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The discourses and practices of mainstream conservation in the Greater Serengeti-Mara Ecosystem.

Doctoral thesis

NTNU
Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Thesis for the Degree of
Philosophiae Doctor
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SUMMARY

Wildlife conservation is an inherently political venture as the formation of protected areas involve complex interactions of actors with diverse interests across many scales. Conservation spaces consist of formally protected areas but have effects on and are affected by what goes on in the areas beyond their boundaries as the adjacent areas are in many cases are shared by wildlife, people and their livestock. In recent years, there has been growing global calls for the incorporation of more land into the existing protected areas due to widespread fears of biodiversity loss and threat of mass extinction as a result of ecosystem fragmentation and isolation of protected areas. Some advocates of conservation argue that we need to set aside up to 50% of the earth's surface in order to save nature and ourselves and call up on governments and other key actors to redraw the boundaries of conservation areas. Others argue against such proposals and advocate for radical approaches that breakaway from the conventional exclusive protected area-based conservation and for taking the needs of the human inhabitants into consideration.

Life in contested lands, the title of this thesis, emphasize the challenges that both humans and non-humans, face in spaces adjacent to existing protected areas, due to the continuous contestation among different actors about control over land and resources in wildlife-rich landscapes in East Africa. The aim of this study is to examine the discourses and practices of wildlife conservation in the Greater Serengeti Mara ecosystem of Kenya and Tanzania. Through a multi-sited extended fieldwork, I seek to investigate the discourses about the relation between nature conservation and people and the social and ecological implications of policies and practices, which are based on such discourses.

The Greater Serengeti-Mara ecosystem comprises the Serengeti National Park, the Maasai Mara National Reserve and a wide range of protected areas surrounding these, across large portions of northern Tanzania and southern Kenya. It is home to one of the greatest numbers and diversities of wildlife in the world, as well as to traditional pastoral, agropastoral and hunter-gatherer communities. Exclusive protected areas were established more than six decades ago on land that was carved out of what used to be a communal landscape shared by wildlife and people and their livestock. The formation of these protected areas has in most cases forced local people to settle in adjacent areas of marginal productivity (Neumann, 2003).

In recent years, there has been a growing push by conservation authorities to expand conservation spaces beyond the boundaries of the existing, mostly state-controlled, protected areas. In Kenya, the settlement areas around Maasai Mara were first privatized and then reorganized to form semi-private conservancies, causing extensive land use changes and recently widespread fencing in the remaining non-protected segments. In Tanzania, authorities have used forced evictions to expand protected spaces into what they call 'buffer zones', 'corridors', 'dispersal areas', 'catchment areas' and so on to appropriate spaces crucial for the livelihoods of local populations. There is also ongoing discussion on a plan to relocate people from the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA), where they have been allowed to remain within a protected area since its establishment in 1959.

Using four interrelated articles, this thesis provides critiques of the mainstream conservation narratives (Büscher & Fletcher, 2020a) currently used to rationalize expansions of protected areas and identifies the social and ecological implications of territorial expansion in conservation. I argue that conservation policy and practice in the Greater Serengeti-Mara Ecosystem is guided by the hegemonic "dichotomous" imaginaries of nature and society (Büscher & Fletcher, 2020a), a discourse that presents humans (mostly locals) and nature as separate and which need to be kept apart in order to protect nature. These narratives provide legitimacy to powerful actors such as the state, local and multinational corporations and local elites to appropriate contested land from local users. Such narratives contribute to the continuous expansion of protected areas across the region without regard to the social and ecological implications. I also show that increasing expansion of protected areas does not necessarily mean that there will be more space for wildlife but may rather be counterproductive seen from both social and ecological standpoints. As Büscher et al. (2017) also argued, the way the "human half" or non-protected half is managed has implication on the wider ecosystem.

Moreover, findings from this study provide insights into the current debates on biodiversity extinction and the growing calls for global level expansion of conservation spaces to avert extinction. Such calls do not take into account the complex nature conservation practice in specific contexts. Conservation in the GSME, for example, is rooted in the colonial history of the region which continues to affect local production practices and contributes to marginalization of local land users and social inequalities. Expanding conservation spaces in the name of preventing extinction thus plays into reconstituting and strengthening these inequalities.

Articles 1 and 2 address how the historical stigmatization of pastoralism from colonial times to the introduction of Kenya's new constitution in 2010 led to the reduction of pastoralism through commoditized conservation practices as well as the social and ecological implications of these

changes. Article 1 focuses on emerging fencing on historically open pastoral lands adjacent to the Maasai Mara National Reserve. Article 2 investigates the expansion of conservancies, a new semi-private or otherwise non-state conservation model, following the subdivision of the areas adjacent to the Maasai Mara National Reserve. In article 3, I analyse how Tanzanian conservation authorities employ global biodiversity 'extinction narratives' to legitimize the use of violence in clearing land for conservation. I investigate how the re-emergence of militarization and the use of overt forms of violence in the name of conservation is legitimized in a specific non-poaching context. The article documents how the state switches to overt physical violence when necessary, showing how covert violence is not far from the overt use of it. In article 4, I analyse the specificities of the processes by which land becomes grabbable. Using empirical material from Ngorongoro Conservation Area, I show how the government of Tanzania, despite allowing the Maasai to remain within a protected area and promising to safeguard their interests, continued to impose restrictions on their livelihood practices, that resulted in the locals' impoverishment. Sixty years after the establishment of the NCA, there are ongoing plans to relocate majority of the local population out of the protected area. I argue that creating such uncertainties and impoverishment are part of the plan to make land grabbable.

Key words: *conservancies, exclusion, human and non-human spaces, land grabbing, violence*

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Teklehaymanot G. Weldemichel

Trondheim, March 2021

LIST OF ARTICLES (IN ORDER)

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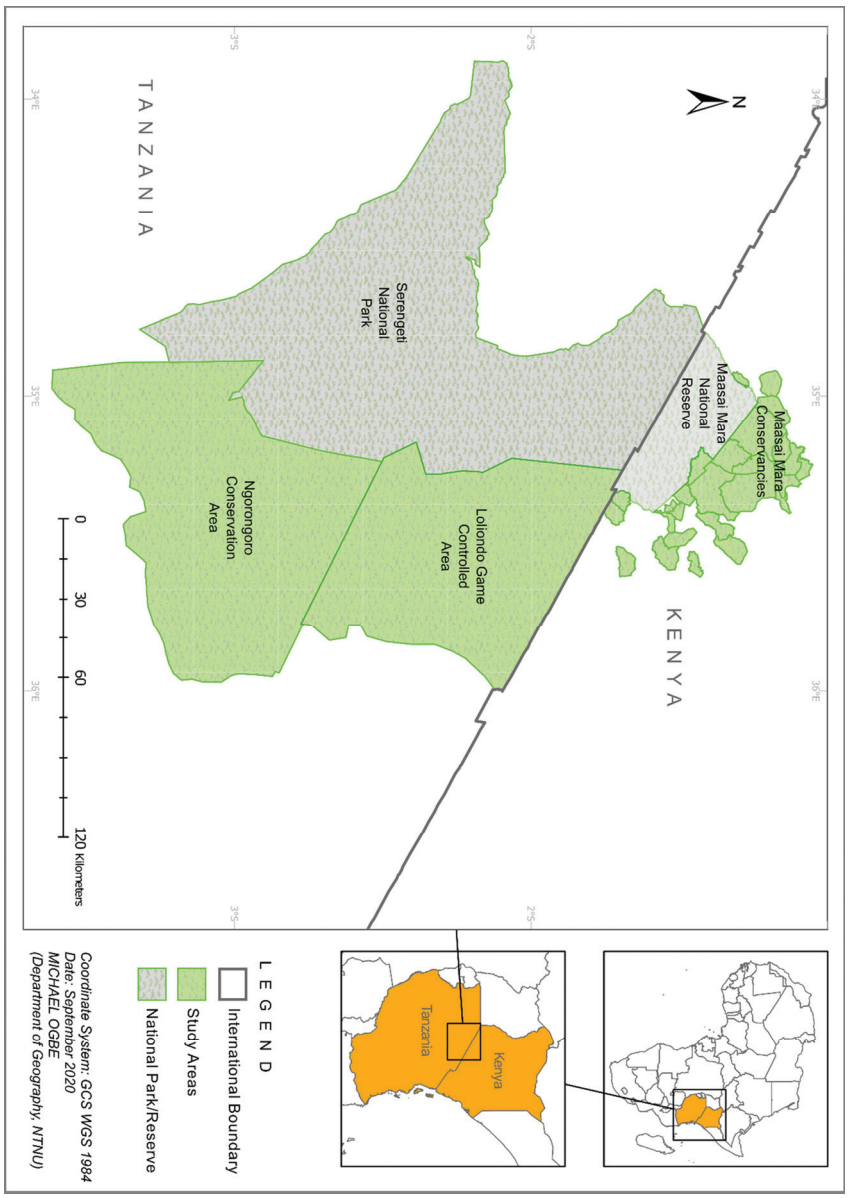
2. Cavanagh, C. J., Weldemichel, T., & Benjaminsen, T. A. (2020). Gentrifying the African Landscape: The Performance and Powers of for-Profit Conservation on Southern Kenya's Conservancy Frontier. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers,* 110(5).
3. Weldemichel, T. G. (2020). Othering Pastoralists, State Violence, and the Remaking of Boundaries in Tanzania's Militarised Wildlife Conservation Sector. *Antipode,* 52(5), 1496-1518.
4. Weldemichel, T. G. (Under review) Making land grabbable: Stealthy dispossessions by conservation in Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania.

CO-AUTHORSHIP

1. Article 1 was co-authored with Haakon Lein from the Department of Geography at NTNU. Teklehaymanot G. Weldemichel designed and executed qualitative fieldwork, analysed data and drafted the different sections of the paper. Haakon Lein contributed in revising the draft text, as well as in the conceptualization and framing the main argument of the paper. Both authors discussed the results and commented on the manuscript.
2. Article 2 was written in collaboration with Connor J. Cavanagh and Tor A. Benjaminsen from the Department of International Environment and Development Studies at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences. Tor A. Benjaminsen initiated the fieldwork for this article. The three authors conducted a two-week-long fieldwork in the autumn of 2018 and formulated the main arguments of the paper together, which Connor J. Cavanagh conceptualized and drafted. Prior to the collaborative fieldwork, Teklehaymanot G. Weldemichel planned and executed a 2.5-month fieldwork, which constitute a major part of the empirical materials used to supports the main arguments in this article. Teklehaymanot G. Weldemichel contributed in analysing empirical materials and formulating the arguments. All authors discussed the results and commented on the manuscript. Teklehaymanot G. Weldemichel is the second author based on his contributions.
3. Teklehaymanot G. Weldemichel is the sole author of articles 3 and 4.



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ACRONYMS

FZS- Frankfurt Zoological Society

KWCA- Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association

KWS- Kenya Wildlife Service

MMNR- Maasai Mara National Reserve

MMWCA- Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association

MNRT- Ministry of Natural Resource and Tourism, Tanzania

NCA- Ngorongoro Conservation Area

NCAA- Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority

NGO- Non-Governmental Organizations

NTNU- Norwegian University of Science and Technology

PA- Protected Area

PINGO's Forum- Pastoralists Indigenous Non-Governmental Organization's Forum

SENAPA- Serengeti National Park

TANAPA- Tanzania National Parks Authority

TAWA- Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority

TAWIRI- Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

URT- United Republic of Tanzania

WTTC- World Travel & Tourism Council

Part I

1 INTRODUCTION

Wildlife conservation is an inherently political venture. The decision over the formation of wildlife protected areas involves complex interactions of local people, different levels of governments as well as local and international conservation interest groups among others (Adams and Hutton 2007; Goldman, 2009). At local level, wildlife spaces include, but also extend beyond the boundaries of conventional- often state-owned - protected areas (Adams, 2004; Western et al., 2020). In recent years, conservation management in many countries is being extended to include public, private and community lands beyond conventional protected areas (Adams, 2020, p. 789). The decision over designating and protecting a conservation area thus involves conservation authorities and local communities that live adjacent or within the protected areas. Conservation is also at the same time a global concern as local level decisions and practices, particularly in wildlife rich regions, influence global biodiversity. The management of wildlife thus involves actors with diverse interests, such as different levels of governments, local communities (broadly defined), conservation scientists and organizations, private capitalists/corporate enterprises, civic organizations and environmental (green) philanthropists [1] among others (Adams, 2017; Brockington, 2009).

Life in contested lands, the title of this thesis refers to the challenges that life, both human and non-human, faces due to the continuous contestation among different actors about control over land and resources in wildlife-rich landscapes in the East African countries. This study is about the relationship between wildlife conservation and communities who live adjacent to, or within protected areas of what now is commonly known as the Greater Serengeti-Mara ecosystem (GSME). GSME comprises large portions of Northern Tanzania and Southern Kenya. The Greater Serengeti-Mara ecosystem consists of national parks, game reserves, game controlled areas, and other forms of protected areas (see *Figure 1*(Reid et al., 2015).The core protected areas were to a large extent formed during colonial and early independence years on land that was carved out of what used to be farming, hunting and livestock grazing spaces for subsistence producers (Adams & McShane, 1996). Under colonial rule, large areas were cleared of local human populations to form hunting grounds for colonial settlers (Neumann, 1995). The aim, Adams and McShane (1996) note, was to 'preserve' wild animals so that hunting by Europeans could continue. After independence, authorities continued to evict locals to make way for establishments of new

[1] See for example https://www.insidephilanthropy.com/grants-for-animals-wildlife

national parks in response to the environmentalist movements to save ostensibly declining global wildlife numbers. Today, this GSME is home to one of the greatest numbers and diversity of wildlife and one of the biggest wildlife tourism destinations in the world (Nelson, 2012; WTTC, 2019). In addition to the national parks and reserves, wildlife in this ecosystem, roam[2] in and depend on adjacent areas often owned and used by pastoral and agropastoral communities. Some of these communities were at one point in time relocated on to these spaces to establish the protected areas.

Globally, despite the continuing expansion of protected areas (PAs) over the last many decades, reports show that conservation efforts were in many cases able to neither save wildlife- as their numbers across the globe are declining- or improve the lives of people who live adjacent to or inside protected areas, despite promises of doing so (IPBES, 2019). For example, several studies reveal increasing isolation of protected areas and fragmentation of ecosystems across this region and the African continent in general (Ernest et al., 2012; Hobbs et al., 2008; Newmark, 2008; Western et al., 2009; Western et al., 2020) and beyond (e.g. Palomo et al., 2014). The irony is, the continuing isolation of core protected areas and the decline of non-human nature in turn provide justification for the expansion of conservation spaces (Adams, 2020).

The greater Serengeti-Mara ecosystem also faces increasing levels of isolation because of land fragmentation and changes in land use in areas adjacent to it (Said et al., 2016; Veldhuis et al., 2019). Wildlife numbers are, as a result, declining in the region despite a substantial increase in the total size of protected spaces (Ogutu et al., 2011; Ogutu et al., 2016; Western et al., 2020). In the Maasai Mara (Kenya), an alarming expansion of fences in areas adjacent to the national reserve threatens the entire ecosystem as fences block migration corridors and reduce wildlife dispersal areas (Løvschal et al., 2017). On the Tanzanian side of the border, ongoing contestation over land in Loliondo, along the eastern borders of the Serengeti National Park, jeopardizes communities-wildlife relations (Benjaminsen et al., 2013; Mittal & Fraser, 2018). Similarly, a 60-year-old experimentation of a Multiple Land Use Model (MLUM) in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area is facing major challenges of increasing poverty among its local population. The foremost explanation given to such challenges is often linked to the neo-Malthusian notions of population growth and resource scarcity. Veldhuis et al (2019), for example, argued that human population

[2] In Kenya, more than 50% of the wildlife is found outside the borders of the national parks and reserves (KWCA: https://kwcakenya.com/). Similarly, in Tanzania, many villages around the national parks and reserves serve as migratory routes and dispersal areas for wildlife. The presence of wildlife outside the formally protected areas shows the vital role of adjacent communal and private lands for wildlife conservation. As a result of this nature of the relation between wildlife and the neighboring communities had been an issue of concern for conservation policy makers and practitioners, researchers and communities alike for many decades of conservation's history.

growth around the Serengeti has 'squeezed' wildlife into core protected areas by altering land use practices in adjacent areas. Some scholars on the other hand argue that the privatization of land and commercialization may have caused the increasing isolation of protected areas and the decline of wildlife numbers (Homewood et al., 2001).

The solution to the increasing isolation of protected areas and declining numbers of wildlife, many conservation scholars argue, is the incorporation of more land into existing protected areas through the formation of buffer zones and migration corridors (Western et al., 2020).

The *Aichi Biodiversity Targets*[3] are an example of global level expansionist policies in response to the growing concern over declines in biodiversity. Aichi Biodiversity Target number 11 advocates protection of at least 17% of terrestrial areas by 2020. This target has been focused on to the detriment of the other targets such as target number 18, which advocates for traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of local communities and customary usages of biological resources to be respected and the need for participation of locals at all levels as a means of effective conservation to be recognized (CBD, 2011).

Not all places of the similar potential when it comes to wealth of wildlife. Expansion of conservation spaces to a large degree take place in "biodiversity hotspot" regions such as East Africa. While Tanzania, for example, already has more than 40% of its land surface protected (TANAPA, 2018), it continues to push for more land as it is considered to have bigger wildlife population than many other countries. The question is what does the expansion of protected areas at a scale proposed by crisis narratives really mean? Who gains and who loses from such expansion?

In this thesis, I follow a political ecology approach (Benjaminsen & Svarstad, 2019; Watts, 2000; Zimmerer & Bassett, 2003) in analysing and revealing how the spaces around protected area become arenas for contestations that lead to the emergence of distinct conservation management approaches and practices. To this end, I will focus on three study areas in the Greater Serengeti-Mara Ecosystem to provide empirical insight into how expansion of protected areas takes place in

[3] *Aichi Biodiversity Targets:* https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/
By 2020, Kenya plans to meet its Aichi Target of setting aside 17% of its land under some form of protected area (GoK, 2018). This has been achieved ahead of its scheduled time, 2020, through the enormous expansion of conservancies that now cover 11% of its terrestrial surface in the last few years in addition to its existing mostly state controlled protected areas.
Over 40% of Tanzania's surface is under some form of conservation (TANAPA, 2018). Land has been upgraded into higher forms of protected areas. According to a TANAPA official, Tanzania previously had only 11 National parks. Currently it has 16 parks and it is planning to upgrade 5 more PAs into National park status increasing the total number of parks to 21 in the coming few years.

contexts where people have historically been marginalized and where access to land is widely contested.

1.1 AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The overall aim of this study is to analyse the discourses[4] and practices of wildlife conservation in the Greater Serengeti Mara ecosystem of Kenya and Tanzania. I aim to investigate how the relationship between nature conservation and people is understood and the social and ecological implications of policies and practices, which are based on such discourses. More specifically;

1. Which assumptions about the nature-society relations influence policy making and practices in the Greater Serengeti-Mara Ecosystem?
    - How do different conservation actors view the relationship between people and wildlife in the greater Serengeti-Mara ecosystem?
    - How does the predominance of certain views about the relations between nature and society influence conservation policymaking and practice?
2. What are the social and ecological implications of conservation practices that are based on the prevailing discourses? Who gains and who loses from current practices of conservation?

Empirical material for this thesis is based on fieldwork I carried out in three different areas across the GSME (see *Figure 1*). One of the study areas is Maasai Mara district in Narok county of Kenya, where land has been recently privatized and where there are ongoing expansions of private or otherwise non-state conservancies and growth in fencing of private lands adjacent to the Maasai Mara National Reserve. These changes may have considerable implications on the future of both wildlife and people in the region. The second study area is Loliondo in Northern Tanzania where there are ongoing violent evictions of pastoralists to make way for the expansion of state controlled protected area in the form of buffer zone along the borders of the Serengeti National Park. The visit there involved personal experience of an ongoing violent conflict, including burning of pastoralist homes, confiscation of livestock and the arrest of locals. The third location involves what the government of Tanzania and conservation authorities call 'Multiple Land Use Model' in Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA). The NCA is the area where people living within the borders of Serengeti national park was settled to when park was established in the 1950s.

[4] Svarstad et al. (2018) discourse as "a socially shared perspective on a topic".

Tanzanian conservation authorities now claim that the original multiple land use model of NCA now has failed and that the way to save the ecosystem is to relocate people out of the area.

This thesis consists of four interrelated articles. In articles 1 and 2, I address how the historical stigmatization of pastoralism from colonial times to the introduction of Kenya's new constitution in 2010 led to replacement of pastoralism by commoditized conservation practices as well as the social and ecological implications of these changes. In article 3, I investigate how the re-emergence of the use of overt violence in the name of conservation is legitimized in a non-poaching context. The article documents how the state and its partners switch to overt physical violence when necessary, showing how covert violence is not far from the overt use of it. In article 4, I show how the government of Tanzania, despite allowing the Maasai to remain within the NCA and having promised to safeguard their interests, in practice left them under immense uncertainty about their own future. It has led to the impoverishment of the Maasai communities. I argue that impoverishment of locals was discursively and materially produced to enable land grabbing.

Using four interrelated articles, this thesis provides a critique of the mainstream conservation narratives (Büscher & Fletcher, 2020a) currently used to rationalize expansions of exclusive protected areas and identifies the social and ecological implications of territorial expansion in conservation. I argue that conservation policy and practice in the Greater Serengeti-Mara Ecosystem is guided by the hegemonic "dichotomous" imaginaries of nature and society (Büscher & Fletcher, 2020a), a discourse that presents humans (mostly locals) and nature as separate and which need to be kept apart in order to protect nature. These narratives provide legitimacy to powerful actors such as the state, local and multinational corporations and local elites to appropriate contested land from local users. Such narratives contribute to the continuous expansion of protected areas across the region without regard to the social and ecological implications. I also show that increasing expansion of protected areas does not necessarily mean that there will be more space for wildlife but may rather be counterproductive seen from both social and ecological standpoints. As Büscher et al. (2017) also argued, the way the "human half" or non-protected half is managed has implication on the wider ecosystem.

One of the cross-cutting features explored in this thesis is violence. In Tanzania the state is the main source of violence. Violence and resistance in Tanzania are structured and overt occurrences (as can be seen in Articles #3 and #4). In Kenya's Maasai Mara district, violence is routinized and mundane and resistance is more difficult as people are slowly deluded into loosing access to and control over their resources, for instance, through market mechanisms.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of two parts. The first is a comprehensive introduction, which elaborates on the theoretical and methodological choices I have made and presents summaries of the key findings of the thesis. This first part is organized as follows: In the next section, I will present the basic theoretical and conceptual framings of the study. This will be followed by a brief background on the historical evolution of the current conservation practices in the GSME and in the specific cases in the study. I will then present details of the methodological choices I made in this study followed by the summary of the articles that constitute the thesis. In the last section, I present the conclusions and contributions of the thesis followed by further discussion on decolonization of conservation as a way forward. The second part of the thesis comprises the four research articles that constitute the work.

2 THEORETICAL POINTS OF DEPARTURE: CONSERVATION AND ENCLOSURES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section, I present the theoretical debates on which this thesis builds on and to which it seeks to contribute. The overall theoretical framework of this thesis is related to the works of scholars in the political ecology research tradition. Here, I will first introduce the philosophical debates about the nature-society relations that contributed to the emergence of political ecology scholarship. I will then present brief summaries of the different approaches in the policy and practices of conservation, followed by a discussion on current debates on biodiversity "extinction" as a rationale for expansion of conservation spaces. This section will end with a discussion on environmental justice.

2.2 POLITICAL ECOLOGY AND NATURE-SOCIETY RELATIONS

As I stated in the introduction, conservation of biodiversity and the creation of protected areas is often a highly contested political decision (Adams & Hutton, 2007). One of the most fundamental contentions in what Büscher and Fletcher (2020a) defined as "the great conservation debate" is the meaning and the nature of 'nature'. The meaning and nature of nature vary across disciplinary and scholarly traditions. There are as a result various discourses about the relations between nature and society, which influence policy making and practice in nature conservation in different periods. A discourse is a "socially shared perspective on a topic (Svarstad et al., 2018).

One of, and perhaps the most prominent view is nature as external to society. It is based on realist science, which sees nature is something that exists independently of human knowledge. From the perspective of realist science, nature is separate from society/culture and exists independently of our knowledge. The scientist sees him/her self as an impartial and rational being who only speaks on behalf of nature (Curry, 2003). Scientific findings and claims are ostensibly objective and universal, forming a basis for science-based recommendations and policy advice. Conservation practices to a large degree depend on science-policy discourse that perceives nature and culture(society) as separate entities, and in which humans are the invaders that nature needs to be defended from through the creation of exclusive protected areas (Castree & Braun, 1998, p. 3).

Another discourse on the opposite side of the spectrum is *constructionism*, in which nature is to a varying degree seen as a social construct. According to Demeritt (2002), constructionism may refer to the concepts of nature or to the physical and material sense of nature (Demeritt, 2002, p. 767).

For some, constructionism refers to the notion that "nature" is conceptually and discursively mediated. For others, constructionism means nature or a natural phenomenon is literally created by people and thus "social contingent", while for others, nature is discursively realized or through networks of engagements with varied human and non-human beings (Demeritt, 2002, p. 787). Constructionists argue that the world, nature as well as the interpretations we accept as truth, are not real but socially constructed (Curry, 2003, p. 341). In conservation. conceptions of nature such as "wilderness" and "wild nature", as nature "unmodified by humans" are human constructions (Rolston, 1997). Such imaginaries have their origin in European romanticized and "archetypal longing for, or archaic vision of a world with no people in it" (Rolston, 1997, p. 46).

Constructionism faces several criticisms. For Demeritt (2002), constructionism's focus on the *nature/culture dualism* is problematic. Despite its claims of being a radical alternative to the objectivist realist view, constructionism maintains the nature/society dualism and presents nature as external to humanity. For realists, constructionism sees too much of the constructed-ness and tends to forget the existence of nature (Rolston, 1997). Based on the works of Derrida, Curry argues "All is political, but it is not only political" (Curry, 2003, p. 342). Curry adds, instead of "is nature a social construct?" often asked by scholars (e.g. Rolston, 1997), the question should be "[i]s nature only a social construct?" (Curry, 2003, p. 9).

The conservation problem, Rolston (1997) argued, is at the same time an epistemic and environmental problem. Yes, conservation science is political, but is it only political? For example, there are real concerns over biodiversity decline. But, the choice is often put as either a return to naïve realism in order to save nature or push forward with radical constructionist views in the name of achieving justice to humans who suffer from conservation interventions (Curry, 2003). A *critical realist* position recognizes the fact that reality exists independently of our knowledge, but our knowledge of reality is not impartial and neutral as realists claim. Critical realism asserts that there is a world independent of us human beings and that there are deep structures in the world that can be theorized about (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). For critical realists, reality exists independent of our knowledge, but our concepts and understanding of it are differentiated, subjective and partial (Benton & Craib, 2011). Our knowledge and interpretation of reality is mediated by our position in society.

In the study of nature and society relations, one such approach is political ecology. In political ecology, research follows what Robbins (2012) called "*soft constructivism*". Soft constructivism refers to the view that our concepts of reality are real and have force in the world, but they are based on incomplete, incorrect, subjective, and fallacious understanding of observed reality (pp.114).

Political ecology is based on a philosophical position known as *critical realism* (Danermark et al., 2002; Neumann, 2005).

According to Benjaminsen and Svarstad (2019), the emergence of political ecology as a research approach can be attributed to two confluent trends in the 1970s. The first trend is related to the growing Marxist critique of Malthusian arguments in environmental thinking at the time. While ecological science commonly presented itself as apolitical and neutral, Marxist scholars argued that ecological scholarship is inherently political as it involves diverse interests, norms and power. The second trend was the evolution of human ecology and cultural ecology scholarship. Anthropologists who previously employed ecological methods to explain human behaviour came to the realization that there is a need to include the role of the state and markets in shaping the ways that humans interact with the environment in their analysis (Benjaminsen & Svarstad, 2019).

As Michael Watts once noted, central to political ecology research is the point that an environmental problem can be "perceived" in a variety of ways by different actors (Watts, 2000). As I previously stated, decisions about conservation is often a result of constant contestations among different actors both within and outside specific geographical contexts of conservation interventions (Benjaminsen et al., 2013; Brockington et al., 2008; Holmes et al., 2017; Newsham & Bhagwat, 2016). A range of actors are involved in the decision making about conservation approaches and the actors' positions in society determines whose voices are to be heard the most in the process (Benjaminsen et al., 2013; Svarstad et al., 2018). The process of establishing a conservation scheme is both a social and ecological project with political, economic and ecological consequences and powerful stakeholder's political, social and ecological preferences have a role in the process of shaping the type of conservation approach chosen. Central to political ecology as Watts (2000) noted is a

> "sensitivity to environmental politics as a process of cultural mobilization, and the ways in which such cultural practices- whether science, or "traditional" knowledge, or discourses, or risk, or property rights- are contested, fought over, and negotiated." (Watts, 2000)

Political ecology seeks to understand the complex relations between nature and society through careful analysis of the forms of access and control over resources as well as their social and environmental implications (Watts, 2000, p. 257). According to Robbins, political ecology is "a research effort to expose the forces at work in ecological struggle and document alternatives in the face of change" (Robbins, 2020, p. 17). It aims to deconstruct dominant and simplifying narratives about the human-nature relationships. It helps in disentangling commonly accepted but often misleading notions about the relationship between people and nature, and to expose the ecological,

social and economic consequences of employing these accepted notions in decision making and practice (Forsyth, 2001). Moreover, political ecology deconstructs the "broader politics, economics and culture of knowledge production" to demonstrate why certain ways of thinking about nature and society gained and continue to maintain predominance (Wolford, 2005).

How do we deconstruct narratives? Robbins (2012) argues that deconstruction of narratives does not mean rejecting real phenomena on which such narratives base their interpretation. Deconstruction is the questioning of taken-for-granted concepts and ideas about reality. Political ecology questions the "role and status" of powerful actors and the dominant discourses on environmental and development issues (Benjaminsen & Svarstad, 2019).

For political ecologists, the environment is an arena where different actors with asymmetrical political power relations compete for access to and control over resources (Bryant & Bailey, 1997; Vaccaro et al., 2013). Analysis of power is thus central to political ecology enquiry as interpretation of a phenomenon can vary and whose interpretation take the foreground depends on power.

For Svarstad et al. (2018), the strength of political ecology is in its use of a combination of multiple theoretical perspectives on power. They identify three perspectives on power in political ecology. First, power can be analysed through 'actor-oriented' approaches that examine the exercise of power by actors such as state agencies, NGOs, corporations, local people and others. Here power combines "intentionality, relationality and causality" (Svarstad et al., 2018, p. 352). While research in political ecology traditionally focuses on the voices of the marginalized- often local communities affected by interventions, analysing and exposing other actors beyond the local may be equally useful. The focus in this sense of power is how it is "exercised for, most commonly, domination, or, sometimes, as resistance and empowerment" (Ahlborg & Nightingale, 2018, p. 384). Second, Svarstad et al. (2018) argue that perspectives on power which are grounded in scholarly works inspired by Marx can help us understand "how constantly changing economic structures provide opportunities for capital accumulation for some actors, while at the same time, many others are disempowered and marginalized" (Svarstad et al., 2018, p. 359). Third, political ecology analysis set out to uncover the exercises of 'discursive powers' by elites and how elite discourses and narratives get modified, adapted and resisted. This perspective on power draws on the works of post-structuralist scholarship and particularly from the works of Michel Foucault on governmentality and biopower. (Svarstad et al., 2018, p. 356).

2.3 POLITICAL ECOLOGY OF MAINSTREAM CONSERVATION

Even though protected areas are often exclusively reserved for nature conservation and tourism, where subsistence producers are in most cases not allowed to access, areas adjacent to the protected areas in many cases remain open for the wildlife to roam around. Thus, the question of balancing the goals of nature conservation and needs of local communities who live adjacent or inside protected areas has for a long time been a topic of great interest to scholars from wide array of disciplinary backgrounds and policy makers alike.

During conservation's early history, the establishment of protected areas were justified in the name of protecting what was perceived as pristine "wilderness" from human intervention (Adams & McShane, 1996; Adams, 2004; Brockington et al., 2008). The predominant approach to protecting nature was to exclude people from areas that are considered remnants of original nature (Brockington, 2002). This approach is commonly referred to as 'protectionist' (Jones, 2006), 'fences and fines' or fortress conservation (Adams & Hulme, 2001; Brockington, 2002).

In Africa, the purpose of conservation during the colonial period was to 'preserve nature' through a system of national parks (Neumann, 2003; Neumann, 1995) as the continent was presented as a place of "unspoiled, Eden-like landscapes" (Garland, 2008). Nelson (2003) argues that environmental movements in Africa both during and after colonialism share similarities with the historical Christian mission of "saving Africa" from Africans (p. 83). This is indeed evident when we review iconic conservation related scientific works of the colonial period when many of the protected areas were established. In his book titled *Serengeti Shall not Die,* Bernhard Grzimek infamously reasoned for the continuation of the British colonial rule in Tanganyika (today mainland Tanzania). He argued;

> If the British left Tanganyika today, without leaving any European help and influence, that country could lose one of its greatest assets, a possession which is envied by all other lands and to which multitudes of people in coming decades will make a pilgrimage: the gigantic horde of animals in the Serengeti. (Grzimek & Grzimek, 1959 p. 170)

The British colonial rulers did ultimately give Tanganyika its independence not long after this book was published. However, when we follow up historical global events that followed independence, it becomes clear that Tanganyika and other African countries did not gain full control over conservation related matters. European influence over former colonies in Africa continued via global environmental conservation movements that bourgeoned during the period following independence (Nelson et al., 2007; Neumann, 1995). During the immediate years following independence and when state power was transferred to the "representatives" of the "Africans",

global conservation movements gained momentum by popularizing the view that the world was facing a serious decline in 'fauna and flora' (Mkumbukwa, 2008). Various international organizations, most of which with colonial/imperialist historical lineages, continued to advocate for environmental agendas that helped in maintain the colonial-like conservation arrangements (Crush, 1980; Neumann, 1998). Global organizations such as the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the World Wildlife Fund and the African Wildlife Foundation who mobilized resources to "support wildlife conservation in Africa" continued to influence decision making (Nelson et al., 2007).

The first world conference on National Parks, was held in Seattle, Washington in 1962 (Udall & Wirth, 1962). In this conference, the newly independent countries were encouraged to maintain existing National Parks and establish new ones. The arguments for expanding national parks were based on multiple assumptions such as maintaining the last "islands of nature", creating natural retreat for "modern man" and for economic benefits among others (p.26). Extinction of nature has also been a concern. Explaining the "Principles and Purposes" of national parks, M.A Badshah and C.A.R. Bhadran, the Indian representatives at the conference argued,

> We owe a duty to the future generations of the world to save the natural heritage from further diminution and ultimate extinction. We can no longer afford to ignore the ethics of nature conservation or disown our responsibilities for the guardianship of natural resources for the benefit of the people to come (Udall & Wirth, 1962)

Despite promises of introducing basic reforms that break away from the colonizer-colonized relations and arrangements, the newly established states instead reconstituted and strengthened such relations (Mkumbukwa, 2008). Moreover, although countries in the global south gained political independence from colonial rule, local populations continued to endure the burdens of conservation. Newly independent countries continued to expand national parks and other forms of protected areas through forced evictions of local people. Conservation movements advocated what some call "fortress conservation" (Brockington, 2002), which places "nature above people" (Siurua, 2006). The argument for the fortress model, Siurua (2006) noted, was to protect "pristine ecosystems" and "endangered species" from the impacts of human population growth in wildlife rich regions. The solution to the supposed threat from overpopulation was to rearrange human settlement in order to create exclusive spaces for nature (Siurua, 2006, p. 71).

Büscher and Fletcher (2020a) suggest that the global conservation movement has historically moved roughly through three interconnected stages: *fortress, flexible and fictitious*. These stages, they argue, respectively correspond with the historical shifts starting from the establishment of formal

(often, state controlled) protected areas, community-based conservation models that attempted to integrate conservation and development goals and the most recent increasing financialization of conservation(p. 23).

Furthermore, Büscher & Fletcher (2020) argue that two key elements remain central to mainstream conservation: "that conservation is and has long been a capitalist undertaking, and that it is fundamentally steeped in human-nature dichotomies" (p. 24). Despite changes in the language of conservation towards more democratic and participatory models beginning from the 1980s, the underlying principle and practice remained the same- that nature conservation needs reduced human presence and the creation of exclusive spaces for 'nature' (Büscher & Fletcher, 2020a; Napoletano & Clark, 2020). Protected areas of different levels of restriction emerged in the remaining communal lands around the already existing protected areas as global movements for community-based conservation in the 1980s and 90s promoted the establishments of more participatory community conservation programs. In some cases, states also extended boundaries of existing exclusive PAs into adjacent lands, pushing people further into smaller and more marginal spaces. In other cases, restrictions were imposed on communities' practices in the name of keeping such ecosystems intact. One of the outcomes of all these processes of exclusive focus on nature conservation has been increasing poverty (Brockington & Wilkie, 2015).

The question is usually about who should play what role in conservation, how spaces for conservation is secured and who benefits from assuming such roles. In the rest of this subsection, I will briefly discuss of these the above three stages in conservation's history; fortress conservation where the state is the main actor, community-based conservation and the recent shifts towards market-based conservation under the neoliberal regime.

2.3.1 Fortress conservation: The state, violence and expansion of protected areas

The state has historically played a central role in planning and enforcing nature conservation (in Africa). The longstanding assumption in conservation has been that national states have the capacity, legitimacy and willingness to protect and manage resources within their borders (Peluso, 1993). However, Peluso (1993) argues, not all states are necessarily interested in preserving threatened species and habitats. Some states may as well be just interested in appropriating the "ideology, legitimacy, and technology of conservation as a means of increasing or appropriating their control over valuable resources and recalcitrant populations" (p.199). Peluso further argued that states often resort to militarization and violence in order to maintain control over land and

resources. Thus, violence has and continues to play a key role in the creation and maintenance of protected areas.

Violence, Springer and Le Billon (2016) argue, is a difficult concept as it lacks an agreed up on definition. In many cases, violence can mean an overt occurrence of an incident with physically damaging and deadly consequences, as in physical attacks which are easier to recognize. In other cases, it can mean covert and mundane suppressions of critical thought, which are difficult to decipher, and thus requires careful choice of theoretical lenses to appreciate its presence. It can be a manifestation of an exercise of coercive power or in other cases, its use can be unintended (Springer & Le Billon, 2016, p. 1). Violence does not have a fixed form (Nordstrom & Robben, 1995).

