assistant to interpret all of my ethnographic work and interviews, worked through my interview questions with her before interviews, and discussed research findings with her.

Ch. 5 Area Study

5.1 Mangrove forests in Madagascar:

Recent mangrove forest mapping shows that while there has been a nearly 25% loss of mangrove forest cover in the region Madagascar since 1990, significant carbon stocks remain (Jones, Ratsimba et al. 2014). The island holds approximately 278,078 hectares of mangrove forest as of 2005 (Jones et al. 2016). Of that total, 98% of mangrove forest is found on the island's west coast (Lugendo 2015). Deforestation in Madagascar is known to be poverty-induced, and related to economic and political shifts (Moser 2014). Malagasy mangrove forests are increasingly under threat from *tavy,* or slash-and-burn agriculture, drAnjage for agricultural production of rice, maize and cassava, and the island's booming aquaculture industry (Barnes 2014, Mmochi 2015). Charcoal production also heavily threatens Madagascar's mangrove forests.

To combat its high levels of deforestation, the Malagasy state has put laws in place to protect its mangrove forests. Madagascar's Forestry Law of 1997[3] defines mangroves as "integrated" with forests (Article 2). The revised 2015 Environmental Charter names mangrove forest areas and their zones of impact as "sensitize zones."[4] Mangrove forest impact zones (zones d'influence) are areas that stretch 10km upstream from the internal limit of mangroves, and any construction or work within these mangrove forest sensitive zones requires an Environmental Impact Assessment.[5] Commercial timber extraction has

[3] Loi No. 97-017 du 8 août 1997 portant révision de la législation forestière

[4] Décret no. 99-954 du 15 décembre 1999 modifié par le décret n 2004-167 du 03 février 2004 relatif à la mise en compatibilité des investissements avec l'environnement (MECIE) in conjunction with Arrêté No. 4355-97 du 13 mai 1997 portant définition et délimitation des zones sensibles.

[5] ÑArrêté No. 4355-97 du 13 mai 1997 portant définition et délimitation des zones sensibles (Annex).

been banned since 2000[6], and a 2014 regulation bans the "extraction, transportation, stocking an sale of timber specifically in mangrove areas."[7] Further, the Forestry Law's decree concerning forest exploitation[8] refers directly to mangroves: "the mangrove forests and the estuary forests are subject to a management plan" and "the rules for their exploitation will be specifically laid down by regulation, without prejudice to the exercise by the local populations of their rights of use" (Article 10.2). Finally, a National Committee for Integrated Mangrove Management was recently created as part of the GIZC (Integrated Management of Coastal and Marine Zones) to encourage policy for the management and conservation of mangrove forests.

5.2 Ambanja-Ambaro bays mangrove forest:

In Madagascar, mangrove forest loss is particularly prominent in the northwestern Ambanja and Ambaro bays mangrove forest (see Figure 1). The island's largest mangrove forest, it measures at over 45,000 hectares. This mangrove forest is also critically threatened. Remote sensing indicates a loss of 970 hectares since 2010 (Jones, Ratsimba et al. 2014). Charcoal production is the biggest driver of deforestation in Ambanja-Ambaro bays mangrove forest, and demand for timber products is the biggest driver of forest degradation (Barnes 2014, Hipler 2014). A recent study found that "around 2,000 tons of mangrove charcoal were produced annually in AAB from 2000-2010" (Jones, Ratsimba et al. 2016: 77).

[6] Arrêté interministeriel portant arrêt de toute activité extractive et de ressources ligneuses dans les zones sensibles.
[7] Arrêté No. 32.100/2014 du 24 Octobre 2014: Arrêté interministeriel portant l'interdiction d'exploitation de bois des mangroves au niveau du territoire national.
[8] Décret No. 98-782 relatif au régime de l'exploitation forestière

This research takes place in the Ambanja-Ambaro bay mangrove forest, due to its importance in terms of both size and threatened status. The implementation of a blue carbon market in the Ambanja-Ambaro bays mangrove forest is slated to begin within the next few years. The blue carbon project in the Ambanja and Ambaro bays mangrove is part of the organization's larger, country-wide blue carbon agenda. Funding for this country-wide blue carbon plan comes from a number of European and American environmental organizations. Funders include the Fonds Français Pour l'Environnement Mondial, a sustAnjable development organization created by the French state in 1994, and a variety of other European and American funding sources.

5.3 Gendered livelihoods in the mangrove forest:

In this mangrove forest, men and women perform different kinds of work. Labor is often only considered 'work' if it is used to earn an income. Therefore, most of the roles reserved for women to keep the home and family in order are not considered true 'work.' These tasks may also involve children's help, especially older girls. They include child rearing, keeping the house in order, cooking meals, doing dishes, collecting water from the well, collecting dry mangrove wood for cooking, doing the laundry, and keeping the smaller livestock. Women also do 'work' in the mangrove. They help their husbands fish by net, collect shellfish like *vorona* and *kodiva*, harvest sea cucumbers, and fish in the style of *manihitry*, using nets with very small holes to catch small fish (this is often for subsidence only). Outside the mangrove, they farm crops, sell fruits from their family fruit trees, and collect ylang-ylang flowers from large privately owned plantations.

Men's work in the mangrove is typically fishing by pirogue or with a large net, collecting crabs, chopping wood to build houses or fences. Importantly, men are responsible for making charcoal. Now that making charcoal in the mangrove forest is illegal, they do so in the surrounding forest. Men also farm crops, keep the family cattle (or *zebu*), and produce and sell *trembo*, a liquor made from palm trees. Men are considered the workers and breadwinners of the family. Agricultural crops include rice, sweet potatoes, manioc roots and leaves, corn, pumpkins, and other leafy vegetables. Most of these are farmed for subsistence, though some are sold for profit. The Sambirano Valley is known for its cash crops, including vanilla, coffee, cacao, ylang-ylang, coconuts, bananas, and oranges. Families typically keep goats, chickens, and ducks, and, if they are wealthy, zebu.

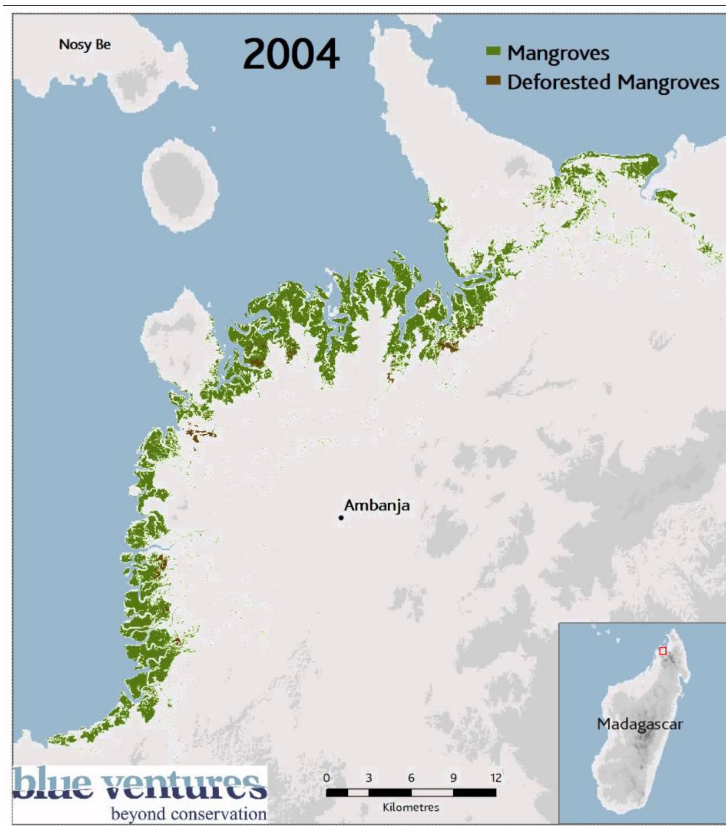

Figure 1. Map of Ambanja-Ambaro bays mangrove forest.

5.4 Conservation in Antsahampano:

Located within the extensive Ambanja and Ambaro bays mangrove forest, the village of Antsahampano has a population of 5,487. It contains a health clinic, which offers limited and intermittent services, and a one-room primary school. Running water can be found in some areas of the village. However, it is located approximately seven miles from the city of Ambanja, which offers many services. With a population of approximately 30,000, Ambanja offers secondary education, and contains both a hospital and a courthouse. Many government and NGO offices are located in Ambanja. The city is accessible via the Route Nationale 6, a well-traveled national road. From Ambanja, Antsahampano is accessible via a *route provinciale,* a smaller road.

The last full census of Antsahampano was conducted in 2001[9]. At that time, 60% of the population were farmers, 6% were fishermen (not including those who fish for subsistence), and 25% raised livestock. The most important crop is maize. Antsahampano experiences seasonal cyclones, and coastal flooding is at its highest in April.

According to the results of focus groups held in 2001, 20% of villagers in Antsahampano were considered wealthy, those who never have problems of food insecurity, even in a bad harvest year. Another 30% of villagers were considered middle-class, those who do not have food insecurity for the majority of the time, except in a bad harvest year. Finally, 50% of villagers were considered poor, those who experience seasonal food insecurity every year.

[9] ("Note Explicative Sur La Base Des Données Sur Les Communes de Madagascar" 2003).

In 2000, Antsahampano community members created the Communauté Locale de Base (or CLB), a village-level conservation and environmental management organization. It was at that time that the state Ministre de l'Environnement, d'Ecologie et des Forêts (Malagasy Department of Environment, Ecology and Forests) transferred control of mangrove conservation to the CLB. Although control of mangrove conservation was transferred to the CLB, it still remains under the supervision of the Ministre de l'Environnement. An initial contract for outside funding of the CLB was drawn up for three years, renewed in 2003 for another five years, and in 2008 for another ten years. The CLB's first and second funding contract were funded by the NGO Service d'Appui à la Gestion de l'Environnement (SAGE). The third was funded by the Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement à Madagascar (PNUD), the United Nations Development Program in Madagascar. These contracts provide funds to pay the CLB Executive Board and security, and to undertake conservation programming.

The state transfer of mangrove forest management to the community grew out of the 1996 law GELOSE, which transferred the management of natural resources to communities. [10] In 2001, a decree on contractual management of forests named GCF[11] (Gestion Contractualisée des Forêts) was adopted. Both GELOSE and GCF aim to empower village community groups named "communautés locales de base" (CLB). GELOSE operates though horizontal governance between the central government, decentralized authority, and the CLB; GCF operates through an agreement between the Forest Administration and the CLB. These contracts transfer resource management to the villages (CLB). They are both used by communities living in or around mangrove forests.

[10] Loi No. 96-025 relative à la gestion locale des ressources naturelles renouvelables
[11] Décret No. 2001-122 Fixant les conditions de mise en oeuvre de la gestion contractualisée des forêts de l'Etat

In 2018, the Malagasy state will evaluate the CLB's work, state of the mangrove, and efforts to protect the forest. If its conservation activities are deemed effective, the CLB will receive another contract in perpetuity. The CLB is currently seeking sources of funding for its next (and indefinite) contract. According to its president, funding may come from UK-based, international marine conservation organization Blue Ventures, a renowned organization with multiple ongoing projects in the mangrove. Blue Ventures has been operating from nearby Ambanja since 2013, and has worked in Antsahampano since 2014. Blue Ventures currently provides financial assistance to the CLB, educational materials, and equipment for surveillance (including kayaks for patrolling the mangrove). It also has an ongoing bee keeping initiative in the village, trainings for local guides, a plan to design an ecotourism conservation education center in the mangrove, and plans to develop environmental education programming for the village. The organization has several ongoing studies in Antsahampano, including a crab maturation study and a survey of fishermen on catch size.

Not everyone in Antsahampano is part of the CLB, although it does have over two hundred members in its Assemblé Générale. According to the CLB president, Madame Anita, the general assembly members are mostly women. Those general members can take part in meetings to decide on mangrove rules. The Executive Board has fourteen members, and the CLB also has twelve male security guards. To be a member of the CLB, there is a monthly fee of 200 ariary (about six cents). The CLB oversees the protection of no-take zones in the mangrove (zones interdites), as well as zones where one can harvest wood legally (zone de droits d'usages). There are also recreation zones and reforestation zones. All Antsahampano community members (except for the executive board and security) must

pay fees to harvest wood from the mangrove. Charcoal production anywhere in the mangrove is strictly prohibited. While someone in the nearby city of Ambanja must pay 300 francs per piece of mangrove wood for their fence, villagers from Antsahampano pay only 100 francs. Anyone can take dried out mangrove wood to cook. The CLB's twelve male security guards patrol the mangrove regularly to monitor for illegal activities.

5.5 The role of women in conservation:

In the Ambanja-Ambaro bays mangrove, women play an important role in mangrove forest conservation. Reforestation projects rely on the women in these coastal communities to provide the labor for mangrove reforestation. However, this reliance on women's labor is neither institutionalized nor written into mangrove forest conservation policies. As I will discuss below, Blue Ventures and PNUD, the primary organizations working in this mangrove forest, have intentionally recruited women for planting projects. Yet, they do not have policies that speak specifically to gender, nor do they have a comprehensive understanding of how social difference among the women in this mangrove forest are able to participate differently in conservation.

In 2012 and again in 2014, the conservation group Blue Ventures organized a paid, two-month reforestation project in collaboration with the CLB. Many of the women I spoke with participated in this project. According to Anja, one of my key informants, the participants were overwhelmingly women. Blue Ventures paid 2,500 ariary per day of work for the first month (or about 78 cents), and 3,000 ariary per day of work for the second month (or about 94 cents). They repeated the project in 2014. Two groups of 120 women planted in the mangrove forest, and were instructed to bring an empty rice sack and a

basket. Each woman filled her sack with mangrove seedlings to plant. I was told this amounted to three thousand seedlings per day.

In 2015, the Programme des Nations Unies pour le Développement à Madagascar (PNUD) implemented another reforestation initiative. In this project, participants were divided into ten groups of ten people, each with a group leader equipped with a machete and water. Each planter was given one basket containing 800 mangrove seedlings to plant every day. PNUD initiated the project, and asked villagers to bring an identification card to sign up for a limited number of planting positions. Priority was given to those who had planted voluntarily in the past (women in Tsikivy and members of the CLB). Paid reforestation projects are always in high demand.

Ch. 6 Roots of ethnic identity, divisions, and tensions in the mangrove forest

6.1 Madagascar's ethnic division:

One morning, Anja led me out of the fenced-in courtyard that held the family's house on the edge of the mangrove. I followed her into the dense grove of fruit trees behind the compound, where she grew bananas, oranges, coconuts, cocoa, and vanilla. She kept seedlings in a small nursery in the shade, and brought customers to pick their own fruit. Standing among her trees, I could see that she was immensely proud of her edible forest. Standing among her fruit trees, I knew that we stood on *tanindrazana*, the land of her ancestors. For Anja, cultivating the land of her ancestors meant something important: it meant that she belonged in this forest.

Anja is Sakalava, the dominant ethnic group of the Sambirano region (Sharp 1996, Rakotondrabe 1993, Scales 2012). In this mangrove forest, Sakalava are considered *tompon-tany,* the "masters/children of the land". In Madagascar, homeland is intricately connected to ethnic identity. Land not only provides a means of subsistence and livelihood for rural households, but also ties Malagasy to their ancestors. Understanding ethnic identity is the key to understanding women's differing positionalities around mangrove conservation. For the women in this mangrove forest, geographic and ethnic lineage determine social hierarchies that matter for conservation.

To understand the difference between the land that someone occupies and the land that someone comes from in Madagascar is important, because a person's geography is linked to her identity in profound ways. Yet, not everyone in Antsahampano, nor in the mangrove forest, is considered *tompon-tany*. People who are not originally from this land, and who consequently belong to other ethnic groups, are instead considered *vahiny*, the

“visitors to the region”. Many Sakalava women see themselves as responsible for mangrove forest conservation. On the other hand, they often view *vahiny* women as outsiders who aren’t invested in the mangrove’s protection. As a result, *Vahiny* women are excluded from conservation projects and feel disenfranchised from conservation.

Madagascar’s deep-seated divisions have important implications for conservation in the mangrove forest today. The divide that determines who is or is not involved in mangrove forest conservation has important implications for women’s experiences of conservation, perceptions of landscape change, and support for future conservation work. In the mangrove forest, a woman’s identity as *tompon-tany* or *vahiny* impacts how she participates in conservation projects. As *tompon-tany,* Sakalava women have the most social power. Furthermore, the Sakalava women’s association belongs to the CLB and undertakes replanting projects. Therefore, Sakalava women have leadership roles in conservation projects and have more opportunities to participate in replanting projects. On the other hand, *vahiny* women, who are seen as outsiders and are even blamed for deforestation, often do not have the chance to participate in conservation projects. The ethnic division in this mangrove forest is part of a larger ethnic tension in Madagascar. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, this ethnic tension is rooted in colonial labor practices and circulation of capital that led to internal migration and resulted in ethnic tensions.

6.2 Tracing Sakalava identity:

The Sakalava people are among Madagascar’s oldest ethnic groups, and Sakalava identity is deeply embedded in their connection to the landscape. This deep-seated connection to land elucidates Sakalava women’s deep connection to and protection over the mangrove

forest. Evidence suggests that the Sakalava ethnic identity existed before colonization took hold, and before the creation of Madagascar's eighteen ethnic categories as we know them today. The Sakalava monarchs had immense power dating back to the 17th Century, controlled the Malagasy slave trade, and opened the island up to new circuits of capital. Tracing the Sakalava history helps us to understand why Sakalava women feel so connected to this land, and why they are so proud to be *tompon-tany*. It also helps us to understand why feel so invested in conservation of their ancestral land. Their connection to this region is rooted in centuries of power. As Lesley Sharp writes, modern-day Sakalava identity is steeped in Sakalava institutions like the slave trade and are "based on a collective sense of local history that links nostalgia for a powerful kingdom with a lucrative trade that spanned several centuries" (Sharp 2002: 183). Tracing this Sakalava history illuminates the complex relations among ethnic communities that remain intact today.

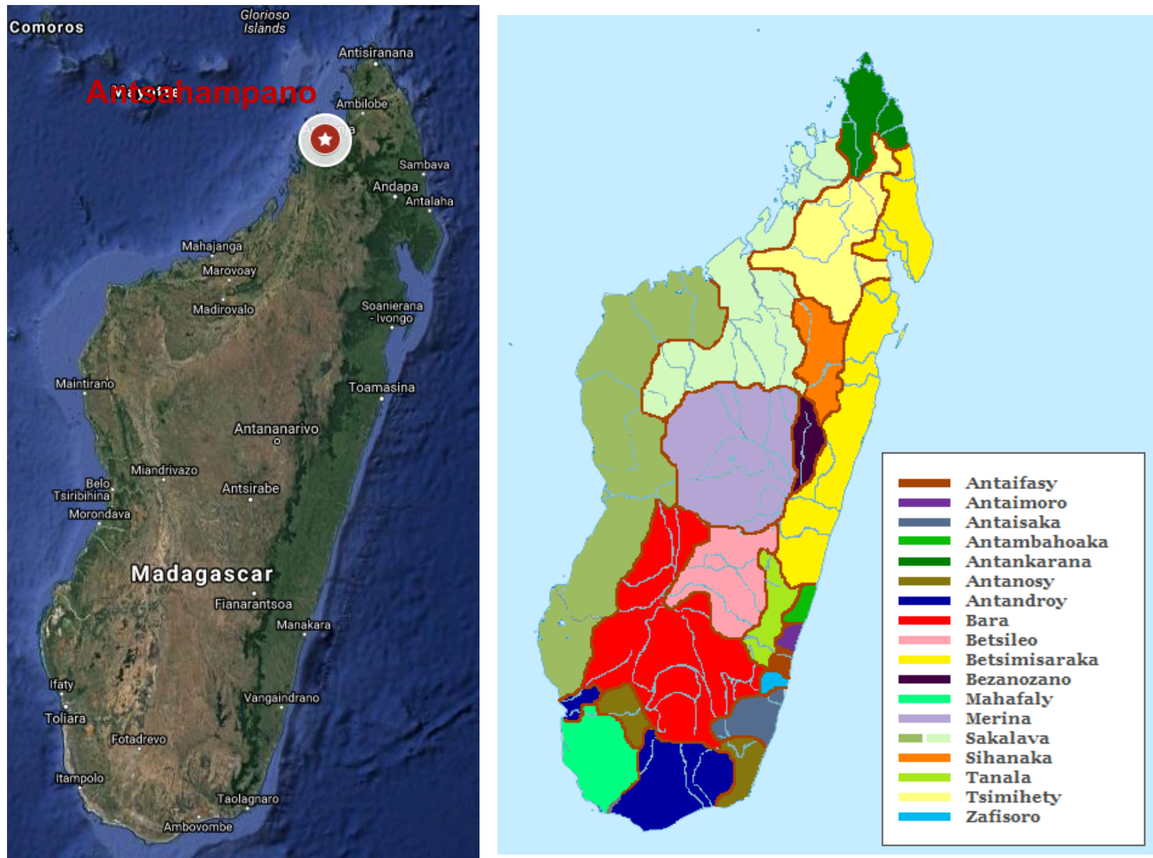

Figure 2. Today, there are eighteen major ethnic groups in Madagascar. The Sakalava ethnic territory spans nearly the entire western coast of Madagascar. The Sakalava people are the island's oldest ethnic group. Although the *vahiny* women in the mangrove forest come from many different ethnic groups (see Appendix B), the majority come from ethnic territories south of the Sambirano Valley. In this chapter, I explore the 20th century mass migration from the south northward. Southern pastoralists migrated to fill the labor needs of new plantations in northern Madagascar. The flow of southern migrants into the Sambirano Valley led to ethnic tensions that remain in the region today.

In order to unravel contemporary ethnic tensions in the mangrove forest, it is important to trace the origins of the Sakalava identity to its early origins. During the 17th Century, the Sakalava kingdoms were the most powerful monarchs on the island. The Sakalava monarchs were the first to establish control over a large territory in Madagascar's western coast. As historians Solofo Randianja and Stephen Ellis argue, "The rise of a

dynasty with origins in south-central Madagascar to form a political identity known as Sakalava is arguably the single most important political revolution in the history of Madagascar," for they "were to become the first of successive monarchies that benefited from major population movements, with far-reaching consequences" (Randrianja and Ellis 2009: 99). The Sakalava kingdoms were instrumental in Madagascar's slave trade, and had profound implications for Malagasy society.

In the 17th and 18th Centuries, the Sakalava kingdoms played a major role in Madagascar's slave trade. In fact, by the 18th Century, the Sakalava were among the region's most important slave traders (Sharp 2002: 181). As an emerging circuit of colonial capitalism, the Sakalava hand in the slave trade signals a turning point in the island's economic and political history. With the emergence of large-scale and global slave trading, kings with extensive control of the island "were able to combine a higher ideology of monarchy with an enhanced commercial role that was partly the result of the growth in trade with the Europeans" (Randrianja and Ellis 2009: 75). During this time, Madagascar's subsidence economy opened up to global capital. Furthermore, the proliferation of the slave trade suggested a new commodification of human life. Although the Sakalava slave trade ended long ago, its legacy matters to understanding ethnic tensions today. That the Sakalava monarchs played a significant role in the Malagasy slave trade suggests that early Sakalava identity was rooted in the subjugation and enslavement of others. Those who identified with the Sakalava monarchs were enrolled in a system of domination that touched every corner of the island. As such, to understand contemporary ethnic relations in the region, it is first necessary to trace this history of Sakalava identity and power.

Portuguese traders who arrived at the beginning of the 16th Century, and the subsequent Europeans who followed, established a transnational slave trade on Madagascar's western coast. European traders most often dealt with kings, and found allies in the Sakalava monarchs. But the Europeans "did not invent kingdoms in Madagascar, nor did they invent the slave trade" (Randrianja and Ellis 2009: 75). From the west coast, Madagascar had been "exporting slaves and commodities for centuries even before the coming of the Europeans" (Randrianja and Ellis 2009: 85). The Sakalava had enslaved others, and kept slaves to work in the royal rice fields (Sharp 2002: 182). Western Sakalava territory was the site of a major slave trade port during the 19th Century (Rakotondrabe 1999: 15). The Sakalava kingdoms themselves were characterized by organized slave-trading; the monarchs were major slave-traders for more than two centuries (Randrianja and Ellis 2009: 100, 215).

The Sakalava kingdoms and transnational slave trade changed the physical landscape and the demographics of Sakalava territory. The Sakalava kingdoms' control over these slave routes had far-reaching impacts on the population along Madagascar western coast. The Sakalava slave-trade facilitated the movement of people toward and away from Sakalava territory, and in the case of captured peoples, away from Madagascar itself. Some speculate that the slave trade of Madagascar's western coast impacted the region's population so profoundly that its effects still linger today. Many people escaped from slave-traders by moving away from the coast and into the highlands. The movement of people in and out of Sakalava territory fundamentally altered both the physical geography and demography of the region.

Some Malagasy people adopted the Sakalava identity in an effort to resist enslavement. Significantly, many Malagasy on the coast also joined different Sakalava monarchs as a means to avoid capture by slave-traders: "in the eighteenth century, the best protection against capture by slave-raiders was often to place oneself under the protection of a king who promised protection" (Randrianja and Ellis 2009: 221). To be Sakalava meant possible protection from the threat of slavery. The ethnic tensions around who belongs on Sakalava territory is arguably rooted in a legacy of slavery and colonial conquest. While today both Sakalava and non-Sakalava people live in this region, the Sakalava people still feel profoundly connected to their royal ancestral past.

6.3 Ethnic groups established during French colonial rule:

The link between ethnicity and ancestral land is important to understanding the role of ethnicity in the *tompon-tany/vahiny,* insider/outsider division in the mangrove forest. I argue that the link between land and ethnic identity has historical roots, and that uncovering this legacy challenges the Sakalava logic that others *vahiny* women. *Vahiny* women, who are ethnically other and originate from elsewhere in Madagascar, are seen as disconnected from the land. This positioning of *vahiny* as outsiders justifies their exclusion from conservation projects.