One common, way of looking at violence is to see it as "means to ends" (Benjamin et al., 2004). Violence can be for just or unjust ends. However, the distinction between just and unjust or legitimate and illegitimate violence is not immediately clear (Benjamin et al., 2004). The use of violence can be a means to the ends of the state and can be handy in situations where the state does not have clear legal upper hand to enforce control over a territory or resource (Benjamin et al., 2004, p. 284). Official and public discourses, for example, present conservation related violence as a just or legitimate act, as it is presumably carried out for the greater good, in terms of saving wildlife or biodiversity. According to Bocarejo and Ojeda (2016), while official and public discourses present the occurrence of violence against communities in conservation as an unintended phenomenon, like a collateral damage, conservation by itself can be both the means and reason for violence.

Militarization and violence have a long history of presence in wildlife conservation. In the 'fortress conservation' approach, armed forces were involved in preventing trespassers from entering the exclusive protected areas for livestock grazing, cultivation, and subsistence hunting (Neumann, 1999). Such militarized tactics in conservation were in some cases partly a means to secure territorial integrity and to consolidate legitimacy of state power in newly liberated countries during early years of independence (Lunstrum, 2013, 2015; Marijnen & Verweijen, 2016). The popularity of this fortress conservation approach to some extent faded during last decades of the 20th century due to widespread criticisms of its records on human rights abuses (Goldman, 2011) as well as the ecological efficacy of alternative more participatory conservation models.

The fortress approach faced widespread criticism from the beginning of the 1970s due to broader decolonial movements and shifts in development paradigms away from high "modernist

development" of the earlier decades (Adams, 2004; Vaccaro et al., 2013). It was also widely challenged by environmental justice groups and movements who criticised the model for its record of human rights abuses against local populations.

2.3.2 Community based conservation

Community based conservation emerged as dominant approach in the 1980s (Benjaminsen, 2007; Hutton et al., 2005). It emerged as an alternative to the fortress conservation model, which at the time was facing severe criticism for its conception of nature as divorced from society and for being exclusionary and ineffective in its practice. According to Hutton et al. (2005), while it is tempting to associate the emergence of community-based conservation with the criticisms against fortress conservation for its human costs, its emergence has more to do with recognition by conservationists themselves about wider changes in society that were taking place around the 1970s. Conservationists, Hutton et al argued, feared decolonialization movements and the shifts towards democratization at the time may lead local people and the political leaders question fortress approach (p. 343). Nevertheless, the introduction of the community-based conservation to some degree facilitated a shift from state-centred to local people-centred conservation.

Community-based conservation according to Adams (2004) has two distinct elements. First, it allows people to remain within or around protected areas. Second, it links conservation and development goals as it recognizes the need to address poverty and the development aspirations of local people around protected areas in order to facilitate conservation. The basic argument behind the shift towards the community based model is that conservation goals can and should go together with goals of addressing basic human needs and that communities are better equipped to do conservation than the state (Adams & Hulme, 2001; Igoe, 2006; Kothari et al., 2013). Moreover, proponents of community conservation assert that both nature and 'traditional' communities' are threatened by modernity and capitalism from which they must be shielded (Adams, 2004, p. 120).

However, the 'win-win' narratives that community-based conservation model is based on faced extensive criticism from both conservationists and critics of conservation (Adams & Hulme, 2001; Benjaminsen, 2007). For conservationists, community-based conservation is an expensive and ineffective distraction from the goals of conservation (Adams & Hulme, 2001, p. 193). Proponents of protectionist conservation argue that community-based conservation does not lead to better conservation of biodiversity (Berkes, 2004). For critics of conservation, community-based conservation works as a façade to hide the continuation of the old-style fortress conservation practices (Adams & Hulme, 2001, p. 193). One the one hand, the notion that community-based

conservation is participatory is disputed as protected areas continue to flourish despite local people's opposition (Brockington, 2004). Despite claims about the participation of local communities in conservation decision making processes, the practices of community-based conservation remain top-down (Brockington, 2004; Campbell & Vainio-Mattila, 2003). On the other hand, the community-based conservation narrative carries "a considerable amount of romantic baggage" as it draws on idealistic and simplistic image of communities as traditional, homogeneous and organic (Adams, 2004). It presents certain groups as primitive and who could amicably live with wildlife, which entails ignoring economic development and cultural change among such groups. To perpetuate this romanticised image is to ask communities around conservation areas to remain "poor and underdeveloped" (Brockington, 2004). As an approach that partly emerged in response to the criticisms of the fortress approach that focuses on the dichotomy between nature and society, one of the basic premises of community-based conservation is that nature and society are deeply integrated and related. It leads to anthropocentric views which present humanity at the centre of destruction of nature without regard to the structural mechanisms that cause the human impact on nature. Furthermore, proponents of community-based conservation present communities as self-standing entities without outside influence. Communities, however, exist within and are constrained by wider structures and diverse interests that influence how they interact with non-human nature (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999). Despite claims of being democratic and participatory, the practice of community-based conservation remains top-down (Goldman, 2003). Moreover, the financial viability of community-based conservation has been put into question (Musumali et al., 2007).

2.3.3 Neoliberal conservation

The global level shift towards a neoliberal political economic order has also infiltrated conservation policy making and practice in recent decades. As part of a broader shifts towards neoliberalism, nature conservation is left to market forces and logics through a progressive reduction in the governing role of states and other actors (Castree, 2008; Holmes, 2015). Neoliberal conservation requires, among many others, the privatization and commodification of communal resources (Holmes & Cavanagh, 2016).

There is a growing body of literature on the growing role of the market in conservation in recent years (Apostolopoulou et al., 2018; Büscher et al., 2012; Duffy, 2015). Scholars, particularly geographers and political ecologists, have extensively studied the ways in which nature is being transformed into a tradable commodity. The conservation movement has historically been closely entangled with capitalist development (Brockington & Duffy, 2010). This entanglement have,

however, become more pronounced as the scope, modes and mechanisms of legitimation as well as the diversity of actors involved have increased in recent decades (Büscher & Fletcher, 2020a; Corson & MacDonald, 2012; Corson et al., 2013). While the idea of conservation has historically been a colonial and capitalist project (Büscher, 2012), this has become more evident in recent decades with the triumph of neoliberalism as a global political economic system where the role of states is reduced in favour of private or corporate investors (Brockington & Duffy, 2010; Holmes, 2015).

What is new is that the discourse that capitalism can and should help in saving nature has become acceptable even by environmental NGOs who took a stronger anti-capitalist position before (Adams, 2017; Brockington & Duffy, 2010). Neoliberal conservation is commonly presented as a win-win or 'multiple win' (Büscher, 2012) solution to the growing need for economic growth and the conservation of nature (Duffy, 2015; Roth & Dressler, 2012). The basic argument is that the protection of endangered nature can be achieved while at the same time supporting economic growth and reducing poverty through market mechanisms, such as payment for ecosystem services (Derissen & Latacz-Lohmann, 2013) and biodiversity offsetting and ecotourism (Apostolopoulou et al., 2018) among others. Its proponents emphasise two arguments: firstly that conservation should not hurt the people who live adjacent to protected areas, and secondly that conservation is likely to fail if it does not address the social causes of biodiversity loss (Büscher & Fletcher, 2020, p. 28).

However, capitalism's role in conservation is fraught with contradictions (Büscher, 2012). Global science-policy discourses simultaneously emphasize the need to save nature from further capitalist penetrations and the need to repair damages caused by unsustainable economic growth. The damage inflicted by economic growth in turn serves as a basis for the new growth of economy of repair (Fairhead et al., 2012, p. 242). The capitalist system, Foster et al. (2010) argued, "is geared at all times to the concentration of economic surplus and wealth together with the displacement of the majority of costs onto society and the environment" (Foster et al., 2010, p. 44)

Another way of looking at capitalism and conservation is through what Igoe (2017) termed the "economy of repair", in which profit generated by unsustainable use of nature in some contexts is reinvested in ventures to 'make nature healthy' in others. It is based on the simple logic that an unsustainable use of resources in one context can be repaired by a sustainable practice in others (Fairhead et al., 2012). According to Corson (2018) there is an emergent trend among conservation actors to embrace capitalism as a means of addressing its own impact on the environment (p.4). The irony of neoliberal conservation, Fletcher (2013) argues, is the fantasy that the forces that

exacerbated poverty and ecological destruction can be employed to address the same problems. It is problematic to claim that we can effectively address environmental problems through the same mechanisms that created them (Büscher & Fletcher, 2015, p. 21).

Capitalist conservation, many argue, deepens the rifts between society and nature while claiming to resolve existing ones. Foster et al. (2010) argue that;

> To the myopic observer, capitalism may appear at any one moment to be addressing some environmental problems, since it does on occasion mitigate a crisis. However, a more far-sighted observer will recognize that new crises spring up where old ones are supposedly cut down. This is unavoidable given that capital is propelled constantly to expand. (Foster et al., 2010, p. 78)

Neoliberal conservation leads to "green grabbing", i.e. the appropriation of land using environmental arguments (Benjaminsen & Bryceson, 2012; Cavanagh & Benjaminsen, 2014; Corson et al., 2013; Fairhead et al., 2012). 'Green grabbing' is enabled by the involvement of numerous actors beyond the state – ranging from transnational networks of public, business and non-for-profit organizations to formulate regulatory frameworks that opens biodiversity to the market opportunities for investors (Corson & MacDonald, 2012, p. 280).

One of the most common manifestation of neoliberalism in the context of conservation is through investments in wildlife ecotourism (Duffy, 2015). Wildlife tourism is often presented as a strategy to save nature as well as to generate revenue that benefit locals and facilitates economic development. Large swaths of often communal land are turned into tourism territories, which replace traditional production practices such as pastoralism and small-scale agriculture. Such transfers of land are facilitated by discourses which stigmatize existing land use practices while at the same time presenting tourism as a conservation friendly practice (Corson, 2011). Low income households are eventually forced off their land through mischievous deals and squeezed into peripheral areas where productivity is low, leading to deleterious social and ecological changes.

Another problem with neoliberal conservation is commodity fetishism, i.e. the concealment of social relations of production to the consumers (Büscher et al., 2014; Kosoy & Corbera, 2010; Napoletano & Clark, 2020). Commodity fetishism arises from commercialization and market exchange of commodities, which conceal the social relations of production (Kosoy & Corbera, 2010). The fetishistic nature of neoliberal conservation has three dimensions: it disregards ecological complexity, fails to account for value in a broader sense and focuses on "exchange value", and creates power asymmetries among market actors and deepens inequalities (Kosoy & Corbera, 2010, p. 1234). For critics, the idea of "selling nature to save it"(McAfee, 1999) is

problematic. First, aspects of nature that cannot be converted into fiscal value tend to be left out (Scott, 1998, p. 12). From a neoliberal point of view, only aspects of nature that have monetary value have a socially acceptable value Second, Foster et al. (2010) argued that qualitative social relations, including those with the natural conditions of life, are not part of capitalism's system of accountancy as it reduces the complexity of a life system to one aspect, i.e. profit (Foster et al. (2010, p. 31). By simplifying nature into 'exchange value', capitalism ousts other forms of practices and imaginaries, which have historically sustained life, further deepens the nature-society rift and undermines the goals of saving biodiversity (Büscher et al., 2012; Ince, 2014). The knowledge and values of local communities are made irrelevant and replaced by neoliberal solutions and values (Büscher et al., 2012; Dressler et al., 2018).

Third, the commoditization turns nature into a basis for new socio-economic hierarchies in which unequal power relations in terms of access to nature and environmental wealth are reproduced (Kosoy & Corbera, 2010). As Harvey (2003) famously argued, privatization of common resources may at its first stage appear as a gift to low income households, who feel that they own a valuable asset and have control over their own wealth. But, once such resources are privatized speculation takes over and prime resources are transferred into hands of people with capital who use these resources for purposes other than what low income populations use, and thus trigger intense gentrification (Harvey, 2003 p. 158). "Green capitalists" (Scales, 2017) use economic and more-than-economic powers to transfer control over land. Commercialization of conservation may facilitate swift transfer of landownership from locals to investors, when combined with narratives of rapid environmental degradation and biodiversity loss, as well as the stigmatization of local production practices as the cause of such changes. In conservation, Dowie argued that local people are in most cases pushed to the lowest end of the market-based conservation economy, often ending up as game rangers, waiters, tourism guides and so on (Dowie 2009 p. xxv- xxvi).

2.4 EXTINCTION NARRATIVES AND EMERGING PARADIGMS OF CONSERVATION

According to Büscher and Fletcher (2020a) conservation is at crossroads with a growing urgency of a need to address increasing pressures on species and ecosystems in recent years. Two prominent alternatives to conservation seem to have emerged in response to this concern in recent decades. The first is what Büscher and Fletcher (2020a) refer to as the 'new conservation' whose proponents argue that humans have altered the global ecosystem to the extent that we now must manage the globe like our garden. According to this view, instead of mourning biodiversity loss, conservationists should shift towards appreciating the possibilities of new natures in the human

altered globe (Little & Shackel, 2014). This view breaks away from the traditional view of protecting 'wilderness' or 'pristine' nature from human intervention. Proponents of the "new conservation" also argue that current conservation practice is out of touch with the economic realities of ordinary people (Cronon, 1996). Furthermore, Cronon argues, rather than excluding humans, conservationists should find ways for humans to sustain living with nature.

The second response to concerns over biodiversity loss is the resurgence of what (Büscher & Fletcher, 2020) named 'neoprotectionist conservation' that call for full-fledged return to old "exclusive" forms of protected areas and enforcement in what some scholars have branded as "*back to the barriers*" movement (Hutton et al., 2005; Wilshusen et al., 2002). As in the earlier 'fortress' (Brockington, 2002) approach to conservation, proponents of neoprotectionist conservation argue that human-induced changes in the ecosystem can only be averted by creating exclusive spaces for nature (Büscher & Fletcher, 2020a, p. 3).

Despite all the evidence pointing towards the ineffectiveness of the approach, which considers human cohabitants of these landscapes as enemies, conservation scientists and authorities alike continue to argue for a return to an even more aggressive version of it. The calls for such a shift originate from two major forms of reasoning. The first builds up on the weaknesses of and the criticisms against decentralized, participatory and community centred conservation models, which were introduced in response to the critiques against fortress approach to conservation (Hutton et al., 2005).

The 'neoprotectionist conservation' reasoning is linked to a growing consensus among conservation scientists and activists that the world is facing mass extinction- an unprecedented loss- of nature and biodiversity (IPBES, 2019). There are widespread fears that world has entered a new phase that many call Anthropocene, an era of dominant human influence on the planet (Büscher & Fletcher, 2020a). The argument is that humans have pushed nature to a phase in which vital biodiversity is getting lost and evolutionary trajectories are affected due to human intervention (Ceballos et al., 2015; Ceballos et al., 2017; Otto, 2018). This human domination of the planet, many argue, is causing mass extinction of the earth's biodiversity (Wake & Vredenburg, 2008). Some refer to this as the age of mass extinction or the *Six Extinction* (e.g. Ceballos et al., 2015; Ceballos et al., 2017; Glikson, 2013; Leakey & Lewin, 1996). Moreover, they argue that while the last five extinctions were of natural causes the current one is mainly induced by humans (Wake & Vredenburg, 2008; Wilson, 2016).

This is not the first time that conservationists are using the idea of 'extinction' in their arguments for conservation (Adams, 2004; Jones, 2006). Support for conservation during the 19th century in Africa was generally based on concerns over the extinction of certain species (Heise, 2016; Jones, 2006). In some cases, it was also about preventing the decline in numbers of game animals in hunting regions due to overhunting by European travellers (Adams, 2004). Its popularity in recent decades Adams (2004) argued is related with the emotional response that it invokes due to the cleverly constructed association of extinction with the concept of biodiversity. The association with the term biodiversity, which encompasses all living beings, makes imagining extinction scary to many people as it threatens life of not just non-humans but also humans (p. 26).

Proponents of conservation argue for a shift towards the expansion of stricter forms of protected areas. Some propose setting aside up to half of the earth's surface to biodiversity in order to avert extinction. The *Half-earth* movement (Wilson, 2016), for example, calls for expansion of PAs to include up to 50% of the earth's surface to prevent the *'sixth extinction'*. Proponents of extinction narratives see population growth, particularly in the global south, as an existential threat to biodiversity (e.g. Kopnina et al., 2018). They argue that the mass extinction can only be prevented by reducing the human impact and moving towards more 'ecocentric' conservation approaches (Kopnina et al., 2018). For Kopnina et al. (2018), anthropocentric approaches are a "distraction at a time of rapid loss of highly biodiverse areas, when all who are truly concerned about the diversity of life should be united, not fractured" (p. 146). According to Ceballos et al. (2015) "Averting a dramatic decay of biodiversity and the subsequent loss of ecosystem services is still possible through intensified conservation efforts, but that window of opportunity is rapidly closing" (p. 1).

Currently, we are witnessing a growing call by conservationists for the expansion of conservation areas as the fragmentation and isolation protected spaces are considered as major challenge for the conservation of biodiversity (Crooks et al., 2017). Advocates of "neoprotectionist" conservation (Büscher & Fletcher, 2020a) are calling for full return to earlier forms of more exclusive protected areas. While concerns for declining biodiversity are important and the solution to it requires the deliberation of all of us, this shift toward 'protectionism' is problematic for three main reasons. First, Büscher and Fletcher (2020a) argue that, this view holds a one dimensional view of science and scientific knowledge as uncontested and apolitical truth that needs to be defended, which is similar to the earlier discourses in conservation that paved the way to the creation of fortress type of conservation areas. Other scholars also put into question the evidence presented to support the notion that a mass extinction is underway (Briggs, 2017). Briggs argues that "extinction rate has been very low and may have been matched or exceeded by species coming into existence" and the

idea that a mass extinction is emerging is based on speculations than real evidence (Briggs, 2017, p. 247).

Second, extinction narratives frame the ecological or biodiversity problem as something that is caused by and which affects all humanity (Büscher & Fletcher, 2020b). Such views present humanity as a single entity and tend to overwrite, obscure and depoliticise the differences in terms of impact and claims between vastly different groups in society. Such interpretations conceal the reality that different groups of people have hugely different ecological impacts (Büscher & Fletcher, 2020a, 2020b; Napoletano & Clark, 2020).

Third, such arguments, if taken plainly, are not good news to communities who already suffered huge loss during the establishment of the existing protected areas and may lead to distressing social and ecological effects (Schleicher et al., 2019). Conservation of nature cannot be carried out in vacuum as protecting a specific space entails destroying others as some spaces will have to be left for human use. Büscher et al. (2017) noted that that *half-earth* narrative does not get to the root causes of the problem it seeks to address and would, as a result, have negative consequences on communities and biodiversity. The way the human half is managed, Büscher et al. (2017) argued, "will continue to have major consequences not just for biodiversity in nature's half, but across the entire planet" (p.498). It leads to more polarization between protected and non-protected spaces, leaving parks and other protected areas more isolated (Adams, 2004; Brockington et al., 2008). Expansion of conservation through displacement of local populations whether it is by force, by market mechanisms and other mechanisms is self-defeating as spaces left out of protected areas, which are historically valuable for wildlife, are sacrificed (Napoletano & Clark, 2020). Displacement of local people merely displaces and even worsens the anthropogenic effects in land and resources (p. 42).

The hegemonic *discourse* in mainstream conservation is that nature and people should be separated in order to save nature (Adams, 2004; Büscher & Fletcher, 2020a). Views about the nature-society relationship and the forms of protected areas suggested have changed through time, but not the basic principle, i.e. the notion that people and nature should be kept apart in order to save nature (Adams, 2004, p. 4). Foster et al (2010) argued that once an idea becomes the dominant way of thinking, it becomes a constant or a background in any analysis and ceases to be a subject of investigation. In conservation, the protected areas based model of conservation may have ceased to be the subject of investigation. It has become a hegemonic way of thinking about nature and society (Brockington et al., 2008). The fear of extinction, Adams (2004) argues, plays into legalizing

this hegemonic discourse. The recent resurgence of violence and militarization of conservation is partly due to fears of extinction (Adams, 2020).

As a solution to the conservation challenge, we currently face, Büscher and Fletcher (2020b) suggest moving "beyond the nature–culture dichotomy". To this end, the renewed push for more exclusive protected space by crisis narratives should be analysed against the backdrop of European colonialism which historically produced drastic environmental changes and generated scarcities by forcefully divorcing people and nature (D'Souza, 2019). What does all this mean to specific contexts such as the ones under this study? What are the implications of these debates to specific places with long history of conservation related contestations over land and local pastoral production practices have been stigmatized and marginalized?

2.5 Conservation and justice

Conservation, as I stated in the introduction, involves a complex interaction among various actors who have different and often conflicting interests. Local populations are usually the most affected by conservation interventions (Vucetich et al., 2018). This raises questions of environmental justice. Widespread critique of the traditional fortress conservation, did, as discussed above lead to more participatory forms of conservation where the needs of communities were recognized and taken into consideration. Arguments for participatory forms of conservation are based on two central premises- that more participatory approaches to conservation are socially desirable and that they are ecologically effective (Martin et al., 2016). Environmental justice movements particularly emphasised the dangers of continuous marginalization of humans by conservation.

However, progress made in terms of recognizing the place of humans seem to be facing a strong push back from proponents of protectionist conservation who argue for 'interspecies justice' in conservation (Cafaro et al., 2017). One of the major shortcomings of the half earth project is ecocentrism and the disregard of human needs in the whole nature-society considerations (Napoletano & Clark, 2020).

> "The way capital extends the same instrumental valuation to humans and non-human nature means that the struggle over conservation is by definition one over social justice, with the converse also being true, that every struggle over social justice affects conservation to some degree" (Napoletano & Clark, 2020, p. 47).

In conservation, justice is about creating "equitable spaces of engagement" (Martin et al., 2016). To ensure this, there is first, a need to move beyond distributive model of thinking about the social benefits and costs of conservation (Dahlberg et al., 2010; Martin et al., 2016). Second, there is a

need to recognise the fact that the social impacts of conservation are relational- are part of a wider structural relations in society that produce the difference in impacts. Third, recognize that local knowledge and practices are central to biodiversity conservation. Lastly, there is a need to recognize that predefined blueprints for conservation whether it is in the forms of exclusive protected areas or through market instruments cannot facilitate the creation of equitable spaces of engagements (Martin et al., 2016, p. 260).

The complexity of the interaction of actors and interests involved in the decision making about nature conservation calls for "moral pluralism" (Brennan, 1992). According to Brennan (1992) moral pluralism as applied to the environment issues has two dimensions. The first form refers to the idea that "different considerations apply in different cases" (p.28). The second form of moral pluralism is "that there is no single theoretical lens which provides a privileged set of concepts, principles and structure in terms of which a situation is to be viewed" (p. 29). While the first form of moralism argues for the existence of differences in how we treat different circumstances, the second form of moralism argues for the recognizing the possibility that the same context can be viewed differently by different actors. The second position is particularly interesting at it has implications on how we investigate the views of different actors on the same issue in a specific context. It recognizes that a single case can be viewed in different ways (Holmes et al., 2017).

Mainstream conservation is predominantly based on utilitarian views of the relations between nature and society- and there is a need to shift towards a pluralistic view. The utilitarian view of nature should not necessarily be avoided but can be considered as partial account of the nature of nature and humanities relationship to nature (Brennan, 1992, p. 30). Protected areas are not the only possible way, and thus not the only reality of conservation and alternative to protected areas should be possible to envision (Nustad, 2015). Protected areas are not the result of intentional design to protect wildlife as they are enthusiastically praised by some today. Their history is rooted in the unequal and exploitative history of colonial policies that excluded local population to avail land for colonizers (Domínguez & Luoma, 2020).

Proponents of neoprotectionist conservation argue that justice is not only about social equality. It should instead mean "eco-justice", i.e. equality among all human and non-human nature (e.g. Kopnina et al., 2018, p. 143). Thus, questions of equality and justice are extended beyond the human domain to include non-humans. While this is admirable, it does not address the fundamental cause of environmental problems, social inequality and capitalist exploitation of both human and non-humans.

3 HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

> This wilderness is not thinly populated, for its inhabitants according to the books and brochures, are said to number more than a million. The inhabitants are not men, however, but quadrupeds varying in size from elephants to gazelles as gig as a goat- not to mention the smaller creatures.
>
> (Grzimek & Grzimek, 1959, p. 47)

In this section, I present a brief summary of the rather long and complicated history of the region under this study and a description of the geographical features of the specific study areas in order to provide the context under which expansion of conservation area are taking place. I will first present the brief history of the colonial roots of conservation in the greater Serengeti- Mara ecosystem and then proceed to divergent paths that Kenya and Tanzania took following their independence from colonial rule.

3.1 CONSERVATION'S COLONIAL ROOTS IN THE GSME

The Greater Serengeti-Mara ecosystem covers large parts of Northern Tanzania and Southern Kenya. It is home to vast numbers and diversity of wildlife as well as many pastoral and agropastoral communities. The Serengeti, according to Adams and McShane (1996) is an 'ecological island' - a dot on the African continent which became the embodiment of the "ideals of pristine wilderness and of wildlife conservation" (p. 38).

This ecosystem has undergone massive change over the last one and half century since colonial structuring of the region and the introduction of exclusive protected areas towards the end of colonial rule (Lankester & Davis, 2016). Under colonial rule, pastoral communities were in many cases pushed away from historical grazing grounds- such as Kenya's central plains- into "native reserves" that they often shared with wildlife in order to make land available for colonial settlers (Adams & McShane, 1996; Hughes, 2006, 2007). Similar evictions took place on the Tanzanian side of the border both by the German and latter British colonial settlers who took over important farmlands in the highlands between Kilimanjaro and Ngorongoro (Adams & McShane, 1996; Spear, 1997).

The local pastoral and agropastoral populations were often pushed into areas, which are marginal and prone to tropical diseases and tsetse fly infestations. The tsetse fly infestations of the plains of the Serengeti ecosystem was closely related to the decline in the number of wildlife, people and

livestock due to the outbreak of rinderpest and smallpox epidemics (brought by colonialists from Europe) at the end of the 19th century (Adams & McShane, 1996; Kjekshus, 1977a). The epidemics killed nearly all the livestock, which in turn led to famine that wiped out the pastoral population that occupied the areas around this ecosystem[5] (Mwangi & Ostrom, 2009; Rogers, 2009).

According to Kjekshus (1977a), the epidemics initiated a breakdown of an "ecological balance", and left the Serengeti ecosystem with much lower numbers of wildlife, people and livestock again leading to overgrowth of vegetation. The overgrowth created favourable conditions for the spread of *tsetse fly* and *trypanosomiasis*, a disease that tsetse fly carries, making it hard for people to get back to these areas at a later stage when their numbers increased- thus effectively clearing large swathes of land for what would latter become the current national parks (p.48). The spread of tsetse fly significantly curtailed seasonal movement arrangements, which are a necessary condition for pastoralist practices (Hughes, 2007). One of the effect of these human and livestock population declines following the epidemics was the availability of large parcel of land without people, which then strengthened European perceptions and claims of East Africa as a "wilderness dominated by wildlife" (Rogers, 2009, p. 86).

[5] The quotation below from an account by Baumann, a 19th century European traveller to the present day Tanzania (Ngorongoro) as cited in Bernhard and Michael Grzimek's book titled *Serengeti Shall not Die* (Grzimek & Grzimek, 1959) summarizes the colossal nature of the disaster that the Maasai faced around the end of 19th century.

> "…we rested for a day at Ngorongoro and I took the chance to look at some Masai Kraals. I was received in the friendliest fashion. In the meantime, a crowd of tattered scarecrows, now typical of the Maasai country, gathered outside the thorn fence of our camp. There were women reduced to walking skeletons, out of whose sunken eyes looked the madness of hunger, children resembling deformed frogs rather than human beings, warriors who could hardly crawl on all forms, and moronic, emaciated greybeards. These people ate everything available; dead donkeys were a delicacy for them; but also devoured their skins, bones, and even horns of cattle. I gave these unfortunate people as much food as I could, and the good-natured porters shared their rations with them, but their hunger was unappeasable, and they came in ever greater numbers. They were refugees from Serengeti where starvation had depopulated whole districts. They had fled to their countrymen who had barely enough to eat themselves. Swarms of vultures followed them, waiting for victims. We were daily confronted by this misery and could do almost nothing to help. Parents offered us their babies in exchange for a piece of meat. When we refused to barter, they artfully hid their children in our camp and escaped. Soon our caravan was swarming with Masai babies and it was touching to see how the porters cared for the little ones..." (Grzimek & Grzimek, 1959, p. 54)

In addition to the epidemics, European colonial settlers also took over areas that traditionally usefully served as seasonal migration and livestock trade routes- features crucial for the Maasai's mobile lifestyle (Mwangi & Ostrom, 2009). In Kenya, for example, the Maasai were relocated from the more productive central highlands such as Laikipia to the less-productive and tsetse fly-infested rangelands, which were designated as 'native reserves' near the borders with what is now Tanzania(Hughes, 2006). The relocation, Hughes (2006) argued was disastrous to the Maasai as it dispossessed them of the highly productive plains, drastically increased populations size in the limited low productivity spaces and affected their livestock production. Through historical analysis, Hughes (2007) has shown that while Europeans blamed the Maasai for 'over-stocking' and 'over-grazing' this 'over-stocking' or 'over-grazing' were simply outcomes of the confinement of postoralists to smaller and more marginal reserves as well as the absence of mobility necessary for effective grazing (p.315). Parts of these native reserves were later transformed into game hunting reserves for colonialists and later again turned into protected areas the end of colonial rule (Igoe, 2017).

As I presented in the previous section, during the years leading up to national independence, many conservationists overtly argued for the continuation of European control and influence over the 'Africans' in order to protect wildlife. This emphasis on wildlife rather than broader ecosystem became the focus of the conservationists even after the countries gained independence in the early 1960s (Adams & McShane, 1996, p. 51). Thus, conservation practices inspired by colonial imageries of the Maasai continued despite political independence of both countries from British rule (Neumann, 1995). Similar to the colonial period, the practices of dividing local human and non-human spaces persisted the within the independent countries (Neumann, 2001; Noe, 2019).

3.2 DIVERGENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN POST-COLONIAL KENYA AND TANZANIA

Despite being under British colonial rule Kenya and Tanzania took divergent paths in their postcolonial development approaches. While post-independence Kenya pursued policies that focused more on economic growth over equity, private sector development, receptivity to foreign private investment, preservation and extension of colonial institutions, and the maintenance of close ties with Britain, Tanzania switched towards a more state-led approach to development also described as 'African socialism'(Coast, 2002).

Kenya was declared independent on December 12, 1963 and became a republic a year later with Jomo Kenyatta as its first president. Kenya's postcolonial land policy for most of the cases focused on private ownership. While protected areas that were established during the colonial rule remained under the control of the government, different tenure regime changes emerged in the non-protected areas. Generally, Kenya has three land tenure regimes: government land, trust land, and freehold. Government land which make up for 10% of Kenya's surface include protected areas, rivers, and land occupied by public institutions. Trust lands, which cover about 70% of Kenya's surface are based on the 1915 amendment of the Crown Lands Ordinance that transferred all "native reserves" into trust lands. Following independence, administrative control over trust lands were given to county governments. The third tenure regime is freehold that consists of land owned by private individuals, groups of individuals or companies (Veit, 2011a).

The portion of land under freehold tenure type has been expanding since Kenya's independence as Kenya progressively embraced private ownership and free market economic policies. In the 1960s, large portions of trust lands such as in Narok country were converted into group ranches through the transfer of landownership from the county council to groups of locals (Mwangi, 2007a). The subdivision and titling of commons, which started with the establishment of group ranches in the 1960s (Ng'ethe, 1992) was followed by subdivision into individual parcels since the end of 1980s (Galaty, 1994; Mwangi, 2007a, 2007b; Veit, 2011b). Land has been divided, privatized, and commercialized (Butt, 2012; Galaty, 2011). Following the subdivisions, there is a growing trend of exclusion and fencing (Lamprey & Reid, 2004). On the one hand, we observe that ownership of large portions of recently privatized land are being transferred to non-pastoral users. On the other hand, there is an emerging trend in fencing of now privatized traditionally open communal land (Løvschal et al., 2017). The emergence of fencing coincides with the formation of conservancies- privately owned conservation areas, which currently occupy over half of what used to be communal grazing areas in the Maasai Mara (Butt, 2016).

Unlike Kenya, after gaining its independence from British colonial rule on the 9th of December 1961, Tanzania followed what (Havnevik, 1993) referred to as "development from above" strategy, where the state planned and reorganized people and nature. Prior to independence, the British colonial government had attempted to introduce "freehold" land ownership, which was reversed shortly after Tanzania became independent. The new government embraced what it called "African socialism" (Hunter, 2008), a national scheme with a focus on self-reliance, equitable distribution of the country's wealth, state intervention in and ownership of the economy, reduction in reliance on agricultural exports, and forced villagization of rural populations (Coast, 2002; Kjekshus, 1977b). In the early 1970s, Tanzania embarked on a national level large-scale villagization scheme as an attempt to permanently settle the country's rural population to 'modernize' life (Scott, 1998). Under the *ujamaa* program, which took place between 1973 and 1976, Tanzania resettled more than five million people (Kjekshus, 1977b; Scott, 1998). According to Scott, this was the largest forced resettlement scheme in postcolonial Africa up to that time (Scott, 1998). As part of this shift, the government transferred all customary land rights of ethnic held by ethnic groups to the newly formed villages and elected councils (USAID, 2011).

In relation to conservation, thousands of people were evicted and resettled in surrounding areas when national parks such as the Serengeti were established in the 1950 and 1960s (Homewood et al., 2012a; Neumann, 2003). Following independence, the state in Tanzania continued control of all land (Nelson et al., 2007). The government continued to expand the borders of existing protected areas, causing a growing tension with communities who occupy these areas. This tradition in which the state maps places and claims their importance for conservation continues today. The goal of conservation was, and continues today, largely to support national development through revenue generated from wildlife-based tourism (Neumann, 1998). Protected areas are therefore presented as the primary concern of the national state, which remained the sole owner of land (Homewood et al., 2012a). There have been incidences of violent evictions of local communities carried out by the Tanzanian state in order to form or maintain protected areas (Goldman, 2011; Neumann, 2001). In other cases, conservation areas with weaker restrictions were upgraded into stringent Game Reserves and National Parks (Nelson et al., 2007).

State-centred conservation was to some extent challenged by the growing critics of conservation who accused of the state of human rights abuses during the creation and expansion of protected areas. In the late 1980s Tanzania opened its economy and carried out reforms which included decentralization of conservation management (Bluwstein, 2017). According to the reforms, local

villages could establish community-based conservation areas and enter into business agreements with private tourism investors (Bartels, 2016; Holmes et al., 2017).

Since the 1990s, the Tanzanian state has generally been reconsolidating control over land previously designated as village lands and shifting towards more violent approach to conservation (Benjaminsen et al., 2013; Homewood et al., 2012a; Nelson et al., 2007; Neumann, 2001). Moreover, there is a growing shift towards the militarization and use of violence in conservation since the mid-1990s.

4 DESIGN AND METHODS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is based on an extended fieldwork that was carried out on several rounds of travel to Kenya and Tanzania between February 2017 and June 2019. The purpose of this section is to present the methodological choices I made during this study. I will first discuss the philosophical angle from which this research work is carried out. This will be followed by a description of the design of the study including the research approach, choice of Kenya and Tanzania as study countries and the selection of the specific study sites, fieldwork and data collection procedures and the analytical approach as well as a brief reflection on the validity and reliability of findings of the study. I will then reflect on the positionality and my experience of working with a group of conservation biologists in the project of which my PhD work forms part. In the last part of this section, I will reflect on some of the ethical considerations I needed to make in the research process.

4.2 PHILOSOPHICAL POSITIONING

When I tell people about my project; that my plan was to study wildlife conservation policies in Kenya and Tanzania, and that I wanted to particularly investigate how conservation actors in both countries view the place of communities in relation the goals of conservation, some of the reactions I got were, "But, we have been studying this over and over for the last many decades, and here at our university, people have been doing exactly this for over 30 years now. What new finding do you expect to come up with? Why do you want to study this?". The implication of such reactions is that this line of research has hit a dead-end and there is nothing we can do about it, that it has all been figured out and whatever is not addressed is something that we cannot find an answer for. This question hit me hard and remained in the background of all my works throughout this project. What is it that I am really looking for in this project that has not been said or written about before? Why do conservation problems persist even though this person claims that it has been studied over and over for decades? Why do we still have declining wildlife numbers and more poor people?

For me, reactions such as the quote above emanate from two *epistemic* delusions. First, it is rooted in the traditional view that scientific venture on a certain problem has an ending point. It assumes that social problems, if studied at greater depth, i.e. by many researchers over a long time, can be

fully understood and solutions can be devised. In other words, there is one or a few 'answers' to problems and if a group of scientists at a given time have reached consensus on a certain answer, there is no need to invest in further research on the problem. This view has its origin in a positivist/ realist view of knowledge and the process of knowing.

Second and closely related to this is a view of society as a static entity that is knowable. The assumption in such understanding seems that once society and its problems are clearly laid out, there is no need for further research. What is needed is formulating policies based on the findings, connecting the dots. Furthermore, any of the problems in society are because of the way scientific findings have been incorporated/or not into policy making and practice, and our role as scientists is to check if policy makers have done so. Society is however never static, and neither are its problems and challenges. It is rather a "moving target" as Wray (2005) argued.

In Tanzania for example, research works particularly from anthropologists, geographers and other social scientists have for several decades criticised the ways in which peoples' place in relation to conservation was understood by conservation authorities (Århem, 1985; Homewood & Rodgers, 1984; Neumann, 1995). However, it seems little has changed to the better or has in most cases worsened, - as conservation areas continued to expand over time often through violent evictions of communities, and the same issues persist everywhere. In such circumstances, research should serve a purpose of investigating why social and ecological problems persist, despite the presence of paramount evidence showing that it exists. What structural mechanisms keep hegemonic ideas about conservation despite widespread criticism and resistance against it?

4.3 Research Design

Nature conservation, the main subject of this study, is simultaneously a local and a global concern. It is a global concern because loss of biodiversity at a specific context, and more so in biodiversity hotspots such as the GSME, could have wider implications. Conservation of biodiversity is a local concern as its practice is fixed in specific geographical locations. This duality of the nature of the problem makes the choice of an approach to the study of conservation a delicate matter as it requires a balanced methodology that allows capturing the local complexity at a greater depth as well as seeing its connections and disconnection to wider processes beyond the local. Studying this phenomenon requires a research design the allows detailed analysis of everyday practices and dynamics at local level as well as their connectedness and disconnectedness to wider structures and changes at national and global levels.

How do we choose a research design and method that allows us to explore the wider debates at global level and at the same time understand the specificities of everyday practices of conservation in specific places and social-ecological contexts? An important consideration to be made when deciding the type of design for a geographical research is thus the issue of scale, which denotes to the size of the unit at which a problem is analysed- such as at local, country, regional or global level (Montello, 2001).

Ethnographic fieldwork, a method whereby the researcher spends extended time in the context of the research doing formal and informal interviews, detailed observations, and group discussions to develop deeper understanding of the phenomenon can be one way to study this problem.

Hirsch (2020) argued that ethnographic methods allow a researcher to both investigate a specific case at greater depth and to see its (dis)connections with wider process and changes at other scales. Ethnographic method is unique as it enables researchers to highlight local and situated social and political dynamics that might otherwise be overlooked (Hirsch, 2020). The strength of ethnographic research, according to Hirsch (2020) is in its ability to go into depth of issues in particular places.

Social phenomenon at any given space and time is a product of the 'interpenetration' of wider structural order of things and everyday local social meanings and practices. A role of a critical social science researcher is to answer the question of why a certain social practice is the way it is. It is to understand how the grand structural meanings in the form of myths, ideas, and ideologies shape and get shaped by when met by other pre-existing systems of meanings, social practices, and other features particular to a specific place. It is to capture the moments of interpenetration of structural ideas as they unfold in the specific context. One of the best ways to do so it to be in the specific spatial and social context and to see, feel and experience the moments through immersive type of fieldworks. Ethnographic fieldwork, Herbert (2000) argues is a great way to develop such an understanding. In traditional anthropological type of ethnography, the purpose is to detail everyday practices of a social group at a specific context without a necessary need to compare, relate or identify any connection with other settings. In a geographical research, one can seek to understand how certain grand meanings get reshaped and reinvented depending on the spatial context and , one needs to go beyond detailing everyday practices in a specific place in order to see why things turned out to be the way they are in a certain place and not in others.

One needs to carefully observe and document events and meaning making process as they unfold in specific contexts in order to make connection between meaning at larger scale and their place

specific practices. One danger with a research of this type Bailey et al. (1999) noted, is that the analysis may end up being a top down deductive approach based on selective use of qualitative data used to justify preconceived views or if the focus is on the local, analysis may fail to move beyond respondents subjective accounts. The trick is to strike a balance between these two (p.171).

Hirsch (2020) outlined some of the ways that an ethnographical research can enable us to understand large-scale phenomena. One way an ethnographic researcher understands large-scale phenomena is by sampling targeted sites over a large area in order to understand broader dynamics. In other words, it is by engaging in a multi-sited research. Ethnography, Herbert (2000) argues, is a methodological practice whereby a researcher devotes extensive time for observing and interacting with a group in order to make sense of the actions and intentions of the people in the group as knowledgeable agents. Additionally, "[t]he ability to contrast deeds and words provides ethnography with insights unallowable by any other methodology" (Herbert, 2000. P. 552)

Furthermore, Herbert (2000) argues that ethnography plays a pivotal role in understanding macro-level phenomena and micro-level dynamics by exploring the processes and meanings through which everyday life is maintained. It allows a researcher to investigate how daily practices are connected or disconnected to wider structural processes that form the "*horizon of possibilities"* for human agency (p.564). As the impact of wider structural frameworks is context specific and shaped by local social formations, ethnographic research is uniquely placed to capture the role of place in reconstructing and deconstructing wider processes as they are translated into local contexts. It enables analysis of "important moments when macro and micro interpenetrate, when constraints and contingencies alternatively pattern and perturb daily life." (Herbert, 2000, p. 555). Ethnographic research enables a researcher to analyse moments when carefully planned grand ideas meet the constraints of daily practices that shape how grand plans turn out to be in local contexts as well as how micro practices are in turn refashioned to fit new realities created by the interpenetration.

According to Herbert (2000), one of the most common criticism against ethnographic approach is that it lacks 'objectivity' and 'value neutrality'. However, social research in general cannot be 'detached', 'objective' or 'apolitical' as the research process involves asymmetrical power relations between the researcher and the participants, which means that the research process is a "reflection of power constellations and the strategies and interests of individuals, groups, or institutions" (Rothfuss, 2009, p. 178). Of course, science is never value neutral and objective (Mandel & Tetlock, 2016). Schneider (2001) argued that the idea that science itself is at least partially socially constructed is a forgone conclusion. Thus, researchers need to recognize that interpretation,

whether based on statistical analysis or informal everyday experiences is intersubjective and partial. Knowledge production as Sayer (1979) argued is instead an intersubjective process, a form of "communication between knowing subjects" (p.19). Knowledge is produced through interpersonal communication between researcher and participants (Poon & Cheong, 2009; Rothfuss, 2009). The effect of the perceived asymmetrical power relation between the researcher and participants can, for example, be diminished if the researcher sees him/herself as a learner and participants as the "possessors of knowledge" (Rothfuss, 2009, p. 178). Our interpretations are influenced by our theoretical and epistemological presuppositions (Sayer, 1979). It is thus important that I, as a researcher, recognize and reflect on how who I am as a person as well as my theoretical and epistemological orientations influence the research process and the interpretations of empirical material. Epistemic modesty, i.e. honesty about the fact that none of us is capable of being perfectly objective given the vying mindsets that shape our goals- is better than blind adherence to the notion of value neutrality (Mandel & Tetlock, 2016)

It is therefore necessary to engage in empirical analysis that show how the socially constructed nature of science and scientific framings affect policies and practices. According to Schneider, critical social science needs to point out towards alternative possibilities that could have existed if the framing was constructed differently (Schneider, 2001, p. 343).

4.4 SELECTION OF STUDY AREAS

In this subsection, I will present the choices of study sites and participants for this project. This thesis project is part of a bigger European Union funded research project named *AfricanBioServices*[6], the aim of which was "to understand how the ongoing climate change, human population growth and land use change affect biodiversity and human well-being, and use this information to derive novel solutions for a future sustainable development" (https://africanbioservices.eu/) in the Greater Serengeti-Mara ecosystem of Tanzania and Kenya. It was coordinated by the department of biology at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology and included 13 research partners across many universities and research centres from Europe as well as Kenya and Tanzania. In Tanzania, our project activities were coordinated by Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI)- our main research partner in Tanzania. In Kenya, the International Livestock Research Institute and the Department of Resource Surveys and Remote Sensing (DRSRS) were our main partners and helped in facilitating my fieldwork.

The project consisted of seven work packages (groups) comprised of wildlife conservation and social science researchers. My PhD project is part of work package 5, a group which mainly consists of social science researchers from the University of Copenhagen (Denmark), Norwegian University of Science and Technology (Norway), University of Dodoma and Sokoine University of Agriculture (Tanzania). The purpose of my work according to the announcement for the PhD position was to "contribute to the sub-project on resources policy analysis". It was to "analyse policy frameworks and evaluate options for promoting poverty alleviation objectives in the governance of ecosystem services". More specifically, my role was to investigate "how natural resource policy and especially land and wildlife policies are being played out on the ground in areas of Kenya and/or Tanzania".

To this end, the thesis focuses on three geographically distinct areas surrounding the GSME; the Maasai Mara district of Narok county in Kenya, Loliondo division and the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Ngorongoro District of Arusha Region of Tanzania (see Figure 1). The selection of the study areas in this study intend to cover the empirical complexity and geographical unevenness which may help us understand how wider discourses unfold in different contexts. While the choice of the region of study was not mine to make, I did the selection of the specific

[6] AfricanBioServices is an EU-funded research project investigating Ecosystem Services in the Greater Serengeti-Mara Ecosystem in eastern Africa. The main aim of the research project is to understand how the ongoing climate change, human population growth and [land use] change affect biodiversity and human well-being, and use this information to derive novel solutions for a future sustainable development
(More can be found here https://africanbioservices.eu/)

field sites following a preliminary fieldwork in February 2017, which I will come back to later in section 4.5. The three study sites and themes that constitute this thesis emerged from specific events that I encountered while doing fieldwork as I will explain below.

4.4.1 Maasai Mara

Maasai Mara consists of the Maasai Mara National Reserve (MMNR) and the adjoining pastoral land located in the Maasai Mara district of Kenya's Narok county. The areas adjacent to the national reserve, which since the official establishment of the reserve in 1962 served as grazing grounds for pastoralists and as migration routes and dispersal areas for wildlife, have undergone substantial changes in recent years. The study in Maasai Mara involves analysis of shifts in land tenure policies and changing land use practices in the areas around the Maasai Mara National Reserve.

Following Kenya's independence from colonial rule in 1963, these areas were divided and reorganized into group ranches, the purposes of which were to 'modernize and commercialize' livestock production (Mwangi, 2007b). Group ranches were supposedly formed to help modernize livestock production through provisions of appropriate infrastructure and services with the support from the World Bank and the Government of Kenya. However, the group ranches project failed to continue for various reasons (Lamprey & Reid, 2004; Veit, 2011b). This culminated in the subdivision of land into individual plots and privatization, which opened land for commercialization and the subsequent introduction of semi-private conservancies since the late 1990s. As of 2019, there are 16 conservancies in the Maasai Mara area, covering approximately 140,000 hectares of land, which generate US$ 4.89 million in payments for 14,528 landowners and employ about 2000 rangers. The privatization of communal land and the introduction of commercial conservation in Maasai Mara in Kenya are of interest to me as the social and ecological implications of these changes are wide-ranging.

My interest in this case comes from my experience during my preliminary fieldwork in February 2017. The areas adjacent the famous Maasai Mara National Reserve that historically have been open for grazing of both wildlife and livestock have seen vast changes in recent years as land became subdivided and privatized. One of the developments following the privatization of the land is the introduction of fences, the social and ecological consequences of which horrified me during my visit. During the first visit to Maasai Mara, I witnessed a lot of ongoing construction of fences (*Figure 5*), resulting in death of wildlife (see *Figures 2* & *6)* and difficulty in movement of people and livestock around the region. On many occasions during this visit, we found places that

we drove through in the morning were fenced when we come back in the afternoon. Yet, there have been very few studies investigating this issue and the focus has been on recording the extent of fencing and not explaining the drivers of the change. I selected this case because the scale of the transformation shocked me greatly and I thought understanding what is driving the change could be both theoretically and practically useful.

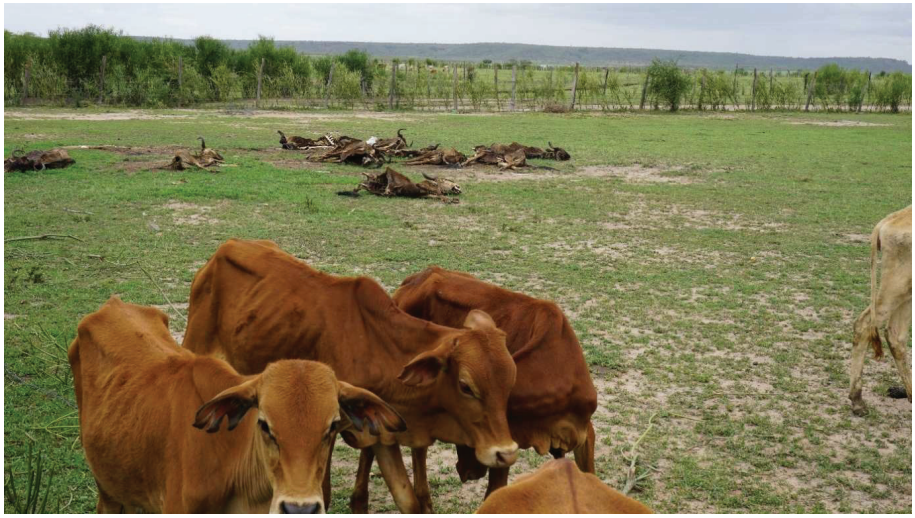


Figure 2: Following privatization of land and the introduction of conservancies, pastoralists in Maasai Mara are pushed into smaller spaces and thus forced to change their age-old pastoralist practices that depended on the presence of open communal grazing lands due to the expansion of conservancies in recent years. In the Picture: Several dead wildebeests can be seen behind the cattle grazing within a fenced private land (Maasai Mara, October 2017: photo: by author)

Another crucial change in the Maasai Mara was the introduction of conservancies- a new form of private or otherwise non-state protected areas. Following privatization of land, significant portions of the newly privatized land was swiftly regrouped to form conservancies. Landowners set aside part, or all of their individual parcels to form conservancies in exchange for a monthly or annual lease payment from ecotourism business owners who provide high-end tourism services. The introduction of conservancies and their legal recognition as a new category of protected areas following the 2013 Wildlife Conservation and Management Act in Kenya is fundamentally reshaping social ecological relations in the Maasai Mara.

My initial plan was to investigate the emergence of conservancies, particularly the thinking behind conservancies as new model for conservation and the actors behind their proliferation. Even though this is interesting, I realized during my first visit that there was an even more interesting development that many researchers did not pay much attention to. Existing works on the Maasai

Mara focused on the vital roles that conservancies were playing in saving the ecosystem from collapsing because of land division and the increases in livestock by the Maasai who are presumably shifting land use towards pastoral and non-pastoral practices which are unsustainable (Løvschal et al., 2019; Sopia & Nelson, 2018). But the emergence of fencing was a more urgent and interesting topic. Even though some researchers have studied fencing, the focus of their works has primarily been on the speed of the spread of the fencing and the effects it may have on wildlife (e.g. Løvschal et al., 2017). Hardly any studies could explain in some depth why fencing emerged and spread so fast in Maasai Mara. So, I decided to investigate this crisis, as understanding fencing may unveil why and how conservancies were introduced and how they operate. The first case (Article 1) I engaged in was an attempt to understand why the Maasai, despite long history of practice of traditional pastoralism that relied on the availability of a communal landscape, decided to fence their land. Within the Maasai Mara, I selected two villages, Talek and Pardamat. Locals in the Maasai Mara are progressively pushed into smaller parts for settlement as a result of the growing expansion of conservancies. Talek and Pardamat were selected because both villages are where formerly spread out pastoralists are resettled into.

The second article on Maasai Mara (Article #2 in this thesis), focuses on the emergence of conservancies. The study sites for this article were 5 of the 16 conservancies within the Maasai Mara. The 5 conservancies were purposefully sampled with the intent of covering possible variations in performance and outcome. Olarro and Naboisho conservancies were selected because of the media and civil society coverage they gained. While Naboisho was widely acclaimed[7] for its performance, Olarro was facing widespread media attention due to conflict between against landowners and investors at the time of our fieldwork[8]. The three other conservancies- Siana, Mara North and Pardamat were purposively included because initial information at the time suggested that their performances were less marked by either excessively positive or excessively negative news.

4.4.2 Loliondo

The second case is a follow up of an incident that I encountered while doing fieldwork in Loliondo in August 2017. On the morning of the 13th of August 2017, I witnessed one of the most horrific human rights abuses in the name of conservation. Loliondo is a 4000 square kilometre land located

[7] See for example: *Mara Naboisho Conservancy – African Responsible Tourism Award Winner 2016:* https://www.adventuretravelnews.com/mara-naboisho-conservancy-african-responsible-tourism-award-winner-2016

[8] *Conservancy manager attacked in Narok* https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/rift-valley/article/2001298962/conservancy-owner-attacked-in-row

on the north-eastern border of the famous Serengeti National Park adjoining Tanzanian's border with Kenya. It constitutes large part of the Ngorongoro district. In 1974, the Loliondo section of the district was gazetted as a Game Controlled Area, in which certain human activities such as game hunting and grazing are allowed. Loliondo borders the famous Serengeti National Park and on the first day of my visit, rangers from the National Park and other government security forces organized an eviction mission which involved the burning of pastoralist homes (see Figure 3 below), confiscation of livestock and many other forms of violence.

Figure 3: Serengeti National Park rangers burning Maasai houses in Ololosokwan on the 13th of August 2017 (Photo: by author)

The Article on the militarization and the use of violence in conservation (Article #3) emerged because of the encounter I had of the atrocious actions by authorities against local people while doing fieldwork in Loliondo in August 2017. Initially, I did not want to do anything on this as everything seemed hopeless and there was not a way to explain this- this is about conservation and there is nothing we can do to stop it. However, not long after the incident, I became aware that things might not be the way they appear and that there was something more that I needed to understand in order to grasp what happened on the 13th of August 2017. Through a follow up, I found out that there has recently been a dramatic shift towards militarized form of conservation in Tanzania following the 2009 Wildlife Management Act, which emphasized the need to protect wildlife outside official protected areas.

To ascribe the shift to this single change in law is, however, to simplify the complexity of the issue. The situation in Loliondo is not an isolated incident. Tanzania has for a long time been using

violent evictions of rural communities both for 'development' and conservation purposes. As I previously stated (see section 3.2), the Tanzanian state both during colonial and postcolonial times continually relied on violence in clearing land for conservation (Neumann, 2001; Neumann, 2004) and 'development' under the *ujamaa* program (Havnevik, 1993; Scott, 1998).

In Loliondo, the eviction incident I mentioned above took place while I was visiting Ololosokwan village, on the border with the Serengeti National Park. Thus, the study area for Article #3 is the village of Ololosokwan.

4.4.3 Ngorongoro Conservation Area

The third case is *Ngorongoro Conservation Area* (NCA) in Tanzania. The NCA consists 809,440 hectares[9] of land spanning from highlands, savanna and savanna woodlands to forests located on the east side of the world-renowned Serengeti National Park. The NCA, which was established in 1959, was from the beginning a unique protected area-as it was organised as a multiple land use area, which allowed people to remain in the conservation area. It has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979.

Despite its worldwide fame, NCA faces serious challenges when it comes to articulating and managing the relation between the goals of wildlife conservation and taking care of the interests of human population living in the area. Even though Ngorongoro is a multimillion-dollar tourism destination, the living conditions of the pastoralist living within the NCA has significantly deteriorated since its establishment (Kipuri & Sørensen, 2008; URT, 2013). According to a report by the Tanzanian government, nearly 22% of the households in the NCA do not own any livestock, total Livestock Units (TLUs) per person have decreased steadily from 11.6 in 1960 to 2.3 in 2017 (URT, 2019, p. 67).

Today, sixty years after its founding, there are calls on the government by national and international conservation organizations such as the UNESCO World Heritage Committee to "voluntarily" relocate local people out of the NCA (UNESCO, 2019). The background for such calls is principally related to arguments concerning a rapidly growing local population undermining the conservation goals of NCA. One problem with such calls is that what may be presented as 'voluntary' may not often be so.

[9] Ngorongoro Conservation Area. (Source: Unite Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization- World Heritage Committee https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/39/)

Figure 4: Maasai residents of Ngorongoro queuing to buy maize supplied at reduced prices by the NCAA (Pastoralist Council). While the Pastoralist Council was initially formed to represent the Maasais' interest in the NCAA, its role has been reduced to supplying consumables to locals at discounted rates and providing small number of bursaries to selected students.

The choice of the NCA as a study site was partly driven by a curiosity about the absence of recent scholarly works on a very controversial phenomena that was widely researched until the 1990s. Scholarly interest in the NCAA among critical social science researchers seems to have declined after the 1990s. The reason why researchers' lost interest in Ngorongoro despite it being one of the most controversial places in terms of the complexity of the problems that people, and the environment face is unclear.

4.5 Fieldwork and Data collection

As I stated in the earlier (section 4.3), this study is based on an extended ethnographic fieldwork that was carried out on several rounds of travel to Kenya and Tanzania between February 2017 and June 2019. In February 2017, I decided to travel to Kenya and then Tanzania for a one-month long fieldwork, for a more like a scoping and site selection process, as I did not have any prior knowledge and experience of working in both countries and the study region. The purpose was to familiarize myself with the study areas, to establish connection with people, and to identify research sites in preparation for a longer visit later during the same year. This was a very exciting trip as it involved a project meeting at Lake Naivasha, close to Nairobi in Kenya, where I met all my future colleagues and collaborators from across the project, a trip to the Maasai Mara in Kenya and then a 7-day trip to Arusha, Loliondo and Ngorongoro in Tanzania. Moreover, it gave me an

opportunity to talk with many people both in the field villages and got sufficient information on the different sites to be able to choose which ones to focus on in my preparation for my study.

A longer fieldwork was carried out in the selected study sites in both countries between July and December 2017. During the second round of fieldwork, I spent about 2.5 months in each country. and carried out open-ended interviews and formal and informal discussions with different members of local communities, key informant interviews with relevant government and non-government authorities. I also participated in different formal meetings and informal social events in both countries and the specific fieldwork sites.

During my second and longest fieldwork, I encountered several incidents that provoked me to ask why such events/paradoxes emerge in conservation practices in the region. Why did the Maasai in the Maasai Mara region of Kenya- despite their dependence on open grazing-based pastoralism, decide to divide and fence land? Why does the Tanzanian state revert to violence in the name of conservation against its own citizens? Why do the NCA authorities claim that the multiple land use model is failing? And why now?

At the end of my long fieldwork in Maasai Mara, I organized a half day long formal workshop where I presented preliminary results of the fieldwork to different local Maasai and representatives of key organization that I had interviews with. This was very interesting as it allowed me to gain reflections from the locals on the findings, and thus confirmations.

Table 2:Summary of the fieldwork rounds

Fieldwork rounds	Purpose	Achievements
1. **February-March 2017 (33 days)**	Preliminary fieldwork: to identify research sites,	In-depth interviews with 24 people (17 in Kenya and 7 in Tanzania) *
2. **July- December 2017 (4.5 months)**	65 days fieldwork in Tanzania 67 days fieldwork in Kenya	In-depth interviews with different members of local communities, informal and formal discussions. A short workshop in Maasai Mara where I presented preliminary results of the fieldwork and received feedback from invited participants.

		Attended meetings, informal social gathering/events. Participated in scientific conference organized by TAWIRI
3. September 2018 (10 days)	Project meeting in Karatu, Tanzania, followed by a and fieldwork)	Informal discussions and 2 in-depth key informant interviews
4. November 2018 (10 days)	Fieldwork in Kenya with Tor A. Benjaminsen and Connor J. Cavanagh	Informal discussions, key informant interviews, formal and informal discussions.
5. June 2019 (7 days)	Project meeting in Arusha, Tanzania	Formal and informal discussions with key government officials, researchers, conservation managers

* The 24 interviews carried out during the preliminary fieldwork in February 2017 are not included in the count to the total number of interviews.

The 24 interviews I carried out during the first round of fieldwork in February 2017 helped me in identifying study sites as well as key issues to focus on and in formulating data collection questions for the subsequent fieldwork.

4.5.1 Selection of research participants

Fieldwork for this thesis consisted of several encounters with a number of informants. It involved a range of meetings, formal discussions and informal conversations with different members of society in Kenya and Tanzania. The selection of informants is thus difficult to classify and quantify.

Participants for this study were purposefully selected based on their relevance to the topics at hand and richness of the information they provide. The selection process involved different techniques. Key informants were in most cases purposefully selected due to the position they hold in key organizations and the type of information I intended to obtain. Selection of local participants and some key informants was based on snowball technique, a method in which the researcher starts by locating certain type of research participants and then asks for their recommendations for more participants (Allen, 2017). After every interview or discussion, the researcher asks the participants for names of other people who they think may also know about the issue at hand. Recruitments of initial participants in the villages were facilitated by local field assistants who functioned as gate keepers as they knew most people in the villages. Once I settled in the villages, I often attended

informal social gatherings and formal meetings where I met more informants in addition to the ones suggested by participants whom I already have interviewed or discussed with.

Snowball method of selection is particularly important when researching in conflict environments where local populations are in many cases marginalized and where it is hard for an outsider researcher to gain trust of research participants (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). Snowball methods enable the researcher to gain trust as they are introduced through trusted social networks (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). One challenge with this type of sampling technique is that it may lead to a possibility that all participants share the same beliefs and experiences and that researcher may end up with homogenous participants, and thus biased findings. Snowballing also depends on the initial research participants having wider social basis and knowledge of others who share their views. The absence of wider social basis and social interconnection of the initial contacts may lead the research to a halt (Geddes et al., 2018). While this is clearly very problematic, the researcher can overcome some of this by expanding "horizontal networking"(Geddes et al., 2018) in which the researcher recruits initial participants with widely different views by intentionally identifying people with different or opposing views. In such situations, the researcher should also be flexible, creative and daring in creating opportunities and seizing any opportunity to interact with the study population and use such opportunities to identify participants. Moreover, the key to gaining trust by participants for the researcher is to present and conduct oneself with integrity, openness and sensitivity towards research participants (Cohen & Arieli, 2011). Such characterises, as Cohen and Arieli (2011) noted, facilitate chain of referrals which are key for snowball technique and enable the researcher to overcome the lack of trust common in conflict environments.

In Kenya, the focus of fieldwork from the beginning was the emergent phenomenon of expanding private or otherwise non-state conservancies and a simultaneous growth in fencing around the Maasai Mara National Reserve. During fieldwork, I started by looking for people who have leased their land to conservancies to see how they feel about the emerging arrangements. The first few people I was introduced to were very positive about the arrangement and benefits that these conservancies gave them. The views about conservancies started to change the more people I interviewed and discussed with. The challenges that local landowners face because of conservancies particularly started becoming evident when I included questions regarding the issue of the emerging fencing situation in the interviews and discussions.

The situation in Tanzania, particularly in Loliondo where Article number 3 is based was more difficult because of an ongoing conflict and luck of trust by locals towards researchers. I was thus forced to rely on very few local informants that I already had established trusting relations with.

In Ngorongoro, I was introduced to the first few participants by a village leader who took me to a "cultural *Boma*" where the Maasai were performing for tourists. When he introduced me, he told the participants that I was a researcher interested in understanding the challenges that they face living within a protected area, that I am not a tourist and they should tell me "the truth, not what they tell the tourists".

4.5.2 Interviews

An ethnographic approach to research entails data collection was not structured and planned. Interviews were in most cases open and took the form of informal in-depth conversations with research participants. Fieldwork for this study thus consists of open-ended interviews with 150 different people in both countries. Interview participants include 90 members of local communities across all the three cases and 60 key informants interviews with relevant government officials at different levels, conservation managers, representatives of both conservation and development Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), (eco)tourism business owners and managers, and other actors who are relevant to the study (see Appendix III for the list of key informants). Among the local interviewees 53 are Kenyans and 37 are from Tanzania. 30 of the Tanzanian local interviewees were from NCA. Of the local participants 57 are male and 33 are female. The age of the local participants ranges from 18 to 81 years. The number of local participants from the Loliondo are only 7 because of the ongoing conflict, which made it difficult for me to go to the field. Two of the interviews with locals from Loliondo were arranged while they were on a visit in Arusha, the capital city of the Arusha region, Tanzania.

Following the preliminary fieldwork during my first visit to the region in February 2017, I drafted a list of open-ended questions for each case and each of the different groups of participants that I intended to interview. When I returned to the field during the summer of the same year, I realized that only a few of my questions were relevant or interesting to discuss with participants for different reasons. I found out that there were more pressing and current issues that people were already engaged in and were thus easier to start conversations with. In the Maasai Mara, the expansion of fences was a pressing matter for locals, conservation organizations and government authorities alike as it affects both pastoralism and wildlife. In Loliondo, my own encounter with the state brutality forced me to entirely revise my initial plan and questions. Similarly, it was after a week of interviews with residents in Ngorongoro that I found out about ongoing plans by the authorities to relocate people form the NCA.

Each interview is different from the next as it depends on the location in which it was carried out and the presence of other people at the place of interview. Moreover, the type of questions I ask also evolved throughout the process as new questions emerged from discussions and interviews and other questions became irrelevant.

Interviews with members of local communities were in most cases carried out in their own homes. As most of the local participants are Maasai and thus spoke Maa (the language of the Maasai)- except for few locals in Kenya who also spoke English, interviews were carried out with the help of local translators. While their familiarity with the everyday life was without question very helpful to the research process, the use of local translators poses several challenges. First, translation is not an easy task. Even though most of the local translators I worked with had good command of both the local languages, i.e. Swahili and Maa (the language of the Maasai) and English, translating often complicated and intricate stories told by research participants into a foreign language is understandably difficult. The details of the stories are thus often lost-in-translation. In some cases, a response by a research participant that lasts for two minutes is summarized into few seconds by translators. Second, local translators are also part of the story being told. I have had many occasions in which the translators add their own version of the story. In some cases, the translators asked me if I want to hear their view on the topic. In other cases, the research participants and translators would go into heated debate on questions that I asked, and I had to ask the translators to explain to me what the discussion was about. In such cases, the translators gave an account of both sides, i.e. both theirs and the research participants' views.

Key informant interviews were mostly conducted in offices of the informants, on the side of events I attended in, over dinners and in the field. Key informant interviews were in English as all the participants have good command of the language. During interviews, I usually started with a more informal discussion of an ongoing event around the case in order to ease the beginning of the conversations.

4.5.3 Observation

Observation based research attempts to make sense of the actions and intentions of the people one studies as knowledgeable agents (Herbert, 2000). It allows the researcher to make sense of the social group's making sense of events and opportunities confronting them in everyday life. Through observation, the researcher sets out to unearth what his/her subjects take for granted, and thereby reveals "the knowledge and meaning structures that provide the blueprint for social action"(Herbert, 2000, p. 551). It is often used in contexts where the researcher believes that

detailed analysis of a societal interaction is of value to a research (Allen, 2017). Observational research can on the one hand be structured or systematic in which the researcher conducts data collection using specific variables and follows a pre-defined timeline. On the other hand, observation can be unstructured, which entails that the researcher is open to unexpected and unintended surprises and turns as he/she does not have a predefined variable to be observed (Allen, 2017).

In this study, I used an unstructured observation, which entails that I had very broadly defined issues that I was interested in. My aim of using observation was to understand everyday interaction between conservation authorities and local communities who live adjacent to or inside wildlife protected areas as well as the wider social context in which these interactions take place.

I am aware that carrying out an observation-based research poses some challenges. Among others, observation requires gaining the trust of the research participants, which means the researcher needs to spend long time in the field. It is also susceptible to observer bias. Moreover, the presence of the observer may affect the behaviour of the group under study. I spent extended time in the villages in order to capture the everyday dynamics at local level. In addition to the more formal interviews, fieldwork consisted of walking in the villages, visiting homes of local Maasai research participants and ecotourism business facilities as well as numerous informal chats with locals. I have also written extensive fieldnotes detailing my impressions of everyday experiences and informal discussions with different people whom I met during my stay in both countries. In addition, I took more than 3000 photographs of different events, ongoing changes in landscapes, wildlife and livestock movements and other relevant phenomena. The photographs represent things and events that shocked or amazed me or anything that I felt has relation to the topic that I wanted to gain an understanding of. Photographs are used to support material analysis and interpretations in the thesis. In some cases, photographs are included in publications to supplement other empirical materials and to strengthen my arguments. In others, I used photographs to initiate discussions with people relevant to the study.

Figure 5: Locals building a fence around a private land in Ol Kinyei village in Maasai Mara, Kenya (October, 2017)

Figure 6: Carcass of a wildebeest that died due to electric fences that blocked wildlife migration corridor on a recently privatized land near the Maasai Mara National Reserve, Kenya. (October 2017)

Figure 7: Livestock market in Aitong town in Maasai Mara, Kenya

Figure 8: The text on the cover of a spare wheel of the tourist truck reads "JOIN US ON OUR JOURNEY TO PROTECT AFRICA'S MOST PRECIOUS ECOSYSTEMS". (Photo on the road from Arusha to Ngorongoro, Tanzania)

I also attended official meetings and informal gathering where people discussed various matters, including conservation related issues that affect their lives. In Maasai Mara, for example, I attended three formal meetings where negotiations between landowners, conservancy managers and ecotourism business regarding land lease and other terms took place.

Figure 9: Landowners- conservancy meeting in Pardamat village in Maasai Mara, Kenya (Photo: Teklehaymanot, Date 22 November 2017)

In addition, I attended and observed land lease agreement signing events between local landowners and conservancies. By attending such events, I gained insight into the interactions of the contracting sides and the circumstances under which land lease agreements are signed.

As I previously mentioned, my fieldwork in Tanzania was facilitated by the Tanzanian Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI), a parastatal organization that coordinates and conducts research on wildlife conservation in Tanzania. Working with TAWIRI was advantageous as it gave me access to government offices and conservation agencies and made application for research permits and travel through protected areas easy. However, association with TAWIRI also had disadvantages when it comes to doing fieldwork in the villages. Travelling in the villages for fieldwork made the hostilities of communities, particularly in Tanzania, towards researchers apparent. To give one

example, in Loliondo, where Article #3 is based, locals refused to talk to me when they saw the TAWIRI logo on the car that I was using. TAWIRI, locals told me, was the reason for the appropriation of their land by the state as it, through research and consultancy, provides the scientific legitimacy for government to relocate locals from contested lands.

Figure 10: Landowners in Pardamat village (Maasai Mara) queuing to sign lease agreement with the conservancy management

Meeting with conservation scientists, higher government officials and civil society officials through interviews, participation in conservation meetings and discussions were also important data collection methods.

Observation also involved documenting everyday life in the study areas and particularly in relation to community-conservation relations. During my fieldwork in Maasai Mara in the autumn of 2017, I was really impressed by how friendly and peaceful the area was until the last evening of my stay. During the afternoon of the day before I left Maasai Mara, I was sitting in the backyard of the guest house I was staying at in Talek, a small town at the gate of the Maasai Mara National Reserve, and writing up some notes from discussions I had with some of my friends earlier in the day. I heard loud noises of people shouting on the street and smelled something burning. The smell was something like a burning cereal or malt. When I went out to the town centre to inquire on what was going on, I saw many people gathered and going around and attacking shops and bars. When I asked what was going on, I found out that this was a rally organized by a group of women from the villages in the Maasai Mara whose husbands spend their days drinking alcohol in Talek. The

group of women and their supporters mainly targeted bars and liquor stores who they believe sold liquors and spirits which are believed to have caused deaths of several men.

In the villages around Masai Mara, many men who are traditionally pastoralist are now left jobless and live of monthly payments from their lands now leased to conservancies. They have become "surplus population" (Li, 2010), who have lost their place in traditional production practice, because pastoralism has been to a large extent replaced by commoditized conservation practices- and nor are able to find a place in the new production practices. Observation of incidents such as the one noted here offer important insights into the everyday struggles of local people who live adjacent to conservation areas.

4.5.4 Document analysis

Document analysis refers to the systematic reviewing or evaluating of documents in order to elicit meaning, gain an understanding and develop empirical knowledge about a certain phenomenon (Bowen, 2009). Documents consist of texts (words) and images produced independently of the researcher's intervention and intended purposes and may serve as "social facts" (p. 27).

In this study, I collected government legal acts, policy frameworks, conservation and management plans, land lease agreement forms, evaluation reports, media news reports and other documents specific to each case. I first identified key national level policy and legal frameworks that govern conservation work in both countries through internet search, from existing literature and through discussions with different people who suggested specific documents that I should refer to.

In the Maasai Mara, lease agreement forms of the five selected conservancies were collected and reviewed to analyse the terms of the lease agreements and their implications. Key legal documents such as *The Wildlife Conservation and Management Act, 2013* (Kenya, 2013) which gave legal recognition to conservancies as a conservation area category were also reviewed to analyse the legal context of their expansion.

With regard to Loliondo, I have in particular paid attention to a study report by the Tanzanian Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI), which has served as a scientific basis for the decision to evict local people (TAWIRI, 2011). Legal Acts such as the 1999 *Village Land Act*, the 2009 *Wildlife Conservation Act*, were reviewed in order to analyse the political context of the eviction and use of violence in the name of conservation. A review of assessment reports by government and non-government organizations as well as news coverage of the eviction event also provided me with vital information on the issue.

Similarly, I reviewed both historical and current legal documents specific to in Ngorongoro Conservation Area, in addition to the national level documents I reviewed in the Loliondo study. I carefully trucked and collected all the amendments of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area starting from the 1959 ordinance, the legal act that established the NCA, to the recent 2019 report by the NCAA. The 1959 ordinance has been amended several times and reviewing the amendments has been useful in understanding the shifts in the operation of Multiple Land Use Model through time. Other documents pertaining to NCA include, General Management Plans (GMP), implementation reports, and population and livestock census reports.

4.6 Analysis

An important feature of qualitative research is that analysis is not a post data collection affair. It is a process that goes on while data is collected and guides future data collection. Analysis also takes a cyclical form (Bailey et al., 1999) in which the researcher first develops 'tentative explanations and propositions' based on observation, (in)formal discussions and unstructured interviews, review of documents and fieldnotes, and then develops new data collection strategies or refines existing ones in order to formulate new explanation. The process of developing tentative explanations and forming arguments continues until emerging concepts are grouped into categories that provide an explanation to a phenomenon. Analysis in qualitative research, as Bailey et al. (1999) also noted, is open to unexpected paths of questioning and discovery- as the researcher has no pre-set plan.

In this study, empirical materials from interviews and discussions during earlier fieldwork were useful in shaping the themes that the articles. Data from the 24 interviews and informal discussions during the preliminary fieldwork in February 2017 served as groundwork for the selection of research sites and potential research participants. While preliminary fieldwork plays a vital role in the study, empirical materials from it do not directly constitute the articles.

During the second round of fieldwork (the main fieldwork), some themes had already emerged. In the Maasai Mara, the fencing phenomenon that Article 1 deals with became the centre of my focus during the second round of fieldwork. The issue of the dramatic expansion of conservancies, which is the theme of Article 2 emerged while I was analysing the causes of the fencing problem. Tor A. Benjaminsen, Connor J. Cavanagh and I went to the Maasai Mara in November 2018 to find out more about the emergence of conservancies in addition to the empirical material I had collected during the first and second fieldworks.

My interest to study the ongoing contestation over land around Loliondo in Tanzania comes both from reading of existing literature and discussions that I had with villagers during my preliminary fieldwork. However, the theme of Article 3 is the outcome of the violent incident I encountered during the second round of fieldwork. While my initial plan was to investigate the broader contestations over access to and control over land, the incident directed my attention to the specific overt occurrence of such disputes. I used interviews with locals, representatives of key government and non-government organizations to investigate how the use of violence in this specific context is legitimized. I also reviewed different documents to see the wider context within which this incident took place.

In Ngorongoro Conservation Area, the theme of Article 4, become apparent to me during an informal discussion with a leader of one the villages when I visited Ngorongoro in March 2017. He explained to me that the authorities are planning to "kick us out of our home". I then decided to interview other locals with different backgrounds, key government authorities ranging from the leadership of the NCAA to key officials in the Ministry of Natural Resource and Tourism, and Wildlife Division. Interview materials were supplemented by reviews historical and current legal documents, management plans, and assessment reports.

The formulation of the interview and discussion questions as well as the selection of participants were guided by the themes that emerged during the early stages of the fieldwork. As this is an article-based thesis, each article focuses on different questions. The collection of empirical material was thus geared towards finding answers to the questions that each article sought to address.