Although the Sakalava identity existed by the time colonialism took hold in Madagascar, the island's eighteen ethnic groups did not yet exist as we know them today. Madagascar's contemporary ethnic categories have been naturalized over time as connected to ancestral land and geographic region. That Malagasy ethnic identity is seen as naturally connected to place of origin obscures the historical roots of Madagascar's

eighteen major ethnic groups: "the most common temporal reification of ethnicity remains the assumption that novel, contemporary ethnic identities and ethnic groups have actually existed for much longer than they in fact have" (Larson 1996: 5). Under French rule, Madagascar's peoples were re-named as naturally ethnically different, with one thing in common: they were all French subjects. This colonial consolidation of power rendered the long historical existence of these disparate groups invisible. Further, it used the concept of 'ethnicity' as the defining feature of complex Malagasy communities.

In 1896, France officially annexed Madagascar as a colony. With the island firmly under its control, the French state needed a system of organization to centralize its power and control its new subjects. That the "exact correlation of territory to ethnic groups dates mainly from colonial conquest" is a result of a colonial categorization of Malagasy people based on geography (Rakotondrabe 1999: 18). The French state assigned rigid ethnic categories to the island's major regions to classify and organize Malagasy peoples. To carry out this administrative re-ordering, the 20th-century French colonial state identified distinct Malagasy 'races', "supposedly immutable categories" that were rationalized into eighteen Malagasy groups (Randrianja and Ellis 2009: 221). By establishing 'racial chiefdoms' around ethnic markers and land, the French state effectively "spatially fix[ed] ethnic groups to the colonizer's representations" (Rakotondrabe 1999: 18). The 'logic' of this similar/dissimilar framework is a sense of shared cultural features and historical origins, and proximity.

Tracing the history of Madagascar's ethnic categorization is central to understanding ethnic relations today. Too often, the origins of Madagascar's ethnic categories, and the ways in which they were a colonial construction, are obscured in

popular discourse. As a result, Madagascar's ethnic categories are naturalized as fixed to place, with important social consequences. This is evident in the mangrove forest, where ethnic identity is central to delineating those who are insiders and outsiders. As a result, ethnic difference in the mangrove forest leads to social divisions and hierarchies, with implications for conservation.

6.4 Roots of contemporary ethnic tensions:

Under French colonial rule, changing land use and the introduction of wage labor drastically altered the region's ethnic makeup. I contend that these colonial-era changes in labor and land use are responsible for the island's contemporary ethnic tension, and are therefore implicated in social divisions among women within mangrove forest conservation projects. When the French state took over Madagascar, it introduced new circuits of capital that formed a new class of domestic migrants in search of wage work. During the 20th century, large-scale migration shifted the ethnic makeup of Madagascar's west coast. The Sakalava faced ethnic mixing for the first time, as many Malagasy from the South left their homelands to migrate northward in search of wage work or share-cropping farmland (Rakotondrabe 1999: 19). In particular, migrants left their places of origin in search of wage work on large plantations or farmland to share-crop in the Sambirano Valley, home of the Ambanja-Ambaro bays mangrove.

Following the Socialist Revolution of the 1970s, once-private plantations were fully or semi-nationalized. As anthropologist Lesley Sharp writes, "the shift from private holdings to state capitalism has had an effect on land tenure and work relations… the plantations transformed the geography of the region and shaped, directly and indirectly,

the economic, political, social, and cultural orders of the region" (Sharp 1996: 28). Under French colonial rule, the Sambirano Valley saw economic prosperity at the expense of farmer's rights to land. During the 1890s, the French state displaced farmers and granted land titles to foreign-born planters to open large private plantations (Sharp 1996: 39). Colonists were attracted to the valley for its fertile land, perfect for growing cash crops. The Sambirano Valley became known as "one of the most fertile and productive areas of the island" (Sharp 1996: 27).

Thus, The Sambirano Valley became known for its large, foreigner-owned plantations. During the first half of the 20th Century, the private plantations in the Sambirano grew mostly coconuts, rice, and manioc. They later began growing pepper and essential oil flowers. Above all, they grew sugar cane. The valley was home to many large sugar plantations until the post-war era, when the price of sugar fell and most of the sugar plantations in the Sambirano cut back on sugar production. Nevertheless, plantations on Nosy Be and Ambilobe continued to grow and process sugar. In the Sambirano Valley, cocoa and coffee replaces sugar as the region's major export crop (Sharp 1996: 41). Cashews have also become an important export crop. During the 1980s, these enterprises were largely responsible for road maintenance and construction, which contributed to increased migration to the region. Sharp writes, "local Sakalava dislike this new development, fearing that good roads will only make it easier for migrants or *vahiny* from other parts of an otherwise extremely economically depressed nation to come here to settle" (Sharp 1996: 30). The region is certainly more accessible now than ever before. Today, the road from Ambanja to Antsahampano is lined with shady cocoa and coffee trees, vanilla, and fruit trees. The region is famous for its cocoa and coffee plantations. The Sambirano

Valley also has ylang-ylang plantations, where women harvest flowers to be processed into essential oil. All of these plantations are owned by large plantations and employ a large wage labor force made up of *vahiny*.

The shift to large-scale cash cropping in the second half of the 20th Century drastically altered labor relations and ethnic migration. Plantations required a new "large and reliable workforce" (Sharp 1996: 41). The Sambirano became well known for its availability of wage labor, and many peoples from the highlands and the arid south migrated to the region for wage work (Sharp 1996: 42). The emergence of a wage labor force in the Sambirano Valley is central to understanding ethnic migration to the region during the 20th Century, because the Sakalava do not, and historically have never, engaged in wage work. It was and is usually reserved for migrant laborers. Sharp cites the Sakalava's "refusal to work as wage laborers" as "by far the most significant form of resistance, in terms of its impact on European attitudes and policies" (Sharp 1996: 49). French concepts of 'work' ran contrary to Sakalava concepts of work. For Sakalava, work was something done out of loyalty for kin and rulers; working for the French government or plantations would be a sign of loyalty to the French administration. Sakalava therefore resisted wage work that would incorporate them into a French economic order. Sakalava are sometimes referred to as too proud or lazy to work for others, and many people prefer to work in their family's fields rather than for an enterprise. Importantly, "the refusal to work was and still is a strong form of resistance to capitalist discipline" (Sharp 1996: 50).

As southern, non-Sakalava migrants arrived in the Sambirano Valley ready to fill the labor needs of foreign-owned plantations and factories, the Sakalava experienced an influx of southern foreigners that resulted in an anxiety against domestic migrants and non-

Sakalava peoples more generally. Some of these non-Sakalava migrants settled along the western coast mangrove forests.

Madame Anita, a Sakalava woman and the president of the CLB, told me that most of the charcoal production in the mangrove forest stems from migrant workers. She recounted that when a sugar factory on the nearby island of Nosy Be closed shorty before the year 2000, many of its workers—according to her, most of them Antandroy—moved to the mangrove to make their living from the lucrative charcoal industry. A conservation scientist at the NGO Blue Ventures seconded Anita's story and cited another spike in charcoal production in 2008 and 2009, near the end of a boom in sapphire mining in the region. Like Anita, she told me that migrant workers from the southeast of Madagascar moved into the mangrove to make and sell charcoal, adding to pressures on the forest. While the responsibility has stayed on those migrants, she argues, those who exploit the mangrove today come largely from the thirteen villages around it. Another conservationist accused men from the nearby city of Ambanja and the island of Nosy Be of coming into the mangrove to illegally harvest wood, to make charcoal, and to dredge up sand in order to build houses elsewhere. As I will demonstrate in the following chapter, this narrative of mangrove deforestation has significant consequences for the *vahiny* women in this forest. As outsiders, they are often blamed for environmental degradation, and consequently excluded from conservation projects.

6.5 Conclusion:

This discourse of migrants as responsible for deforestation grows out of a complex and deep-seated history of ethnic identity in Madagascar has important implications in

understanding current ethnic relations in the region. In the Sambirano Valley, colonization—which brought new circuits of capital and ethnic migration—sowed power inequalities and ethnic tensions that remain today. This deep-seated ethnic hierarchy continues to divide women in the mangrove forest, and impact their participation in or exclusion from conservation projects. These divisions, rooted in legacies of power and ethnic difference, profoundly affect women's social positioning in the community, their participation in conservation, and even their perceptions and experiences of the mangrove forest itself. In the next chapter, I uncover this narrative among Sakalava women of migrants as a force of environmental destruction. Through a framework of postcolonial feminist thought, I investigate the effects of this narrative on the Sakalava and *vahiny* women in the Ambanja-Ambaro bays mangrove forest.

Ch. 7 *Tompon-tany* and *vahiny* experiences of conservation

7.1 Introduction:

I realized the implications of the *tompon-tany*/*vahiny* schism for conservation on a mundane summer night in the mangrove, as I sat with Anja and Hery on the veranda after dinner. We often sat together talking after the children were asleep, and we would listen to the radio, putting off the moment when we'd have to muster the courage to wash up and tuck into our mosquito nets. We had only a feeble solar-powered light to see by at night, and I could barely see Anja's face as she spoke. Sensing that she wanted to tell me something important, I opened my field notebook. We were on the topic of who was really to blame for deforestation in the mangrove.

> "The problem," Anja said solemnly, "is people who are not from here. They come here to make money before going back home."

Her words took me aback. She had never spoken like this before, and I didn't understand to whom she was referring. "Who are you talking about?" I asked.

> "It's people of the South," she replied, "who will do anything for money. They will take any job; do work that we would never do. They cut the forest because they don't care about the mangrove—they only do charcoal."

Hery nodded in agreement. "It's the Antandroy who cut the mangrove," he said.

This exchange is significant because it reveals an anxiety among Sakalava *tompon-tany* women that blames migrants as responsible for mangrove deforestation. Anja and Hery, who are both Sakalava, blame southern migrants—Antandroy specifically and "people of the South" more generally—for ecological destruction. To justify this blame, they cite

migrants' willingness to perform wage labor, as proof that they "will do anything for money," which then includes cutting the mangrove for charcoal. Anja believes that the migrants' lack of connection to the mangrove forest due to their transience, and their intention to return to their homeland, means that they do not care enough about the mangrove forest to abide by conservation restrictions. For her, and for many other Sakalava women, the migrants' lack of connection to the landscape makes them a threat.

This anecdote speaks to a broader social hierarchy in the community in which the Sakalava rank themselves above *vahiny*. While Anja and Hery share feelings of affinity with other Sakalava, they express dissimilarity and distrust with community members of other ethnic groups. Many of the Sakalava women I interviewed in and around Antsahampano echoed Anja and Hery' concerns about outsiders making charcoal in the mangrove. When I spoke with Sakalava women in and around Antsahampano, they often complained about southerners, and migrants more generally, who settled in the mangrove to make charcoal. Many Sakalava complained that these outsiders had no stake in the landscape. As one Sakalava woman said, "They don't care about the mangrove—they only do charcoal—because they don't come from here." In my investigation, I discovered a division in women's participation in mangrove conservation that often corresponded to ethnic identity. While Sakalava women saw themselves as protectors of the mangrove, they marked women from outside ethnic groups as threatening and even destructive of the mangrove.

In this chapter, I reveal how the deep-seated division between *tompon-tany* and *vahiny* in this community, which is linked with to place of origin and ethnic difference, affects women's understandings of deforestation and blame. I first illuminate Sakalava

women's blame of migrants for mangrove deforestation, which I argue is rooted in an insider/outsider divide. To understand Sakalava women's fear of migrant women, I draw on postcolonial feminist theory, including Sara Ahmed's work on the migrant as "the stranger" to untangle Sakalava women's anxiety around migrants as encroaching on their land, bell hooks and Angela Davis' work on women reproducing gendered violence, and Audre Lorde's theory of understanding difference among women. Ultimately, I contend that Sakalava women have constructed discourse of blame towards migrants for deforestation perpetuates ethnic tension in the mangrove forest.

In this discussion, I place the women with whom I work into two different groups: "*tompon-tany"* women who are Sakalava, and "*vahiny"* women belonging to a number of ethnic groups from all over Madagascar: Antaimoro, Antankarana, Antanosy, Antandroy, and Tsimihety. I use this Sakalava/*vahiny* divide for clarity, and because this project is interested in the implications of the *tompon-tany* and *vahiny* ethnic divide for conservation projects in this mangrove forest. However, just as I challenge the treatment of women in mangrove forest conservation as monolithic, I must also recognize that using ethnic identity and the *tompon*-tany/*vahiny* dichotomy as a way to divide up women risks further homogenizing women as defined solely by ethnicity.

7.2 Sakalava women's understandings of conservation

In Madagascar, a person's identity as *tompon-tany* or *vahiny* is tied to land: one's homeland, land of one's ancestors, and the land on which someone lives. In the mangrove forest, the designation of *tompon-tany* and *vahiny* is rigid: "From a Sakalava point of view, all people regardless of their length of stay in or their sentimental ties to the Sambirano—

are vahiny if they are not Sakalava by birth. They are forever, as the word *vahiny* implies, "guests" to the region" (Sharp 1996: 84). *Tompon-tany* live on their homeland, and the land of their ancestors. They feel a powerful connection to the land on which they live. The *tompon-tany* and *vahiny* identities also cannot be separated from ethnicity and homeland. As I discussed in the last chapter, Malagasy ethnic identity is tied to geography of origin. One's ethnic identity is rooted in her or his ancestral land.