During analysis, audio-records of interviews and discussions were mostly transcribed, coded and clustered into the different themes and study areas. I, however, personally preferred listening to the audio recordings as there is a lot in the audio recordings that transcription cannot capture. Listening to the audio recordings during analysis allows me to reconnect to the moments and context in which the interview or discussion was held. So, combining both transcription- in order to make the material visually available and easy to read- and listening to the audio recording- in order to get closer to the empirical context- is valuable in qualitative data analysis. I also often wrote fieldnotes in which I describe events and encounters at the end of every day during fieldwork. Fieldnotes also in most cases consist interpretative summaries of interviews and my impressions of empirical contexts. As Tessier suggests, these fieldnotes were added to the transcriptions to provide "information on context, nonverbal cues, and situational background" (Tessier, 2011, p. 448) for the interviews and discussions.

4.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Validity in research according to Bailey et al. (1999) refers to the extent to which a scientific method can really measure what it intends to measure. The question of validity in qualitative research has two strands. Internal validity which refers to the credibility of findings and external validity which refers to the transferability of findings to other similar setting or generalizability. According to Baxter and Eyles (1997) a researcher can enhance the credibility of findings by the techniques of respondent selection, interview practices and analysis strategies (p. 513).

A purposeful sampling method Baxter and Eyles argue helps the researcher stress on "information rich cases". Information rich respondents are at ease and talk freely with the researcher allowing the researcher to learn more about the phenomenon under study. In this study, I used snowball sampling method, which allowed me to gain access to "information rich" respondents. While this is helpful in gaining access to and trust from research participants, particularly in conflict environment, such an approach may also lead to bias and may affect the reliability of the responses. One way that I tried to overcome this challenge was by widening the diversity of participants through spending extended time in the field and attending different social events that created opportunities to interact with more people. Moreover, I did not have a specific number of participants that I intended to interview or discuss with. The number of participants was rather decided by what qualitative research scholars call "theoretical saturation" (Baxter & Eyles, 1997; Crang & Cook, 2007). Saturation may refer to "data saturation" commonly defined as a point in the research process when information that we gain from adding each new participant becomes redundant, i.e. when "no new information emerges" from recruiting new participants (Guest et al., 2006, p. 59). It also refers to the "conceptual rigor" of a study, that is the study's ability to deal with the explanatory "how and why" questions (Low, 2019).

The focus of the "no new information emerges" notion is that there can be a thorough analysis of data, or that an explanatory theory can be absolute so long us data collection is done up to a point when there is no new information to be gained by recruiting new participants. However, Low (2019) argues that this is problematic. The focus should rather be on "conceptual rigor", i.e. in the explanatory ability of a study. Low (2019) identifies some important issues that one needs to reflect up on to see if a study is conceptually rigorous; one needs to ensure that possibilities of alternative explanations have been exhausted, the theoretical explanation of the research make sense against prior research, the findings, if it generates concepts that can be connected together to form a conceptual model that is generalizable to the broader social context (Low, 2019, p. 7).

And, as Yeung (1997) rightly argued, "all knowledge is fallible". Qualitative research such as this one involves analysing the researcher's own experiences and the experiences the research participants as told by them. While our own experiences as researchers are maybe relatively easier to capture and interpret, our interpretations of participants' experiences can be incomplete and partial- as research participants choose what to tell us as researchers (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). One way of ensuring validity is the use of "methodological triangulation", i.e. the use of multiple methods (Yeung, 1997).

As I discussed the previous sections, the reality that I seek to understand through this study is always on the move and the validity of my work cannot measured against a fixed reference point. Neither can I guarantee that any researcher who travels to these same specific places at a later stage to come up with the same exact results. We can only hope that I have been effective enough in my reading of what was going on during the time of observation in the specific contexts.

One of the main challenges of carrying out such a detailed multi-sited study is that it is easy to get lost in the specificities of each study area at the expense of seeing the connections and disconnections to wider scale explanatory frameworks beyond the specific study areas (Yeung, 1997). The researcher's role in critical realism is to provide explanatory critiques of underlying social structures. It is thus important that the researcher 'elevates' him/herself from the concrete data in order to get 'broader and clearer picture' (Yeung, 1997, p. 63). In this study, while the focus of the analyses is on empirical specificities of each study area, interpretation of findings are also informed by and contribute to the wider debates in the literature on the politics around nature conservation.

4.8 POSITIONALITY: PERSONAL HISTORY OF THE RESEARCHER AND SUBJECTIVITY

An ethnographic researcher's role is not to merely make a description of what the locals tell or do, but to also connect these to wider social relations which provide the context. While it is important that local peoples' knowledge is acknowledged and taken into consideration, it is also equally important to recognize that their knowledge is limited in time and space. What worked for locals in the past may not be as good in current circumstances when everything around has changed. To claim that locals know all is to patronizingly elevate them into a status where they are not.

Critical social science study cannot be neutral as the aim and subject of its research is to question and influence existing ideologies, institutions and interests (Jeanes & Huzzard, 2014). In addition to the intersubjective (Koliba, 2014) nature of social science research, the researcher's own

previous individual experiences and theoretical standpoints shapes the way he/she sees and interprets material experiences he/she encounters during fieldwork. In intersubjective understanding, Koliba (2014) argues "social reality is predicated on social interactions between individuals and between groups of individuals and their wider external environments." (Koliba, 2014, pp. 458-459). The similarity or absence thereof between our own personal experiences and experiences we encounter as researchers thus highly shape our interpretations.

I am (i.e. who I am is) an outcome of many strange coincidences, which have a lot to do with what I do now. In 1973, Haile Selassie's government, in my home country Ethiopia, intentionally covered up a drought and a subsequent famine crisis that affected the lives of millions of people in Northern Ethiopia and this eventually led to his overthrow from power and an end to a millennia-long monarchy in 1974.

In 1984, the military regime that came to power after overthrowing Haile Selassie, attempted to coercively resettle people far into the Southwestern parts of Ethiopia. The aim of the resettlement, according to the government, was to solve a food crisis in rebel strongholds in the ostensibly degraded Northern Ethiopian highland regions. Reports later revealed that the famine was rather a result of political instability and historical repression by the Ethiopian government (Hailu, 1985; Vestal, 1985)[10]. Many people perished because of different tropical diseases, which they were not familiar with, some were lost in the jungles while trying to flee back home, while others died in fights with local populations who saw the settlement programs as invasions of their native lands. My father, a middle-aged man by then, was one of the people who were captured on a market day and placed in concentration camps and latter miraculously released because of protests by international organizations against the coercive resettlements. The resettlement program was opposed because it was not voluntary, the underlying intention was to drain a rebel stronghold off its people, and the food crisis was government induced and there was no need for resettlement (Hailu, 1985).

During my childhood years in Northern Ethiopia, there was a war between a military dictatorship led by Colonel Mengistu Hailemariam and a rebel group whose stronghold were the farmers in the mountains of Tigray region. The rebel group had a wide popular support in the region and closely worked with people in this largely rural farmer region. Even though I was very young when the Derg (the military government) was overthrown when the rebel group liberated Addis Ababa- the

[10] *The Politics of Famine in Ethiopia*. https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/politics-famine-ethiopia

capital city of Ethiopia- in 1991, I have dreamlike memories of what happened during the last few years when the regime tried to reoccupy territories lost to the rebel group in Tigray region. Government soldiers came to the villages, burned farmers' houses and slayed any elderly, sick or any other people who remained in their homes while the rest of the families went on hide away from villages along major roads. I still have the faintest memories of soldiers firing bullets from their rock forts into our homes and my mom and others crying to no avail. Ever since the war, my parents always recall that farmers in my village spent the summer of 1985 in churches because all their houses were burnt down by the military. The village where we lived was burnt down five times between 1975 and 1991, i.e. the start and the end of the war.

The encounter of violent evictions in Loliondo brought back memories of the intense stories that my parents told about their experiences by and recollections of my own early childhood experience under the brutal military state in Ethiopia. The images of this past came back to me on the 13th of August 2017, when I saw Tanzanian government soldiers burning down homes of pastoralist Maasai communities in Loliondo, along the eastern border the Serengeti National Park.

While the incidents are of very different circumstances, the brutality of state induced violence and the impacts on the lives of people affected by it are very similar. What makes the Tanzanian case even more depressing is that it happened during "peace time".

To witness the kind of experience as I did in Loliondo and to claim to stay neutral is to deny who I am and what made me who I am. It is to claim that my own personal and family history, motivations, and position as a victim of violence by nation state do not matter. My view of the problem is to a large extent tainted by my previous personal experience and to deny that would be to be ignorant of what made me who I am and how I think. What would rather be more productive is to reflect on the implications of bringing in personal history and emotions to the analysis of a similar but at the same time different event and its context. And, I believe having a similar personal experience gave me a deeper connection to the event and allowed me to feel closer to how the affected felt than it would have been without. Personally, witnessing both the violence in Tanzania and changes including the construction of fences and death of wildlife, as a result, in Kenya form the start of the formulation of the research problem. These are the reasons behind the choices of places and phenomenon I decided to write about.

Similarly, my research work, even though mainly based on analysis of empirical material from extended fieldwork in both countries, communicates to existing wider theoretical debates. It is, for example, influenced by my readings in political ecology and human geography literatures to which

I also intend to contribute. My interpretation of the empirical experiences is shaped by, but also shaped my everyday interaction with research participants. Results are thus outcome of an intersubjective experience.

4.9 Being the 'black sheep': experiences of working with a group of conservation biologists

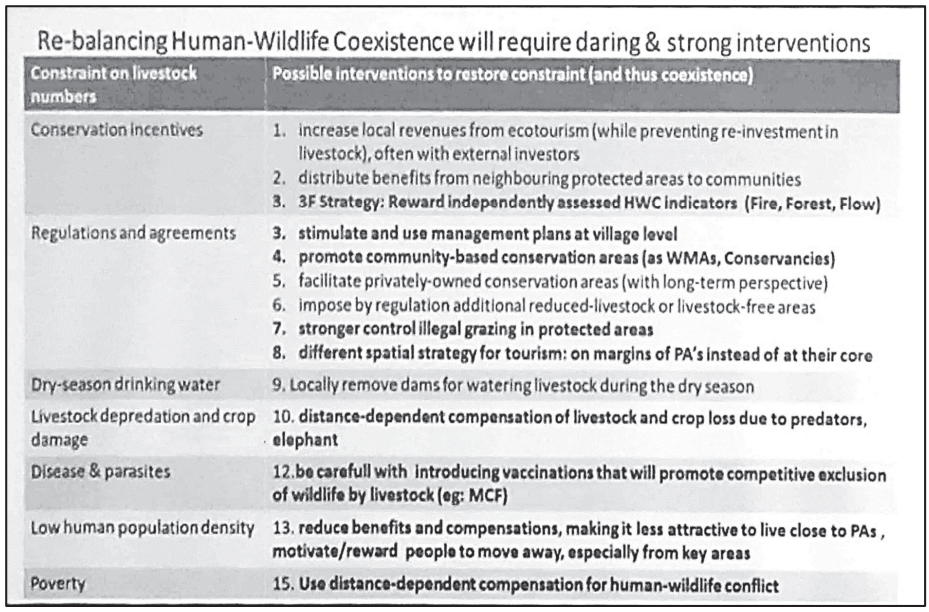
There is an increasing appeal for engaging in interdisciplinary and collaborative research in conservation- partly due to growing recognition that environmental problems are simultaneously socio-political and ecological concerns. As I mentioned earlier (section 4.1), my PhD work is part of a bigger European Union funded project that focuses on nature conservation in the GSME. I have had the opportunity of closely working with a big group of mainly conservation biologists, whose works are also the subject of my own research - as the works of conservation biologists constitute the conservation 'discourses' that I seek to explore. This has been both a rewarding and challenging experience. It has been rewarding because throughout my reading of studies on conservation from the critical social science side of the literature, as a student, I always had doubts regarding the level of criticism directed towards conservationists and if it is proportionate to the level of obliviousness among conservationists. As an insider in this project, closely following the debates gave me a much deeper insight into the kind of arguments that originate from conservation biologists and the dynamics within the discipline itself. Most important of all, it made me realize that there is a deep disciplinary rift between our academic debates and a great need to bridge this gap.

Despite continuous rhetoric on the importance of interdisciplinarity, the project group remained true to its conservation biology roots. During our project meetings, findings and suggestions from my work were often simply dismissed as, "too political", "too radical", "too wild" and so on. I was sometimes told by the leadership of the project that my works and findings are "too political" to be presented in front of high-level Kenyan and Tanzanian politicians who attended our project meetings (see the poster on Appendix II for example). For example, in a discussion about the future of conservation in the Greater Serengeti-Mara Ecosystem, at the project's final consortium meeting in Arusha, Tanzania, where the chairperson (a conservation biologist himself) asked the audience to come up with suggestions. I argued for rethinking ownership of and control over the already established protected areas. I reasoned that the Tanzanian and Kenyan states have no right to claim absolute control over national parks such as the Serengeti and the Maasai Mara National Reserve. An important step towards effective conservation, I said, could be to return ownership

of state-controlled areas to communities. I could see so many people turn towards me in shock. When I finished my turn the chairperson said, "well, this is one wild suggestions, let us see what others have to say". And, just like that the discussion on rights to ownership of land, which I think is very crucial to address conservation's dilemma, ended.

These disciplinary differences are very apparent for anyone who have attended any conservationists' meetings, a field that is very far from addressing societal challenges despite claiming to do so. From the social science side, our critiques of conservation science are still insufficient and there is a long way to go in terms of deconstructing the foundations and basic premises up on which the field is instituted. Conservation science is still dependent on colonial narratives that see non-European humans as objects of control, and this must change.

Figure 11 below shows a photograph of one of the slides from a presentation by a conservation scientist at one of our project meetings arguing for more restrictions to be placed on people who live adjacent to protected areas in order to reduce human population pressure in areas adjacent to national parks and to "save nature". The similarities of these statements with arguments in colonial time reports and other documents is staggering.



Re-balancing Human-Wildlife Coexistence will require daring & strong interventions

Constraint on livestock numbers	Possible interventions to restore constraint (and thus coexistence)
Conservation incentives	1. increase local revenues from ecotourism (while preventing re-investment in livestock), often with external investors 2. distribute benefits from neighbouring protected areas to communities 3. **3F Strategy: Reward independently assessed HWC indicators (Fire, Forest, Flow)**
Regulations and agreements	3. **stimulate and use management plans at village level** 4. **promote community-based conservation areas (as WMAs, Conservancies)** 5. facilitate privately-owned conservation areas (with long-term perspective) 6. impose by regulation additional reduced-livestock or livestock-free areas 7. **stronger control illegal grazing in protected areas** 8. **different spatial strategy for tourism: on margins of PA's instead of at their core**
Dry-season drinking water	9. Locally remove dams for watering livestock during the dry season
Livestock depredation and crop damage	10. **distance-dependent compensation of livestock and crop loss due to predators, elephant**
Disease & parasites	12.**be carefull with introducing vaccinations that will promote competitive exclusion of wildlife by livestock (eg: MCF)**
Low human population density	13. **reduce benefits and compensations, making it less attractive to live close to PAs , motivate/reward people to move away, especially from key areas**
Poverty	15. **Use distance-dependent compensation for human-wildlife conflict**

Figure 11: *A slide from a presentation during the closing meeting of the AfricanBioServices project (https://africanbioservices.eu) in which the Scientist clearly argues for all varieties of measures to be taken by the state and its conservation partners to "limit the effect of population growth" on wildlife.*

The fact that I am an outsider (at least in terms of disciplinary background) in a group, seemingly coherent within itself, often left me with loneliness and desperate helplessness. I often found myself feeling high and dry during meetings when I found a lot of that my colleagues present problematic, but I cannot say much because I did not know where to start and my comments were often not well received. I tried to overcome this by engaging in scientific debates both in face-to-face meeting and through publications that addressed some of the arguments made by my colleagues, which are based on taken for granted neo-Malthusian arguments that I personally find counterproductive to effective conservation work. A group of researchers form the AfricanBioServices project published an article in *Science* (Veldhuis et al., 2019) arguing that human population growth and resulting changes in land use around the GSME is "squeezing" wildlife into core protected areas, arguments that I find very problematic. In collaboration with three other co-authors, I responded to this article, arguing that the claims are overly simplistic and based on take for granted notions that do not reflect empirical reality (Weldemichel et al., 2019). The authors also responded to our arguments, but we found the response unsatisfactory and wrote an e-letter which was published on the same magazine in September 2019 (see *Appendix I*).

4.10 Ethical considerations

This study involves several people of different backgrounds and positions in society. The involvement of people in research thus makes paying attention to ethical consideration imperative. Among the major concerns here include informed consent, confidentiality of information, protection of identity of participants and ethical use of evidence in the analysis.

Conducting a participatory qualitative research may pose multiple challenges. Conflict environments, in particular, often present unique challenges regarding gaining informed consent, confidentiality, risk-benefit analysis and the researcher's own security (Campbell, 2017). The researcher must, thus, gain fully informed consent of the research participants. I have obtained the consent of all the participants included in the study. I have always been upfront about the aim of my project, who I work with and for. Throughout this study, I have been mindful that participants have the "right to know what they are getting in to" (Griffith, 2008), which means that I needed to clarify the purpose of the study from the outset before starting an interview or a discuss with participants. Presenting the purpose of the study to participants has two advantages. First, it helps me gain informed consent. Second, it opened opportunities for honest interviews and discussions with participants.

In conventional research ethics guidelines, the focus is often on the vulnerability of research participants and the necessary precautions that a researcher needs to take to avoid aggravating existing vulnerabilities or causing new ones. In situations where the participants felt insecure about participating in interviews or discussions, I simply avoided doing so. This may have to some degree affected the type of data I obtained. Their feeling insecurities, I believe, indicate that they have something important to say, that they think the state may not like. I have also made sure that personal details of participants are kept confidential. Local participants, particularly in conflicts settings such as Loliondo, have been anonymized to ensure that they are not identifiable by authorities. In situations where the identity of the participants is difficult to conceal, such as when they are key officials, I have obtained permissions to use their real names and other identifiers.

There are some challenges regarding research ethics in qualitative research. While research relationship is an evolving work (Banks et al., 2013), official review processes often require clear informed consent forms from the beginning. It means that any initial agreements about consent would have to be reviewed (Banks et al., 2013). Furthermore, qualitative research on everyday lives of people- particularly when events that take place in the research setting resemble researchers' own difficult life experiences- may trigger emotions (Banks et al., 2013). With conventional ethical

discussions that do not address the researcher's own vulnerabilities and emotional difficulties, as a research I am left to deal with issues by myself.

5 SUMMARY OF ARTICLES

In addition to the introduction, the thesis consists of four articles: two on Kenya and two on Tanzania. Through the four articles, I have examined the basic assumptions behind conservation policies and practices in the Greater Serengeti-Mara Ecosystem. In so doing, I address two sets of questions: 1) Which assumptions about the nature-society relations influence policy making and practices in the Greater Serengeti-Mara Ecosystem? 2) What are the social and ecological implications of conservation practices that are based on the prevailing discourses?

As I stated in the introductory section, wildlife numbers and biodiversity in general are reportedly declining despite enormous increase in the size of protected areas across the globe. This is a contradiction.

In section 2.3, I presented the argument that conservation has historically been guided by the hegemonic dichotomic notion; that nature and society must be separated in order to "save nature" from human induced annihilations. This does not however mean separation all humans from nature as it is mostly local people who are excluded from protected areas. Many of the protected areas were often set up to attract visitors and provide access to wilderness. Such assumptions have led to the creation of the different forms of protected areas in many parts of the world. The establishment of protected areas is often contested as wildlife rich regions are in many cases cohabited by communities who are either forcefully evicted or enclaved within the PA and their production practices restricted. Despite widespread critique against the protected areas-based approach to conservation for its human rights abuses and ineffectiveness in addressing the problems that wildlife and biodiversity face, local communities continue to be presented as invaders and destructive of wildlife.

In line with the traditions of political ecology (Büscher & Fletcher, 2020a), I have critically investigated ongoing conservation practices. In so doing, I examine the historical genealogy and contemporary wider debates that shape current practices at local level. The four articles that constitute the thesis are summarized as follows.

Article #1: Weldemichel T.G. And Lein H. (2019) "Fencing is our last stronghold before we lose it all." A political ecology of fencing around the Maasai Mara National Reserve, Kenya. *Land Use Policy*.

This article is based on two rounds of fieldwork in the Maasai Mara district of Narok county in Kenya. I seek to examine an ongoing fencing phenomenon on previously communal areas adjacent

to the world famous Maasai Mara National Reserve. The areas adjacent to the reserve have historically been relatively open and communally used for pastoral grazing and as venues for wildlife migration. In recent years, these communal lands are facing a challenge from an alarmingly expanding fencing problem, which affects both pastoral production and wildlife. Why did many Maasai who traditionally depended on the presence of open grazing space and possibilities for seasonal migration- a core feature of pastoral practice in such semi-arid landscapes- decide to fence their land.

In this article, we set out to investigate the causes of this phenomenon. To this end, I carried out an extensive fieldwork involving interviews with local people who have and have not fenced their land, key government authorities, representatives of non-government conservation organizations and other relevant actors. I also reviewed different documents relevant to the case including, legal acts, conservation management plans, and government and non-government reports. The main finding is that injustices associated with the history of land division, the introduction of wildlife conservancies, and the materialization of an age-old discourse about the 'end of pastoralism', through the process of privatization and commercialization of land, have played major roles in pushing the Maasai to fence their land.

Article #2: Cavanagh, C.J. and T. Weldemichel and TA Benjaminsen. (2020) Gentrifying the African landscape: the performance and powers of for-profit conservation on southern Kenya's conservancy frontier. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*. 110(5) 1594-1612

This article is a result of a two-week collaborative fieldwork in the Maasai Mara by the three authors in November 2018, in addition to my own a total of two and half month-long earlier fieldwork between February and December 2017. It also follows up some of the arguments made in article #1 regarding the role of conservancies in the ongoing land use changes in the Maasai Mara.

Communal land adjacent to the Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya was first subdivided into Group Ranches in the 1960s by the Government of Kenya and the World Bank to promote modernization and commercial production of livestock. However, group ranches failed to achieve this goal for various reasons. Following the collapse of group ranches, authorities in the area moved towards subdividing the land into individual parcels. This was followed by the introduction of conservancies, a for-profit based new model of conservation in which individual landowners set aside land for conservation of wildlife in exchange for lease payments. This is a follow up of analysis in Article #1. In the first article, I argued that fencing in the areas was, among others,

closely associated related to the introduction of conservancies and the process through which they were established. Following the adoption of the 2013 Wildlife Conservation and Management Act in Kenya, non-state conservancies now encompass 6.36 million hectares – or 11 percent of the Kenya's land area – with at least a further 3 million hectares proposed or in the process of territorialization. In this article, examining the consequences and effects of this precipitous rise of conservancies in Kenya's Maasai Mara region, we suggest that – in addition to significant potential for considerable profit margins to be realized by individual firms via the production and closure of rural rent gaps – these investments also retain a number of other unique powers or capacities to transform prevailing varieties of environmental governance. In this case, these capacities manifest in the both economic and cultural gentrification of complex socio-ecological systems and the displacement – though not the *de jure* or formal dispossession – of a private landowning class of transhumant pastoralists from a rapidly expanding swathe of the East African landscape.

Article #3: Weldemichel, T. (2020) Othering pastoralists, state violence and the re-making of boundaries in Tanzania's militarized wildlife conservation sector. *Antipode.* 52 (5) 1496-1518.

This article is a follow up of one of the most horrific human rights abuses against local people in the name of conservation that I encountered while doing fieldwork in Loliondo- on the eastern border of Serengeti National Park- in Tanzania. On the 13th of August 2017, I come across park rangers and government security forces burning down homes of pastoralists along the borders of the Park in an attempt to evict people and clear land for conservation. This encounter provoked me to question what causes governments to engage in such violent actions against local populations they are meant to protect. Militarization and the use of violence in the existing conservation literature is often discussed in relation to the fight against poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking. In the case at hand, violence has little to do with poaching and there is a need to understand what drives it. In this article, I set out to analyse why violence emerges in conservation and how its use gets legitimized as it unfolds in specific contexts. More specifically, why do conservation authorities choose militarized and violent interventions? And, how does the concrete from of militarized intervention get legitimized in non-poaching contexts?

Drawing on the history of conservation and violence in Tanzania and using an empirical case from Loliondo, I suggest that violence may be legitimized when based on extinction narratives and claims, whose proponents argue that more exclusive spaces are urgently needed in order to protect biodiversity of global importance. I argue that the emerging militarization and use of violence in Tanzania and specific contexts such as Loliondo can be associated with both global biodiversity

extinction and local neo-Malthusian narratives, which have lately regained predominance. Combined with othering of groups of pastoralists by portraying them as foreign 'invaders', this legitimizes extension of state control over contested land by any means available, including violence.

Article #4 Weldemichel, T. (submitted to a journal) Making land grabbable: Stealthy dispossessions by conservation in Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania

This article focuses on Ngorongoro in Tanzania where people have been allowed to remain within a wildlife protected area since its establishment in 1959 when the country was under the British rule. The reasons for allowing people to stay within the conservation at the time have to do with political circumstances that the British colonial administration was facing due to anti-colonial struggles in the region. Nearly half of the human residents of the Ngorongoro were also relocated from what is currently the Serengeti National Park into it only three years before its establishment and relocating them for the second time within a short span of time was not seen as a tenable solution as it may push people to join ongoing anti-colonial struggles elsewhere in the region.

Using the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania as empirical case, this paper, seeks to explain how land becomes "grabbable" and people relocatable. The existing literature on land grabbing usually focuses on the hasty appropriation of land and on the moments of grabbing. While recognizing the important contributions thus far made by the literature on land grabbing this paper seeks to examine the specific processes that befall before land is grabbed and its original users are relocated. I seek to identify the specificities of the process through which land becomes grabbable. Based on empirical analysis of policy and practices from Ngorongoro Conservation Area, the paper reveals that land grabbing for conservation, can be a result of long-term structural marginalization of rural land users, which make land available for grabbing.

To summarize, articles1 and 2 focus on changes that are taking place on historically communal land around the Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya which has recently been privatized and turned into commercial (for-profit) conservation spaces. The privatization of land was followed by the emergence of several changes in land use practices. One of these developments was the alarming expansion of fences on private lands. Paper 1 examines the causes of development of fencing around recently privatized lands in the region. Paper 2 explores the specificities of another major development in the Maasai Mara, i.e. the expansion of for-profit conservancies following the privatization of land. In this paper, we conclude that different actors in conservation employ

economic and extra economic forms of power to enable and facilitate the expansion of conservancies.

The prevailing assumption in conservation in the Maasai Mara region seems to be that market-based solutions can ensure that wildlife can be protected while simultaneously benefiting local landowners. The solution to marginalization of the Maasai pastoralists, conservation actors argue, is to reorganize and incorporate privatized land to form semi-private or otherwise non-state protected areas. We argue that the expansion of the new forms of conservation was partly enabled by the deployment of economic and extra economic powers by ecotourism investors. The outcome of such assumptions has been an unprecedented expansion in the number and size of conservancies in the last 10 years. Conservancies in the Maasai Mara now cover an area equivalent to the size of the existing state controlled Maasai Mara National Reserve.

Papers 3 and 4 address conservation issues in a context where the state is the main actor and is returning to regain full control over previously partly decentralized conservation. In its attempt to consolidate control over land, the Tanzanian state is redrawing boundaries of protected areas and using overt and covert forms of violence to relocate people from areas that are considered vital for wildlife conservation which supposedly face threat from growing human population.

6 CONCLUSIONS

In this section, I present a summary of the main conclusions of this study. This study sought to address the overarching question of how different global narratives on wildlife extinction and decline get translated in the varying geographical contexts and the implications of conservation practices guided by such narratives on the nature-society relations in the different contexts. Particularly, the aim was to analyse the discourse and practice of conservation in the GSME. What assumptions guide policy making and practice of conservation in the GSME? What are the social and ecological implications of policies and practices based on the prevailing discourses?

Tanzania and Kenya gained their independence from colonial rule in the 1960s, but land which was appropriated by colonial authorities was in most cases not returned to the 'natives'. Instead, national governments or other new powerful actors consolidated ownership over such crucial resources using multitude of mechanisms. Very little changed particularly for the communities whose land were converted into game hunting reserves and national parks by the colonial administrations. Sovereignty of the state has not in many cases automatically translated to the 'sovereignty of the people', as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) rightly noted in many other cases across Africa.

In Tanzania, the state claimed trusteeship of all land, leaving communities only with vastly fragile user rights. Land was simply transferred from *Shamba La Bibi* - Swahili equivalent for "Queen's farm"- (Kideghesho & Mtoni, 2008) to *Shamba La Rais,*- Swahili equivalent for "the president's farm"-, as the president of the republic still holds, as a 'trustee', all land in Tanzania (URT, 1995). In fact, in some cases land was transferred to new colonizers, such as the Otterlo Business Corporation (OBC)[11] in Loliondo (*see* Article #3), who used appropriated land for the same purposes as the earlier colonizers, i.e. for game hunting. Besides, in places where people were allowed to stay, the fact that the president owns all land means people remained under a state of uncertainty as the government could decide to take land away whenever it finds it necessary and allocate it to whoever it presumes deserves it.

In Kenya, while communal land was transferred to county councils as 'trust land', large portions were swiftly seized mostly by local elites (Ndungu et al., 2004; Thompson & Homewood, 2002). The local elites who were mostly connected to the state grabbed historical communal lands pushing

[11] Otterlo Business Corporation is a United Arab Emirates based luxury game hunting company that controls more than 1500 square kilometres of land in Loliondo, Tanzania.

the land users further into marginal areas, which they usually co-habited with the wildlife (Ndungu et al., 2004).

During colonial and early decades following independence, states worked towards dividing up and containing society and nature into discrete categories (Neumann, 2005). Elements of this early history of segregation of nature and society continues in current conservation. What is common across all the areas studied here has been the continuous push towards exclusion of people- and not all types of people but the local poor and the everyday land users, through what James Scott calls "administrative ordering of nature and society" (Scott, 1998, p. 88).

The current conservation policies and practices in the GSME are dominated by discourses that focus on nature - society dichotomy. According to such discourses, nature is to be protected from people, a view that has its roots in the colonial history of the two countries. In Kenya, a full blown neoliberalization of conservation has led to the emergence of private or otherwise non-state conservancies, which enabled the expansion of exclusive conservation spaces in recent years. In Kenya, conservation work through conservancies have increased the size of formal protected areas from 8% to 19%, more than doubling it in just few years. This enabled Kenya to surpass its *Aichi Biodiversity Target 11* of protecting 17% of its terrestrial and inland water areas surface by 2020, much earlier than expected (CBD, 2011).

In Tanzania, even though conservation spaces expanded significantly over last many decades and more than 40% of its land surface is currently under some form of protection, there is still an ongoing push towards creating more exclusive protected spaces. The government is engaged in widespread effort to consolidate control over conservation territories through overt and covert forms of violence. In Loliondo, the government uses overt forms of violence, while in Ngorongoro Conservation Area, violence is covert, soft and long-term. Both forms of violence are used to create exclusive territories for conservation and conservation-based tourism.

Whereas the reasons for the expansion of conservation spaces are often about consolidation of resource control, the government draws on global narratives of biodiversity decline and extinction as well as taken for granted neo-Malthusian narratives regarding population growth to legitimize evictions and restrictions to clear land for conservation. One emerging argument is that protected areas are becoming isolated because of growing human population leading to land use changes (Veldhuis et al., 2019; Western et al., 2020). Veldhuis et al. (2019), for example, argued that wildlife in the greater Serengeti-Mara ecosystem are being 'squeezed' into the core protected areas due to increasing human population and land use changes in the peripheries. This argument is however

problematic and misleading, as I have also argued in a co-authored response article that was published by the same journal (Weldemichel et al., 2019). Such analysis simplifies the complexity of the situation and tends to focus on population growth as the sole cause. While the impact of population growth is undeniable, to attribute the shifts in land use outside the formal protected areas to population growth alone is simplistic and problematic. This may lead to solutions, which only aggravate the problem.

Despite the exponential expansion of formally protected areas, there are reports of declining number of wildlife in both countries (Ogutu et al., 2011; Ogutu et al., 2016; Veldhuis et al., 2019; Western et al., 2020). The recent expansion of formally protected areas in its attempt to protect wildlife and its struggle to separate people and wildlife has reduced the shared spaces which the wildlife roamed around and used in addition to the exclusive protected areas. While the sizes of protected areas have significantly increased, the spaces that used to be shared by wildlife and people are disappearing as they tend to be converted to non-wildlife friendly uses. As a result, protected areas are increasingly isolated and cut-off from the rest of the ecosystem.

I argue that conservation policy and practice in the Greater Serengeti-Mara Ecosystem is guided by the hegemonic "dichotomous" imaginaries of nature and society (Büscher & Fletcher, 2020a)- a discourse that presents humans (mostly locals) and nature as separate and which need to be kept apart in order to protect nature. Such discourses provide legitimacy to powerful actors such as the state, local and multinational corporations and local elites to appropriate contested land from local users and contribute to the continuous expansion of protected areas across the region. However, expansion of protected areas, I argue, may have grave social and ecological implications.

On the one hand, expansion of conservation spaces contributes to changes in land use, undermines local production practices and increase social inequality. As the ownership of large swathes of land is transferred to non-pastoral users, locals are forced to end their traditional production practices. The effect of such changes is the further divorcing of nature and local people. A typical example of the consequences of conservation that undermines local production practices, is how the COVID19 pandemic, which unfortunately coincided with finishing of this thesis, impacted wildlife tourism destinations (e.g. Lindsey et al., 2020). According to the Director General of Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya has during the pandemic seen a 98% decline in international/non-resident tourists resulting in 92% fall in tourism revenue until the middle of June 2020.[12] As a result of the

[12] (from a speech during an online meeting titled "*The impact of COVID-19 on Wildlife Conservation in East Africa", June 23, 2020*).

loss of income from tourism following the COVID 19 crisis, conservancies in the Maasai Mara, for example, decided to halve lease payments to landowners (see Bearak, 2020). This left local land users who, as a result of continuous stigmatization and the conversion of land into commercial wildlife conservation spaces, have been divorced from traditional production practices in a very difficult situation. Conservation outcomes, in terms of expansion, in such cases are thus easily reversable. The profitability and viability of wildlife-based tourism is put into question following international travel restrictions in response to the pandemic.

Moreover, increasing expansion of protected areas does not necessarily mean that there will be more space for wildlife but may rather be counterproductive when seen from both social and ecological standpoints. As Büscher et al. (2017) also argued, the way the " human half" or non-protected half is managed has implication on the wider ecosystem.

7 FURTHER DISCUSSIONS: DECOLONIZING CONSERVATION?

> "One of the ways of exploring the power of an idea is to examine the myths that persist around it. These myths can be false, else have only a weak historical basis, but they serve to reinforce the ideas they are associated with, despite these flaws." (Brockington et al., 2008, p. 18)

There is very little difference in the arguments behind conservation interventions, whether it is in the form of the colonial game reserves, conventional 'fortress' type parks, community-based conservation or recent neoliberal conservation. The underlying arguments has always been that there is a need to separate (local) people and nature as people are considered external and thus a threat to 'nature'. Despite changes in the language in the transitions from one form of conservation to the other, this basic tenet has remained to a large degree constant throughout all changes in conservation approaches.

The persistence of the protected areas based conservation that marginalizes local populations in Africa has largely to do with the script that mainstream conservation is based up on- the colonial narratives that present Africa as "pristine", " empty wilderness" (Neumann, 1995) and a place of "unspoiled, Eden-like landscapes"(Garland, 2008). However, according to Neumann (1995), rather than "preserving nature", these narratives facilitated the "production of nature" through the evictions of thousands of people to form a system of national parks (Neumann, 1995, p. 150).

One of the most striking observation when carrying out fieldwork in Tanzania and Kenya is perhaps how similar the current conservation system is to its colonial predecessor. The institutions, which govern conservation, the land ownership arrangements, and the ways local people are perceived and treated by conservation authorities are almost indistinguishable from how colonial administrators arranged their colonial matters, as described in the historical accounts. How did this happen? The maintenance of colonial-like arrangements after independence may have to do with what happened during the years following independence. On the one hand, there were many conservationists at the time (e.g. Grzimek & Grzimek, 1959) arguing for the continuation of colonial relations and thus pressuring European states to continue their influence in the newly independent colonies. Colonialism in conservation also continues through the glorification of "individual charismatic conservationists" (Garland, 2008) who are in most cases Western scientists, celebrities or conservation enthusiasts. On the other hand, former colonies were as Mamdani argues, handed over to people mostly loyal to colonial European powers and who subscribed to the same ways of thinking as their western masters (Mamdani, 2001, p. 654).

The new twist, as Nelson (2003) also noted, is that powerful locals stepped into the shoes of colonial masters and that people are disciplined (silenced) in many more ways than during colonial times, when most silencing was done by brute force. Authorities now employ, among others, nationalistic narratives (i.e. "sacrificing for the nation[13]"), biodiversity extinction narratives, the market (market mechanisms as a way of appropriating resources) and by defining local population groups in certain ways that prevent them from questioning authority. In Ngorongoro Conservation Area (Article #4), people who belong to the area are defined as traditional, indigenous pastoralists, and deviation from such ways of living may lead to condemnation and people being labelled as not belonging to the place. What makes current conservation paradigm hard to resist is that such control mechanisms are often mundane and difficult to take note of. It is especially difficult for outsiders, who may well otherwise stand in solidarity with communities, to see the brutality of exclusion in the name of conservation.

While the focus of mainstream conservation during the colonial period and early years of independence was mainly on protecting "wilderness" and specific endangered species, this shifted towards more complex relations between conservation and development goals with the advent of more participatory conservation since the 1980 and 90s (Igoe, 2017). Conservation projects at the same time became development projects often through what Chambers (in Igoe) term 'showpiece' projects, which Igoe argue, were crucial to showing that both goals (conservation and development) are compatible (Igoe, 2017). Projects that combine both development and conservation are often similar to what James Scott refers to as miniaturization, i.e. the creation of controlled micro-order to show that such ideas work (Scott, 1998, p. 4). A typical example of such miniaturization covered in this study is the expansion of conservancies in the Maasai Mara. The conservancies represent a type of 'miniaturization'. Here you will find examples of successful, small conservancies with high income from tourist and where landowners are paid well. However, this will not necessarily work on larger scale. First, because a conservancy does not maintain profitability without resources from outside as the wildlife would have to roam around in non-conservancy areas to survive. Secondly, extension to a wider scale is not viable as it means that more landowners would have to be paid and not all conserved land have flagship species that can attract high paying tourists.