In this mangrove forest, Sakalava women have more social power than *vahiny* women who are outsiders in the landscape. Sakalava women are in charge of conservation projects, and are much more represented in reforestation projects. They also describe a narrative of blame toward *vahiny* for deforestation. Many Sakalava women expressed that only *tompon-tany* could truly understand the importance of the mangrove, as *tompon-tany* have always depended on the forest for survival and therefore respect its value. Sakalava women see themselves as insiders in the mangrove, and feel protective of what they see as their land. As Antsa, a Sakalava woman, told me, "People who come from here understand the importance of the mangrove, and know that cutting the mangrove will cause sea level rise. People who come from here respect the rules, but often outsiders do not. Those who make charcoal are often outsiders." While they, the *tompon-tany*, protect and respect the mangrove, *vahiny* disrespect and exploit the mangrove.

The following vignettes demonstrate Sakalava women's understandings of mangrove forest conservation, and their blame of *vahiny* for deforestation. In their testimonies, these Sakalava women connect their feelings of belonging in the mangrove forest with their feelings of care for the forest. In contrast, they depict *vahiny* as outsiders who do not respect the mangrove forest, and therefore hold *vahiny* responsible for

destructive charcoal production. Their words illuminate their feelings of connection to the landscape and their mistrust of migrants who pose a threat to the forest.

Pamella:

Pamella is forty years old. She is originally from Antsahampano, is Sakalava, and has raised her five children there. She has been a member of the CLB since 2001, has taken part in CLB reunions, and has participated in both paid and unpaid reforestation projects, including one project in which her husband was in charge. Although Pamella sells *mokari* (pastries) to make her living, she also draws from the mangrove for additional income. Pamella works in the mangrove forest with other women.

As we sat on her porch rolling and frying *mokari,* Pamella spoke of the importance of mangrove forest conservation and praised the CLB's efforts for halting deforestation. She told me, "Before, everyone took wood and it led to the destruction of the forest. The CLB was created to protect the mangrove. Before, there was no more mangrove. Since the CLB, there is more and more [mangrove forest] because of reforestation. If the CLB continues protecting, the forest will be more beautiful."

While Pamella believes in the efficacy of the CLB and reforestation efforts in this forest. She also blames southern migrants for deforestation. She said, "Some people do not follow the CLB. They are punished. Often they are people from the South who make charcoal. Those who live from the mangrove respect it." Pamella attributes support for the CLB and participation in reforestation to people who rely on the mangrove for

survival, and simultaneously blames migrants for mangrove forest degradation. Here, she implies that southern migrants do not rely on the mangrove forest for survival and thus do not care about conservation. As she poignantly told me, "Everyone who lives from the mangrove will agree."

Mialy:

Mialy is fifty-two years old. She is also from Antsahampano and Sakalava. Although she once worked cultivating cacao, she now takes care of her four children. She is a member of the CLB and of the women's association *Tsikivy.* She has participated in paid mangrove replanting projects within the last two years, and has also planted voluntarily with the CLB.

In the mangrove forest, Mialy collects *vorona* three times per week and fishes *manihitry* twice per week, traveling far from her home into the mangrove forest. Harvesting *vorona* is an important social activity. Mialy travels into the mangrove forest with five other women, where they also share their collective fish catch. Mialy has also seen changes in the mangrove forest. Namely, she said, "There are more mangroves because of reforestation. In some areas there is less forest, which is where we will plant next." Since the mangrove forest has returned, she told me, there is more food and more rain.

Mialy blamed certain members of the community for mangrove deforestation. "Not everyone is like me," she said. "I do not know why

people would go into the forest and ignore the rules. They do it in secret." She claimed that she doesn't know of anyone who transgresses the CLB's conservation restrictions. Yet, she added, "It's more people from the South who come here. People from here respect the mangrove forest, as they are their source of livelihood. People from the South do not respect the mangrove forest, so they don't care. They cut wood in secret and make charcoal. They destroy the forest."

Mialy clearly condemns *vahiny* for deforestation. She cites migrants' lack of respect for the mangrove forest in opposition to people who come from the mangrove forest, and who necessarily respect conservation rules. Despite her anxiety about migrants' hand in mangrove forest destruction, Mialy nevertheless remained hopeful about the future of the forest. "There will be more mangrove forest in the future," she said, "a lot of forest."

Anja:

Anja is thirty-two years old, and has lived ten years in Antsahampano. She is Sakalava, and grew up in the nearby village of Ambohimena. Anja is Vice Treasurer of the CLB. She takes part in regular CLB decision-making and attends community meetings, and she has assisted with CLB security patrols, for which she is paid 5,000-10,000 ariary per day. Anja has also taken part in a CLB ruling on a 100,000 ariary fine for illegal sand dredging in the mangrove. She is also the Vice President of the women's association

Tsikivy, and works closely with Madame Anita to organize unpaid reforestation projects and eco-tourism activities in the mangrove. She has participated in multiple reforestation projects in the mangrove.

Anja is clear in her support of mangrove conservation efforts, and believes them to be effectively restoring the mangrove forest. On the importance of conservation, she told me, "The forest is the obstacle against the sea. There are fewer and fewer fish, farther and farther away, and crabs are harder to find too, because of mangrove destruction." Of changes to the mangrove over time, she said, "Conservation has increased, and the forest is more and more dense." In saying this, Anja links ongoing conservation efforts with an increase in mangrove forest over time.

Aina:

Aina is from the Ambanja region, and is Sakalava. She is originally from the nearby town of Ambanja, and has lived in Antsahampano for fifteen years. She has been a part of the woman's association *Tsikivy* for ten years. She lives near the edge of the mangrove forest, and regularly goes into the mangrove near her home to harvest mollusks, and she is the only person who fishes in her household. Her family eats fish, crabs and mollusks. The men of her family stopped making charcoal about a year ago and now exclusively collect and sell crabs. Thus, the mangrove is important for Aina's family.

Notably, Aina's participation in reforestation has also impacted her perception of mangrove change over time. When asked how the forest has changed, she told me, "I have seen more and more mangrove because of the reforestation. It is important to keep replanting." Thus, Aina's participation in conservation efforts directly impacts her perception of landscape change. She replanted and has seen her propagules, and by extension, the mangrove, grow.

Aliciah:

Aliciah is forty-seven years old, and is Sakalava. She is from Ambanja, but has lived in Antsahampano since she was five years old. Aliciah spoke at length on the importance of the mangrove forest and supports the CLB's conservation efforts. She told me, "The mangrove is very valuable. The wood is very important to make our shelters, and it is a habitat for crab, fish, kodiva, vorona, and shrimp." Aliciah was very familiar with the CLB's rules regarding cutting mangrove wood and the ban on charcoal. She and her husband paid the CLB fee in 2005 to cut wood for to build their house.

Aliciah sees the CLB as effective. She claimed, "The CLB's impact is positive. Without the CLB, there would be more deforestation and sea level rise. There is less deforestation today." Aliciah has taken part in CLB decision-making meetings, and has participated in several reforestation projects through the CLB. She told me, "We need mangroves, so we need to plant." Aliciah sees erosion, "because of people who destroy the

mangrove forest." Yet, she also envisions the mangrove forest expanding: "If the mangrove is well managed, there will be more." She believes that planting is for everyone, and has faith in the power of reforestation to stop sea level rise and restore the forest.

These vignettes reveal the ways in which these Sakalava women believe that those who depend on the mangrove forest should strive to protect it. These women have all participated in mangrove reforestation projects, and many are part of the CLB. Notably, they report seeing a growing mangrove forest over time, and believe that reforestation projects will lead to a denser mangrove forest in the future. As *tompon-tany,* they also feel responsible to care for the mangrove forest and to follow the CLB's conservation rules. They claim that those who depend on the forest for survival are sure to support the CLB's rules and projects. They also blame *vahiny* for deforestation, and describe themselves in opposition to *vahiny*. If Sakalava are protectors of the mangrove forest, then *vahiny* are its destroyers.

7.3 *Vahiny* women challenge narrative of blame

The social divisions in the conservation of this mangrove forest hinge on Sakalava women's belief that *vahiny* women do not care about the mangrove forest, and therefore are responsible for its destruction. Yet, this research reveals that the narrative of blame is a mischaracterization of *vahiny* women. In the following vignettes, I illuminate *vahiny* women's stories to reveal that they directly depend on and deeply care for the mangrove

forest. Most importantly, I reveal how their experiences disprove the Sakalava narrative of *vahiny* disregard for the mangrove forest.

In interviews and conversations, many *vahiny* women spoke of seeing a decrease in mangrove forest over time. They also spoke of their fears of the future and their dependence upon the mangrove forest for survival. Their stories reveal a tension: while the women understand the mangrove's importance and have a subsequent desire to protect it, they also feel disconnected from, or even resentful toward, mangrove forest conservation restrictions. In contrast to the *vahiny* women, many Sakalava women claim to have seen the mangrove forest grow over time. I contend that the Sakalava and *vahiny* women have such different perceptions of mangrove forest change because they are able to participate in conservation projects differently. When *vahiny* women are excluded from conservation projects, they feel less hopeful about the efficacy of conservation efforts.

Comparing the stories of *vahiny* and Sakalava women reveals a disparity in their perceptions of mangrove forest change over time and their attitudes toward the CLB conservation rules that restrict activities in the mangrove forest. Importantly, all of the women, whether Sakalava or not, spoke of the importance of the forest for their survival, and their desire to protect it and to see it grow.

<u>Miora:</u>

> Miora lives a short distance from the edge of the mangrove outside of Antsahampano. She is fifty years old, and has lived in this mangrove forest since 2009. I met Miora during my first week living in the mangrove, while walking along the narrow path that led from my house on the edge of the

forest to the village of Antsahampano. I was looking for women living along the dirt road with whom I might connect, and the two of us crossed paths as she walked home from the ylang-ylang fields nearby. Sitting in her courtyard the next morning, she taught me to pound and sift rice, and chased the men away to talk as we sat in the shade. Miora relies on the mangrove forest for subsistence, as she goes fishing by net with her husband regularly, especially when she has no other way to eat.

As we spoke of the forest, I was struck to heard Miora say, "I am afraid of the future." Miora spoke with concern of decreasing fish populations. She said, "I see fewer and fewer fish because no one respects the *fadys*[12], like that which says not to fish on Sundays. In the South, there is respect of *fadys,* so we can find many fish." Notably, Miora feels that those of southern origin, and therefore non-Sakalava, observe *fadys* that restrict overfishing. Her words are significant. By claiming migrants have more respect for the environment than northern Sakalava people, she subverts the popular narrative that blames southern migrants for environmental degradation. Her words suggest that her ethnic identity is central to her understanding of mangrove deforestation and conservation. Miora's position as an ethnic minority and an outsider in this mangrove forest shapes her way of thinking about the landscape.

Miora spoke of the many changes she has seen in the mangrove forest over time, including fewer crabs, erosion, and sea level rise due to

[12] *Fady* means cultural taboo. Many fadys are specific to individual ethnic groups.

deforestation, since, as she put it, “the trees hold the earth.” Miora also spoke with great concern of watching the mangrove forest disappear over time. Why does she think this happening? “Because the people do not respect the rules.” Although Miora “does not really know about the CLB,” she knows that there are restrictions on charcoal production and deforestation in the no-take zones. She has never participated in reforestation. In fact, she questioned the CLB’s effectiveness in halting illegal cutting. As she told me, Miora has seen people making charcoal first-hand, even as the CLB security patrolled nearby. She told me, “There are always people who don’t follow the rules. I know people who transgress these rules.” Even she admits to having taken wood without permission for her family.

As a matriarch who depends on the mangrove for subsistence, Miora is clearly concerned with the implications of mangrove forest loss. Yet she has also witnessed the inefficacy of the CLB, and she does not seem to feel empowered to affect change. This lack of empowerment is linked to her gendered position in the community. Of speaking out against illegal deforestation, she said, “If it was a man who had seen someone breaking rules, maybe he would have dared to tell the person, but I as a woman should not do that, I cannot, I don’t dare.” Miora fears creating problems with her neighbors, in her social life and social relations. Miora’s words implicate her social standing in the community, as a *vahiny* woman who is not originally from the mangrove forest, as particularly precarious. Although

she has never participated in mangrove reforestation, she wants to participate. As she told me, "I am ready to plant!"

Geneviève:

Geneviève is 37 years old, and has lived in Antsahampano for 32 years. She is a *vahiny* in this mangrove forest, and migrated to the region with her family as a child. She now has two children of her own, born and raised in Antsahampano. Geneviève depends on the mangrove for her livelihood. She does *manihitry* most days to sell and eat fish. Since coming to Antsahampano, Geneviève has observed diminishing fish populations in the mangrove forest. Of fishing, she added, "I used to get many little fish, but now there are fewer."

Geneviève also spoke of changes she has seen in the forest itself; "When I arrived here, there was a lot of mangrove. Before the forest was very dense, a woman would not even dare enter it alone for fear of getting lost, but now I'm not scared to go alone." Geneviève is anxious about mangrove deforestation because she depends on it: "The mangrove is important. We live from it." This mangrove forest is unequivocally important to Geneviève: "The disappearance of the mangrove means the disappearance of species like crabs, sea cucumbers, fish, and mollusks. It also allows the sea access to come near our houses. It is dangerous. Let us hope that it doesn't happen." As such, Geneviève wants to protect the forest, and she affirmed, "for me, the rules are necessary." Yet, Geneviève

also questioned the CLB's efficacy and motives. This became apparent when she told me the story of an old woman whom the CLB wrongly accused of making charcoal illegally. According to Geneviève, "It was on her land, she had brought dead wood from the mangrove. The security made her pay. Today everything is a question of money, but to have made her pay, it's unjust." That Geneviève told me this story suggests that she questions the enforcement of conservation rules. To say that "today everything is a question of money" implies that the CLB security might not really concerned with stopping illegal mangrove deforestation, but rather with making money. As a result of this story, Geneviève had little faith in the CLB's efforts. In addition, she has never participated in mangrove reforestation projects.

Joséphine:

Joséphine is fifty-one years old. She and her family—she is married with ten children—have lived in Antsahampano for five years. She cultivates rice, manioc, and sweet potatoes. Joséphine also goes into the mangrove forest regularly to collect mollusks with her daughter. She also does *manihitry,* fishes by net, with a fishing pole, and goes crabbing with her husband. Evidently, she spends a lot of time in the forest, both to find food and to make a living. As Joséphine told me, "I'll do any activity in the mangrove for money." Although she has only lived by this mangrove forest for relatively a short time, Joséphine has seen significant changes in the

landscape: "Before on the east side there was a lot more forest, but now we can see Anja's house because it is so deforested."

Importantly, Joséphine uses her self-identified status as an outsider in the forest to interpret changes in the landscape. This outsider status is tied to her place of origin and her ethnic identity. To be Tsimihety, and to have migrated to the mangrove, makes Joséphine an outsider in this forest. Joséphine therefore justifies her limited knowledge of the mangrove forest by calling herself a 'foreigner', but also demonstrates that she does have initiate knowledge of the changing landscape. Of changes she has seen in the forest, Joséphine told me, "It's rather rare to find *vorona* right now. But I don't know why. I don't come from here, I'm a foreigner. But before when I went in the mangrove I could bring a bucket of vorona. But now those who come from Antsahampano live from the mangrove. Their economic livelihood comes from crabs and vorona. There are more and more people who live from this, so it has become harder and harder to find crabs and vorona." Here, Joséphine uses her status as a migrant in order to explain why she has a limited knowledge of why change is occurring in the mangrove. Yet at the same time, she offers an explanation of why change is occurring, demonstrating her insider knowledge of the landscape.

Although Joséphine is invested in mangrove forest conservation, she also speaks of her outsider status to explain her exclusion from conservation efforts. In our conversations, she understood the CLB rules concerning mangrove use. She also believed in the importance of conservation, saying,

"It is a good idea to stop too much cutting because deforestation leads to erosion." Deforestation makes her frightened for the future: "If the CLB does not take action, I worry for other villages. There will be no more mangrove." In fact, she goes so far as to call for more surveillance of the mangrove forest and more regulation. However, she is also excluded from the CLB conservation activities, and attributes it to her outsider status: "I have never taken part in the [conservation] decision-making system because I'm a foreigner. But I would like to take part someday." Though Joséphine is passionate about mangrove forest conservation, she has never participated in reforestation. Again, she told me, "I would like to take part."

Joséphine is an important case because she both subverts and perpetuates popular ideas of migrants as uncaring and destructive of the mangrove forest. She identifies as an outsider in the mangrove forest, and feels excluded from conservation as a result. Yet she also employs language from the popular conservation narrative that blames outsiders for mangrove deforestation. She told me, "Those who pay [the CLB] think of conservation and of living in harmony. But there are also those who don't care. They are mostly men who come from elsewhere." The position of 'outsiders' is contingent upon their gendered livelihood activities and use of the mangrove. Although Joséphine is an outsider in this mangrove forest, she does not necessarily feel an affinity with all other outsiders or migrants. Here, we can see that Joséphine's personal commitment to conservation and

resentment toward her exclusion from conservation contradicts her own narrative of destructive outsiders in the mangrove forest.

Linah:

Linah is 36 years old, and migrated to Antsahampano ten years ago from southern Madagascar to cultivate manioc, rice, and sweet potatoes, and to work in the ylang ylang plantation. For Linah and her family, the mangrove provides a very real and important source of subsistence. Linah does *manihitry* every afternoon in the mangrove with other women who are her friends. I had the pleasure of joining her on several occasions, wading in waist-deep water with a group of women as we quickly and methodically scraped a very fine net on the mangrove's muddy bottom. It was difficult work, but the women laughed and splashed as they made their way downstream, children waiting on the sandy bank. The women go to the same area of the mangrove every day. They use *manihitry* to catch their food. When I asked Linah about changes in the landscape, she said that "before they caught many fish, now it's few." She spoke of fewer fish at high tide, but didn't know why it was happening. She also spoke of increased erosion: "before there was earth and now the sea swept away the sand."

During an interview, Linah told me, "the mangrove is important because of the fish we eat every day." She and her family rely on the forest to survive in a very real, daily way. Yet, Linah's words also reveal a tension in her feelings on the importance of the mangrove and her feelings toward

mangrove conservation. While she understands the importance of the mangrove forest, she nevertheless resents conservation rules that limit her ability to use the forest freely.

Although she lives in and relies on the mangrove, Linah has strong feelings of resentment towards the CLB and mangrove conservation laws. Of conservation rules, Linah said, “the rule suits those who decided it, but not me, because the mangrove grows naturally, it’s nature that made it grow, so I should not have to ask permission to cut it.” And even more adamantly, she declared, “we should eliminate this rule.” Yet, although Linah expressed anger toward mangrove conservation restrictions, she nevertheless believed that the mangrove needed protecting. This was evident when she said of deforestation, “It’s good to limit the cutting, because if we do not limit them, there will be no more trees left.” She added, “What is difficult [in conservation] is that there are always people who cut.”

Linah feels excluded from mangrove conservation, both socially and economically. Although she would like to replant mangrove, she has never participated in a paid planting project. Linah argued that CLB rules, including the fee to cut wood and the ban on charcoal production, only suits those who decided them: “The mangrove grows naturally, it’s nature that made it grow, so I should not have to ask permission to cut it.” Yet, Linah also understands the importance of the mangrove. She relies on its fish to eat every day, and agrees that “it’s good to limit the cutting because if we do not limit, there will be no more trees left.” While Linah disagrees with

> the rules around cutting the mangrove, and believes them to be unfair, she also supports conservation and believes it is important not to cut mangrove unnecessarily. She challenges Sakalava assumptions of migrants as disrespectful and uncaring toward the mangrove. Rather, her dismissal of conservation stems from her feeling of social exclusion from the decision-making process.

It was Aliciah, a Sakalava woman, who told me, "Only those who do not need the mangrove to survive would find the rules unjust." And yet, the testimonies of these *vahiny* women reveal that they do care deeply about the future and health of the mangrove forest because they depend on the mangrove forest for their livelihoods and daily survival. Thus, their testimonies contradict the Sakalava narrative of disrespect and environmental destruction. Yet, these *vahiny* women also question the efficacy of replanting efforts and the fairness of conservation restrictions imposed by the CLB because they are left out of conservation projects. When *vahiny* women who might otherwise be more invested in conservation activities feel disenfranchised from conservation, that disenfranchisement impacts their perception of conservation's worth.

The central factor in explaining this disparity in experience with and perception of mangrove forest conservation is the insider/outsider division in this community. In Antsahampano, migrant women who belong to minority ethnic groups are considered to be outsiders to the land. Even women who have lived in the mangrove forest for many years remain tied to their place of origin. Someone who is not *tompon-tany,* or a master of the land, cannot become *tompon-tany,* because the land on which they live will never be their

tanin-drazana, the land of their ancestors. Thus, migrant women are always, at least partially, on the outside. This insider/outsider division shapes the way that women understand their environment. The division and the exclusion from conservation are co-constituted: while migrant women who are outsiders may care about the mangrove forest, they are excluded from conservation because of their status as outsiders. The exclusion then reifies them as outsiders and upholds the narrative of migrants as outsiders who don't care about the mangrove forest.

As Madame Anita told me, "There has been a lot of progress. There is a lot of respect for the rules. People know the rules. There is more mangrove forest now because the replanting has had an effect. Thanks to the CLB, there is no more deforestation." Yet, the CLB's narrative contradicts migrant women's testimonies of deforestation and mangrove forest degradation. Conservation policies and discourses that depict women in the Global South as facing a universal struggle of climate change and environmental degradation obscure the women's lived realities. Such a discourse reproduces women in the Global South as universal victims of a colonial and patriarchal world order in which they fall at the bottom. In reality, they are implicated in structures of power that determine their social standing and participation in conservation.

7.4 Situating these ideas within postcolonial feminist theory:

Sakalava women blame ethnically different *vahiny* women as responsible for deforestation because of their otherness, thereby reifying ethnic difference and an insider/outsider divide. Part of deconstructing the monolith of 'women' means considering the ways women themselves uphold structures of oppression. Sakalava women's feelings toward *vahiny*

women as uncaring and destructive of the mangrove forest cannot simply be explained through the history of Madagascar's ethnic groups or the 20th century ethnic migration into the Sambirano Valley. Parsing out this social tension means deconstructing the Sakalava women's understandings of themselves in relation to the *vahiny.* Understanding the persistent narrative of blame of migrants for mangrove deforestation means untangling an anxiety that Sakalava women feel toward migrant women. To do so, I draw on postcolonial feminist scholar Sara Ahmed's theory of the migrant as a stranger in the landscape. Ahmed writes, "the migrant, journeying from 'there' to 'here', becomes a stranger in a strange land" (Robertson et al. 1994: 3). For the Sakalava women, the stranger in the mangrove forest is the non-Sakalava migrant, the *vahiny* who can never be of that land, the ethnic other who has come to the forest from elsewhere. As Sara Ahmed writes in her book, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Postcoloniality*, "The strange is an effect of processes of inclusion and exclusion, or incorporation and expulsion, that constitute the boundaries of bodies and communities" (Ahmed 2000: 6). For the Sakalava women, one such boundary that protects them from the strange though exclusion is their construction of conservation as a Sakalava responsibility. By pitting themselves against migrant women through a discourse of connection to and respect for the landscape, the Sakalava women both employ their *tompon-tany* identity to justify their connection to the land and portraying themselves the stewards of the mangrove, while also closing off the possibility that there might be a *vahiny* connection to land that contradicts their blaming of migrants for deforestation. Sakalava women employ a discourse of strangeness to exclude migrant women from conservation, and simultaneously use the fact that they are strangers to justify the exclusion. When Anja says, "They cut the forest because they don't care about the

mangrove," she reinforces the *vahiny* as a stranger, and an outsider in the mangrove, and makes that stranger into someone who would cut the mangrove because she is an outsider. In doing so, she not only reifies social boundaries that lead to the exclusion of migrant women from conservation, but makes an argument in which strangeness, exclusion and deforestation are co-constituted.

Importantly, the stranger poses a threat because of her proximity. As the *vahiny* encroach upon the mangrove forest, there are "*spatial negotiations* with those who are already recognized as familial or strange" (Ahmed 2000: 24). The strange is that which is threatening because it is approaching the familiar: "the stranger is always in proximity: a body that is out of place because it has come too close." It is in fact the stranger's closeness that makes her seem so threatening: "the stranger only comes to be recognized as such by coming too close to home" (Ahmed 2000: 88). In Antsahampano, the fear of deforestation is associated with migrants' proximity. This is evident in Madame Anita's narrative of the arrival of southern migrants as the beginning of widespread mangrove deforestation, discussed at the end of chapter five. As I will discuss in the next chapter, these conservationists too often forget the historical processes that contributed to ethnic migration in Madagascar: processes of colonization, capitalism, wage labor, and industrialization. Rather, once again, the strangers' arrival becomes a symbol of environmental destruction. This results in a persistent conservation narrative that blames rural communities, and migrants in particular, for deforestation.

Sakalava women's fear of migrant women is wrapped up in their relationship to homeland. This fear of migrants manifests itself through the marking of different bodies "that are recognized as familiar, familial and friendly, and that are considered strange"

(Ahmed 2000: 40). As Ahmed writes, the encounter through which a subject understands herself as distinguishable from the ‘other’—here, the ethnic other—is a racial encounter, written on the body, and “already carries traces of social antagonism and conflict which differentiate different bodies from each other” (Ahmed 2000: 44). The hierarchizing of bodies means dispossessing those seen as ethnically inferior. Such embodied difference is established not only through the body, but importantly, through a relation between bodies as they relate to homeland. That women use the concepts of *tompon-tany* and *vahiny* to explain who is an insider or an outsider suggests that the different bodies of Sakalava and migrant women are imbued with meanings of belonging or strangeness because of their relationship with the landscape. Ahmed writes, “The forming of the boundaries of ‘unmarked’ bodies—bodies-at-home or bodies-in-place—has an intimate connection to the forming of social space—homeland” (Ahmed 2000: 46). The way in which the idea of homeland has been constructed for the Sakalava women means that migrant women can never be fully on the inside, and therefore, will always be encroaching on their homeland. The bodies of migrant women come to be marked as outsiders in the Sakalava women’s homeland, and their transgression of the boundary of homeland through very proximity poses a threat to the Sakalava sense of safety. As a result, for the Sakalava women, the migrant women come to embody environmental destruction itself.