[13] From an interview with a Tanzanian key government official who argued to me that local communities, by not asking the government to share income from ecotourism with them and by allowing protected areas to be established on their lands, are "sacrificing to the nation" and "contributing to the national basket".

This is also similar in other non-state conservation forms such as Wildlife Management Areas and other community-based conservation areas. Success reports of such models are often based on few, very selected 'showpiece' projects. The problem with such projects is that despite their claims to tell complex story, they tend mask the complexity on the ground. In the Maasai Mara, for example, it is common to find conservation NGO, conservation-based tourism businesses and development organizations, previously unimaginable to be together, working in collaboration to achieve conservation and development goals. Despite all the problems associated with "Showpiece projects", they get 'translated into larger stories about capitalism, conservation and cultural preservation' (Igoe, 2017 p. 63)

What the somehow populist critics of conservation in the 1980s and 90s achieved is to encourage governments to recognize the fact that communities, if given the freedom to decide about what goes on in their lands, can and should continue to practice wildlife friendly livelihoods. The problem with such argument was that it was translated into expanding conservation (protected areas) beyond the already established, often state-controlled, protected areas. Community based conservation projects were in many cases established on communally owned or used pastoral and agropastoral land outside formally protected areas. So, instead of giving rights to access and control over resources on land previously taken to form existing protected areas, community-based conservation efforts in recent decades put more restrictions on local peoples use of the remaining lands. Despite all this, in some cases, such as in Loliondo in Tanzania (Article #3), people managed to circumnavigate this challenge and to some extent succeeded in obtaining benefits under a highly controlled 'decentralization' of resource management (Boer & Tarimo, 2012; Homewood et al., 2012b). Communities signed direct agreements with tourist businesses and generated considerable revenues, started managing their own local matters regardless of the state's resolve to meddle. But, in the last few years, we have witnessed that the Tanzanian state is aggressively pushing towards recentralizing the whole conservation sector. Land tenure and conservation laws have been reformed and new institutions have been established to facilitate the process of recentralization.

The focus on community conservation in the 1980s and 1990s failed to recognize that conservation is a colonial project the aim of which is to legitimize claims regarding control over resources. Instead of challenging the ownership of existing protected areas, the critical scholarship of the 1980s and 90s in a way helped governments and conservation interest groups to incorporate even more land into protected areas in the name of community-based conservation. Through the introduction of the ostensibly participatory programs, fundamental questions of communities towards decolonialization were depoliticized. The conversation among critics of conservation also

shifted from being about the national parks and the rights of communities to access resources to whether conservation should or should not take place in the remaining areas outside the often state-controlled national parks. In other words, the shift towards decentralization did not decentralize the control of the already established protected areas. Instead, it spatially refocused the debate into the adjacent areas and paved the way for the formation of more conservation areas of different types. Through this shift, state-controlled protected areas, which were established in the 1950s and 1960s became immune to inquiry.

As a result, sixty years after independence from colonial rule, substantial portion of land in the GSME still is out of the hands of the traditionally primary land users. In Kenya, in addition to keeping the National reserve under state control, communal pastoral land was recently subdivided and reorganized to form private conservancies which to a large extent ousted the Maasai's traditional pastoralist production practices. The irony is, the prime tourist businesses that profit from the conservancies are in most cases owned by foreign investors or by non-Maasai Kenyans, which means very limited portion of the revenue from tourism goes to the local landowners. On the other side of the border, the Tanzanian state controls land and income generated from almost all protected areas.

A more radical approach to the conceptualizations of the relation between nature conservation and communities, at a scale of a 'revolution' is needed to address the problem. A conceptualization in which states need to give back the resources, which they now claim a monopoly on. Resources generated from protected areas should be shared with communities. And by sharing, I am not referring to letting communities establish their own protected areas as in the 1990s, but giving back all the land that was taken away from them to establish the existing ones and making them the owners of these territories and benefits that generate from these. In other words, we must move beyond "distributive justice" (Vermeylen, 2019). Governments could, for example, learn to let go national parks and other forms of exclusive protected areas back to 'locals' as they did with most other types of land. This does not mean that the Serengeti, the Maasai Mara National Reserve, Ngorongoro Conservation Area or any other established protected area should be left to the communities who may lack the means and the institutions to manage these resources. The argument instead is that resources generated from protected areas should belong to the populations whose lives have been affected through the establishment of the PAs and states as well as other concerned bodies could provide supports that enable locals strengthen institutions.

Why should the state in Tanzania own and benefit from the national parks when we all know that the land on which the parks are established belonged to the local communities before they were

relocated by colonial governments? Would it be right if the Tanzania state owned and managed the production of crops in the whole country? Most land, apart from what was under protected areas has been returned to the locals, at least the user rights. Why can land under protected areas not be controlled by the local land users? Why can the people who were relocated from the Serengeti plains, to make way for the establishment of the national park, for example, not be given user rights to manage the national park? The concept of the "locals" here should, of course, be used with caution as the "locals" are not homogenous group of people. Nevertheless, I believe that a fundamental rethinking of conservation policy and practice needs to engage in radical questions. Further research is needed into refocusing the debates towards such possibilities.

I argue, the challenge of conservation is not technical but an epistemic one. Conservation has historically been based on myopic European imaginaries of the relation between nature and societies, particularly in the global south. In these imaginaries, 'the African man', for example, is not one to be trusted and to be left alone with wildlife, but one whose urges should be controlled in order to stop annihilating nature and himself, as evidenced by the writings and arguments of some conservationists throughout conservation's history. The outcomes of such interpretations have been the expansion of exclusive protected areas or the imposition of restrictions on the lives of local people across landscapes that have been historically co-inhabited by people and rich wildlife. In the conservationists' mind, the Africans are not to be trusted to be left alone with wildlife; they are to be baby-sat, influenced and to be kept an eye on (i.e. to be colonized). Despite increasing criticisms against the different conservation models that focus on restricting local peoples' access to resources, conservationists still insist on reconfiguring the same system at even wider and bigger scale. I argue that there is a need for a radical re-thinking of conservation because, as many before me have also argued, the same knowledge system that led us to the current global biodiversity crisis cannot help us find a solution to the social and ecological crises we face. The current conservation problem has to do with, as Jason Moore (2015) rightly argued, the Cartesian dualism the separates society and nature. It is the hegemonic notion that sees the creation of exclusive spaces as a way to protect nature. A dualism that puts *Society* (without natures) in one box and *Nature* (without humans) in another.

Conservation biologists in particular need to learn about the complexities of the nature and society dynamics and the history, particularly colonial history, that shaped the current relations and dynamics. They need to recognize that conservation of wildlife is beyond maintaining protected areas boundaries and that there is a need to address social problems associated to conservation. And, as Garland (2008) argued, social responsibilities extend beyond small outreach programs in

communities surrounding protected areas. The success of conserving wildlife in the Greater Serengeti Mara Ecosystem thus depends not on the continuing reconfiguration of these overly simplistic colonial narratives and claims of westerners saving African wildlife from Africans but recognition of the dignity of the people who cohabit the ecosystem. Furthermore, as I stated in the introduction, conservation is political and is an ideology- a specific world view- that gained hegemonic status due to various historical reasons. The sooner conservationists realize and accept this, the better it is for conservation.

Similarly, conservation organizations and actors interested in ensuring effective conservation should recognize the crucial role local communities played and continue to play in safeguarding wildlife. Colonial relations do not have to continue for conservation to succeed. More realistic scripts that show the full complexity of the African landscapes and its rich history of human-nature cohabitations and interactions are needed in order to break away from the current conundrum in conservation.

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9 APPENDIXES

Appendix I: Interdisciplinary scientific debates with other project members

PHOTO: STUART BLACK/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Edited by **Jennifer Sills**

Conservation: Beyond population growth

In their Research Article "Cross-boundary human impacts compromise the Serengeti-Mara ecosystem" (29 March, p. 1424), M. P. Veldhuis *et al.* argue that human population growth in nearby areas, and the resulting increased human activity, is squeezing wildlife into existing protected areas in a way that might lead to decline in wildlife numbers throughout the ecosystem. As a solution, they suggest extending the space under protection by incorporating wildlife migration corridors and dispersal spaces into the core protected area, thereby implicitly heightening restrictions on human use. However, Veldhuis *et al.*'s attribution of problems to population growth is misleading. The increased human activity on the borders of protected areas has resulted from social, economic, and political variables.

In Kenya, the rapid expansion of new forms of conservancies has come at the expense of pastoralists' communal lands, squeezing local people into ever-smaller and more marginal areas (*1*–*3*). The expansion of these conservancies has precipitated conflicts and led to widespread fencing of remaining open areas around Maasai Mara (*2*, *3*). In Tanzania, authorities have violently forced pastoralists out of historical grazing spaces in Loliondo to establish buffer zones (*4*–*7*). Pastoral lands are therefore divided into "upgraded" buffer zones and "downgraded" village lands, leaving pastoralists with reduced landholdings and leading to mounting pressures on remaining grazing areas. When the land area available to local people shrinks because of dispossessions and evictions implemented to expand protected areas, more human activity becomes necessary in the remaining areas bordering protected land.

Veldhuis *et al.*'s myopic focus on population growth reproduces a neo-Malthusian explanation (*8*, *9*) of a bygone era. Such explanations may invite the immediate attention of the general public and policymakers due to the simplicity and sense of urgency that they communicate. However, effective conservation measures demand the recognition of historical and empirical complexity and the recognition and inclusion of local communities' concerns about environmental justice.

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Response

Weldemichel *et al.* dismiss our argument that human population growth drives mounting pressures around protected areas and instead propose that these patterns are driven through land dispossession by authorities for conservation, causing concerns about environmental justice. However, population growth and the resulting increased livestock and land use changes are the more likely cause of the trends we observed.

The establishment of Mara conservancies in Kenya since 2004 [discussed in our Research Article and in (*1*)] cannot be the main cause of the observed changes because, as our Research Article makes clear, the onset of the Mara wildlife declines predates the conservancies by about 30 years. In other parts of Kenya, increased fencing of private lands, which also predates conservancies, is better explained by human population growth, increasing competition for grazing areas, and land-use change (*2*, *3*).

E-Letter

RE: Conservation: Beyond population growth: response to Ogutu et al.

- **Teklehaymanot G. Weldemichel**, PhD Candidate, Department of Geography, Norwegian University of Science and Technology
- Other Contributors:

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  Connor Joseph Cavanagh, Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of International Environment and Development Studies, Norwegian University of Life Sciences

  Haakon Lein, Professor, Department of Geography, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

(2 September 2019)

In their response to our letter, Ogutu el al. 2019 insist on primarily attributing the problems with the current state of conservation governance in the Serengeti-Maasai Mara ecosystem to human population growth, as they did in their original article.

While we certainly acknowledge that human populations are growing in the region, we consider such a reductionist focus on population growth to be analytically problematic for the following reasons.

First, while the focus of our argument in the letter was on broader trends in the whole of the Serengeti-Maasai Mara ecosystem, Ogutu et al.'s response focuses on the Maasai Mara in Kenya, avoiding the more complex and often violent nature of conservation on the Tanzanian side of the ecosystem. In Tanzania, several rounds of evictions have been carried out to expand the borders of the Serengeti National park through the formation of buffer zones. These areas have been carved out of village lands, and have left thousands of people homeless (1, 2, 3). Similarly, the authors appear to support the expansion of new conservancies adjacent to the Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya, which have likewise pushed people into smaller, environmentally suboptimal lands. In turn, such marginalisation has precipitated considerable 'leakage' effects, or deleterious land use changes in the limited areas that local people are left with (4,5).

Second, Ogutu et al. argue that fencing in the Maasai Mara emerged prior to the introduction of conservancies. However, studies by Løvschal et al (2017) and Weldemichel and Lein (2019) show that the fencing trend has accelerated in the last 10 years, coinciding with the expansion of conservancies that has followed their recognition by Kenya's Wildlife Conservation and Management Act of 2013. The Act provided private businesses with legitimacy to expand conservancies and to create semi-private protected areas by displacing pastoralism as the prevailing form of land use. This has contributed to the disentanglement of wildlife conservation from its historic relationship with pastoralism and to the fragmentation of the ecosystem.

Third, our main argument in the letter was that focusing on population growth alone obscures other more important political and economic drivers of conservation conflicts. Rather than grappling with such drivers, the authors direct the attention of both policy makers and the public to human population growth as the main concern. The risk of such a narrow focus on population growth is that it can justify hostilities by conservation authorities towards local people and vice versa (6), as can be seen in parts of the larger Serengeti ecosystem today (1,2,3).

In sum, the very solutions proposed by Veldhuis et al. and Ogutu et al. threaten to exacerbate – rather than ameliorate – the challenges facing conservation in the region. As a response to growing human populations, Veldhuis et al. suggest the expansion of the region's protected area network, as well as the intensification of restrictions on access to existing protected areas. If undertaken, such an approach would likely contribute to ongoing processes of marginalization for local pastoralists, thereby further inflaming existing conflicts. Differently put, it is not only the quantity of local populations that must be considered, but also the qualitative nature of their relationship with conservation institutions. In this regard, increasingly draconian measures and increases in the scale of land dispossession for conservation may in fact result in a 'vicious cycle' that precipitates negative outcomes for both local communities and biodiversity.

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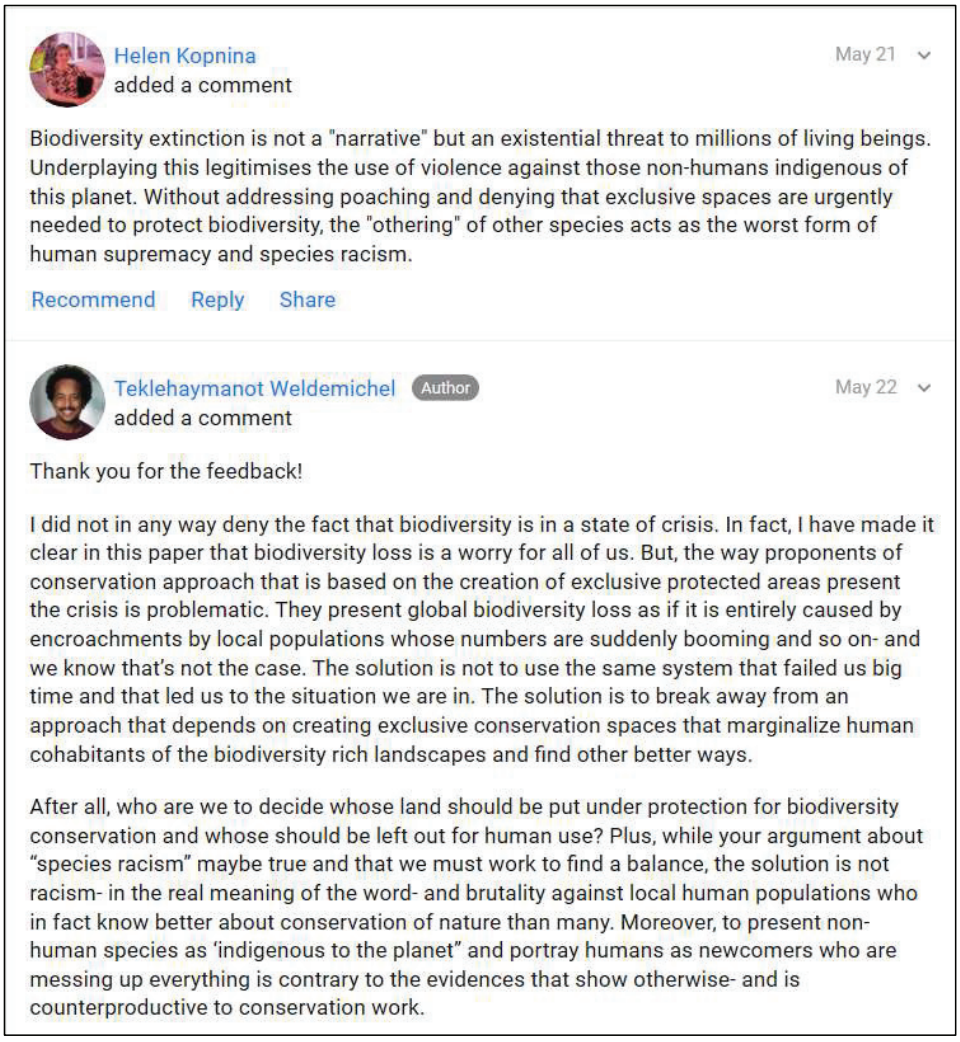

Figure 12: A comment by Helen Kopnina, a prominent proponent of the 'Half-earth' narrative, and my response on response on ResearchGate following the publication of Article#3.

Appendix II: Poster presentation

Livelihoods in Contested lands

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Background

The greater Serengeti Mara ecosystem is facing an increasing level of isolation as a result of fragmentation of land due to changes in land use practices adjacent to the Protected Areas (PAs). In the Maasai Mara, there is an alarming expansion of fences in areas adjacent to the national reserve. This may put both wildlife and traditional pastoralism in danger. On the Tanzanian side of the border, an ongoing contestation over land in Loliondo may jeopardize communities' relations with wildlife. Similarly, a 60 years old experiment of the 'multiple land use model' in Ngorongoro Conservation Area seems to be facing major challenges of increasing poverty of its growing human population and competition over resources. What drives such changes is not clearly understood.

Questions

- How do conservation actors in Kenya and Tanzania see the relation between people and wildlife conservation in the greater Serengeti-Mara ecosystem?
- How does this influence conservation policy making and practice?

This was researched looking at the three cases:

- *Maasai Mara*: conservancies, fencing
- *Loliondo*: violent evictions and the deteriorating relations between people and conservation authorities
- *Ngorongoro Conservation Area*: challenges of 'staying Maasai' and maintaining local livelihoods under the 'multiple land use system'

Some conclusions

- Conservation in the Greater Serengeti-Mara ecosystem is largely based on a predominant view that seeks to physically separate 'people' and 'nature'. Thus, the focus of conservation work has often been on creating exclusive spaces for wildlife and wildlife-based tourism, through conservancies, GCAs, National parks etc.
- Revenues from conservation-based tourism are often captured by the states, private businesses and local elites,
- Local people are in general pushed into smaller and often marginal spaces leading to changes of land use in the human occupied spaces.
- This leads to the isolation of wildlife spaces.
- Conservation experts and authorities often blame human population growth as a cause of the isolation of PAs and propose further expanding PAs into community lands as a solution.
- Isolation of PAs is instead an outcome of a view that separates human and wildlife spaces and that only focuses on expanding conservation areas without regard to livelihood concerns of local people.
- Expanding PAs may not resolve fragmentation and isolation of wildlife spaces as local people, who are further squeezed into smaller spaces due to the expansion of PAs, tend to convert the non-PAs into land use practises not friendly to wildlife, such as fencing and cultivation as we now see in the Maasai Mara and other areas in the region.

Local people are seen as mere objects of tourism

Serengeti National Park rangers evicting local residents in August,2017

Fences in Maasai Mara, Kenya

What can be done?

A radical rethinking of the relation between conservation and communities is needed.

- Expanding exclusive PAs shouldn't be a goal.
- Instead of expanding PAs, benefits from existing protected areas could be made accessible to people affected by conservation
- Financial resources generated through conservation should be shared with those affected by it and sharing should not mean letting locals establish 'their own' new PAs as in the 1990s. It should mean giving back land that was taken away to establish the existing PAs and making locals the owners of these territories and benefits generated from these areas.

Acknowledgement
Many thanks to MMWCA (Kenya), TAWRI, NCAA and the AfricanBioServices project for all the support during fieldwork. Also, thankful to all the people in both Kenya and Tanzania who spent their precious time discussing with me.

Further references

1. Articles under review
   - Weldemichel, T.W & Leih (2019?) *'Fencing is our last stronghold before we lose it all.": A political ecology of fencing around the Maasai Mara National Reserve, Kenya.*
   - Cavanagh, C.J., T.G. Weldemichel and T.A. Benjaminsen (2019?) *Gentrifying the African landscape? The performance and powers of for-profit conservation on southern Kenya's conservancy frontier.*
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AfricanBioServices

Figure 13: Poster presentation at the final consortium meeting of the AfricanBioServices project in Arusha, Tanzania (June 2019)

Appendix III: List of key informants

1. **Key informant interview participants in Tanzania**

	Organizations	Number of people interviewed	Place and date of interview
1	President's Office for Local Government and Regional Administration	1	Dodoma, September 2017
2	Ministry of Natural resources and Tourism	3	Dodoma, August & September 2017
3	Ministry of Livestock and fisheries development	2	Dodoma, September 2017
4	Land use planning commission	1	Dodoma, August 2017
5	Wildlife Division	2	Dar es Salaam, September 2017
6	Tanzania National Parks Authority	2	Arusha, September 2018
7	Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority	1	Arusha, September 2018
8	Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority	7	Ngorongoro, August & September 2017 Arusha, September 2018
9	Pastoralist Council	2	Ngorongoro, August 2018
10	Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute	2	Serengeti, August 2017 Arusha, September 2018
11	PINGO's Forum	1	Arusha, September 2017
12	Ngorongoro District Commission (2):	2	Loliondo, February 2017 & Ngorongoro, August 2017
13	Tanzania Natural Resource Forum	1	Arusha, August 2017
	Total	**27**	

2. Key informant interview participants in Kenya

S.N	Organizations	Number of Key informants	Place and date of interview
1	Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association-KWCA	2	Nairobi, November 2017 & November 2018
2	Maasai Mara Conservancies Association – MMWCA	6	Maasai Mara and Narok (February & October-November 2017 November 2018
3	WWF- Kenya	1	Narok, October 2017
4	Nature Kenya 1	1	Nairobi, October 2014
5	East African Wildlife Society	2	Nairobi, October 2017
6	Kenya Wildlife Trust	1	Nairobi, November 2017
7	Maasai Mara National Reserve	2	Maasai Mara, November 2017
8	Basecamp Explorer (private ecotourism company)	3	Maasai Mara, October 2017
9	Mahali Mzuri- private ecotourism company	1	Maasai Mara, November 2018
10	Conservancy managers	3	Maasai Mara, October-November 2017
11	Former chief of Koyake Group ranch (in Maasai Mara)	1	Maasai Mara, October 2017
12	Current chief of Koyake	1	Maasai Mara, October 2017
13	Basecamp Foundation	2	
14	Maa Trust (Development NGO in Maasai Mara)	2	Maasai Mara, February & October 2017
15	Local Maasai business owners	1	October 2017
16	Local politician(s)	2	October and November 2017
17	Mara Elephant project	2	Maasai Mara, November 2017
	Total	**33**	

Christianity and Conservation

"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" Genesis 2:15

The connection between man, nature and our obligation to protect the natural environment is a theme throughout the Bible. One recurring topic is the destruction of wildlife and habitat – a key threat to the greater Mara today. **Genesis 1:28** tells how God gave man the responsibility to protect his creation – *"God gave man authority over all that was created on earth… protecting all that God had created including wild animals."*

A strong conservation message runs through the Bible; many passages stress the respect humans should have for the land and warn against depleting natural resources. In **Leviticus 25:2-4**, the Lord commands that *"the land shall keep a sabbath unto the Lord… in the seventh year shall be a Sabbath for the Lord; thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard."* This is reflected by the Maasai practice of olokeri, whereby land is left un-grazed for those animals most in need.

Today's biggest conservation challenge is how to achieve *olokeri* without fencing, which immediately reduces the movement of those wild animals that the Bible asks us to nurture and treat with respect.

MMWCA is working with Mara pastors to communicate and celebrate the Church's role in conservation, supporting religious leaders to play a key role in the future prosperity of the Mara.

This includes workshops with pastors from across the Mara, all of whom understand the importance of supporting conservation. Workshops cover five key topics:

1. Benefits of the Mara Conservancies
2. Local relevance of the new Wildlife Act of 2013
3. Role of the Church in conservation
4. Challenges facing the Mara Conservancies
5. How societies can work together for financial reward

Bishop William Mainka of the Kenya Assemblies of God Mara District inspired and **urged all pastors to lead the way in protecting Kenya's natural heritage**.

"The focus on protection (rather than ownership) corresponds with the widely held belief that all creatures including wild animals are God's creatures. Christianity shares this belief with a number of other religions and if religious leaders can inspire their communities to join them in protecting God's creatures, the greater Mara could face a bright future."

Helen Gibbons, MMWCA CEO

Figure 14: A page from the "Voice of the Mara", a bulletin of the Maasai Mara Conservancies Association

Part II: Articles

In this part, I present the four articles that constitute the thesis. The three first articles are published in *Land Use Policy, Annals of the American Association of Geographers and Antipode* journals respectively. The fourth article has been submitted to *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space* for publication and is currently undergoing a review process.

Paper I

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"Fencing is our last stronghold before we lose it all." A political ecology of fencing around the Maasai Mara National Reserve, Kenya

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Exclusion

ABSTRACT

In the Maasai Mara National Reserve, a state-controlled protected area in Kenya, and in its surroundings, a particular concern in recent years has been the proliferation of fencing in what once was an open landscape. The fencing poses challenges to both wildlife and the traditional pastoralism practised by Maasai communities, which were dependent on the presence of open communal land. The purpose of the article is to identify the root causes of the enclosure of former common land and the increasing fencing of plots of land owned by individual Maasai. The study is based on empirical material from extended fieldwork conducted in two villages adjacent to the reserve and a review of relevant documents. The main finding is that the history of land division, the introduction of wildlife conservancies, and the materialization of an ageold discourse about the 'end of pastoralism', through the process of privatization and commercialization of land, have played major roles in pushing the Maasai to fence their land. The authors conclude that fencing can be seen both as an active form of resistance to dispossession in the name of conservation and as evidence of the acceptance of the discourse on the 'end of traditional pastoralism', which has been promoted by a range of state and nonstate actors since Kenya gained independence from colonial rule.

1. Introduction

Wildlife conservation spaces often extend beyond the boundaries of formally protected areas and into surrounding communal and private lands used and owned by traditional pastoral communities. The relations between wildlife conservation and communities around areas that are rich in wildlife have long been of great concern to researchers, policymakers, local people, and conservation actors.

The Maasai Mara National Reserve and the adjacent land (hereafter, referred to collectively as the Maasai Mara), which form part of the larger Serengeti–Mara ecosystem, are home to pastoral communities and are important wildlife areas (Thompson et al., 2009). In recent decades, communal land adjacent to the National Reserve has been subdivided and the title deeds passed to individual landowners, thereby giving them full legal ownership and control of their parcels of land. At the same time, large areas of the subdivided land have been consolidated and set aside for nature conservancies (*i.e.* market-based conservation areas), while the remaining areas have been enclosed due to a rapid upsurge in the use of fencing. The increased fencing of land that is currently taking place in some parts of formerly open landscape is of concern both to environmental organizations and local people, as it can have severe consequences for wildlife as well as pastoralist livelihoods.

There is a growing body of literature documenting the increasing land fragmentation (Archambault, 2016; Said et al., 2016) and fencing (Hart, 2017; Løvschal et al., 2017, 2019) in Kenya in general and in the Maasai Mara in particular. However, limited research has been done to explain the causes of fencing as a phenomenon and the relationship between land subdivision, the establishment of conservancies, and the decisions to fence in the Maasai Mara. In this article, we examine in detail what drives the ongoing processes of fencing. More specifically, we aim to answer the following research questions: What role has the division of land played in the emergence of fencing? How does the establishment of conservancies affect land use patterns and fencing in the greater Maasai Mara area?

We argue that land division, the privatization of land, and the formalization of land rights alone cannot explain why areas are being fenced but rather that the fencing must be understood as embedded in complex sequences of historical and contemporary events. Specifically, a understanding of historical injustices linked to land division and privatization, the introduction of wildlife conservancies, and the materialization of an age-old discourse about 'ending pastoralism' is necessary in order to understand what is driving people to fence their land.

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In the presentation of our argument, we first provide a brief description of the background of land issues in Maasai Mara Kenya. We then review the literature on the ongoing debates on land privatization, territorialization, and fencing. This is followed by a brief discussion of the methodology. Thereafter, we present our empirical research on the Maasai Mara, which pinpoints the root causes of the enclosure and fencing in what were once communal areas.

2. Background

2.1. A brief history of land in the Maasai Mara national Reserve

The Maasai Mara National Reserve was established in 1961. It is a government-owned protected area which covers an area of 1510 km^2 (Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association, 2017c) and forms a critical part of the Greater Serengeti–Mara ecosystem. The areas surrounding the reserve have traditionally served both as communal grazing spaces used by pastoralist Maasai communities and as dispersal areas for wildlife. The areas have undergone several changes including a gradual shift from communal to private ownership as well as from pastoralist grazing land to wildlife conservancies. The shift started with the establishment of group ranches in the 1960s, when the government of the newly independent Kenya introduced and promoted group ranches in arid and semi-arid areas of the country (Hughes, 2013). According to a Ministry of Agriculture report produced in 1968, a group ranch is 'a system where a group of people jointly own [the] freehold title to land, maintain agreed stocking levels and herd their livestock collectively which they own individually' (Ng'ethe 1992). For the government, group ranches were seen as a means to modernize and increase the production capacity of pastoral lands, avoid overstocking and land degradation, and ultimately contribute to the 'sedentarization' of the pastoralist population (Veit, 2011). The establishment of group ranches was promoted between 1968 and the early 1980s.

The legal basis for setting up group ranches was the Land (Group Representatives) Act of 1968, which opened up for the ownership of land by a group of people (Veit, 2011). The establishment of group ranches implied that trust land previously controlled by county councils was transferred to freehold land (*i.e.* to private ownership), whereby the members of a group ranch had joint ownership of the ranch. The demarcation of the ranches was to be based on traditional Maasai grazing units (*oloshons*) and membership was confined to Maasai pastoralists. The group ranches were to be governed by ranch committees elected by the members, and the committees were responsible for managing grazing rights among the members.

The Maasai were initially supportive of the idea of group ranches and hoped that it would increase the security of their land rights and prevent further encroachment onto their land by non-pastoralist users, which was a widespread problem when trust land was controlled by the county councils (Hughes, 2013; Ng'ethe, 1992). However, during the 1970s it became clear that many members of the Maasai community itself as well as powerful external actors, including President Daniel Arap Moi (1978–2002), wanted to dissolve group ranches and transfer the joint ownership to individual ownership of parcels of land (Mwangi, 2007a; Seno and Shaw, 2002). This was possible, because the 1968 Land (Group Representatives) Act that had formed the basis for the establishment of group ranches also contained a provision that allowed for the subdivision of group ranches if 60% of the members supported such a move. Moreover, if a group ranch was to be dissolved, the jointly held land was to be subdivided between members in equal, undivided shares.

The reasons for the subdivision of ranches and the widespread Maasai support for the division of land into private parcels were probably quite diverse and complex. According to Mwangi (2007a), many Maasai wanted to use their land as collateral for loans, which was not possible under joint ownership. Maasai households that lived sedentary lives took particular advantage of national policies in favour of 'sedentarization' to enforce more exclusive rights that were not in the interests of traditional pastoralists who still practised nomadic and subsistence-oriented livelihoods (German et al., 2017a). In addition, there was widespread dissatisfaction with the functioning of ranch committees, which were plagued by elite capture, which in turn had resulted in influential members being allocated better grazing rights and the ability to have land registered as individual holdings (Lamprey and Reid, 2004; Mwangi, 2007b). A further problem was that some ranches were too small to sustain traditional pastoral livelihoods, which often were dependent on access to grazing land over large areas due to seasonal variations in precipitation. The above-mentioned factors and factors greatly contributed to the governmental decision to divide land into individual parcels. We argue that the subsequent division of land has played major role in the emergence of fencing.

Since the 1980s, most of the land held by group ranches has been dissolved and transferred to individuals, who now hold private title deeds. The process of subdividing the group ranches in the Maasai Mara, as similarly done in many other parts of Kenya, was characterized by a range of problems. Although by law the land should have been distributed equally among the members of group ranches, it has been well documented that the subdivision processes generally favoured powerful and wealthy members of the ranch committees, as well as local influential leaders and politicians (Butt, 2016; Mwangi, 2007a, 2007b).

Along with the land division process, conservancies emerged as part of a new wildlife conservation model. According to the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act of 2013 (Government of the Republic of Kenya, 2013, p. 1275), a conservancy is a sanctuary for wildlife established by any person or a community who owns land that is inhabited by wildlife. Conservancies are largely established on land previously organized as group ranches. In the Maasai Mara, conservancies are membership-based organizations and member landowners set aside land for wildlife conservation and tourism in return for fixed monthly or annual payments. The expansion of conservancies started with the establishment of Olare Orok Conservancy and Ol Kinyei Conservancy (not shown in Fig. 3) in 2006 (Osano et al., 2013). Mara North Conservancy (280 km^2) (Fig. 3), one of the largest conservancies in the Maasai Mara, was established in 2009 with a lease agreement between 11 tourism operators and more than 800 landowners (Mara North Conservancy, 2017).

In total, 15 conservancies cover an area of 1394 km^2 land belonging to 13,236 landowners in the Maasai Mara (Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association, 2018). The conservancies cover an area equivalent in size to the National Reserve (1510 km^2) and almost double the size of protected area within the Maasai Mara. Conservancies provide a reliable source of income year-round, which means beneficiary households do not have to sell their livestock to meet their basic needs, yet they also impose restrictions on access to grazing spaces (Bedelian and Ogutu, 2017)

2.2. Fencing in the maasai Mara

In parts of the Maasai Mara there is growing pressure due to the use of fencing to enclose areas, which blocks the migratory corridors used by wildlife and hinders the mobility of livestock (Løvschal et al., 2017). Following an analysis of satellite images from 1985 and 2016, Løvschal et al. (2017) revealed a significant increase in spaces with fences that were outside protected areas in the Maasai Mara. Between 2010 and 2016, there was a more than 20% increase in fences in those areas and Løvschal et al. argue that fencing is on the brink of becoming a new permanent and self-reinforcing path and that rate at which fences are being built is increasing.

Similarly, the Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association (MMWCA), an umbrella organization governing conservancies in the Maasai Mara, claims that fencing in places outside protected areas (*i.e.* outside conservancies and the national reserve) increased by 354%

Fig. 1. Fences under construction in Pardamat village in the Maasai Mara (Photo: Author, 16 October 2017).

between October 2014 and June 2016 (Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association, 2016). For example, the number of fenced parcels of land in Pardamat village increased by more than fourfold, from 113 in 2014 to 628 in 2015 (Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association, 2017b). Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 show the dramatic increase in fencing in some areas close to the national reserve.

For local landowners, fencing is a means to secure control over their land. Additionally, fencing can reduce human–wildlife interactions and thereby reduce conflicts (Hayward and Kerley, 2009). However, fencing is changing the way the Maasai Mara ecosystem has functioned in the past, as it affects possibilities for the seasonal migration of wildlife and livestock (Hughes, 2013). The impacts of fencing on the region's wildlife are evident in many places. For example, studies by Ogutu et al. (2011) and Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association (2017b) revealed a significant decline in the Loita–Mara wildebeest migration, which contributed critically to the larger Serengeti–Mara wildebeest migration. In many places, fences have caused the deaths of significant numbers of wildebeest (Fig. 4) and severed the migration routes between conservancies and the Maasai Mara National Reserve (Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association, 2017b; Weldemichel, 2017).

Mobility is one of the core features that allow for the adjustment of pastoral livelihoods to climatic variations (Groom and Western, 2013; IUCN, 2007). Sheridan (2008) argues that fencing makes traditionally flexible and dynamic social and ecological systems rigid. Because of land fragmentation due to fencing, formerly mobile pastoralists have increasingly been forced to adopt sedentary livelihood strategies (Hart, 2017).

3. Territorialization, privatization, and fencing

In general, a fence is a way of establishing a physical barrier between who and what belongs and does not belong within a given territory. From the perspective of wildlife conservation, fencing is often presented as a means for protecting biodiversity (*e.g.* Evans and Adams, 2016; Lindsey et al., 2012; Massey et al., 2014; Slotow, 2012). Fencing for conservation is used to prevent people and their livestock from accessing areas considered essential to wildlife and wildlife-based tourism (Hayward and Kerley, 2009), and is commonly practised in southern African countries, including Botswana, Zambia, and South Africa. According to Snijders (2014), one-sixth of the land in South Africa is 'game fenced', meaning that it is fenced for tourism and hunting purposes. Additionally, fences are sometimes used to protect 'vulnerable species' from 'invasive species' (Somers and Hayward, 2012).

Fencing can also have political goals, such as Namibia's Red Line, which separates settler territories from the those occupied by natives (Miescher and Miescher, 2012), or on South Africa's 'wildlife ranches', where settlers who owned big portions of land used fences to prevent land from being redistributed to natives after independence (Brockington et al., 2008)

Small-scale landowners whose land rights have been recognized are responsible for fencing in the Maasai Mara, where serves an exclusionary purpose to prevent not only other people and their livestock but also the wildlife from accessing resources on their land. The fencing used in the Maasai Mara differs from both the 'game fences' used to protect wildlife in some South African countries and the political fences, such as Zambia's Red Line, that have been built to separate settlers from indigenous communities. In the Maasai Mara, fences are built by small-scale landowners who still depend on traditional pastoral livestock farming that needs open spaces. Individual land tiling and privatization do not necessarily lead to fencing, but the increase in the use of fencing sometimes coincides with the formalization of land titles (Benjaminsen and Sjaastad, 2008). Privatization of land and the allocation of title deeds alone cannot guarantee security of property rights (Hornbeck, 2008). Hence, fencing is done by landowners as one among many ways of protecting their property rights but it neither ensures nor is a prerequisite for the maintenance and upholding of those property rights (Xu et al., 2015). This is particularly the case in pastoral landscapes, where fencing off individual property may not be a viable strategy because pastoralism depends on the presence of open space and property rights have to be secured through other institutional arrangements (Galaty, 2016). Moreover, fencing directly and indirectly threatens both wildlife conservation and traditional pastoralist practices. In Botswana for example, the use of fencing to block wildlife migration routes through ranches in the 1980s reportedly triggered an ecological disaster (Williamson and Williamson, 1984).

The challenges explored in this study are related to processes of territorialization, privatization, and fencing. The decision to fence off land is linked to territoriality and territorialization (Sack, 1986). According to Corson (2011), territorialization entails the creation and mapping of land boundaries, the allocation of rights to 'private actors', and the designation of specific resource uses by both state and private actors within specified territorial bounds. Moreover, Peluso & Lund state that territorialization is 'no less than power relations written on the land' (Peluso and Lund, 2011, p. 673). Territorialization has physical and social dimensions: it involves both the demarcation of physical spaces and the transformation of social practices and institutions (Corson, 2011; Kelly and Peluso, 2015; Robbins and Luginbuhl, 2005). The social dimension of territorialization can be associated with processes of neoliberalization, whereby the market is perceived as the most desirable way for allocating resources and meeting the diverse needs of different actors (Brockington and Scholfield, 2010; Castree, 2008; Corson, 2011; Galaty, 2013; Holmes and Cavanagh, 2016). Neoliberalization is a hybridized and embedded process that takes place within diverse political economic and cultural practices (Castree, 2008; McCarthy, 2005; Peck, 2013; Springer, 2017). Castree argues that despite such hybridization, a number of ideal-typical features characterize neoliberalization, including, among others, privatization, marketization, deregulation, and reregulation (Castree, 2008).