Although I challenge Sakalava women’s narrative of blame toward *vahiny* for mangrove deforestation, I do not know for certain who is responsible for charcoal production in this mangrove forest, or if it is even related to ethnic identity or the *tompon-tany/vahiny* divide. Unfortunately, I was not able to conduct research on charcoal production in this mangrove forest as part of this research project, though I hope to conduct

this research in the future. However, I was struck by the words of Clara, conservation scientist at Blue Ventures, who spoke to me about who is responsible for charcoal production and deforestation. She told me that in the past, Southern migrants were responsible for the majority of deforestation for charcoal production. As a result, Clara said, “Local people did not feel responsible.” Yet, she also told me, “Although [Southern migrants] are the ones who started cutting the mangrove forest, it has changed. Now, it’s the people from here who cut the forest.” Although more research is needed, Clara’s testimony suggests that *vahiny* may not be responsible for the majority of charcoal production.

Relatedly, in 2016 study conducted by researchers affiliated with Blue Ventures, found that “mangrove charcoal production is carried out partly (i.e., 31%) by recently settled (e.g., for less than one generation) migrant populations, but mostly (i.e., 69%) by long-established community members” (Jones, Ratsimba et al. 2016: 76). Considering the testimony of the Sakalava women I interviewed, it is surprising that this study found that most charcoal production is carried out by “long-established community members,” and not migrants. Furthermore, this study listed many underlying causes of deforestation in the Ambanja-Ambaro bays mangrove forest, which indicates that the reasons many Sakalava gave me, including migration to the mangrove or population growth due to increased, are not sufficient to explain deforestation. It is important, however, to note that Blue Ventures is an organization with significant stakes in this mangrove forest, and its findings demand further research. Nevertheless, the narrative of migrant-caused deforestation for charcoal production persists.

7.5 Conclusion:

As Audre Lorde writes, "we have *all* been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate" (Lorde 1984, p. 115). In this chapter, I have brought forward Sakalava women's anxiety of migrants encroaching upon and destroying their mangrove forest. As their words suggest, these Sakalava women feel that migrants have no stake in the land on which they have settled and therefore do not respect the forest. As Anja said, "The problem is people not from here. They come here to make money before going back home." The narrative of migrants as destroying the mangrove forest is echoed by conservationists working in this landscape, and fits into a broader discourse in environmental conservation in Madagascar. Yet, importantly, a 2016 study found that it is long-term inhabitants, rather than migrants, who are primarily responsible for deforestation due to charcoal production. Understanding the reasons for this enduring narrative means untangling complex social relations between Sakalava and migrant women.

Highlighting these Sakalava and *vahiny* women's opposing experiences of conservation illustrates the effects of the insider/outsider, Sakalava/migrant, *tompon-tany*/*vahiny* division on women's understandings of mangrove forest change over time and the efficacy of CLB conservation efforts. As these vignettes demonstrate, these *vahiny* and Sakalava women have very different perceptions of mangrove forest change over time, experiences of conservation, and opinions on the efficacy of conservation efforts in this mangrove forest. The *vahiny* women's stories demonstrate that they both depend on the mangrove forest for survival and care about its conservation.

Cultural constructions of *tompon-tany* and *vahiny* identities are central to understanding the Sakalava-migrant tension. As children of the land, Sakalava women see themselves as protectors of the mangrove because of their ancestral and embodied connection to the landscape. In contrast, they see migrant women as temporary visitors to the mangrove who are disrespectful of and uncaring toward the mangrove forest. As evidenced in their own words, some Sakalava women believe that only *tompon-tany* women who rely on the mangrove could understand its importance and the need for its protection. This *tompon-tany/vahiny* divide, based in both ethnicity and constructions of homeland, reveals an understanding of migrant women as strangers in the landscape, whose proximity to Sakalava women's homeland makes them threatening.

In the next chapter, I argue that reforestation projects in this mangrove forest have also perpetuated this discourse of blame towards *vahiny.* In doing so, and in failing to recognize the complexities of *vahiny* women's lived experiences in the forest, reforestation projects often disenfranchise *vahiny* women from participating. They also reinforce a social hierarchy within mangrove forest conservation, with Sakalava women in control. I draw on feminist theory to consider the ways in which ongoing mangrove forest conservation efforts have largely ignored ethnic difference, thereby treating the women of this mangrove forest as a monolith. Finally, I envision a different way of doing conservation in this mangrove forest that unites women around their shared care for the mangrove and their desire for mangrove forest protection.

Ch. 8: Implications of *Tompon-tany/vahiny* divide for conservation

8.1 Introduction:

In this chapter, I explore the material impact that the Sakalava discourse of blame and uncaring has on *vahiny* women in the mangrove forest as it relates to conservation. I contend that the *tompon-tany/vahiny* division, and the blaming of *vahiny* for deforestation, have important implications for women's participation in conservation. This discourse of blame has material consequences for the *vahiny* women. Namely, this narrative of blame toward the *vahiny* for deforestation leads to uneven participation between Sakalava and *vahiny* women in reforestation. While Sakalava are primarily involved in reforestation projects, *vahiny* women who might otherwise be more involved in conservation are often excluded from these projects. Here, I illuminate the informal practices in conservation that limit *vahiny* women's participation in reforestation projects.

While current conservation efforts in this mangrove forest incorporate women in reforestation projects, I argue that they often do not consider the complexities of social relations between Sakalava and *vahiny* women that shape the women's experiences of conservation. In doing so, these reforestation projects treat the women of this mangrove forest as monolithic, without considering the histories or social divisions that shape women's experiences of conservation. Failing to recognize these social divisions also reifies the Sakalava narrative that blames *vahiny* women for deforestation, with consequences for *vahiny* women's participation in reforestation projects. Importantly, *vahiny* women's status as outsiders in the community, which contributes to the narrative of blaming, also results in their exclusion from reforestation projects.

In this chapter, I draw on postcolonial feminist theory, and the work of feminist political ecologists, in order to intervene in conservation project that homogenize women's experiences of conservation and entrench social divisions. Finally, I envision a way for these reforestation projects to address issues of inclusivity and to work across difference in order to build solidarity among all of these women.

8.2 Divide within conservation:

In my investigation, I discovered that the Sakalava/*vahiny* social divide has real consequences for women's experiences of and participation in reforestation projects. While most of the Sakalava women I met took part in replanting projects, many of the *vahiny* women had never participated in replanting projects, even though they expressed interest. This Sakalava/*vahiny* divide in replanting projects suggests that the persistent narrative of blame of *vahiny* women for deforestation, and their status as outsiders in the mangrove forest, contributes to their exclusion from reforestation projects.

The *tompon-tany/vahiny* division around participation in replanting projects ultimately revolves around women's relationship with the CLB. Although there is no formal rule within the CLB stating that a woman's ethnic identity determines her ability to participate in replanting projects, the CLB operates through a series of informal practices that exclude *vahiny* women. Officially, participation in reforestation projects is not reserved for women who are paying members of the CLB. In theory, any woman who lives in the mangrove forest is free to take part in planting projects. In reality, there are a number of informal practices in the CLB that limit *vahiny* participation in reforestation projects and give Sakalava women preferential treatment.

There are several key practices that limit *vahiny* women's participation in replanting projects. First, it is significant that the president of the CLB, Madame Anita, is a Sakalava woman. As such, her social group is also made up mostly of Sakalava women, who then have first access to information about planting projects. There are also many more Sakalava women than *vahiny* who are paying members of the CLB. As the CLB organizes replanting projects, its members have the first opportunity to sign up to participate. Madame Anita also organizes regular volunteer replanting projects for the women in the CLB. Moreover, the Sakalava women's association *Tsikivy*, which is made up almost exclusively of Sakalava women, is folded into the CLB. In partnership with Madame Anita, they also frequently undertake volunteer replanting projects. As an informal practice, women who plant voluntarily have first priority for the limited number of spots available in the replanting projects. These informal practices benefit Sakalava women who are in *Tsikivy* or general members of the CLB, by prioritizing them for mangrove forest reforestation projects.

Not all of the women are included in reforestation projects. Madame Anita, Sakalava woman and president of the CLB, works closely with the Association des Femmes *Tsikivy* on mangrove reforestation projects. Formed in 2009, this women's organization is folded under the CLB. Many of the women with whom I worked were part of *Tsikivy*. Importantly, *Tsikivy* is made up of mostly Sakalava women. These Sakalava women have the first priority to participate in replanting projects, and are often responsible for helping to organize these projects. Madame Anita also organizes four volunteer mangrove planting projects each year for the women, who are sometimes joined by the security guards.

Since *vahiny* women are not often part of the CLB, nor part of *Tsikivy,* they do not have the same access to reforestation projects when opportunities arise. Thus, these informal practice effectively exclude *vahiny* women from reforestation projects. Yet, many of the *vahiny* women I met expressed a desire to participate in replanting, like Miora, who told me, "I'm ready to plant!" Or Maman'y Dede, who said, "I have never planted until now. But if I find a mangrove seedling it will not bother me to plant it, even if I don't gain any money." Or Joséphine, who told me, "I have not yet participated in reforestation, but I would like to." While these *vahiny* women want to participate in replanting projects, and even claim that they would plant voluntarily, they do not have the same access as the Sakalava women to reforestation projects.

This Sakalava/*vahiny* division in conservation also has social consequences. When *vahiny* women are informally excluded from reforestation projects, they sometimes feel marginalized more broadly in the community. This is evident in the story of Hanitra, a *vahiny* woman who moved to the mangrove several years ago in an attempt to make a better living. It was during a conversation with Hanitra that I was first struck by the effects of the *tompon-tany/vahiny* divide on migrant women as it relates to mangrove forest conservation. Hanitra told me that she had never participated in mangrove replanting projects, but that she was interested in planting. When I asked her why she had never planted mangrove, Hanitra replied that although she had heard about planting projects, no one had asked her to join the women planting. She told me, "I was not invited to plant." When I asked why she was not invited, Hanitra replied, "When it's question of money, more women are asked who are not illiterate. I don't have an education, so I was not asked to plant."

Her words are significant to understanding how informal practices that keep *vahiny* women from reforestation projects impacts their feelings of social exclusion. Hanitra cites her lack of education as the reason for her exclusion from reforestation projects. However, I contend that Hanitra's powerful statement actually reveals her position as an outsider in the mangrove forest. That she feels excluded because she is illiterate suggests that she has internalized a hierarchy of social status in this community, in which she is made inferior to the women who participate in replanting projects, namely Sakalava women. When she feels excluded from replanting projects, Hanitra is made to feel like a stranger in the mangrove, and subordinate to the Sakalava women who are in charge of conservation in this mangrove forest.

The narrative of blame toward *vahiny* women for deforestation has both material and social consequences. Hanitra's words give insight to an insider/outsider friction in the community related to the *tompon-tany* and *vahiny* divide. Ultimately, as an outsider, Hanitra feels ostracized from paid mangrove reforestation projects, and from conservation more broadly. Her comments suggest that the discourse of blame of *vahiny*, and the social exclusion they experience as outsiders, shapes *vahiny* women's feelings of alienation in conservation. Although reforestation projects in this mangrove forest rely on women's labor for replanting, they historically have not considered who is and isn't included in these projects. These organizations, including Blue Ventures and PNUD, depend on the CLB to recruit women and organize the logistics of replanting. In doing so, they re-entrench the informal practices that benefit Sakalava women and marginalize *vahiny* women. Reforestation projects and policies that do not take these divisions into account uphold a power structure that privileges some women over others.

8.3 How some conservationists ignore difference:

In my investigation, I encountered conservationists working in Antsahampano who blamed the community in general for mangrove destruction, without considering the inter-community social dynamics and divisions. Importantly, unlike the Sakalava women, these conservationists did not always blame outsiders for mangrove forest destruction. Instead, they failed to acknowledge any social divisions among the women in the mangrove forest. They seemed not to recognize the ethnic tensions and resulting social hierarchies within the community. Instead, they blamed the community writ large for deforestation. While this homogenization of the community may not directly reify a narrative of blame toward *vahiny* women, it does ignore important divisions with significant implications in reforestation projects.

Some of the conservationists interviewed for this project depicted the rural people of Antsahampano as backward by universalizing the blame for mangrove forest loss onto the community. As Clara, a Malagasy woman and coordinator for Blue Ventures, told me, "the community does not feel responsible for mangrove forest loss." She blamed rural peoples' "mentality" and resistance to replant mangrove without compensation, saying, "even though they will benefit, they don't care." When I asked her why subsistence farmers and fishermen might not be able to do conservation work without payment, she replied, "because of their intellect." Here, she blames the community as ignorant of the importance of their environment, and as uncaring toward the wellbeing of the mangrove forest. Paulet, Chef de l'Environnement, de l'Ecologie et des Forêts d'Ambanja, echoed these sentiments when he told me, "The biggest problem is charcoal production in the mangrove forest of Antsahampano. In general, it is illicit exploitation, cutting wood to transport to Nosy Be in

boats. The people of the village are complicit with wrongdoers. For them, it's a question of money." Finally, Raymond, head of the conservation group CRADES, told me, "People depend on the mangrove forest but the forest cannot support the population. The problem is illicit charcoal production."

These statements homogenize the community's relationship to the mangrove forest as a single threatening presence. By reducing many disparate groups to a single community that menaces the mangrove forest, these conservationists render important social divisions invisible. This homogenization has implications for reforestation projects. When conservationists do not stop to consider the nuanced social relations among women in this mangrove forest, they inadvertently reify ethnic divisions that dispossess *vahiny* women from these projects. By blaming the community as a whole for deforestation, these conservationists fail to recognize that in reality, Sakalava and *vahiny* alike understand the importance of the mangrove forest and care about its protection. Their comments represent the community as homogenous in their attitudes toward the mangrove forest. Their words do not reveal any knowledge or understanding of the complex social divisions within the community that shape women's experiences of and participation in conservation.

8.4 Feminist political ecology intervention:

To intervene in this homogenization of women's experiences, I draw on postcolonial feminist theory and the work of feminist political ecologists. Postcolonial feminist scholars have long critiqued the notion of women as monolithic and the construction of a collective identity of women. In her critique of Western feminism, bell hooks challenged the concept that "all women are oppressed," arguing that such a limited understanding homogenizes

women's struggles (hooks 1984, 5). Audre Lorde also confronted the myth of a norm among women, writing, "There is a pretense to a homogeneity of experience covered by the word *sisterhood* that does not in fact exist" (Lorde 1984, 116). Rather, deconstructing the construction of women in the Global South are depicted as monolithic means considering the ways women themselves uphold structures of oppression. As this project reveals, it is critical to recognize that women are implicated in a sexist and racist hierarchy that encompasses many forms of oppression.

For reforestation projects to homogenize women in the Global South without revealing their nuanced lived experiences does not only diminish women's lived experiences and construct them as passive victims, but it also constructs false commonalities among women that render other forms of struggle invisible. The notion of a universal woman's experience of environmental change renders invisible the true nature of women's complex social realities. Postcolonial feminist scholar Chandra Mohanty also challenges the production of a third world women as "a singular monolithic subject" (Mohanty 1986: 49). She writes, "What is problematical, then, about this kind of use of 'women' as a group, as a stable category of analysis, is that it assumes an ahistorical, universal unity among women based on a generalized notion of their subordination" (Mohanty 1986: 60). Instead, Mohanty suggests a "conceptualization of agency that is multiple and often contradictory but always anchored in the history of specific struggles" (Mohanty 2003, 82). Thus, she urges feminist scholars to consider the ways in which women are historically and politically situated, and the historically specific materiality of women across borders. It is therefore important to recognize that no group of women is ever monolithic, and can never be reduced to a single category, including *tompon-tany*,

vahiny, Sakalava, nor any other categorization. While ethnic identity does have an important role to play in shaping women's understandings of mangrove forest conservation, this project also reveals that social ex/inclusion is not determined solely by ethnicity, but by a number of complex material practices.

Feminist political ecologists draw on postcolonial feminist theory to challenge the homogenization of women's experiences in environmentalism. As Andrea Nightingale writes, "many feminist theorists have argued that a narrow focus on gender is inappropriate and rather how people are subjected by race, ethnicity/caste, class, gender and other forms of social difference must be seen as simultaneous, called intersectionality" (Nightingale 2011: 153). Feminist political ecologists posit that "the impact of environmental degradation is differentially experienced" (Gururani 2002: 230). As Bina Agarwal writes, "The processes of environmental degradation and appropriation of natural resources by a few have specific class-gender as well as locational implications… 'Women' therefore cannot be posited as a unitary category, even within a country, let alone across the Third World globally" (Agarwal 1992, 150). It is therefore necessary to interrogate the ways in which women in the Global South relate to the environment differently based on social positioning. As Shubhra Gururani writes, "differences of age, caste, race, marital status, and location are also shown to inform the politics of environment, challenging the homogenization of Third World women's experiences" (Gururani 2002: 232). Uncovering these complex relations challenges essentialism in environmentalism. Gururani calls for scholarship to "attend to the specificities and micro-politics that shape the complex cultural politics of nature and constitute the many meanings of 'nature'" (Gururani 2002: 232).

As I have demonstrated in this project, women's ethnic identities, and the

corresponding rift between Sakalava and *vahiny* women, are central to understanding their relationship to environmental conservation. It is critical, therefore, for feminist political ecologists to employ a lens of intersectionality in research about women's relationships to the environment. Placing gender in relation to other axes of identity, "avoids privileging gender differences over other important inequalities" (Harris 2006: 188). This work follows other feminist political ecologists who destabilize 'gender' as a central analytical category: "instead, emphasis is given to an exploration of multi-dimensional subjectivities where gender is constituted through other kinds of social differences and axes of power such as race, sexuality, class and place, and practices of 'development' themselves." (Elmhirst 2011: 6). Using intersectionality allows feminist political ecologists to "more meaningfully connect gender to class, ethnicity, livelihoods, and other key factors" (Harris 2006: 188). Intersectionality in feminist political ecology reveals particular kinds of exclusions and inequalities that go beyond an analysis of gender relations alone.

When conservationists homogenize women's experiences of environmental change, they effectively entrench existing social divisions that exclude *vahiny* women from conservation efforts. As feminist political ecologists have revealed, it is critical to consider women's experiences of environmental change in relation to other forms of identity, including ethnicity. In this project, I have attempted to trace the historical legacies that contribute to divisions in women's experiences of and participation in conservation projects. To my mind, understanding these social dynamics, and their roots, opens up possibilities for reforestation projects to build solidarity among these women.

8.5 Possibilities for solidarity:

In this work, I draw on postcolonial feminist theory in the hopes of opening up possibilities for solidarity among women. I follow feminist scholars who recognize that difference among women should not divide, but should forge solidarity. As Audre Lorde writes, "difference is that raw and powerful connection from which our personal power is forged" (Lorde 1984: 99). With this work, I have attempted to demonstrate the ways in which the women living in this mangrove forest share a purpose, to protect the forest, across social difference. Chandra Mohanty adds, "It is only by understanding the *contradictions* inherent in women's location within various structures that effective political action and challenges can be devised" (Mohanty 1986: 62). Unravelling these social hierarchies, and their effects on women's lives as they relate to conservation, reveals hidden commonalities that have the potential to unify these women around shared goals.

I contend that in order to build effective conservation projects in this forest, it is critical for conservationists working in this mangrove forest to recognize the ways in which Sakalava and *vahiny* women care for and depend on the landscape in similar ways. Those with a stake in conserving this mangrove forest have a responsibility to more fully untangle the connections between ethnic identity and mangrove conservation. Otherwise, they risk reproducing exclusionary social hierarchies that undermine their own conservation efforts and further disenfranchise *vahiny* women. Conservation projects that ignore differences among women reify a narrative of blame toward *vahiny* women, and entrench informal practices that disenfranchise *vahiny* women from conservation.

Understanding how social difference is produced and entrenched "opens up possibilities for new mechanisms for transcending oppressive forms of difference"

(Nightingale 2011: 161). By working to better understand social divisions, and the ways in which they perpetuate false discourses, conservation projects and policies could disrupt social hierarchies in conservation to build commonalities among women in this mangrove forest. By working to bridge this Sakalava/*vahiny* divide, conservationists in this mangrove forest could begin to build solidarity across ethnic difference, bringing Sakalava and *vahiny* women together around the shared goal of protecting their valuable landscape.

8.6 Conclusion:

As conservationists develop blue carbon policies in this mangrove forest, they must work to overcome the insider/outsider division that disenfranchises certain women from conservation initiatives. While *vahiny* migrant women may not have ties to the land in the same way as *tompon-tany* Sakalava women, the task for conservation must be to include all of the women in this community in the project, regardless of ethnic identity and place of origin. Not doing so treats the women in this mangrove forest as a monolith, and overlooks serious and deep-seated divisions that undermine conservation efforts, render differences among women invisible, and reinforce a power hierarchy that privileges some women over others. It also perpetuates a narrative that blames *vahiny* women for deforestation and claims that they do not care about the mangrove forest. This research intervenes in reforestation projects and policies that fail to recognize these important differences. By doing so, I hope to find avenues for solidarity among women around shared interests in conserving this mangrove forest.

Ch. 9 Conclusion

It is widely recognized that the effects of global climate change—including sea level rise, erosion, severe storms, and drought, among others—disproportionately threaten communities in the Global South. In the coming years, women in the Global South will especially bear the brunt of global climate change. As such, global climate change policies that aim to protect vulnerable communities and ecosystems have a responsibility to understand women's multifaceted experiences of and relationships to their changing environments. Illuminating women's lived realities is the first step in ensuring that their voices are heard in these policies. This project advances emerging scholarship on gender and climate change by illuminating women's complex, material experiences of climate change through a framework of postcolonial intersectionality. As 'blue carbon' climate change policies arrive in Madagascar, policy-makers and implementers must work to recognize how these policies will impact Malagasy women in different ways.

As the future site of one such policy, the Ambanja-Ambaro bays mangrove forest provides an essential point of entry to understanding women's experiences of conservation and climate change. Although blue carbon has not yet arrived, I contend that studying current conservation initiatives has the potential to inform future blue carbon policies. Although future blue carbon projects in the Ambanja and Ambaro bays mangrove will significantly impact the communities living there, Blue Ventures' blue carbon agenda does not currently address women. While Blue Ventures' language prioritizes the well-being of Malagasy communities who depend on mangrove forests, it does little to address the complexities of gendered livelihoods within those communities. Of their research, the organization writes, "We are working to ensure that blue carbon initiatives bring equitable

benefits to mangrove-dependent communities… Madagascar's coastal communities stand to lose the most from the loss of mangrove habitats and, as the primary users of mangroves, are best placed to lead conservation initiatives" (Blue Ventures 2015). However, blue carbon will undoubtedly affect women's lives in specific and important ways. As such, it is important to understand the ways in which current mangrove forest reforestation projects impact women, to inform future blue carbon policies.

This project examines the gendered effects of current reforestation projects in the Ambanja-Ambaro bays mangrove, and the ways in which gender intersects with ethnic difference. In doing so, this work seeks to understand the ways in which women living in this valuable landscape relate to conservation. In this mangrove forest, women have a vital role in conservation. They provide the labor for paid reforestation projects, the main conservation activity in the forest. Yet, it is important to understand that the women in this mangrove forest are not monolithic in their involvement with conservation. This project pushes back against the homogenization of third world women by revealing complex power relations among the women living here.

As I have explored, there is an important division among the women rooted in ethnic difference. This rift is rooted in a long history of colonization, capitalism, and labor that resulted in contemporary ethnic tensions. In this ethnic hierarchy, Sakalava women are placed socially above *vahiny* women. Further, this ethnic divide contributes to a narrative of blame towards *vahiny* women for deforestation, as evident in Sakalava women's testimonies. Yet, as this work demonstrates, uncovering *vahiny* women's own voices contradicts this narrative of blame.

This division also has material consequences for conservation. By examining conservation custom in this mangrove forest, I ague that reforestation projects are enacted through series of informal practices in which Sakalava women have control. In contrast, these practices exclude *vahiny* women from reforestation projects. When these projects do not work to understand these social exclusions of *vahiny* women, they inadvertently reify this dispossession.

This project is situated within feminist political ecology. Feminist political ecologists have long drawn on U.S. Black feminist thought and postcolonial feminist theory, and in particular on intersectionality, in order to challenge depictions of women in the Global South as monolithic. As such, this work joins feminist political ecologists who call for an intersectional analysis of gender and the environment as imbued in relations of race, ethnicity, class, and other axes of power. As Audrey Kobayashi writes, "One of the greatest challenges to the researcher… is to untangle what people take to be essential and unequivocal and what is challenged and therefore subject to change" (Kobayashi 1994, p. 77). In particular, this project challenges reforestation projects' universalization of women in this mangrove forest. When reforestation projects fail to untangle the complex dynamics that divide women in this mangrove forest, they diminish women's lived experiences, reify unequal power relations, and disenfranchise *vahiny* women from conservation.

Importantly, this project reveals commonalities among Sakalava and *vahiny* women in their understandings of the importance of the mangrove forest and their desire to protect it. Recognizing these commonalities subverts the social division that leads to women's disparate participation in conservation. It opens up possibilities for solidarity for shared action around mangrove forest conservation. I am inspired by Black feminist scholars who

advocate for unity across difference to achieve positive change. To my mind, if reforestation projects work to bridge this social divide among women, there is the possibility for more inclusive and effective conservation work.

With this project, I challenge conservation groups in Madagascar to work harder to more fully consider women's experiences of climate change and deforestation, and to include their voices in decision-making for conservation policy. For too long, conservationists working in this mangrove forest have failed to understand important differences in women's experiences of conservation and relationships to the landscape. In doing so, they have ignored the colonial legacies and political economy that led to ethnic migration, processes whose effects are still felt in this community today. In reality, I have shown how deep-seated social divisions among the women living in this mangrove forest heavily impact women's relationships to the forest and to conservation. I assert that as blue carbon policies arrive in Madagascar, they must be careful not repeat this homogenization of women's understandings and practices of conservation. Rather, I call on blue carbon policies, and any other future replanting projects, to do the difficult work of more fully enumerating women's experiences of environmental change as entangled in relations of ethnicity and other forms of power. Only then will these policies push back against the legacies of power that render women in the Global South invisible. Those with a stake in fighting the effects of global climate change must instead work to forge solidarity across difference, to protect the most vulnerable ecosystems and the communities who depend on them.