Privatization refers to the introduction of individual property rights to phenomena that previously were state controlled or communally controlled. The transfer of property rights from communal or state control to individual control makes such phenomena marketable and thus allows for 'the assignment of prices to phenomena that were previously shielded from market exchange or for various reasons unpriced' (Castree, 2008, p. 142). Marketization requires deregulation, which is

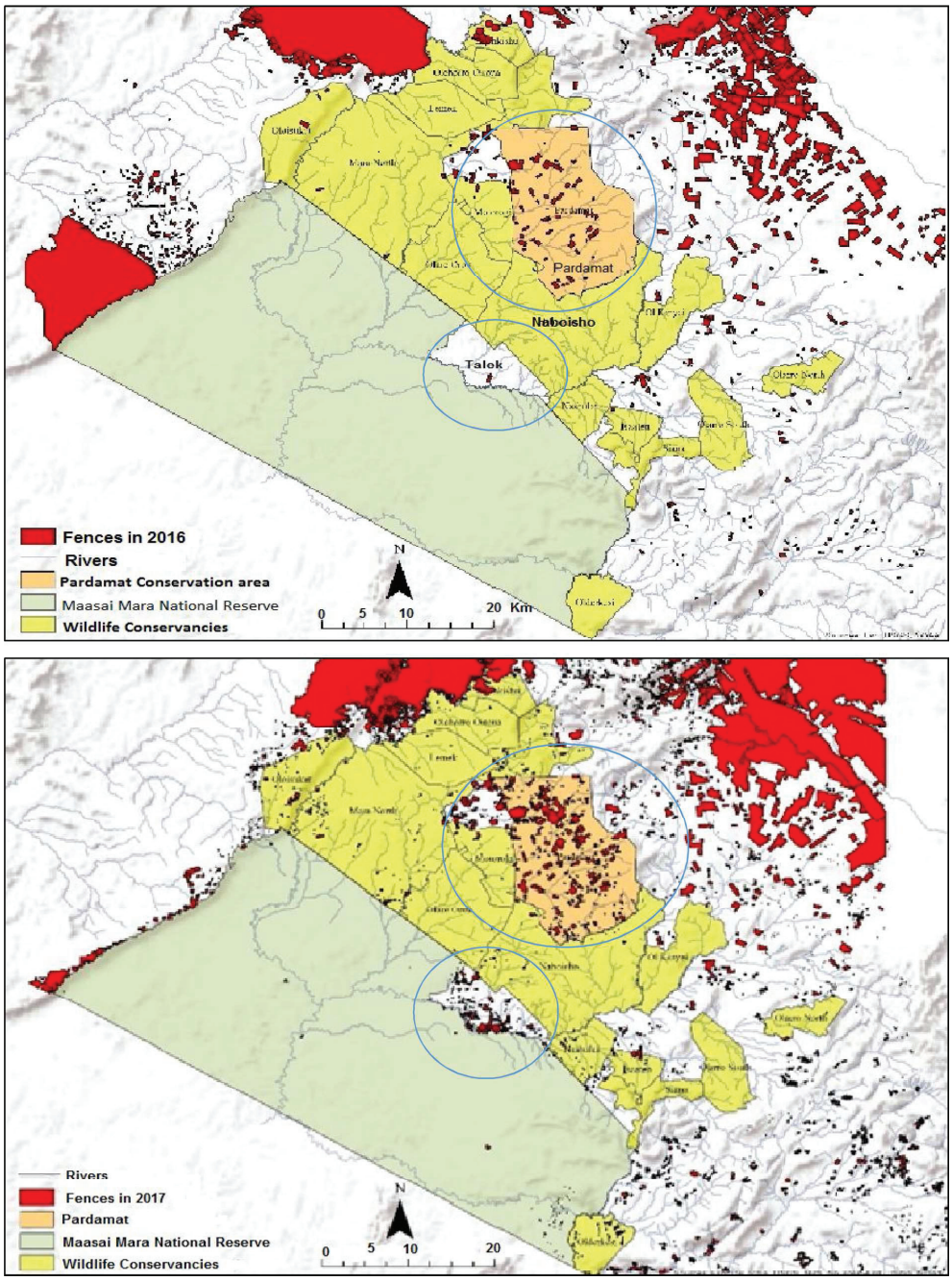

Fig. 2. Fenced land (red) in 2016 (upper map) and early 2017 (lower map). Fenced areas around Talek and Pardamat (encircled on both maps) significantly increased within one year. Maps prepared by the Maasai Mara Conservancies Association (MMWCA) based on data provided by Aarhus University, and reproduced here with the permission of the MMWCA. (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article).

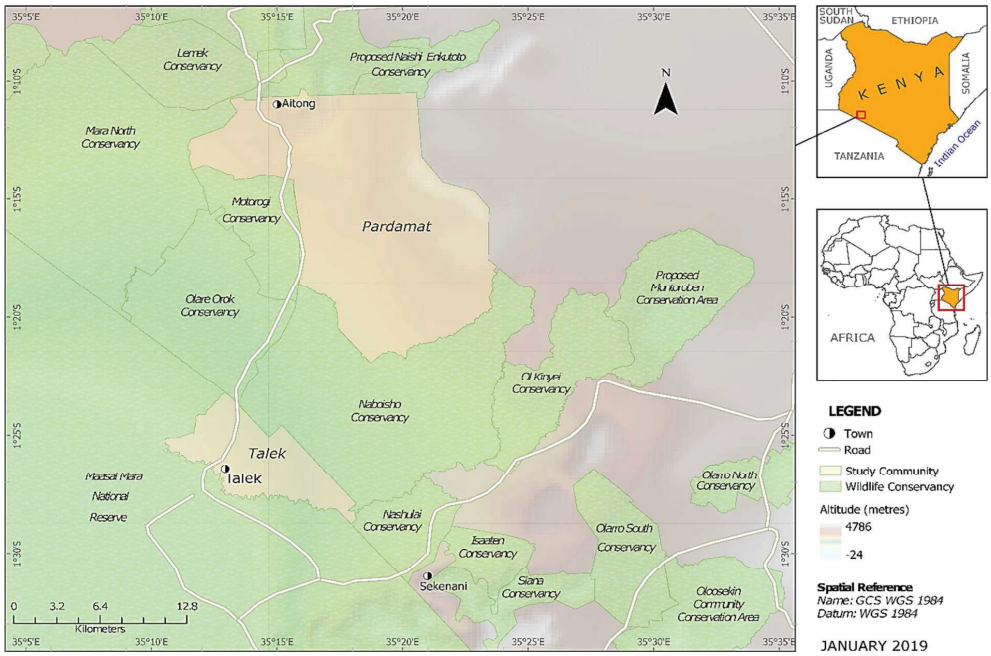

Fig. 3. The location of the two study villages, Pardamat and Talek, and wildlife conservancies around the north-east boundary of the Maasai Mara National Reserve (Map by Michael Ogbe).

defined as minimizing the role of the state in social and environmental issues and giving self-governing roles to local actors within a wider framework (2008, p.142). Through deregulation, local actors are left to take matters into their own hand, in many cases this creates institutional vacuums that allow for impacts by firms and private actors' interests (Castree, 2008, p. 147). Reregulation refers to the use of state policies to facilitate the privatization and marketization of social and environmental phenomena. It also refers to the use of state mechanisms to transform non-commercial items to tradable commodities (Goldstein and Yates, 2017; Igoe and Brockington, 2007; Li, 2017). Such transformation is achieved through state regulations that allow subdivision of communal land and private transactions involving land (Adams et al., 2014; Corson, 2011; Igoe and Brockington, 2007; Vandergeest and Peluso, 1995).

A further aspect of neoliberalism is the emergence of a new trend in which various state and non-state actors work in collaboration with private actors to facilitate the privatization and marketization of conservation areas and to undermine local control of resources (Adams, 2017; Brockington and Scholfield, 2010). De-commoning and the introduction of private property relations are key features of neoliberalist governance, as, too, is the proliferation of hybrid property systems in which the state, individuals, and various civil society actors interact in new ways (Turner, 2017). Such hybrid systems can be linked to the creation and marketization of 'new' elements in nature (*e.g.* carbon credits) or new forms of organization that allow for new forms of accumulation. One such form is linked to nature conservation and the emergence of non-state, for-profit conservancies in many parts of Africa (Büscher, 2011). Conservancies share some of the features of traditional state protected areas such as biodiversity conservation and tourism, but unlike traditional state-owned protected areas they are based on private or land owned by communities, with the aim of creating income and even profit for the owners.

The transformation of land into a tradable commodity has multiple social and ecological impacts (Büscher et al., 2012) and often widens social differences by adversely affecting pre-existing inequalities (Holmes and Cavanagh, 2016; White et al., 2012). The privatization and formalization of land titles usually entail top-down restructuring and carry risks of elite capture and marginalization of less powerful groups (Putzel et al., 2015). Moreover, the restructuring of property rights and marketization shift value from public goods to the private

Fig. 4. Carcasses of wildebeest that died next to a fence on a migration route between the Maasai Mara National Reserve and Naboisho Conservancy in the Maasai Mara (Photo: Author, 19 October 2017).

pockets of elites (Robbins and Luginbuhl, 2005), and may lead to various forms of land grabbing (Benjaminsen and Bryceson, 2012; Corson and MacDonald, 2012; Fairhead et al., 2012; German et al., 2017b). However, there are limits to how much land can be grabbed, as people need places to live in and food to survive on, which means some places have to be designated for those purposes (Li, 2014). Büscher (2011) argues that in Africa it is hard for local actors to negotiate with for-profit conservation actors, as their natural resources are at the same time "framed as 'inverted commons', a special commons that belongs to the entire globe, but for which only Africans pay the real price in terms of their conservation" (p.84).

The above-described forms of exclusion can be both consolidated and reinforced through territorial practices, but they can also be resisted through similar means (Storey, 2017). Such 'reactions from below' (Borras and Franco, 2013; Hall et al., 2015) may involve counter-mapping (Peluso, 1995), non-cooperation, fencing, and other similar actions. In this article, we discuss how fencing can be seen as an intrinsic consequence of the privatization and marketization of land, but may also be seen as a form of resistance from 'below' to those processes.

4. Methodology

The empirical findings presented here is the results of two sessions of extended fieldwork (three months in total) in the Maasai Mara during the spring and autumn of 2017 and review of a wide variety of relevant documents. The fieldwork involved in-depth interviews, group discussions, and observation. The fieldwork was carried out in two villages, Talek and Pardamat, located adjacent to the Maasai Mara National Reserve (Fig. 3). With the growing expansion of conservancies, people have had to move away from land and resettle in the remaining areas outside the conservancies. We chose the villages of Talek and Pardamat as case studies because many people had relocated to them after leasing their land to conservancies. In addition, fencing has become a common practice and a major problem in the two villages.

We held open-ended, in-depth interviews with 51 members of local Maasai communities in the age range 19–81 years, of whom 24 had fenced their land, 18 people had resettled because they had leased land to conservancies, and 9 could be defined as local elite members, namely ex-chiefs, educated members of communities, and elders. Of 51 interviewees, 18 were women. We also carried out key informant interviews with 15 representatives of NGOs working on conservation and community development and 8 representatives from different government authorities including the management of Maasai Mara National Reserve, Narok County, in which the study villages are located, and Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS). Thus, a total of 74 people were interviewed. All interviews with participants who gave consent were audio recorded and transcribed. Handwritten notes were taken during interviews and discussions with participants who did not agree to be audio recorded. Key informant interviews and few of the interviews with locals were all carried out in English language. We employed translators/research assistants during group discussions and interviews with locals. In this article, we have used pseudonyms for the interviewees' quotes, to preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of the interviewees. We received verbal consent to use the names of participants whose positions meant that it would be difficult to ensure their anonymity.

In addition to individual interviews, we attended three meetings involving landowners, conservancy managers, tourism business owners, and other stakeholders, during which many issues concerning the relations between landowners and representatives of conservancies were widely discussed. In addition, numerous informal conversations with different actors from within and outside the villages took place during the fieldwork. At the end of the fieldwork, a workshop involving 15 members of the different conservation and development NGOs and members of local communities was organized on the 28th of November 2017 in Talek to present and reflect on the preliminary finding from the fieldwork.

Direct observation of the ongoing changes and local debates about the changes constituted a major part of the empirical work for the study. We witnessed events such as numerous dead and dying wild animals during the migration season in the autumn of 2017 (Fig. 4), which meant we had personal experiences of the impact of the fences on wildlife and the ecosystem in general. The fieldwork material was supplemented with a review of relevant documents, including legal acts, management plans, lease contracts agreements[1], reports, news articles, websites, and other sources.

5. Results and discussion: explaining fencing

A prevalent explanation of the current processes of fencing given by key representatives from conservation NGOs, government conservation agencies, and conservation-based businesses in the area, whom we interviewed for our study, was that the drivers for fencing are rapid human population growth, 'encroachment' by outsiders (non-Maasai land users), and the resulting competition over space for settlement and livestock production. That explanation was confirmed by the findings from our brief review of documents by relevant conservation organizations (*e.g.* Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association, 2017b; MMWCA, 2017d).

The recent increase in the use fencing was commonly perceived by the study participants as a short-lived reaction to the division of land and formalization of titles, as well as individual landholders' feelings about owning land for the first time. Some of the actors we interviewed suggested that the building of fences would stop and fences would be removed as soon as local people (*i.e.* the Maasai who fenced their land) realized that it was not compatible with their lifestyle and the ecosystem in which they lived. Furthermore, they argued that local people would not be able to afford the relatively high cost of maintaining the fences. As many people had borrowed money from different sources to build fences, it would be difficult for them to repay their debts and to maintain their fences at the same time, given that the fences did not generate immediate economic benefits. For example, one leader of a conservation-related development NGO working in the Maasai Mara said:

> People don't realize how expensive it is to maintain the fence. People think of the initial expense to put the fence up. But, then every year you need to repair that fence, the electricity, the poles, everything. So, people are starting realizing that now and I think they [the fences] will start coming down. (Key informant interview, Talek, 13 February 2017)

Despite the plausibility of such explanations, our analysis of data from interviews, formal and informal discussions with different members of the local communities, observation, and reviews of documents revealed an alternative explanation for the increasing use of fences. The above explanation underestimates the importance of the structural forces at play, as neither population growth nor encroachment by outsiders alone can explain the trend and it remains to be seen whether the high cost of maintaining fences will ultimately encourage people to take them down. In the following subsections we discuss alternative explanations for what might have motivated local landowners to fence their land.

5.1. Land subdivision, privatization, and inequalities in the study areas

The subdivision of the group ranches in the Maasai Mara was, as in many other areas in Kenya, a process characterized by a range of problems. Koyake Group Ranch, on which both of the study villages are

[1] We reviewed 5 lease contracts including Olaro, Mara North, Naboisho, Siana and Pardamat conservancies.

now located, was dissolved in 2003 and according to our interviews with local Maasai, the way the land division was carried out had implications for the emergence of fencing. First, the land was not divided equally. One interviewee who worked as a member of the land division committee for Koyake Group Ranch admitted that he had received over 600 acres (243 ha) in addition to the 150 acres (61 ha) to which every member was entitled. Similarly, three interviewed men from Talek admitted that they each owned more than 500 acres (202 ha) as a result of their close relations with the division committee. Other members only received interviewed 20–50 acres (9–20 ha). For example, in Pardamat village, one interviewed man owned 20 acres (9 ha), while another, the then leader of the land division committee, owned over 1000 acres (404 ha). We heard about several accusations of corruption that happened during the subdivision process. For example, one interviewee said:

> We have been told many confusing pieces of advice to pay bribes to members of the land division committee, but we ended up not getting any land. The maximum land one can get is 150 acres [61 ha]. But, there are people who have [land] four and five times bigger than that. (Landowner, woman, aged 57 years, Talek village, 10 October 2017)

According to interviews with several key informants who were involved in the decision-making relating to the group ranches, land under group ranches was classified in three categories: wildlife tourism areas, livestock areas, and settlement areas. Areas close to the Maasai Mara National Reserve, which were richer in pasture, were reserved for wildlife tourism, while areas located farther away from the reserve and of poorer quality were designated for livestock development and settlement. The villages of Pardamat and Talek were designated for settlement because of the availability of water and healthier conditions for people. The land classified as wildlife tourism areas and livestock areas can be regarded as 'core areas' with respect to wildlife conservation based tourism and are important grazing spaces for both wildlife and livestock, whereas most of the settlement areas have lower potential for grazing purposes. Group ranch officials and land division committee members, as well as people associated with them, all received better and larger parts of the core areas, leaving others with smaller and less optimal grazing areas.

Additionally, problems related to registration when group ranches were dissolved contributed to inequality during the division process. Before the division, group ranch committees had registered members who were eligible to land titles but some households who were unaware of the process had failed to have their members registered, which left them landless after the dissolution. Moreover, young family members were not given any titles to land. Similarly, women were landless, since according to Maasai tradition, only men can own property. Although Kenya's constitution clearly specified the abolition of gender-based discrimination in relation to landownership as its main land policy principles (Kenya Constitution 2010, article 60), its formal establishment was too late for women in the Maasai Mara, since most of the land had been privatized prior to its formulation in 2010.

In many cases, external investors rapidly bought up the newly divided land for permanent use for agriculture (Kimani and Pickard, 1998). When land was divided, many landowners were quick to sell their land, particularly those in areas around the Loita Plains in the north-east of the Maasai Mara. Most of the purchasers had backgrounds and interests mainly in crop production and other non-pastoral uses of land. Today, when outsiders buy land, they tend to fence it in, thereby blocking wildlife and livestock migration. As a result, wildlife and livestock have to stay in the remaining open private lands near to the national reserve. This has intensified competition for grazing land in the affected areas and put local landowners in a difficult position, making fencing the only rational choice for them.

Thus, the land division in the Maasai Mara did not address the importance of the free movement of wildlife and livestock. Instead, it encouraged the process of 'sedentarization' that started when the group ranches were introduced:

> For a Maasai, the division of the land is a big problem because it totally reduces the number of cows that we used to have. We are not like farmers, you see. If you have been given a small portion of land and if you have a large number of animals, it is not easy to keep the animals. There is no free movement of our cows from one place to another as it used to be in the past. Like here [near his home], it is really bad now. In the past, we used to go all the way to Pardamat [c.30 km distant]. But, when the division came, everything started to reduce. (Olana, man, 73 years, interviewee, Talek)

Another interviewee similarly identified lack of mobility as one of the disadvantages of land division:

> Before the land demarcation, everyone had the right to access water points. But, now because it is demarcated and fenced, you have to take a long route to reach to where there is water. (Ole Peter, man, 58 years, Pardamat)

According to the same man, the land division had also limited the seasonal migration of animals searching for suitable places to graze:

> In the past, if you see rain on the other side of the village and you see it is a big rain there, you do not have to ask anyone. You just have to drive your cows through anywhere because land belonged to everyone. Now you have to wait here. If it doesn't rain here, you die here!

Dickson Kaelo, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Kenyan Wildlife Conservancies Association similarly argued that the division of land into individual parcels was a 'recipe for disaster':

> The traditional pastoral system was about moving over larger areas. The whole idea of land division is one, a foreign concept, and, two, it is a concept that works in wet areas where water is evenly distributed. But when you have a landscape where it doesn't rain for six months and when it rains, it rains there not there, you need to be able to move with the rains to be able to survive.

Furthermore, during a key informant interview in Nairobi on 16 November 2017, Dickson Kaelo, argued that land division had led to fencing for two reasons. First, a former group ranch officials and people associated with them, who were financially capable, chose to fence their land, thereby preventing access by poorer households and wildlife. Kaelo stated that those people were aware of the changes that would result from division and had tried to adjust early. The actions of those people encouraged similar actions among others, who felt they would lose out if they continued to keep their land open for other people's livestock and wildlife. Although many of the Maasai who participated in our study knew that fencing would have disastrous effects for their pastoral practices, they claimed they had been left with no other option than to fence their land.

Second, all types of land, including forests, hills, and river banks, were demarcated and distributed without regard to differences in the quality of land and its economic and ecological implications. Thus, many people received land on wooded hills and as a result they did not have sufficient pasture for their livestock. In most cases they cleared land with natural vegetation in order to use it as pasture, and according to the interviewees the practice could have disastrous consequences for the greater ecosystem due to the reduction in water retention and increase in erosion. Similarly, when referring to the changes in land use, Joseph Ngoitoi, a Maasai and assistant to the chief warden of the Maasai Mara National Reserve, argued that fencing was the result of the way land had been divided:

> Long time ago, our parents never thought of the hills as land. Hills were just hills. Now, you hire someone to do the demarcation, he demarcates everything, including the hills and rivers. This will have

disastrous consequences, as people are clearing bushes to make way for pasture.

Although land division and fragmentation played a major role in the widespread construction of fences in the Maasai Mara, there were other reasons for the fencing. In the next subsection, we briefly present the introduction of conservancies, a new conservation model, which local landowners and some key informant interviewees argued had contributed towards pushing locals to fence their land.

5.2. Wildlife conservancies and the proliferation of fencing

The process of land subdivision and the formalization of land titles were partly facilitated by the developers of the tourism business, who wanted to establish conservancies but found it difficult to do so as long as the land was organized as group ranches (Butt, 2016). Investors who saw an opportunity for the development of tourism-related businesses around the Maasai Mara first started to make deals with some elite members of group ranches and during the final years of the group ranches, representatives of conservation-related businesses signed agreements with members of group ranch committees that enabled a number of tourist camps to be established. Members of former group ranches interviewed for this study admitted they had received payments from the organizers of the tourist camps. However, they believed there was no way to know how much revenue was generated by the camps or how it was distributed among the members of the ranches. During a discussion at meeting between landowners and conservancy management representatives, which we attended in Talek, on 21 November 2017, the owner of Mara Porini Camp, who leased an entire conservancy, explained the crucial role that his company played in facilitating the land division as follows:

> In the beginning, the income was going to the [ranch] committee because land wasn't divided, and later on we divided the land to make sure that the landowners [would] get direct income.

The establishment of conservancies is based on the principle incentivise that benefits and appropriate policy arrangements can incentivise local people to protect wildlife on their lands (Butt, 2016; Kenya Wildlife Service, 2019; Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association, 2017c). According to the MMWCA, conservancies pay on average USD 30–50 per hectare per year to landowners (Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association, 2017a). Boards of directors are elected by landowners and the tourism businesses manage conservancies. From key informant interviews and discussions with a number of conservation actors, it was apparent that conservancies played important roles in providing benefits to landowners and maintaining wildlife.

The conservancies currently provide direct benefits to landowners. Several of the interviewed representatives of the conservancies claimed that the direct payments from conservancies prevented Maasai landowners from selling their land. Similarly, Bedelian and Ogutu (2017) argue that conservancies can provide a crucial and reliable source of income and therefore households can avoid the need to sell their livestock when they are under financial stress.

Furthermore, the conservancies promote the conservation of wildlife by ensuring that important dispersal areas and migration corridors remain open for wildlife. During a key informant interview in Aitong, a town near Pardamat (shown on Fig. 1), on 4 October 2017, David Kortot, a Community Liaison Officer for the MMWCA said:

> If it's not for conservancies, land that is divided could have all been converted into other forms of land use, which are not compatible with conservation of wildlife. Through conservancies, we have managed to keep important wildlife corridors open.

However, according to landowners we interviewed, the establishment of conservancies had contributed to the alienation of certain people and spaces. The conservancies were established around the core areas, due to the presence of more abundant wildlife and the scenic value of the landscapes. Landowners receive payments through land lease agreements with conservancies are normally required to vacate land as soon as the lease agreement is signed and grazing is allowed only when the conservancies agree to give permission, such as in periods of drought. In recent years, conservancies have tried to revise their management plans and to incorporate 'controlled grazing' in them. Although almost all of the conservancies currently allow controlled grazing during extreme droughts and low tourism seasons, the access is limited only to members. Hence, pastoralists without land in the conservancies have nowhere for their livestock to graze during such times.

The cash income that landowners gained from leasing out land means that they had additional funds that they could use to acquire more livestock and/or reduce the sale of livestock they needed to meet their household's needs. Some of the locals claim that this meant in many cases people maintained or even increased their numbers of livestock, despite having leased grazing space to the conservancies.[2] The increases were possible because the landowners moved their cattle to other areas, such as in the peripheral drier landscapes and on bush-covered hills. People whose land parcels were located in such areas found themselves in an increasingly difficult position because the competition for grazing on their unfenced lands intensified when more people started to use the open spaces.

According to several interviewed locals who leased land to conservancies, the income from tourism and leasing land is too low for many of them to sustain decent livelihoods. This finding is in line with findings from the same region reported by Bedelian and Ogutu (2017), who report that income from land leases was less than households would have earned if they had kept livestock. Despite the limited amount of space left, livestock still remain the main source of income for households (Osano et al., 2013). In addition, almost all of the interviewees who had leased land to conservancies stated they did not have any other form of employment and if they ceased practising pastoralism all members of their households would become idle and thus lack sources of income. In a meeting between landowners and the authorities of the Mara North Conservancy to discuss the impact of livestock on the conservancy, one of the landowners asked:

> If I stop pastoralism and if I do not have cows, am I supposed to just sit and wait? And, wait for what?

Thus, the process of establishing conservancies pushed people and their cattle to use land belonging to other people who did not receive any benefits from the conservancies (Bedelian and Ogutu, 2017). As the size of protected area under conservancies almost doubled between 2015 and 2017 (https://www.maraconservancies.org/), there has also been a notable growth in the amount of fenced land in the remaining unprotected parts (Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association, 2017b). Between 2014 and 2015 the Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association. (2017b) reported a more than fourfold increase in fences in Pardamat area. Landowners in marginal areas have chosen to fence their land and livelihoods in order to maintain control: one interviewee said, 'Fencing is our last stronghold before we lose it all.'

Although many relatively poor landowners have fenced their land to protect it from being used by outside pastoralists who have land in the

[2] Examples included 'Sayel' (university graduate, man, 26 years, from Talek), 'Peter' (tourism business owner, 35 years, from Talek), 'Nashipai' (livestock owner, woman, 50 years, from Talek), and Josh (livestock owner, 43 years, from Pardamat). Sayel's father owned c.120 ha, most of which was leased to Mara North and Naboisho conservancies (Fig. 3), but he still owned c.600 cattle and c.6000 goats and sheep. For much of the year, he grazed his livestock in different open areas, including the national reserve and non-protected lands (areas mainly owned by other Maasai who had not leased land to conservancies).

conservancies, others have been responsible for the fencing, too. Some of the first people to fence land were wealthy people such as the ex-chief of Koyake Group Ranch, who owned land in different places and leased big plots to conservancies. In an interview, he proudly explained that he was behind the decisions to divide the land and to establish conservancies and also among the first to start the construction of fences. Additionally, some who leased their land to conservancies have either purchased or leased land outside conservancies and then fence it off in order to keep livestock there. 'James', an interviewee who was living in Pardamat village, explained that people with land in Mara North Conservancy (Fig. 3) had leased land from his neighbours in order to build fences around it for their livestock. Although the practice has become common, much of the fencing has been built by marginal landowners. However, 'James' and others we interviewed in Pardamat and Talek considered the trend was still emerging and may spread to areas currently under conservancies.

Conservancies in the Maasai Mara have been hailed as beacons of success, since they combine the goals of wildlife conservation with meeting the livelihood needs of local communities. However, according to our study participants, the success may not last and the current trend in fencing in the Maasai Mara is the beginning of challenges that the conservancies will face in the future. According to 'John', an active local politician who had long resisted land division, conservancies were 'a time bomb', with reference to the way land deals to establish conservancies were made:

> I have never met any landowner who says he is happy with the arrangement [land lease agreements with conservancies]. When you ask this question, people just keep quiet and this is not a good sign.

Moreover, 'John' argued that conservancies had contributed to the increased amount of fencing and their success was temporary:

> Conservancies do not recognize that the wildlife wealth they depend on is not independent from what goes on outside their premises. Conservancies boast that they are successful, but it is only a short time before they realize that they cannot stand on their own.

The challenge was recognized by Dickson Kaelo (CEO of Kenyan Wildlife Conservancies Association), who played key role during the establishment of many conservancies in the Maasai Mara. He maintained that conservancies were only a means to 'buy some time' for the government and other actors to 'intervene and save the ecosystem' and 'If the government does not help, the system will collapse.' According to him, conservancies were facing an uncertain future, as landowners might not renew land lease agreements with conservancies when their contracts ended in few years.

This is a genuine concern as there already are increasing incidents of disputes between landowners and conservancies. In October 2018, William Hofmeyr, the manager of Olaro conservancy, was reportedly shot with an arrow amid disputes over access to grazing and water with landowners (Daily Nation, 2018). Similarly, there is an ongoing court hearing in Narok, the district's capital, on a dispute between landowners of Mara North and Naboisho conservancies (two of the biggest) over access to grazing and lease payments.

One of the reasons why the group ranches were dissolved was their inability to secure benefits and their lack of transparency, which opened up for contestation over the legitimacy of the governing institutions. Despite changes in the institutional arrangements, conservancies face similar challenges to those faced by group ranches, as there is a lack of transparency regarding how much revenue they collect and how they use it. Both during individual interviews with Maasai landowners and during the conservancy-landowners' meetings that we attended during our fieldwork, questions were frequently raised about transparency regarding the amount of revenue generated by conservancies. A study conducted in Northern Kenya by Bersaglio & Cleaver revealed that historical patterns of access, accumulation, and domination continued to constrain conservancies' seemingly innovative and progressive agendas (Bersaglio and Cleaver, 2018). With limited income from conservancies and concerns over the legitimacy of the conservancy management system, local landowners have few incentives to keep their lands open.

5.3. The end of pastoralism

Studies by Løvschal et al. (2019) and Ogutu et al. (2016) revealed an increase in the numbers of livestock, particularly goats and sheep, in Kenya general and the Maasai Mara in particular, in recent years. Correspondingly, there has been a decline in wildlife numbers, which Ogutu et al. (2016) argue can partly be attributed to growing competition for pasture from owners of increasing numbers of livestock. Despite the increase in livestock, it was apparent from the interviews and discussions held as part of our study that an important factor driving the fencing process has been many pastoralists' anticipation that traditional pastoralism is coming to an end. Of the 24 interviewees who had fenced their land, 22 mentioned that the future of traditional pastoralism based on open grazing landscape was in question. Similarly, from formal and informal discussions held with different members of local communities, there seemed to be a wide-ranging recognition by the locals that the pastoral system, which they had relied on in the past, was gradually disappearing. With the division of land into individual parcels and with competition for other forms of land use, the study participants saw a need to shift their livelihood bases away from pastoralism. The view seemed to be prevalent among the young and educated Maasai with whom we had many formal and informal discussions throughout our fieldwork. On participant in a group discussion said, 'As a young man, I do not intend to keep cows. That, I think, was ideal in the past and not anymore', while a woman aged 27 years, whom we interviewed in Talek, stated: 'there is no future in cows'.

The 'end of pastoralism' discourse is not new, but dates back to colonial times when British administration tried to settle the Maasai in specific designated 'native reserves' (Hughes, 2006). The desire to settle the Maasai and to 'modernize' their production system continued during the time when group ranches existed under the post-colonial government of Kenya that was led by President Kenyatta (Ng'ethe, 1992). Development programmes in the 1960s particularly stressed the transformation of pastoralists into more market-oriented producers, as the underlying thinking was that pastoralism was unproductive and irrational system (Catley et al., 2013). Traditional pastoralism in development policies has often been presented as an economic activity 'doomed to fail', despite abundant evidences that show its viability in terms of the number of people it supports and its ecological friendliness compared to other forms of land use (Zinsstag et al., 2016).

Currently, the shift away from pastoralism is evident in two emerging processes in the Maasai Mara. First, locals are investing in tourism-related businesses through the purchase of tourist vehicles and the construction of houses in urban centres. Buying a tourist vehicle costs more money than can be raised by selling the small numbers of livestock typically owned by pastoralists. This has led to a situation in which increasingly more people try to keep livestock mainly as a strategy to switch to a non-pastoral production system. One example was 'Peter', an interviewee who drove a Safari Landcruiser. He had purchased his first Landcruiser by selling c.200 cattle, and he planned to purchase a second vehicle in the same way, before embarking full-time on an exclusive business strategy. Twenty-one interviewees mentioned their intention to either buying a plot of land in town to build a house for rent or to buy a vehicle for tourism. In the long-term, people may move away from pastoralism, but currently the tourism business leads to intense competition for grazing land as more people strive to acquire sufficient numbers of cattle to enable them to make the change. Similar shifts in the Maasai Mara and other areas that have undergone land subdivision have been documented by Homewood (2009).

Second, in a related process, several of our interviewees foresaw a

future in livestock production but not in the form of traditional pastoralism. A number of the locals intended to start livestock farming on a commercial basis by introducing a more productive or higher yielding cattle breeds, but that would only possible if land were fenced off and protected from wildlife and other people's livestock. A related development is the shift from cattle to small livestock such as goats and sheep, as noted also by Løvschal et al. (2019) and Ogutu et al. (2016). Bedelian and Ogutu (2017) argue that the reason for this shift could be that sheep and goats can live on smaller amounts of pasture and are thus more resilient to harsher conditions, such as prolonged droughts and conditions of limited mobility due to the land division and grazing restrictions imposed by conservancies. Our analysis of the interviews with local Maasai indicated that by ending their mobility, which has been a central feature of traditional pastoralism characterized by the practice of transhumance over large areas of open landscape, the conservancies have contributed to the 'sedentarization' of livestock production, characterized by keeping sheep and goats instead of cattle. We are arguing that land division and privatization do not necessarily lead to enclosure and fencing as Galatly (2016) also clearly demonstrated. It is when subdivision and privatization of land is supplemented by other discourses that lead to breaking of the commons. In our case, the introduction of conservancies (*i.e.* marketization of conservation) and the relentless drive by state and non-state actors to 'modernize' pastoralism played crucial role.

6. Conclusions

Based on our analysis of the interviews, discussions, and documents reviews, we argue that fencing in areas surrounding the Maasai Mara National Reserve has emerged in response to both historical and current processes of exclusion, in three stages. The first stage involved state-driven reorganization of space and social practices with the aim of modernizing livestock production through the establishment of group ranches. The process of territorialization entailed defining both physical boundaries between wildlife areas and the group ranches, as well as between the group ranches and the social practices (Corson, 2011), in which modern forms of livestock production were favoured in place of traditional pastoralism that required mobility across an open landscape. The second stage in the emergence of fencing involved the end of the group ranches, which led to the introduction of private ownership and the formalization of individual land titles. In the third stage, non-pastoralist land users reterritorialized recently privatized land to form conservancies through the lease and purchase of private lands. The establishment of conservancies marked a reterritorialization of physical space involving both the regrouping of individual land parcels as well as shifting animal geographies. A landscape that was historically shared by wildlife and livestock has been separated into exclusive wildlife territories (conservancies), with spaces that are more peripheral left for use by livestock and wildlife.

While almost all of the local Maasai who participated in our study said that they supported the land privatization project in the hope that it would secure land rights for them, our analysis of the subdivision process and subsequent events suggests that it did not address their fundamental fear of being dispossessed of their land. First, land division was fraught with problems, as the process was led by powerful actors who were primarily interested in securing their own position. This in turn contributed to the widening of existing social inequalities. Second, the land division project did not secure Maasai land per se because many people, particularly those who were not pastoralists, sold their parcels of land, thereby enabling outsiders to own and use land for non-pastoral purposes such as tourist camping facilities, commercial ranches, and farms. None of the latter is compatible with traditional pastoralism, which is based on open grazing. Furthermore, the Maasai Mara is characterized by seasonal variations in rainfall and differences in the availability of resources such as pasture and water across different areas, which the land privatization process failed to take into consideration.

The introduction of membership-based, commercial, protected areas in the form of conservancies has led to the enclosure of previously communally used resources such as water access points and dry season pastures. In addition, pastoralists whose entire parcels of land fell outside the conservancies and who were left without payments and other benefits from conservancies found that fencing land was their only pathway to protect their land from other pastoralist who brought their herds onto their land.

In addition to the privatization of land and commercialization of conservation, various actors, including the government, have long propagated the idea of ending traditional pastoralism. Pastoralism has been presented as an obsolete practice that should be replaced by market-oriented and commercial production systems in the form of cattle ranches based on new breeds of cattle or intensive farming. The building of fences maybe seen as marginalized Maasai households' attempt to stop the process of dispossession of their traditional land. Further, it is an unintended outcome of complex historical processes of inclusion and exclusion, and a final defence line from further exclusion of the Maasai.