APPENDIX A: Semi-Structured Interview Guide*:

**Because my study involves multiple study sites and diverse participants, there is no one interview template that will be used. Interviews will typically follow a semi-structured and conversational format. The following is a general guide for interview data to be collected:*

ANNEXE A : Guide semi-structuré des entretiens

Puisque mon étude aura lieu sur de multiples sites et avec des participants divers, il n'y a pas qu'un seul modèle d'entretien qui sera utilisé. Typiquement, les entretiens se dérouleront selon un format de dialogue semi-structuré. Vous trouverez ci-dessous un guide général pour rassembler les données lors des entretiens.

Questions for community members in villages around the mangroves:
Questions pour les habitants des villages aux environs des mangroves:

1. Do you mind if I use a digital audio recorder during our conversation? I will delete the recording after I transcribe it, but it's no problem if you prefer not to be recorded at all. Puis-je vous enregistrer? Je supprimerai notre conversation après l'avoir transcrite. Mais il n'y a aucun problème si vous préférez ne pas être enregistré.

2. Do you prefer that I record your responses in my notes under a pseudonym? The pseudonym will also be used in place of your name if any information or quotes from this interview are published or presented publicly later on. Generally, it is recommended to use a pseudonym to protect your privacy, but if you prefer it I will use your real name.

Est-ce que vous préférez que j'enregistre vos réponses sous un pseudonyme? Le pseudonyme sera utilisé à la place de votre nom si des informations ou des citations sont utilisées plus tard. En général, il est recommandé d'utiliser un pseudonyme pour protéger votre identité, mais si vous le préférez j'utiliserai votre vrai nom.

3. Is there any particular reason you volunteered to participate in this study?
Est-ce qu'il y une raison particulière que vous vous êtes porté volontaire à participer à cette étude?

4. How long have you lived here?
Depuis combien de temps vivez-vous ici?

5. How often do you go into the mangrove?
À quelle fréquence allez-vous dans la mangrove?

6. When you go into the mangrove to harvest from it, where do you go? Do you stay in certain areas?
Où est-ce que vous allez pour récolter dans la mangrove? Est-ce que vous restez dans certains endroits spécifiques ?

7. How do you use the mangrove on a daily basis (e.g. fishing, timber harvesting, farming, etc.)?
Comment utilisez-vous la mangrove dans votre quotidien (par exemple: pour la pêche, la récolte de bois, la cultivation)

8. How does the mangrove impact your livelihood (enable you to make money or survive)?
Comment est-ce que la mangrove influence vos moyens de subsistance (vous permet de gagner de l'argent ou de vivre)

9. When you go into the mangrove, do you go alone or with others? If you go with others, who are they typically?
Quand vous allez dans la mangrove, est-ce que vous y allez seul(e) ou avec d'autres personnes? Si vous y allez avec d'autres personnes, vous y allez avec qui?

10. Are there any restrictions on the way in which you use the mangrove? If so, what are they?
Y-a-t-il des restrictions sur les façons dont vous pouvez utiliser la mangrove? Si oui, quelle sont les restrictions?

11. From your experience, do women and men use the mangrove differently? If so, how do they use it differently?
À votre avis, est-ce que les femmes et les hommes utilisent la mangrove différemment? Si oui, comment est-ce qu'ils l'utilisent?

12. Who makes decisions concerning this community's use of the mangrove?
Qui dans la communauté est chargé de prendre des décisions concernant l'utilisation de la mangrove?

13. How have you experienced decision-making in this mangrove?
Quel est le système décisionnel de votre communauté concernant l'utilisation de la mangrove?

14. Have you personally been involved in decision-making in the mangrove?
Est-ce que vous faites partie du système décisionnel de votre communauté concernant l'utilisation de la mangrove?

15. From your experience, do women and men have different roles in decision-making in the mangrove? If so, how are their roles different?
À votre avis, est-ce que les femmes et les hommes prennent des décisions de façon égale en ce qui concerne l'utilisation de la mangrove? Si non, en quoi est-ce inégale?

16. What is the role of conservationists and researchers in this mangrove?
Quel est le rôle des ONG environnementales et des chercheurs dans cette mangrove ?

17. How does conservation take place in this mangrove? (e.g. closed fishing season, no-take zones, protected areas, restoration etc.)
Que font les ONG environnementales dans cette mangrove? (par exemple: restriction de pêche, zones de non-prise, aires protégées, rétablissement de la mangrove)

18. Has the role or presence of conservationists and researchers in this mangrove changed over time?
Pendant votre vie, avez-vous vu un changement au rôle de la conservation, des ONG environnementales, ou des chercheurs dans la mangrove?

19. How have you interacted with conservationists and researchers in and around this mangrove?
Quelle est votre relation avec les ONG environnementales et les chercheurs qui travaillent ici?

20. Have you seen any changes in this mangrove in the last five years? Ten years? How has it changed?
Pensez-vous que cette mangrove a changé depuis cinq ans? Depuis dix ans? À votre avis, quel a été le changement ?

21. What is the biggest problem facing this mangrove?
Quels sont les plus grand problèmes de votre communauté?

22. How do you feel about mangrove conservation?
Quels sont vos sentiments à propos de la conservation de la mangrove ?

23. Can you imagine what this mangrove will be like in 10 or 20 years; what do you think it will be like (e.g. what changes do you anticipate, such as who will live here, what the economy will be like, and what the environment will look like)? What do you wish it would be like?
Comment est-ce que vous imaginez cette mangrove dans 10 ou 20 ans (quels changements anticipez-vous, par exemple qui y vivra, quelle en sera l'économie, comment sera l'environnement) ? Quels seraient vos souhaits ?

24. Is there anything else you would like to discuss or that you think would be important for me to know?
Y a-t-il autre chose dont vous aimeriez qu'on parle, ou que vous pensez que je devrais savoir ?

Additional Questions for Town Authorities:
Questions supplémentaires pour les responsables municipaux :

1. What are the formal and informal policy-making and governance structures related to mangrove resource use? Is there a "dina" (social code)?

Quelles sont les structures décisionnelles formelles et informelles pour l'élaboration des politiques et la gouvernance de l'utilisation des ressources de la mangrove ? Y a-t-il un "dina" (code social) ?

2. Are there any restrictions on who can use the mangrove, and/or how the mangrove can be used, both formally and informally? Who is most impacted by any existing restrictions?
Y a-t-il des restrictions concernant qui peut utiliser la mangrove, et/ou comment la mangrove peut être utilisée, à la fois de façon formelle et informelle ? Qui subit le plus grand impact des restrictions existantes ?

3. What are the major issues facing this community around mangrove access, use or governance?
Quelles sont les les problèmes les plus importants pour cette communauté en ce qui concerne l'accès à la mangrove, son utilisation et sa gouvernance ?

4. How is the mangrove monitored and regulated?
Comment la mangrove est-elle contrôlée et réglementée ?

5. How do local governing authorities interact with conservationists?
Quels sont les rapports entre les responsables locaux et ceux qui travaillent pour la conservation ?

6. How do you feel about mangrove conservation?
Quels sont vos sentiments vis à vis la conservation de la mangrove ?

7. How have you interacted with conservationists, NGOs, and researchers in the past?
Avez-vous été en contact avec les travailleurs en conservation, les ONG et les chercheurs dans le passé ?

8. Describe the local political landscape as you see it. Who has power to change things? Have you had interactions with policymakers at local or federal levels? If so, describe them.
Décrivez la politique local comme vous la percevez. Qui a le pouvoir de changer les choses ? Avez-vous eu des rapports avec des décideurs au niveau local ou national ? Si ou, décrivez-les.

9. Can you imagine what this mangrove will be like in 10 or 20 years; what do you think it will be like (e.g. what changes do you anticipate, such as who will live here, what the economy will be like, and what the environment will look like)? What do you wish it would be like?
Comment imaginez-vous cette mangrove dans 10 ou 20 ans (quels changements anticipez-vous, par exemple qui y vivra, quelle en sera l'économie, comment sera l'environnement) ? Quels seraient vos souhaits ?

10. Is there anything else you would like to discuss or that you think would be important for me to know?
Y a-t-il autre chose dont vous aimeriez qu'on parle, ou que vous pensez que je devrais savoir ?

Additional Questions for Conservationists/Researchers:
Questions supplémentaires pour les travailleurs de conservation et les chercheurs :

1. What is the importance of conservation work in this mangrove?
Quelle est l'importance du travail de conservation dans cette mangrove ?

2. How have you seen the mangrove change in the last five years? Ten years? How has it changed?
Comment avez-vous vu la mangrove changer ces cinq dernières années ? Ces dix années ? Quels ont été les changements ?

3. What are the major conservation goals for this mangrove? What is the time frame for these goals?
Quels sont quelques-un des objectifs majeurs de conservation de cette mangrove ? Quelle est l'échéance de ces objectifs ?

4. What are some of the major challenges in mangrove conservation here? What groups present the biggest challenges (e.g. timber producers, fishermen, farmers)?
Quels sont quelques-un des défis majeurs dans la zone de conservation de la mangrove ? Quels groupes présentent les défis les plus importants (producteurs de bois, pêcheurs, fermiers) ?

5. What are the existing structures for conservation decision-making in this mangrove? Who has authority, and how are decisions made? How often do conservationists meet with community members?
Quelles sont les structures décisionnelles existantes pour la conservation de la mangrove ? Qui a l'autorité, et les décisions sont-elles prises ?

6. How does community participation factor into mangrove conservation here, at the decision-making and implementation levels? Who participates, to what degree, etc.?
Comment les membres de la communauté contribuent-ils à la conservation de la mangrove, aussi bien pour la prise des décisions que pour leur mise en pratique ? Qui participe, à quel niveau, etc. ?

7. Is community participation in conservation decision-making divided along gendered lines? Do women and men participate differently or to different degrees? If so, why do you think that is?
La participation de la communauté aux décisions concernant la mangrove est-elle différente selon les sexes ? Les hommes et les femmes participent-ils de façon différente, ou à des degrés différents ? Si c'est le cas, pourquoi, selon vous ?

8. How do decisions made at the local level interact with broader policies or strategies (regional, national, international)?
Comment les décisions prises au niveau local interagissent-elles avec les politiques ou stratégies plus générales (régionales, nationales, internationales) ?

9. How does conservation of this mangrove connect to larger conservation issues, like climate change?
Quel est le rapport entre la conservation de cette mangrove et les questions de conservation plus globales, comme le changement climatique ?

10. Can you imagine what this mangrove will be like in 10 or 20 years; what do you think it will be like (e.g. what changes do you anticipate, such as who will live here, what the economy will be like, and what the environment will look like)? What do you wish it would be like?
Comment imaginez-vous cette mangrove dans 10 ou 20 ans (quels changements anticipez-vous, par exemple qui y vivra, quelle en sera l'économie, comment sera l'environnement) ? Quels seraient vos souhaits ?

11. Is there anything else you would like to discuss or that you think would be important for me to know?
Y a-t-il autre chose dont vous aimeriez qu'on parle, ou que vous pensez que je devrais savoir ?

APPENDIX B: List of participant observation tasks

Mikoko voanio (scraping out the meat of a coconut)
Mandrary (weaving)
Mangala batata (harvesting sweet potatoes)
Mangala folera'ylang (harvesting ylang-ylang)
Manitry (fishing with small net)
Manarato (fishing with a large net)
Miloloa rano (carrying water on head)
Mantsaka rano amin' vovo (fetching water from well)
Mamintana (fishing with fishing pole)
Mamofo vary (sorting out the rice)
Mamofoko vary (beating rice)
Mandisa vary (crushing rice)
Mitsongo feliley mahogo (sorting cassava leaves)
Mandisa feliky mahogo (crushing cassava leaves)
Mangala trembo (harvesting trembo)
Mandoky kody sauce (making lentil sauce)
Manasa kapila (doing the dishes)
Mangala radaka (catching frogs)
Mangala drakatra (catching crabs)
Milomano tanaty ala onko (planting mangrove)

APPENDIX C: List of women research participants

Name	Age	Ethnic identity	Part of CLB?	Part of women's association?
Miora	50	Betsileo	N	N
Ando	27	Sakalava	Y	Y
Karen	28	Sakalava	Y	Y
Anja	32	Sakalava	Y	Y
Anja	54	Sakalava	Y	Y
Stephanie	50	Sakalava	N	N
Linah	36	Antaimoro	N	N
Mimi	52	Sakalava	N	N
Tatiana	25	Antaimoro	N	N
Mia	30	Sakalava	N	N
Hanitra	35	Antankarana	N	N
Nomena	19	Antanosy	N	N
Jenny	38	Sakalava	Y	Y
Erica	32	Antandroy	Y	Y
Aliciah	47	Sakalava	Y	Y
Pamella	40	Sakalava	Y	Y
Domoina	32	Antankarana	Y	Y
Mialy	52	Sakalava	Y	Y
Christelle	51	Tsimihety	N	N

Henintsoa	53	Antankarana	N	N
Antsa	35	Sakalava	Y	Y
Raissa	46	Sakalava	Y	N
Cynthia	37	Tsihimety or Antandroy	N	Tsy manava drazama

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