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Paper II

Gentrifying the African Landscape: The Performance and Powers of for-Profit Conservation on Southern Kenya's Conservancy Frontier

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Across eastern and southern Africa, conservation landscapes increasingly extend far beyond the boundaries of government-owned protected areas. Several countries have now granted full legal recognition to various types of private or otherwise nonstate conservation arrangements, thereby often seeking to create novel opportunities for ostensibly "green" capital investments in various for-profit conservation enterprises. Following the adoption of the 2013 Wildlife Conservation and Management Act in Kenya, for instance, nonstate conservancies now encompass 6.36 million hectares—or 11 percent of the country's land area—with at least a further 3 million hectares proposed or in the process of territorialization. Examining the consequences of this precipitous rise of conservancies in southern Kenya's Maasai Mara region, we suggest that—in addition to significant potential for considerable profit margins to be realized by individual firms—these investments retain a number of other unique powers or capacities to transform prevailing varieties of environmental governance. In this case, these capacities manifest in two interrelated forms: first, in the dissemination of environmental crisis narratives that stigmatize pastoralist communities and thus drive down land rents or values and, second, in the recapitalization of conservation territories and the reconfiguration of prevailing land uses in ways that enable novel forms of rural gentrification via the capture of heightened or differential ground rents. *Key Words: conservation, gentrification, political ecology, property, rent gap.*

非洲东部和南部各地的自然保护区面积不断扩大，已经远远超出了国有保护区。对于不同类型的私人保护区或其他形式的非国有保护区，目前囊括这些地区的几个国家已在法律上对它们予以正式承认，为打着"绿色"旗号投资盈利性保护企业的行为创造新机会。例如，肯尼亚在2013年通过了《野生动植物保护和管理法》，如今该国非国有保护区的占地面积已达到 636 万公顷，是该国总面积的 11%，目前至少还有 300 万公顷的土地已提交申请或正在土地划分过程中。本文研究了肯尼亚南部马赛马拉地区激增的保护区可能产生的后果。我们认为只有个别的公司在此类投资中可能实现可观的利润，但这些投资在还具有其他特殊的力量或能力，将会彻底改变现行的各种环境治理方式。从这个角度而言，这些能力体现为两种相互关联的形式：第一，由于此类企业在环境危机方面的大肆宣传，将责任甩给了当地草原的农村社区，进而压低了土地租金或价值；第二，随着各保护区进行资本重组，主要土地用途发生变化，可能会提高地租或造成地租差异，进而催生出全新的农村高档化形式。 *关键词：保护，高档化，政治生态，财产，租金差距。*

A través del África oriental y del sur, los paisajes de conservación crecientemente se extienden mucho más allá de los límites de las áreas protegidas de propiedad del gobierno. Varios países ahora han dado total reconocimiento legal a varios tipos de programas de conservación privados o de otro tipo no gubernamental, que con tal estatus buscan a menudo crear oportunidades novedosas de inversión de capital ostensiblemente "verde" en varias empresas lucrativas de conservación. Luego de la adopción de la ley de 2013 sobre Conservación y Manejo de la Vida Silvestre en Kenia, por ejemplo, las áreas de conservación no gubernamentales comprenden ahora 6.36 millones de hectáreas —o sea el 11 por ciento de la superficie del país— con por lo menos 3 millones de hectáreas más propuestas o en proceso de territorialización. Examinando las consecuencias de este ascenso tan pronunciado de los proyectos de conservación en la región Maasai Mara del sur de Kenia, proponemos que —además del potencial significativo de considerables

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márgenes de ganancia que pueden obtener firmas individuales— estas inversiones retengan un número de otros poderes únicos o capacidades para transformar las dominantes variedades de gobernanza ambiental. En este caso, estas capacidades se manifiestan en dos formas interrelacionadas: primero, en la diseminación de narrativas sobre la crisis ambiental que estigmatizan las comunidades pastoralistas y por tanto hacen bajar las rentas o valores de la tierra, y, segundo, en la recapitalización de territorios de conservación y reconfiguración de usos dominantes de la tierra con modalidades que habilitan formas novedosas de gentrificación rural por medio de la captura de rentas aguzadas o diferenciales del terreno. *Palabras clave: conservación, ecología política, gentrificación, propiedad, vacío de renta.*

In *Misreading the African Landscape*, Fairhead and Leach (1996) famously highlighted how successive generations of West African colonial administrators, state forestry officials, and environmental professionals repeatedly misperceived dynamics underpinning forest cover fluctuations in Guinea. In turn, these flawed interpretations supported neo-Malthusian narratives of progressive deforestation caused by population growth and the ostensibly destructive land use practices of rural African populations. As a consequence, local understandings of environmental change were often occluded and authoritarian modes of environmental management were legitimated (Sullivan 2003). In short, these authors certainly made a compelling case for how colonial officials effectively misperceived or misread the African landscape in this regard and often projected their own prejudiced stereotypes on local populations and livelihoods in the process. Yet they also showed more implicitly how these same bureaucrats and administrators nonetheless still concretely remade the African landscape in response to prevailing narratives of environmental degradation. Not least, this was evident in the expansive territorialization of exclusionary, state-owned forest reserves, which frequently marginalized the very same rural populations who had often effectively stewarded agro-forest landscapes in the region over preceding generations.

Through engaging an ecologically distinct region and historical–geographical conjuncture, this article highlights the ways in which such conjoined processes of (mis)perceiving and remaking the landscape are once again recombinant in relation to an increasingly salient phenomenon in East Africa: rural gentrification via private investments in ecotourism and for-profit conservation. Indeed, as a growing number of scholars increasingly highlight, there is perhaps no necessary reason why studies of gentrification must be limited only to urban environments (Phillips 1993). This is particularly so as prevailing forms of urbanization on an apparently "planetary" scale denote that the strategies of territorial stigmatization that often precede gentrifying patterns of capital investment might unfold across a much broader range of contexts (Slater 2017). Yet logics of gentrification are to some extent also far from new in East African conservation. As Neumann (1996) once notably argued, British conservationists often understood themselves to be reconstructing aristocratic landscapes of sport hunting and wildlife preservation in the emerging protected areas of twentieth-century African colonies, reflecting the views and interests of the literal gentry of the period. What is perhaps relatively novel today, we suggest, is the extent to which these past cultural logics of rural gentrification are seemingly now dialectically engaged with new economic justifications for investment in for-profit conservation, promising to transform prevailing relations of land and environmental governance on an unprecedented scale in the process.

Contributing to these latter debates, this article examines the ways in which dynamics of both stigmatization and rural gentrification unfold within Kenya's rapidly expanding conservancy frontier. Certainly, conservation-related laws and regulations have been enforced in Kenya since the earliest days of British rule in the late nineteenth century. Likewise, diverse efforts toward establishing both "community" and "private" conservation areas have been underway at least since the late colonial period (Matheka 2005). Nonetheless, the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act of 2013 was unprecedented in its extension of full legal recognition for a new category of landholding: nonstate wildlife conservancies. Indeed, three broad types of nonstate conservancies can now be formed in Kenya: private conservancies on the landholdings of individuals or firms, group conservancies on private

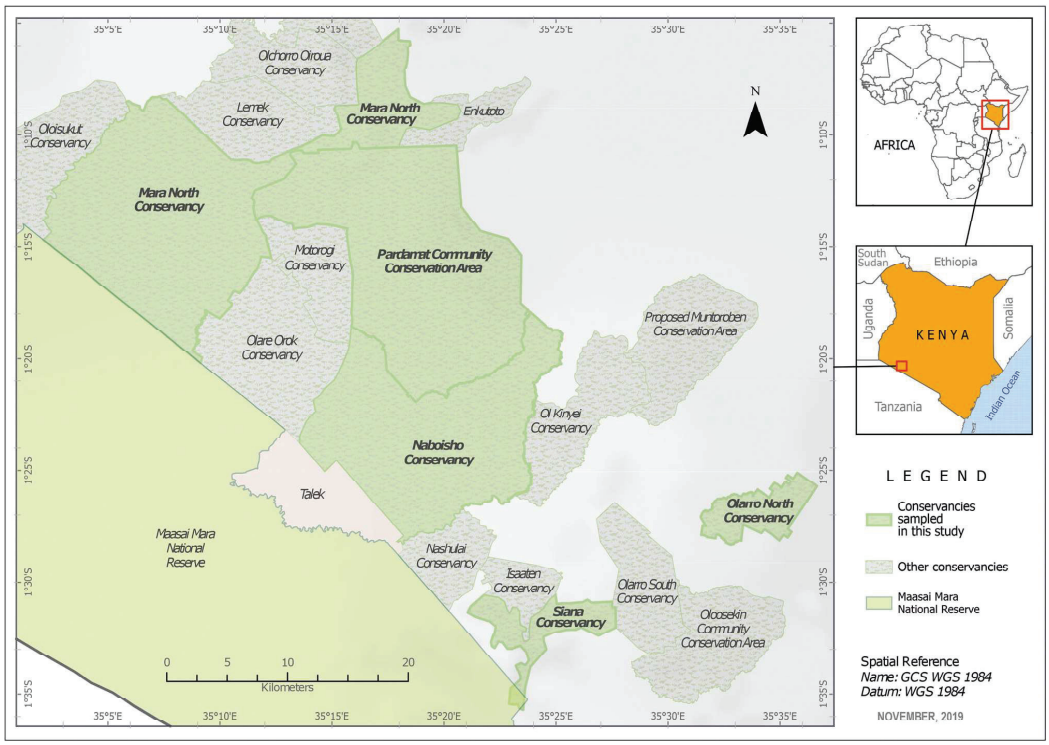

Figure 1. Map of the Maasai Mara National Reserve and surrounding nonstate conservancies. Conservancies sampled in this study are displayed in dark green. Cartographer: Michael Ogbe (Norwegian University of Science and Technology).

landholdings aggregated for conservation purposes, and community conservancies established on collectively owned lands.

The implications of these new laws for both the spatial extent and increasing institutional complexity of conservation in Kenya are difficult to overstate. At present, state-owned wildlife conservation areas—designated as national parks, reserves, sanctuaries, and so forth—cover 8 percent of the country's surface area (Kenya Wildlife Service 2018). Since the coming into force of the new Wildlife Act, however, the amount of land officially recognized as held under nonstate conservancy arrangements has grown exponentially. Indeed, these conservancies now encompass an additional 6.36 million hectares—or 11 percent of Kenya's land area—with at least a further 3 million hectares of conservancies proposed or in the process of formation (Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association [KWCA] 2016).

In the Maasai Mara region of southern Kenya's Narok County, for example, conservancies have proliferated to the extent that they are nearly equivalent in size to the Maasai Mara National Reserve, which was first established as a wildlife sanctuary in 1948 (see Figure 1). Currently encompassing more than 145,000 hectares, the Mara conservancies are projected to continue this expansion even further over the coming decade (Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association [MMWCA] 2018). Drawn by the promise of low operating costs and sizable profit margins from the region's increasingly exclusive, high-end ecotourism market, these nonstate conservation areas alone now host sixty ecotourism camps backed by competing Kenyan and international investors. At the time of writing, for instance, some lodges in the newly established conservancies are charging upward of US$1,700 per night of accommodation.

Although widely marketed as a "triple win" approach to conservation for local communities, biodiversity, and a broader transition to a green economy (U.S. Agency for International Development

[USAID] 2017), the rise of similar private or nonstate conservation areas has recently been critically examined by political ecologists and human geographers (Goldman 2003; Sullivan 2003; Igoe and Croucher 2007; Benjaminsen et al. 2013; Adams, Hodge, and Sandbrook 2014; Bersaglio and Cleaver 2018; Bluwstein 2018). In Kenya, much of the corresponding media and scholarly analysis has been preoccupied with alleged pastoralist "invasions" of European-managed conservancies in Laikipia County, as well as high-profile incidents such as the shooting of Kuki Gallman, a conservationist and long-standing member of Kenya's European settler community (Fox 2018). Yet such cases have not been confined to Laikipia and other portions of the former White Highlands, which were reserved for European settlement under British rule (Okoth-Ogendo 1991). In the Maasai Mara region, similar controversies were exemplified on 12 October 2018 by an attack on the conservancy manager William Hofmeyr—who was reportedly shot through the mouth with an arrow following an altercation with local landowners (Kiplagat 2018)—as well as by recurring protests about low lease payment values and asymmetrical conservancy decision-making processes (Sayagie 2019). Not least, such incidents highlight the political ecology of Kenya's emerging nonstate conservancy frontier, wherein novel institutional arrangements are indubitably reworking and recasting long-standing conflicts over the ownership and use of land, wildlife, and other natural resources.

In this article, we thus adopt an explicitly political–ecological perspective in exploring the consequences and effects of the rise of nonstate conservancies specifically in Kenya's Maasai Mara region. The analysis is based on fieldwork jointly conducted by the authors in November 2018, as well as 2.5 months of earlier fieldwork by the second author over the course of 2017 and 2018 and an extensive review of conservancy lease agreements, management plans, business annual reports, and relevant institutional frameworks. Five conservancies were purposively sampled for analysis, with the intent of covering possible variations in performance and outcome and thus avoiding biases that might follow from an exclusive focus on either "best cases" or "worst cases" of conservancy performance. Indeed, two locations in particular—Olarro Conservancy and Naboisho Conservancy—were purposively selected because media and civil society coverage suggested they were potentially representative of two extremes of conservancy outcomes in the Maasai Mara region.

On one hand, Olarro Conservancy has been subject to ongoing, well-documented conflicts between landowners and investors and seemed to constitute a possible worst case of conservancy–community relations. By contrast, Naboisho Conservancy has been widely promoted as an ostensible best case of one of the most successful conservancies in Kenya, having been declared the Overall Winner of the African Responsible Tourism Awards 2016 and recognized with the Gold Award for Wildlife Conservation from the same body on other occasions. The other three conservancies—Siana, Mara North, and Pardamat—were purposively selected because available information suggested that their performance to date has been less marked by either excessively negative or excessively positive outcomes. In relation to this sample, fieldwork consisted of in-depth interviews with fifty-three local residents and conservancy landowners and twenty key informant interviews with a diverse stakeholder population of ecotourism investors, civil society personnel, camp managers, and government officials, as well as observations and interviews rooted in the attendance of three conservancy landowners' lease negotiation meetings.

In presenting the resulting findings, we suggest that—in addition to significant potential for considerable profit margins to be realized by individual firms—these investments retain a number of other unique powers or capacities to transform prevailing varieties of environmental governance. Indeed, as Holmes and Cavanagh (2016) observed, there are often subtly "extra-economic" dimensions of conservation's neoliberalization to be considered, which "may be as much concerned with the inculcation of new subjectivities and forms of governance as they are with securing profits for individuals and institutions" (202). The latter might include, for instance, transformations of control over land and resources—whether via the transfer of property rights or other means of regulating access—or the substantive reform of livelihoods and production systems. Examples of the latter might include efforts to encourage the sedentarization of pastoralists or the adoption of reformed agricultural and land management practices. Hence, our corollary is that we might usefully remain attentive to contexts in which rural gentrification and for-profit conservation enterprises

might still counterintuitively enjoy support from a diverse range of actors—including, perhaps, private investors themselves—even if returns on investment at first fall well below the "market rate" (Dempsey and Suarez 2016) or fail to achieve returns equivalent to investments of the same value in more conventional sectors of the economy. As we explore later, these extraeconomic capacities manifest in this case in two interrelated forms: first, in the dissemination of environmental crisis narratives that stigmatize pastoralist communities and thus drive down land rents or values and, second, in the recapitalization of conservation territories and the reconfiguration of prevailing land uses in ways that enable novel forms of rural gentrification via the capture of heightened or differential ground rents.

In support of this argument, the article proceeds as follows. First, we discuss this new wave of private investment in Kenya's conservancy frontier in relation to literatures on neoliberal conservation (Igoe and Brockington 2007) and rural gentrification or "greentrification" (D. P. Smith and Phillips 2001), highlighting the ways in which dynamics of rent capture and territorial control evident within these processes could both nuance and extend our understanding of East Africa's contemporary land rush. Second, we present crucial historical background on the emergence of these conservancies in the Maasai Mara region, drawing particular attention to their institutional precursors in the form of colonial-era native reserves and postcolonial group ranches and situating these in relation to other forms of historically evolving "community-based" conservation in the region. Third, we examine donor- and investor-driven narratives of environmental crisis in southern Narok County, illuminating the ways in which such rhetoric is instrumental both in the "stigmatization" (Slater 2017) of pastoralist Maasai livelihoods and in potentially suppressing lease payment values in the former group ranches. Fourth, we present findings from a detailed analysis of lease agreements signed between local Maasai landowners and our sample of five nonstate conservancies, highlighting concerns related to lease payments, grazing rights, implementation procedures, and dispute resolution mechanisms. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of the implications of these findings for literatures in critical geography and political ecology on large-scale land acquisitions and rural gentrification in the context of global economic and environmental change.

For-Profit Conservation and the Gentrification of the African Landscape

In political ecology, critical human geography, and related fields, a vibrant literature engaging issues related to the neoliberalization of both conservation and other forms of environmental governance continues to expand and evolve (Igoe and Brockington 2007; Adams, Hodge, and Sandbrook 2014; Holmes and Cavanagh 2016). Here, the rise of attempts to link conservation with profit-generating enterprises of various kinds, as well as wider efforts to pursue the "greening" of economic growth more generally, have often been explained in relation to the identification of a socioecological fix for both the environmental and the overaccumulation crises of late capitalism (Büscher and Fletcher 2015). That is to say, political ecologists have often suggested that for-profit conservation and related means of economically internalizing the biophysical externalities of global production processes are being pursued as a means of simultaneously addressing the harmful ecological effects of industrial capitalism and identifying new investment opportunities for sustaining compounding processes of global economic growth (Cavanagh and Benjaminsen 2017).

Recently, Dempsey and Suarez (2016) intervened in this literature by framing the issue of for-profit conservation operating as a socioecological fix as an empirically open question or testable hypothesis, rather than as a theoretical explanation whose validity should ostensibly be accepted a priori. Taking stock of global investment data sets from Credit Suisse, WWF, and McKinsey & Company, these authors examine capital flows into what they term "for-profit biodiversity conservation," noting that these investments to date are largely "small, illiquid, and geographically constrained," and therefore usually achieve "little to no profit" in practice (Dempsey and Suarez 2016, 653). As a result, they concluded that critical theorizations of growth in for-profit conservation perhaps overestimate the current volume of actual capital flows in this domain and potentially thus overstate the likelihood for "market rate" or economically competitive returns to be realized within conservation relative to the returns that would accrue if the same amount of capital was invested in more conventional sectors of the global economy.

In short, Dempsey and Suarez's (2016) contribution is valuable in its efforts to empirically discipline

ongoing debates about the nature of for-profit conservation. Conversely, we also note that investment patterns in a wide range of sectors often cannot be fully explained by economic incentives and opportunities for profit maximization alone. Indeed, despite its growing power over the last several decades, finance capital still operates within complex global, regional, and national matrices of power. Therein, the interests of investors intersect—but do not always align—with those of (often internally heterogeneous) states, transnational institutions, civil society organizations, and other powerful actors (Sassen 2014). Although profit seeking and profit maximization, of course, remain core motivations for ascertaining the direction of prevailing capital flows, one can frequently also note instances in which the rationale of specific investments—or even particular investment portfolios—might in practice be overdetermined by variable constellations of political, sociocultural, and perhaps even socioecological interests or logics. To take perhaps one of the most straightforward examples, one cannot fully understand the intensively global operations of Islamic finance institutions and investment patterns without considering the embeddedness of those dynamics within a deeper sociocultural or theological framework. Indeed, the latter framework is one in which the profit motive interacts with a variety of other deeply rooted values—such as the ethical–theological imperative to avoid usury or excessive financial rent seeking—that likewise guide investment decisions and practices (Pollard and Samers 2007).

Here, an enhanced degree of engagement between political ecology and geographical literatures on the political economy of both finance and gentrification more specifically is potentially useful. Although typically associated with uneven patterns of investment within capitalist forms of urban development, we follow N. Smith (1996) in conceptualizing gentrification in the first instance as enabled by the closure of a "rent gap [...] between the potential ground rent level and the actual ground rent capitalized under the present land use" (65). Differently put, a rent gap is fundamentally an opportunity for "high levels of profit to be made by those people or institutions that can revalorize these areas by investing capital in new use of these areas" (Phillips 2005, 478). As is well known to geographers, N. Smith's classic theories of gentrification and the rent gap are drawn from urban examples and particularly from his studies of North American cities such as Baltimore and New York. This early work is often remembered for its economistic focus on the production of rent gaps and their closure via gentrifying patterns of investment (N. Smith 1979). Yet the development of N. Smith's oeuvre over time usefully draws our attention to the relationship or interplay between investment patterns, capital accumulation, and the inherently more-than-economic forms of politics, governance, and geographical imaginaries that ultimately both enable and constrain these investments (Kallin and Slater 2014).

As scholars of rural gentrification have noted, many of the same dynamics present in gentrifying urban areas—such as the exploitation of rent gaps by developers, the displacement of low-income individuals and families via "class colonization" (Phillips 1993) by the wealthy, and the associated conversion of land and property uses—are frequently at work elsewhere as well. Processes of rural gentrification have often been justified, however, not only with logics of economic growth and capital accumulation but also with ambitions related to conservation, sustainability, and the facilitation of ecotourism initiatives. So prevalent are such motivations that D. P. Smith and Phillips (2001) proposed the term *greentrification* in reference to rural landscapes, emphasizing widespread "demand for, and perception of, 'green' residential space" (457) among rural gentrifiers. In a similar vein, Hines (2010) argued that recent processes of rural gentrification in the U.S. West effectively amount to a form of "permanent tourism," given that "rural gentrifiers are enacting cultural projects that are akin to those of tourists but doing so with the intention of permanently writing them into the social and physical landscape." Yet as Darling (2005) argued, these "green" dimensions of rural gentrification are not necessarily only a cultural or symbolic phenomenon, primarily motivating the movement of people rather than capital. Instead, as she demonstrated with reference to New York State's Adirondack Park, Smith's notion of the rent gap is potentially applicable in idiosyncratic form to instances of "wilderness gentrification" as well, wherein a new wave of investment in conservation and ecotourism promises considerable returns for "green" redevelopers.

In much the same way, today, narratives of environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and intransigent local persistence with allegedly unsustainable land use practices stigmatize both rural African landscapes and those who reside in them. In turn, this

assists investors and project managers to exploit rent gaps for ostensibly more sustainable forms of capitalist (re)development. As Li (2014) observed in relation to the global investment rush for agricultural land following the 2007–2008 financial crisis, narratives of allegedly underproductive African lands and land users were said to present a "yield gap" that might be closed via the allocation of investment capital to acquire lands and resources, thereby enhancing productivity. Likewise, Geisler (2012) maintained that colonial *terra nullius* (unowned land) narratives are once again resurgent on the African continent, portraying customary lands in particular as chronically subject to tenure insecurity and low productivity, thus freeing up space for gentrification via capital investments for commercial agriculture or extractive industry. The crucial point here is that stories that stigmatize existing land use practices are integral to the mobilization of investment capital. In tandem with the emergence of a new wave of "green" capitalist development, investors are increasingly construed not only as boundedly rational market actors but also as a kind of "savior"—indeed, even as so-called "angel investors" in some instances—or potential harbingers of technical solutions to various environmental and development crises.

In relation to the case of nonstate conservancies in the Maasai Mara, we engage a set of processes in which such multiple or hybrid justifications for green gentrification are certainly observable empirically. These phenomena are hybrid in the literal sense, arising genealogically from evolutions or mutations of past efforts to extract lands, rents, and other resources from rural East African populations. Similarly, critical scholars have recently examined instances of "control grabbing" (Hall et al. 2015, 474) rather than land or resource grabbing as such, defined as a potentially coercive form of influence exerted over smallholders' own prevailing land use practices. Yet we suggest that the formation and expansion of Kenya's nonstate conservancy frontier provides insight into still comparatively novel processes and in ways that perhaps draw previously underexplored connections between the study of both land and resource appropriation within East Africa's contemporary land rush. Indeed, as the case of the Maasai Mara conservancies illuminates, rent gaps can be leveraged via stigmatization and subsequent capital investment, yet in ways that nonetheless still precipitate a degree of financial incorporation for local communities as landowning stakeholders. In turn, it is precisely this degree of incorporation—which can be more or less "adverse" (Hall et al. 2015, 475), depending on the exact terms of lease agreements—that continues to influence rural populations' agency within Kenya's nonstate conservancy frontier, the historically evolving context of which we address next.

Dispossession via Text: The Legal Evolution of Conservancy Leases

Southern Kenya is characterized by long histories of dispossession facilitated by asymmetric negotiation processes and the recurring deployment of fraudulent or otherwise disingenuous treaties and contracts. This has been the case since at least the late nineteenth century, when various African representatives signed—or simply marked with their thumbprints—treaties drafted by employees of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC). Given that these treaties were drafted solely in English, even the IBEAC official in charge of treaty signing, Frederick D. Lugard, questioned the validity of these agreements at the time. This was so given that—as Lugard (1893) himself wrote in a retrospective account of his IBEAC activities—"the cession of all rights of rule in his country was, in my opinion, asking for more than was fair from a native chief" (329).

These patterns of disingenuous treaty signing between the British and the Maasai continued in the early twentieth century. The first of these was signed in 1904, dividing the Maasai into two sections: one inhabiting the Laikipia plateau on the northern border of the emerging White Highlands populated by European settlers and a southern section inhabiting the rangelands of the contemporary Narok and Kajiado counties near the border with German East Africa (now Tanzania; Waller 1976). In 1911, however, the administration reneged on the 1904 treaty to expand the land area available for European settlement, forcing the northern section of the Maasai in Laikipia to relocate to an enlarged southern reserve. Hughes (2006) argued that the implications of this relocation were disastrous for the Maasai, dispossessing them of highly productive lands in Laikipia and drastically increasing population densities in the lower productivity and tsetse fly–infested southern rangelands.

This dispossessory precedent notwithstanding, Matheka (2005) noted that there is also a somewhat paradoxically long history of ostensibly "community-based" wildlife conservation in these southern Kenyan rangelands. Such tendencies toward an early form of community conservation are evident in the initial structure of the expansive northern and southern game reserves. The latter alone encompassed nearly 26,000 km^2 of what was then the East Africa Protectorate by 1910 and did not at first distinguish between territories designated as native reserves and those designated as game reserves. Indeed, the two land use categories were initially overlapping. Here, the early, paternalistic colonial assumption—reflecting a type of social Darwinist or "ecologically noble savage" ideology (Cavanagh 2019)—was that, as "pastoralists with no tradition of hunting, neither the Maasai [in the southern game reserve] or the Samburu [in the northern game reserve] were … a threat to wildlife in their areas" (Matheka 2005, 241).

This perception rapidly began to fade after the relocation of the Maasai from Laikipia to an expanded Southern Maasai Native Reserve after 1911, however, within which British administrators soon became increasingly preoccupied with the twin problems of human overpopulation and cattle overstocking (Tignor 1976). By the 1920s, boundaries between the Maasai native reserve and various portions of the southern game reserve began to be demarcated more firmly, not least due to growing anxieties about the potential for zoonotic diseases to spread from wildlife to uninoculated livestock populations and the presumed inability of the Maasai to protect themselves and their livestock from tsetse fly–infested areas (Lindsay 1987). From this juncture onward, the enforcement of wildlife regulations thus began to more closely resemble the types of fortress conservation that are more typical of colonial protected area management across eastern and southern Africa (Brockington 2002), once again reneging on British assurances to the Maasai that incipient conservation practices would not negatively affect their livelihoods (Homewood and Rodgers 1991). Even here, however, a certain variety of community logic persisted throughout the late colonial period, as the newly established reserves—such as Amboseli and Maasai Mara, gazetted in 1948—were officially instructed to share the economic proceeds of tourism with local communities (Matheka 2005). The nature of this late colonial compromise resulted in Maasai Mara remaining a national reserve under the control of the local county council after independence, rather than a national park under the centralized control of the colonial and later the republican state (Collett 1987). Indeed, this is a compromise that persists into the present in the form of the contemporary Maasai Mara National Reserve, which is formally owned and managed by the local government of Narok County, rather than the central government and the Kenya Wildlife Service (MMWCA 2018).

After independence, Kenya's former native reserves were converted to a new category of trust lands, formally owned by local district governments on behalf of resident populations of rural land users (Okoth-Ogendo 1991). For some emerging development experts, these trust lands would ideally be privatized, thereby enabling individuals and private firms to use land as collateral for accessing credit and catalyzing further investment. Such privatization initiatives had in fact already been implemented unevenly within Kenya's native reserves prior to independence—under the auspices of the Swynnerton Plan—but were confined largely to agricultural areas in the central and western highlands (Haugerud 1989). Conversely, certain development agencies, such as the World Bank and USAID, argued that privatization schemes were not well suited to land reforms in the more arid sections of the former native reserves. In these areas, transhumant pastoralism remained the dominant mode of livelihood, necessitating mobility across expansive landscapes to harness seasonally variable grazing, foraging, and livestock watering opportunities.

By the late 1960s, an alternative model of land reform had thus emerged for application in Kenya's arid and semiarid rangelands: the group ranch (Kimani and Pickard 1998). In short, group ranches provided an alternative to both privatization and public ownership in the form of trust lands, enabling a registered body of land users to collectively own a legally gazetted and demarcated rangeland for their common use, with decision-making processes guided by an elected body of executive board members or trustees. The study of these group ranches in Kenya has yielded a considerable literature, particularly given that their establishment quickly yielded what was to many an unexpected empirical outcome: widespread subdivision and privatization. As Galaty

(1994) noted, internal conflicts quickly emerged within the newly established group ranches, particularly as ranch trustees sought to position themselves favorably at the expense of their constituents. In turn, this sparked processes of—first, informal—subdivision, in which local political and economic elites used their relative power and influence to accumulate larger or more economically valuable landholdings and in some instances selling these to outsiders (Mwangi 2007). The result was a subsequent rush toward formal subdivision and privatization, in which group ranch members sought to protect their individual lands from dispossession by both local elites and outside speculators via the assertion of private property rights (Homewood, Coast, and Thompson 2004).

Crucially, it is this context of formally subdivided group ranches that investors and other ecotourism brokers have recently engaged to establish nonstate conservancies in the Maasai Mara region. From a conservation perspective, group ranches in the immediate vicinity of the state-owned Maasai Mara National Reserve and other protected areas in the region serve as important wildlife corridors and dispersal zones, ones that have become increasingly fragmented via the proliferation of private landholdings and the subsequent fencing of these (Boone and Hobbs 2004). In this regard, the formation of group conservancies—in which investors lease land from associations of private landholders, removing fences or preventing their erection in exchange for regular lease payments—initially struck many as a relatively sophisticated solution to the challenge of increasingly fragmented wildlife dispersal areas (Blackburn et al. 2016).

Although these conservancies are "new"—in the sense that they only obtained full legal recognition after 2013—they are unavoidably also layered on earlier forms of "community" conservation from the late colonial period onward (see also Igoe and Croucher 2007). As Western (1994) noted, the rise of community-based conservation rhetoric in Kenya after independence mirrors the emergence of "integrated conservation and development" policy in the transnational conservation sphere more broadly. This is evidenced both by the Kenya Wildlife Service's commitment in the late 1980s to share 25 percent of gate receipts from national parks with local communities and—in the case of southern Kenya's rangelands—to experiment with private forms of conservation and ecotourism in the former group ranches.

These early experiments were limited, however, both by the tumultuous context of ongoing group ranch subdivision from the 1980s onward and by relatively tepid engagement from both investors and a broad constituency of local landowners. Although these experiments in the former group ranches clearly prefigure the dynamics of the new nonstate conservancies, they at first generally lacked full legal recognition—and thus, crucially, legal certainty for investors. As such, early attempts at community conservation in the group ranches were occasionally perceived as a "top-down approach 'invented' at the KWS headquarters" (Rutten 2002, 22) with limited resonance on the ground in local communities.

In what follows, we examine the ways in which the precipitous rise of nonstate conservancies after 2013 has begun to reshape the contours of this evolving historical context of "community" conservation from the late colonial period to date. Connecting the emergence of these conservancies to processes of rural gentrification, the following section outlines how donors, consultants, and actors within Kenya's nonstate conservancy industry have played critical roles in stigmatizing prevailing human–environment relations in the Maasai Mara region, often in ways reminiscent of the colonial environmental narratives of the past. As we will see, the ensuing production of an environmental crisis narrative in the region thus creates a highly asymmetrical context for the negotiation of conservancy lease agreements. This is particularly so as one party (the investor) is positioned as an environmental savior and another party (the landowner) is framed largely as a threat to wildlife conservation or an obstacle to sustainable development more broadly.

Stigmatizing the Commons: Narratives of Environmental Crisis and Green Gentrification

Over the course of the last century, there has been remarkable consistency within state and other exogenous characterizations of Maasai livelihoods, as well as their environmental implications. Overpopulation, overstocking, and the consequences of both for the conservation of wildlife constitute recurring themes (Homewood and Rodgers 1991). Moreover, such justifications are of increasingly pressing relevance, as the area framed as necessary for protection from Maasai

pastoralism is rapidly growing alongside the ongoing expansion of nonstate conservancies.

Here, investors, environmental professionals, and other brokers of the ecotourism industry have frequently resorted to a minimally revised version of colonial environmental narratives to justify this growth. For instance, the KWCA frames the overall predicament as follows, clearly evoking colonial tropes of pastoralists' "cattle complex" (Collett 1987) or alleged tendency to accumulate "irrationally" large numbers of livestock for reasons of cultural prestige:

> Most of the wildlife rich counties are inhabited by pastoralists whose culture defines wealth in terms of livestock herds. Recurrent droughts and poor land use practice leads to overgrazing, soil erosion and ultimately land degradation. … Pasture and water scarcity drive pastoral livestock to protected areas and conservancies. (KWCA 2016, 75)

In turn, the KWCA's account largely parallels the Kenyan Ministry of Environment's own perspective. As a recent "state of the art" report from the latter would have it, the "most likely causes of wildlife declines" in Kenya's southern rangelands are primarily attributable to

> Rapid human population growth and its ramifying effects on the rangeland ecosystems. … Habitat degradation, fragmentation and loss are attributed to land-use and cover changes associated with unregulated expansion of agriculture along rainfall gradients and settlements, land-use intensification, over-stocking and over-grazing, unsustainable range management, [and] unregulated wood harvesting for firewood. (Republic of Kenya 2017, 5)

In such characterizations, it is primarily pastoralists' own "irrational" or "suboptimal" livestock and land management practices that constitute the most salient drivers of land degradation. Not least, this recalls Kallin and Slater's (2014) observation that the "state's role in creating the very stigma it then insists on scrubbing" (1351) is a key more-than-economic feature of gentrification processes. Moreover, so apparently extensive are the deleterious consequences of these practices that such degradation is said to be occurring not only on community or privately owned rangelands but also within existing protected areas due to encroachment for illegal grazing (e.g., Veldhuis et al. 2019).

In a similar vein, one of the major investors in Naboisho Conservancy, Svein Wilhelmsen—CEO and owner of the celebrated Norwegian ecotourism company Basecamp Explorer—phrased his own appraisal rather starkly: "We have huge issues, let me only mention two for you—too many livestock leading to over-grazing and too fast population growth" (Wilhelmsen 2017). Reiterating this position in an interview with the second author, Wilhelmsen emphasized the apparent "crisis" of Maasai population growth in particular:

> It is a huge urgency and what is propelling the urgency is first and foremost the fact of population growth. It is absolutely not sustainable and so we [investors] are fighting against time because of the very high population growth. (Interview 2017)

Other investors and conservation managers insist that their efforts are essential as well due to the Kenyan state's own apparent unwillingness or inability to expand public conservation activities. As the Olarro Conservancy manager William Hofmeyr put it:

> Without us here, it would be a catastrophe. … When we got here, there was very little, almost no grass on the ground. The elephants were actually getting killed because no one was really here [conserving] per se. … Now you can see for yourself, the animals are relaxed, because they know they are in a safe place. … There are boots on the ground and lives on the line over here to ensure that any guests coming over can sit in their vehicle and enjoy and just thoroughly relax. (Olarro Conservancy 2018)

In short, such narratives position investors and conservationists such as Wilhelmsen and Hofmeyr, as Gardner (2017) recently put it, in a long tradition of European interventions oriented toward "saving African wildlife while also saving Africans from themselves" (348). Without external capital and expertise, in other words, investors imply that Maasai communities are likely condemned to carry out the supposed environmental ruination of their own lands and resources. As we discuss in the following section, such forms of stigmatization can exacerbate the marginalization of rural populations both literally and figuratively, most recently by constraining local capacity to effectively negotiate agreements for conservancy leases and other forms of resource governance.

Contractual Political Ecologies: Institutionalizing Marginality in Conservancy Lease Agreements

Indeed, our empirical fieldwork in southern Narok suggests that negotiation processes for the formulation of conservancy lease agreements have been highly asymmetrical. In Narok County as a whole, for instance, the overall literacy rate is 67 percent, with substantially lower levels in the most rural and pastoralist-dominated areas of the county (Narok County 2018, xvii). As such, it is notable that lease agreements for most conservancies in the region were drafted in English and in the form of lengthy documents characterized by complex legal jargon. Not wholly unlike the first treaties signed between Maasai leaders and the IBEAC, then, literacy is still today not a legal requirement for entering into a contractually binding lease agreement. In contexts where landowners are illiterate, conservancy investors have secured lease agreements "signed" with either a thumbprint or another apparently distinctive mark, witnessed by a third party or notary. In some instances, landowners were reportedly allowed only one hour to consider the terms of lease agreements described to them verbally and were offered a signing bonus for immediate acceptance (interview 2018). After signing, some landowners alleged that they were not even provided with a copy of their lease agreement, apparently on the presumption that their illiteracy rendered this irrelevant. As one respondent put it, "If you have a problem, you just have to go to court and find your lease agreement there" (interview 2018).

In what follows, we outline findings from an analysis of lease agreements on three thematic areas to further illuminate why the formation of conservancies might have exacerbated tensions between landowners and investors in this context: (1) grazing and resource access rights, (2) lease payment values, and (3) dispute resolution mechanisms (Table 1).

Grazing and Resource Access Rights

In general, conservancy lease agreements extinguish landowners' preexisting grazing and other resource access rights for the duration of the lease period (usually fifteen years). For instance, the Naboisho Conservancy (n.d.) lease agreement states that landowners agree to "not use or permit the Premises [of the conservancy] or any part thereof to be used to graze livestock save in periods of extreme drought save with the Tenant's prior and written approval" (7). Although such restrictions are common across each of the conservancies examined, the exact wording of specific agreements can be restrictive to a greater or lesser degree. Olarro Conservancy's (n.d.) lease agreement, for instance, prohibits not only grazing but "any activities such as (but not limited to) farming, the grazing of livestock, grassland management (mowing, re-seeding, burning, weeding, or fertilizing) and amenity woodland management … except as may have been previously agreed with the lessee and then only on the terms and conditions as may have been agreed with the lessee" (9). Hence, although grazing could still take place within the conservancy under certain

Table 1. Conservancy socioeconomic indicators

Conservancy	Size (ha)	No. of landowners	Grazing rights	Lease values (2018, US$ per ha)	Dispute resolution protocol
Naboisho	21,628	609	None; privileges granted at tenant's discretion	43.70	Place, Nairobi; language, English; appeal process, none; costs, private
Olarro (North and South)	9,914	2,200	None; privileges granted at tenant's discretion	28.17	Place, Nairobi; language, English; appeal process, none; costs, private
Mara North	26,129	696	None; privileges granted at tenant's discretion (via land management plan)	48.55	Place, Nairobi; language, English; appeal process, none; costs, private
Pardamat	26,069	850	None; privileges granted at tenant's discretion (via land management plan)	30.65	Place, Nairobi; language, English; appeal process, none; costs, private
Siana	4,451	1,484	None; privileges negotiated via land management plan	27.03	Place, Nairobi; language, English; appeal process, none; costs, private

Source: Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association (2019) and respective lease agreements.

circumstances, this is essentially a privilege extended at the discretion of investors and conservancy managers rather than a right held by landowners.

Moreover, lease agreements are often explicit that the revocation of grazing rights also entails the loss of residence or habitation rights for both landowners and livestock. As Olarro Conservancy's (n.d.) agreement stipulates, "All the Maasai homesteads … and all other third party occupiers within the Conservancy are vacated and removed … at the sole cost of the lessors. Furthermore … no new Maasai homesteads are established within the Conservancy during the entire lease period" (9). Consequently, although donors and investors alike construe the formation of these conservancies as a form of "community-based conservation" (e.g., USAID 2017), this remains a form of conservation that requires the absolute separation of rural land users and wildlife within the same landscape. Moreover, the costs of separating humans and livestock from the landscape—such as the removal of dwellings or other structures—are incurred by the landowners themselves.

In relation to the preceding stipulations, lease agreements reviewed for the Mara North, Pardamat, and Siana conservancies are relatively lenient, explicitly allowing for grazing subject to the formulation of conservancy land management plans (LMPs) rather than purely at the discretion of conservancy managers. Yet the exact nature of these plans can also vary according to the precise terms of existing lease agreements. Here, for instance, the lease for Siana Conservancy (n.d.) is somewhat unique, stipulating that its LMP will be negotiated with landowners—specifically, that it "will be *developed by mutual agreement* between the Lessee and the Lessor soon after the signing of this Agreement to Lease" (34, emphasis added). By contrast, the agreements for Mara North and Pardamat conservancies note that a certain amount of grazing access will be permitted under their respective LMPs but do not explicitly state that these plans are open to negotiation with landowners. Pardamat Conservancy (n.d.), for instance, simply notes that a relevant plan will be developed in "consultation" with landowners and that "the initial rules and regulations to be promulgated as aforesaid will be made available to the Tenant as soon as practicable following execution of this Lease" (7). Likewise, the Mara North Conservancy (n.d.) is forthright that its management plan "will be developed by the Tenant" rather than the landowners and that it alone will be responsible for determining the management of "the grazing of livestock, if any, within the Conservancy" (6).

In short, these lease agreements denote that control over territory and natural resources within newly formed conservancies is effectively captured by investors and conservationists, even though ownership rights remain vested in local Maasai pastoralists. In relation to resource access and land use practices, conservancy agreements provide for a disproportionate allocation of decision-making power to investors and conservation personnel, largely extinguishing landowners' grazing rights and other customary forms of natural resource management. Notably, such arrangements are somewhat unique in the field of property lease law, in which such decision-making rights and powers typically remain vested in land or asset owners, rather than in tenants who simply rent access to the properties or assets in question. Moreover, the significance of these grazing and other resource access restrictions becomes particularly salient when considered in relation to the value of lease payments, as we discuss next.

Lease Payment Values

According to lease agreements in force, 2018 payments to landowners in the five conservancies reviewed were, on average, US$35.62 per hectare per year. There is also quite considerable variation among these, with payments ranging from US$27.03 per hectare at Siana Conservancy to US$48.55 per hectare per year at Mara North. Although these lease payments provide a stable source of regular income—unlike agriculture or pastoralism, which can vary seasonally and in response to various kinds of economic or ecological shocks—most of our respondents maintain that they still do not raise equivalent incomes (see also Bedelian and Ogutu 2017). In other words, landowners have effectively accepted a form of conservation-induced displacement in exchange for incomes that are reliable, yet reportedly often lower than the prevailing economic baseline or preconservancy scenario, suggesting that the lease payments do not adequately compensate for opportunity costs.

As one landowner from Naboisho Conservancy described the underlying predicament:

> If I keep fifty bulls in that parcel, I think I will make more than the 6,000 [Kenya shillings, approximately US$60] I am receiving every month. … I calculated that it is less than 100,000 a year. (Interview 2017)

In such instances, information asymmetries and inequalities of bargaining power between landowners and investors are brought to the fore. Indeed, poverty and the need for an immediate cash infusion to cover basic household necessities can often persuade landowners to sign these agreements despite concerns about economic losses accruing over a longer term. Moreover, the internal dynamics of the former group ranches denote that once conservancies convince several landowners to sign lease agreements it becomes increasingly difficult for others to refrain from doing so. In our sample of local landowners, for instance, land ownership ranged from 10 to 400 hectares per household (interviews 2017). In the context of such inequality, smaller landowners who choose to keep their land use rights and who decline to sign lease agreements can effectively be denied productive access to their parcels by implication. Indeed, their neighbors and conservationists may legally prevent grazing and the migration of livestock to and from the parcel in question, a context that can ultimately force reluctant landowners' acquiescence to conservancy lease agreements (interview 2018). For instance, Butt (2016) also documented instances where landowners who have not leased their land to conservancies have been fined up to approximately US$100 for "trespassing" to access water and grazing on nearby properties. Many landowners are faced with few alternatives to such trespassing if they wish to maintain access to their lands, however, given the region's semiarid landscape and the necessity of migration for accessing water or other resources to sustain pastoral productivity.

Within the framework of an established conservancy, the question of whether these lease payments are excessively low depends on their relation to the rent gap leveraged by conservancy investors and the returns that they subsequently receive. According to MMWCA staff, conservancy lodges in the Maasai Mara region are considered profitable if they exceed an occupancy rate of approximately 30 percent per year. Moreover, it is currently estimated that at least 95 percent of lodges achieve this target in any given year (interview 2018).

Prices per night of accommodation also vary widely between lodges, however. In some cases—such as the Mahali Mzuri lodge owned by Richard Branson's Virgin Airlines in Olare-Motorogi Conservancy—rates at the time of fieldwork were in excess of US$1,700 per night. In this regard, investors are explicit that they wish to target only the most upmarket segment of the global ecotourism industry, overtly conceding that this price point is, in fact, attractive to some clients, because it "ensures exclusivity and privacy" (interview 2018). Yet regardless of whether a given tourist lodge charges US$500, US$1,000, or US$1,500 per unit of accommodation, lease payments to conservancy landowners largely remain constant rather than variable in accordance with investor returns.

At the only two lodges within Olarro Conservancy, for instance, room rates are approximately US$1,000 per night, with premium accommodation options attracting even higher rates. Moreover, this figure excludes additional conservancy fees levied on visiting tourists of US$100 per night, which are used to cover operational expenses. At this price point, we estimate that Olarro Conservancy would be able to cover its entire annual lease payment with approximately only twenty-five nights at full capacity from the flagship Olarro Lodge property alone. Similarly, the larger Naboisho Conservancy hosts eight ecotourism camps backed by several different investors, each of which charge fees in the approximate range of US$500 to US$1,500 per night. These investors share the lease payments among themselves, thereby distributing risk arising from fluctuations in tourism demand. One of these investors, the Norwegian company Basecamp Explorer, which is 40 percent owned by the Norwegian Investment Fund for Developing Countries (Norfund), reported a surplus of approximately US$167,000 in 2017. This is despite significantly growing its operations and investing further capital in the establishment and construction of additional ecotourism camps (Basecamp Explorer 2018).

Accordingly, the profit margins potentially enabled by these agreements raise questions about how lease payment values were initially determined. As one conservation professional put it:

> When the [first] conservancies were set up … the tourism partners are the ones who decided, with a few people, that this is what your land is worth. Right now, the land value has gone up and I think the land owners know that. So, I think when the lease is run out, during the negotiations there are going to be a lot

> of fights because the land owners will say, "Our land is worth this much," and of course the tourism partners would want to pay less. (interview 2017)

Given the liberal nature of land markets in Kenya, land leases are generally determined on a "willing buyer, willing seller" basis. As such, lease payment values are largely influenced by prevailing dynamics of supply and demand without significant mediation by pricing regulations. Like all liberal market transactions, however, such agreements are nonetheless subject to the possibility of information asymmetries between negotiating parties, particularly regarding knowledge about average prices and price trends in local land markets. As the preceding respondent alludes, land prices in Narok County—as well as elsewhere in Kenya—have been rising steadily, on average up 7.37 percent overall in 2017 despite widespread election-related tensions and recurring protests in parts of the country (HassConsult 2018). Yet such detailed information about rising land values remains largely inaccessible to rural populations. As a result, information asymmetries at baseline point to the salience of dispute resolution mechanisms built into lease agreements, which are likely to be increasingly activated as landowners gain more information about their legal and financial position in relation to both land markets and external investors.

Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

If disputes arise about existing conservancy lease agreements, contracts currently in force have stipulated a preexisting arbitration protocol. Although this is generally positive, the nature of these protocols might actually compound existing inequalities, because they demand the investment of considerable volumes of time and expenditures on behalf of all parties. Both landowners and investors are privately responsible for incurring these expenses, despite the vastly unequal resources at their respective disposal.

The mundane practicalities or machinations of these arbitration processes are also of concern. For example, each of the five lease agreements in the preceding analysis stipulate that arbitration procedures must take place exclusively in Nairobi and that the proceedings must be in English. As noted in the Pardamat Conservancy (n.d.) lease agreement, for instance, "[w]here a Party does not understand the English language or is unable to fluently follow proceedings in English language, the such party shall appoint an interpreter at their sole cost, risk and expense" (17). Such costs accrue in addition to other legal expenses that might be incurred in the arbitration process, as well as any travel and opportunity costs of attending arbitration proceedings in Nairobi. Given that more than 22 percent of Narok County's population lives below the official "poverty headcount ratio" of US$1.90 per day (Narok County 2018), the fact that proceedings are held in Nairobi might itself denote that participation in arbitration proceedings is beyond the means of many landowners. Indeed, this is particularly the case as several landowners have lamented the travel and other costs incurred to attend conservancy negotiation processes only within Narok County itself (interviews 2017).

Despite the costly and distant nature of these arbitration proceedings, existing agreements are also clear that the result of these dispute resolution mechanisms cannot be appealed. As the Mara North Conservancy (n.d.) agreement states, "The determination of the Arbitrator shall be final and binding upon the parties and shall not be subject to any appeal" (21). The fact that such weight is attributed to the conclusion of arbitration proceedings is significant given the highly unequal resources at the disposal of the various parties: from illiterate, relatively impoverished landowners to well-capitalized international investors and the Kenyan legal experts at their disposal. In the absence of effective legal representation for an aggrieved party, therefore, arbitration processes can potentially exacerbate or compound existing asymmetries of power and wealth, rather than ameliorate them.

Finally, an indirect means through which disputes over lease agreements can be resolved is through the incorporation of review provisions into conservancy contracts. When present, such provisions allow for the renegotiation of certain lease conditions at predetermined intervals, should one or both parties desire this (interview 2018). Yet even when present, the usefulness of such procedures depends on the quantity and quality of information available to all concerned. As one conservation professional put it:

> Now, it becomes very messy trying to fight [lease agreements]. … There is no awareness within members so that you know that this is how much the conservancy is earning and this is how much you are supposed to earn. Because before it was the tourism partners saying this land is worth this much and this is

> what we are willing to give you, take it or leave it. But now the community is getting more aware. (Interview 2017)

Given that investors are under no legal obligation to disclose information about their profit margins or other indicators of economic performance to either landowners or the MMWCA, both often lack accurate data about the significance of lease payments relative to the returns accruing to investors. If such awareness increases via the receipt of new information via informal or formal channels, the activation of contract review provisions might allow landowners to renegotiate their position relative to investors in comparatively favorable ways. If the activation of such review clauses proves impossible, however, landowners are faced with the prospect of either disputing their agreements though lengthy and expensive arbitration processes or finding more informal and clandestine ways of communicating their grievances to investors and conservation managers.

In some cases, landowners undertake precisely such clandestine measures to resist conservancy managers or to coerce reforms of existing management practices. Such measures include fencing remaining community lands adjacent to conservancies, which blocks wildlife migration routes and effectively isolates conservancies from the broader Mara ecosystem (Weldemichel and Lein 2019). As one landowner from Mara North put it, "I would rather fence … than getting that 3,200 shillings payment every month" (interview 2017). Similarly, in Olarro Conservancy alone, five elephants have died "mysteriously" since the beginning of 2019, with conservation managers alleging that they were poisoned by disaffected conservancy landowners (Kiplagat 2019). As documented elsewhere in eastern Africa, such elephant killings appear to serve as a common means of protesting the perceived injustices of conservation in the region, rather than simply being instances of "poaching" or hunting for economic gain (Mariki, Svarstad, and Benjaminsen 2015). More overtly, large protests erupted at Naboisho and Mara North conservancies in September 2019, wherein a group of more than 400 disenchanted landowners blocked roads, prevented normal ecotourism operations, and demanded reforms as a result of grievances about low lease payment values and inequitable conservancy decision-making processes (Sayagie 2019).

Understandably, such unrest among landowners also influences discussions about whether to renew lease contracts if lease payment values do not increase. In Mara North, for instance, fourteen of the twenty landowners who formally contributed to a 2017 meeting mentioned concerns about the value of lease payments, threatening to withdraw when the current contract period ends. As one of the participants put it, lamenting the insignificance of lease payments relative to conservancy profits, "I am never going to sign my parcel in again. I am waiting for this agreement to end" (interview 2017). Hence, despite ongoing processes of marginalization, these and other similar deliberations point to the ways in which landowners continue to exercise both formal and informal varieties of agency, which might eventually force investors to renegotiate lease payment values or prevailing means of governing access to land and resources in the Maasai Mara region.

Conclusion

Engaging geographical literatures on rural gentrification and for-profit conservation, this article has examined political–ecological dynamics underpinning the rapid expansion of southern Kenya's nonstate conservancy frontier. As Dempsey and Suarez (2016) usefully cautioned, empirical data to date on the performance of large-scale investment portfolios oriented toward "for-profit biodiversity conservation" suggest that critical theorizations of these phenomena might at times overestimate the current volume of actual capital flows in this domain and could thus risk overstating the likelihood for "market rate" returns to be realized within conservation as opposed to more conventional sectors of the global economy. Examining the rapid growth in geographical coverage of Kenya's nonstate conservancies following the extension of full legal recognition in 2013, however, we have suggested that the speed and scale of this ongoing expansion cannot be fully explained by the profit motive and investors' return-seeking behavior alone. Investigating the "extra-economic" (Holmes and Cavanagh 2016) dimensions of rural gentrification in the region, we have explored the ways in which for-profit conservation might still counterintuitively enjoy support from a diverse range of actors even when returns on investment at first fall below the market rate. Indeed, such support could result from the other unique powers or capacities of for-

profit conservation to transform prevailing varieties of environmental governance; for instance, by transferring control over lands and resources even in contexts where the existing mosaic or distribution of de jure property rights remains unaltered.

Our empirical analysis of these phenomena in southern Kenya offers to enrich our understanding of for-profit conservation and rural gentrification in three primary ways. First—as alluded to earlier—the case of nonstate conservancies in Kenya's Maasai Mara underscores that it is not only or necessarily ownership rights that are being acquired via processes of large-scale land and resource grabbing or appropriation in the region. Under existing forms of group conservancy lease arrangements in Narok County, for instance, more than 14,000 private landowners have pooled their properties together, transferring usufruct rights to outside investors and managers under certain prescribed conditions. For some, this model denotes that the Maasai Mara region lies at the forefront of a new wave of community-owned rather than merely community-based conservation initiatives, wherein pastoralist landowners are well positioned to benefit rather than to be excluded from the establishment of nonstate conservancies (USAID 2017). As such, these processes perhaps nuance accounts of global land grabbing that emphasize the ways in which acquisitions are enabled by states' long-standing refusal to recognize rural communities' customary or other property rights (see, especially, Geisler 2012). Rather, legacies of group ranch subdivision and formal privatization have yielded a context in the Maasai Mara in which pastoralists retain both clear and secure rights to land. Yet this fact appears to have facilitated rather than inhibited the displacement of existing land use practices for conservation. Moreover, these transfers have occurred collectively, in some instances entailing nearly the entirety of former group ranches, rather than a piecemeal or gradual "dispossession via the market" that has been identified in other empirical settings (Fairhead, Leach, and Scoones 2012).

Second, our article contributes to a heightened understanding of why a growing number of private investors are increasingly prepared to enter into such lease agreements for the formation of private or otherwise nonstate conservancies. Engaging literatures on rural gentrification or "greentrification" (D. P. Smith and Phillips 2001), we have sought to illuminate the ways in which the ongoing land rush in Kenya's nonstate conservancy frontier is often structured around the exploitation or leveraging of differential rent gaps between actually capitalized and potential ground rents. As a number of critical geographers have recently noted, the leveraging of rent gaps typically entails two interrelated processes: initially, the "territorial stigmatization" of particular locales, communities, and associated land uses in ways that drive down land rents or values and, second, the facilitation of investments that recapitalize particular territories and reconfigure prevailing land uses in ways that allow the capture of heightened or differential ground rents (Slater 2017). In the Maasai Mara region, such rent gaps appear to be increasingly produced and harnessed by investors through an environmental crisis narrative that stigmatizes Maasai pastoralists and portrays investors as "saviors" or harbingers of crucial environmental interventions. Moreover, both government and donor support for these arrangements helps investors to realize this rent gap in practice, precipitating the conservancies' rapid expansion despite the possibility that more competitive returns on investment might be attainable in more conventional sectors of the economy.

Finally, however, our analysis of existing conservancy agreements in the Mara region also yields a detailed understanding of the ways in which the negotiation processes and precise terms of these agreements remain critically important in transforming material forms of control over land and resources. Indeed, these more-than-economic powers or capacities are perhaps just as important as investor returns in explaining the rapid expansion of nonstate conservancies in Kenya. Existing lease agreements vary considerably, both in the values of lease payments transferred to landowners, and in the minutiae of provisions governing grazing and resource access rights, dispute resolution mechanisms, and other conservancy regulations. As the case of Maasai Mara's nonstate conservancies demonstrates, the mere fact that ostensibly "green" investors have not acquired such ownership rights does not necessarily denote that outcomes for rural land users will be substantially less maligned than those entailed by more clearly deleterious instances of land grabbing or accumulation by dispossession. As our analysis of these lease agreements makes clear, the devil remains firmly in the details, because the potential beneficence of these contracts for local populations depends almost entirely on the (in)equitable nature of the processes through which

they are negotiated and implemented. Recent developments in the Maasai Mara suggest that landowners are certainly capable of exercising their agency in ways that disrupt ecotourism operations if they perceive their grievances as remaining unaddressed, indicating that the ongoing expansion of conservancies retains the potential to exacerbate rather than to ameliorate these conflict dynamics (Weldemichel et al. 2019). As such, the contestation and reformulation of such agreements and the institutional matrices in which they are enacted will doubtlessly feature in political ecologies to come of the rapidly expanding nonstate conservancy frontier, whether in Kenya, eastern Africa, or far beyond.

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Paper III

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Othering Pastoralists, State Violence, and the Remaking of Boundaries in Tanzania's Militarised Wildlife Conservation Sector

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Abstract: This paper examines the ways in which Tanzanian conservation authorities utilise biodiversity "extinction narratives" in order to legitimise the use of violence in redrawing protected areas' boundaries. Militarisation and violence in conservation have often been associated with the "war on poaching". Drawing on the history of conservation and violence in Tanzania, and using an empirical case from Loliondo, the paper suggests that violence in conservation may be legitimised when based on extinction narratives and a claim that more exclusive spaces are urgently needed to protect biodiversity. It argues that the emerging militarisation and use of violence in Tanzania can be associated with both global biodiversity extinction and local neo-Malthusian narratives, which recently have regained predominance. When combined with "othering" of groups of pastoralists by portraying them as foreign "invaders", such associations legitimise extensions of state control over contested land by any means available, including violence.

Keywords: poaching, political ecology, buffer zones, extinction narratives, Maasai, Serengeti

Introduction

This paper emerged from an incident I encountered just before starting fieldwork in Loliondo, a subdistrict in Ngorongoro District of Arusha Region, Tanzania. Loliondo is located on the north-eastern border of the Serengeti National Park (SENAPA) and the purpose of my visit was to meet with village leaders and to obtain permission to do fieldwork. A few minutes into a discussion with one of the village leaders, the leader received a phone call and I was aware that he was furious about the information he had just received about the park authorities burning the homes of local people in his village on the park's boundary. Our discussion was interrupted, and the village leader suggested that, together with a driver from Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI), I should leave the village immediately, as local people might have confused us with government conservation workers and attacked.[1]

While driving towards SENAPA we witnessed park rangers and government security forces burning Maasai *bomas* (traditional houses) along the road, while

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the owners stood by helplessly. Investigation reports by Mittal and Fraser (2018) and Pastoralists Indigenous Non Governmental Organization's Forum (2017) later revealed that over 200 Maasai pastoralists' homes were burned on that day alone. Similar actions continued for the several months, during which c. 5800 homes were destroyed by government forces between August and November 2017, leaving more than 23,000 people homeless (Mittal and Fraser 2018).

Wildlife conservation practices, particularly in Africa, involve a long history of often violent encounters between communities and conservation authorities (Brockington and Igoe 2006). Colonial and postcolonial authorities often established exclusive protected areas through spatial designations by dividing up and containing societies and nature in discrete categories (Brockington and Igoe 2006; Neumann 2005; Ngoitiko et al. 2010). Authorities commonly used military and military-like techniques and violence to deter communities from continuing traditional hunting practices, cultivation and accessing livestock grazing grounds (Brockington 2002). Hence, violence in the name of conservation is not new (Lunstrum 2014) and it is not unique to Tanzania (Cavanagh and Benjaminsen 2015; Schauer 2018). Rather, it represents a continuation and hardening of some aspects of the violent "fortress conservation" (Brockington 2002), which was widely challenged by proponents of participatory conservation models around the end of the 20th century (Lunstrum 2014).

Nevertheless, elements of the fortress model seem to have regained acceptance in recent years in Tanzania (Benjaminsen et al. 2013; Goldman 2009; Noe 2019). While there is a growing body of literature on militarisation and violence in conservation (e.g. Büscher 2016; Duffy 2014; Lunstrum 2014), the focus is often on its use in the context of poaching. By contrast, the driving force behind the current surge in the militarisation of conservation and how the use of violence is legitimised in non-poaching contexts, particularly in Tanzania, is not well documented.

In this paper, I use the violent evictions in Loliondo as an empirical case in my examination of why violence is used in conservation and how its use in a specific non-poaching context is legitimised. I argue that in the case discussed here, interventions in the name of conservation drew on predominantly global narratives about wildlife decline or even extinction, as well as local narratives about degradation of "wildlife corridors" and "dispersal areas" due to "uncontrolled population growth"[2] in order to rationalise the appropriation of pastoral land to expand protected areas. However, expansion is not a straightforward process, as communities who occupy the affected areas claim historical and juridical rights to the land and maintain that they are better placed than the state to take responsibility for conservation. The communities in Loliondo also have a history of active resistance against attempts at land grabbing by various actors. Authorities justify the use of violence to counter such resistance by defining local people as "others", invaders and foreigners, as well as enemies of conservation.

My analysis is based on five sessions of fieldwork, totalling approximately three months, between February 2017 and June 2019, during which I held in-depth interviews with representatives of key government (15) and non-governmental organisations (4), as well as with researchers (3) and local people in Tanzania. I

also had several informal meetings with various actors. In addition, the analysis is based on readings of various relevant documents.

My planned fieldwork in Loliondo was cut short due to the eviction incident described at the beginning of the introduction and continuing hostilities made returning to the villages in Loliondo difficult. Hence data on local views were mainly obtained from secondary sources, such as reports and news articles, in addition to seven open-ended interviews that I conducted while in the field before the eviction incident. I also arranged meetings with two village leaders from Loliondo while they were in Arusha, the regional capital, where we had an in-depth discussion about the situation. Most of the interviews were audio recorded, after having obtained the interviewees' verbal consent.

In this article, I first briefly present the theoretical debates relating to militarisation and violence in the name of conservation. In the next section, I provide a brief background on conservation and violence, followed by a discussion of the recent shifts towards militarisation in Tanzania. Thereafter, I present empirical material from Loliondo, which shows how violence unfolded and was legitimated in the specific context, as well as its social and ecological implications. Finally, I briefly discuss the empirical findings in relation to existing works and present my conclusions.

Conservation and Violence

Springer and Le Billon (2016) argue that violence is a difficult concept to grapple with, as it can refer to an overt occurrence of an incident with easily recognisable physical damage and deadly consequences, such as in the case of physical attacks, or it can mean covert and mundane suppressions of critical thought, which require careful choice of theoretical lenses to appreciate its presence. Moreover, violence can be a manifestation of an exercise of coercive power or its use can be unintended (Springer and Le Billon 2016:1). The history of conservation is filled with accounts of the different forms of violence, such as evictions (Brockington and Igoe 2006), "shot-to-kill" type attacks (Brockington et al. 2008) and multiple forms of mundane suppressions (Dowie 2009) against local populations. Bocarejo and Ojeda (2016:182) argue that violence in all its forms is "not external to, but constitutive of, conservation practices". Nevertheless, the earlier acceptance of the overtly violent approach to conservation waned due to widespread criticisms of its human rights abuses record (Goldman 2011) and due to the emergence of less violent and ostensibly more socially and ecologically effective participatory conservation approaches around the end of the 20th century.

Recent literature on wildlife conservation, particularly in Africa, includes various accounts of the use of militarised violence (Duffy 2016; Duffy et al. 2015; Lunstrum 2014; Marijnen and Verweijen 2016). Lunstrum (2014:817) terms this trend "green militarisation", which she defines as "the use of military and paramilitary (military-like) actors, techniques, technologies, and partnerships in pursuit of conservation". Green militarisation combines general tendencies of militarism—an ideology that privileges military culture and values, and justification of the extension of these values and culture—into nominally civilian spheres, as well as the

actual use of militarised techniques and actions in the name of protecting wildlife (Lunstrum 2014:819). Violence in the name of conservation is often promoted through the "spectacularization of green militarisation" (Cavanagh and Benjaminsen 2014; Cavanagh et al. 2015; Marijnen and Verweijen 2016), meaning the presentation of militarised conservation actors, such as rangers, as selfless champions or "green martyrs" (Marijnen and Verweijen 2016).

The recent increase in "green violence" (Büscher and Fletcher 2020), many argue, is allegedly associated with the "war" against poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking (Duffy 2016; Duffy et al. 2015; Lunstrum 2014; Marijnen and Verweijen 2016) and with growing concerns about the decline in wildlife numbers due to habitat destruction and the assertion that "people-oriented" conservation approaches have failed to address this decline (Bocarejo and Ojeda 2016; Neumann 2004; Wilshusen et al. 2002).

Poachers as Terrorists

Growing concerns among conservationists over the decline in wildlife numbers due to increasing poaching and illegal trafficking of wildlife products endorses "war for biodiversity" (Duffy 2014) by creating a sense of urgency that in turn justifies the use of violence to save wildlife (Büscher 2016; Duffy 2014; Duffy and Humphreys 2014). However, the militarisation of conservation has partly to do with a discourse that links poaching with global security concerns (Cavanagh et al. 2015; Duffy 2016; Duffy et al. 2015). The ways that the relation between poaching and global security concerns are framed herald a fuller integration of conservation and security objectives, which thus make the use of violence defendable (Duffy 2016). Nonetheless, Massé and Lunstrum (2016:236) argue that the production of the poaching-terrorism link serves more as a depoliticised alibi for green grabbing and dispossession, as wildlife-based tourism becomes more profitable, than as concerns for wildlife.

Extinction Narratives and the Militarisation of Conservation

Wildlife spaces often extend beyond the conventionally protected areas (Adams 2004). The return to more violent and protectionist conservation in recent years can be associated with the numerous reports of biodiversity loss due to the alleged failures of the more participatory alternative conservation models (Brockington et al. 2008; Hutton et al. 2005; Wilshusen et al. 2002). It can also be related to concerns over decline in global biodiversity numbers, which many conservationists refer to as the "sixth extinction" (Kolbert 2014; Leakey and Lewin 1996) or "biological annihilations" (Ceballos et al. 2017) whereby, it is argued, humans are in the process of pushing the earth's biodiversity to the verge of extinction and have altered the "evolutionary trajectories of species" (Otto 2018:1). For example, a recent report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) stresses that "nature is declining" at rates "unprecedented in human history" and warns that the accelerating extinction rates of species may threaten humanity's own existence.[3]

Proponents of extinction narratives consistently emphasise that humanity is under threat from the decline in biodiversity, making conservation a matter of security and an emergency (e.g. The Independent 2019).

While some critical scholars, particularly political ecologists, recognise the looming crisis and argue for radical rethinking in conservation policy and practice (e.g. Büscher and Fletcher 2019), proponents of extinction narratives, primarily neoprotectionist conservationists, propose extending the borders of existing protected areas and setting aside up to half of the earth's surface to prevent extinction (e.g. Wilson 2016). They call on conservation actors to enforce desperate measures to save both biodiversity and humanity. Despite widespread criticisms, the assumptions of neoprotectionist conservationists seem to be gaining acceptance, partly because they fit with taken-for-granted scarcity narratives in communicating a sense of urgency and partly because they reinforce the prevailing interests of powerful actors in resource control (Büscher et al. 2017; Mehta et al. 2019; Weldemichel et al. 2019). This is not to claim that biodiversity loss is not real, but rather to point out that the way crisis narratives frame biodiversity loss is "superficial, anti-political and devoid of context" (Büscher and Fletcher 2019:288). Büscher et al. (2017) argue that a plan to expand protected areas at a scale proposed by such narratives might have considerable social impact through fuelling conflict and violence. Globally, such a plan could negatively affect up to one billion people who are already marginalised (Schleicher et al. 2019). Furthermore, the expansion of protected areas is a difficult task, as land adjacent to existing protected areas is in many cases occupied by people whose lives have already been affected by existing protected areas (Dowie 2009:xxi). As Li (2011) notes, there is a limit to how far people can be pushed off their land and it is likely that plans for further expansion of protected areas would face resistance from them.

Thus, in conservation, militarism and the use of extreme violence may be justified, as the environment, wildlife, and biodiversity are presumed to be under a threat that is becoming "out of control" (Büscher 2016:980). This sense of urgency, which is communicated through crisis narratives combined with neo-Malthusian interpretations of the relation between population growth, resource scarcity and environmental degradation (for an example, see Veldhuis et al. 2019), may further legitimise militarised interventions and help to mobilise public support for violent measures to "protect" wildlife (Duffy 2014; Lunstrum 2014).

At the local level, violence and evictions can be legitimised when the political nature of subtle and hidden resistance by locals are misconstrued as encroachments by conservation authorities (Holmes 2007). Expansion of protected areas and the use of violence can be legitimised by discursively "othering" a targeted group of people (Lunstrum and Ybarra 2018; Neumann 2004). According to Said (1985:108–109), "othering" means "disregarding, essentialising, [and] denuding the humanity of another culture, people or geographical region" as grounds for violent expulsion, land theft, occupation or invasion. Melber (2014:197) states that othering "promotes the 'we-they' dichotomy and … [is used] to justify why 'others' by definition do not qualify nor are entitled to be part of the national body politic" and can be used to legitimise direct and structural violence. Furthermore, othering is used as an exclusionary discursive tool, whereby "dissident or

ethnic others are relocated to a captive space on which the state, or colonizing culture, is able to inscribe its own version of legibility" (Jones and Manda 2006:199) in which the "other" does not have the same rights and humanity as those creating the distinction (Klein 2016). In conservation, the discursive constructions of locals as "others" as "foreigners" (Lunstrum 2014:827), "illegal occupants" (Bocarejo and Ojeda 2016) and "conservation's enemies" (Dowie 2009: xxi) serve as stepping stones for the use of violence and eviction (Lunstrum and Ybarra 2018). Once local communities are defined as foreigners or as threats to wildlife, these imaginaries strip them of their legitimacy to demand justice (Lunstrum and Ybarra 2018). Combined with crisis narratives that present biodiversity decline as a global emergency driven by humans, this discursive reordering of the moral standing of certain types of people (local people in the studied case) as dangerous encroachers versus the victimised wildlife may play a vital role in making the use of violence justifiable (Neumann 2004).

To summarise, the increasing focus on the "war on poaching" and illegal wildlife trafficking in the green militarisation literature, to some extent obscures aspects of why authorities militarise and securitise conservation management. Emerging consensus among conservation scientists and authorities regarding the fragmentation of ecosystems and the need to create "wildlife corridors", "dispersal areas" and "buffer zones" to reconnect ostensibly increasingly isolated protected areas (Goldman 2009) may give an "environmental stamp of approval" for decisions to convert more land into protected areas (Bocarejo and Ojeda 2016; Brockington and Duffy 2010). The role such powerful extinction narratives play in legitimising the use of violence in conservation across varied geographical contexts is yet to be fully explored.

Conservation and Violence in Tanzania

Tanzania is often renowned for its exemplification of the clichéd image of "Africa"—a vast wilderness with abundant diversity of wildlife. Currently, c. 40% of Tanzania's land surface is under some form of protection, including 16 national parks, 31 game reserves, 38 Game Controlled Areas (GCAs), over 30 Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), and other forms of protected areas, which makes it among the countries with the highest proportion of protected spaces in the world (TANAPA 2018). It is one of the biggest wildlife tourism destinations in the world, and according to the World Bank, Tanzania's revenue from international tourism increased from less than US$ 500 million in 1996 to over US$ 2.465 billion in 2018 (World Bank 2020). With an average growth rate of 12%, tourism contributed 17.2% of the GDP and 41.7% of Tanzania's foreign exchange earnings between 2014 and 2018, making it one of the key economic sectors of the country (TANAPA 2018).

However, in Tanzania, vast areas such as the Serengeti, which are often considered "wildernesses" by conservationists and conservation authorities alike and upon which the country's tourism depends, have essentially never been devoid of people (Adams and McShane 1996; Miller 2016; Shetler 2007). Historically, people lived in these areas before they were violently relocated by colonial and

post-colonial governments to form national parks (Neumann 2001; Ngoitiko et al. 2010; Shetler 2007). Although Tanzania gained independence on 9 December 1961, and user rights for most land previously taken by the colonial authorities was generally transferred to locals, land designated as protected areas remained under state control (Bluwstein 2018). Moreover, the new government continued to alter land use legislations pertaining to parts adjoining protected areas and this critically affected people who were relocated to such areas (Bluwstein and Lund 2018; Brockington 2008; Miller 2016).

In the 1990s, growing global and domestic pressure, along with the imposition of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), led the Tanzanian government[4] to decentralise conservation and to recognise communities' land rights (Benjaminsen et al. 2013; Igoe 2005). The Village Land Act of 1999 (United Republic of Tanzania 1999) stipulates that villages can acquire title deeds and maps of village land from relevant authorities. The Act defines village land as land outside reserved land, which inhabitants have regularly occupied or used for over 12 years prior to the enactment of the Act. Most importantly, the Village Land Act also allows villages to enter into venture agreements with tourism businesses (Gardner 2012; Ngoitiko et al. 2010).

From the state's side, direct engagement of local communities with tourist companies means that a portion of tourism income goes to communities instead of the state (Brockington 2008; Nelson 2004). This has coincided with a rapid overall increase in tourism revenue due to growing global affluence, which has resulted in a demand for nature-based tourism (Nelson 2004). The growing contribution of conservation-based tourism to Tanzania's GDP has made it an issue of national importance and has vitalised the government's interest in recentralising its management (Benjaminsen et al. 2013; Ngoitiko et al. 2010).

As part of the recentralisation process, the government passed the controversial Wildlife Conservation Act 5 of 2009 (United Republic of Tanzania 2009), which underlines the need to establish wildlife corridors, migration routes, dispersal areas, and buffer zones adjacent to existing national parks. It also grants powers to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism to declare any land, including village lands, as a protected area. In this way, power can be transferred back to the national government. Additionally, the Wildlife Conservation Act states that protected areas should be enlarged and clear boundaries be marked between protected and non-protected areas (United Republic of Tanzania 2009:17–18). Thus, the Act clearly provides for the recentralisation of wildlife management (Benjaminsen et al. 2013).

Since late 1990s, there has been a shift towards militarising conservation management and conservation agencies through the formulation of directives and Acts, such as the 1997 "shot-on-sight directive" (Neumann 2001) and the above-mentioned 2009 Wildlife Conservation Act, as well as through the replacement of civilian conservation workers by people with a military background and the ongoing provision of compulsory para-military training of civilian workers. In addition, ex-military personnel now occupy key positions in government conservation authorities.[5] Similarly, under Section 10.1 of the 2009 Wildlife Conservation Act, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism has established a paramilitary unit

to protect wildlife from "unlawful" use outside the conventional protected areas. The Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA) was established in 2014. Currently, the board of TAWA—an agency that manages a total area of 169,553 km^2, equivalent to almost 79% of the country's protected areas including Loliondo—is chaired by a retired military general (TAWA 2020).

Violence and the Remaking of Conservation Boundaries

When the Serengeti was established as a national park in the 1950s, the colonial government resettled the Maasai on the eastern boundary, where they were left to practice traditional pastoralism on smaller and marginal lands (Gardner 2016; Ngoitiko et al. 2010). Representatives of the Maasai supposedly signed an agreement in the expectation that finally, after years of displacement by colonial authorities, they would receive a permanent place in which to live and sustain their livelihoods (Århem 1985). However, as noted in the preceding section, the government continued to change land use regulations in areas surrounding the protected areas. For example, in the southern part of Ngorongoro District the establishment of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area as a "multiple land use" system in 1959, only three years after people had been relocated into it, critically constrained the traditional livelihoods of the Maasai and other hunter-gatherer tribes (Århem 1985).

In 1974, a 4000 km^2 area to the east of Serengeti National Park, north of Ngorongoro Conservation Area and south of the border with Kenya, was gazetted as Loliondo GCA (Game Controlled Area) (Bartels 2016). According to the Wildlife Conservation Act of 1974, GCAs are forms of protected areas where certain human activities such as controlled grazing and professional hunting are allowed. Although GCAs place restrictions on livelihoods, people have continued to live and practice pastoralism in most parts of Loliondo, where they have established several villages and Wasso, the capital of Ngorongoro District.

Following the 1999 Village Land Act, village leaders in Loliondo acquired maps and certificates for their villages, even though the land in which they lived fell within a protected area. Villages also developed business ventures with ecotourism companies and generated revenues up to US$ 50,000 a year (a significant amount in Tanzanian standards) by renting land to ecotourism investors (Brockington 2008; Nelson and Makko 2012).

Conflicts over land in Loliondo started to intensify in the early 1990s, when the government leased parts of the Loliondo area as hunting concessions to foreign investors, while at the same time it promoted decentralisation and village ownership of land (Bartels 2016; Benjaminsen et al. 2013; Ngoitiko et al. 2010). In 1992, the government issued a controversial hunting license to Otterlo Business Corporation (OBC), a company owned by the royal of family of the United Arab Emirates, on a land within the GCA, which the villagers openly opposed on grounds that the land belonged to them (Ngoitiko et al. 2010), and they had leased the same land to another photographic safari company (Brockington 2008). Similarly, in 2006 the government signed a 96-year lease contract with an

American company, Thomson Safaris, for yet another piece of land that the communities claim belonged to them (Mittal and Fraser 2018).

According to studies of Loliondo, several rounds of violent evictions of pastoralists occurred between 2009 and 2017 (Anaya 2010; Gardner 2016), leaving thousands of households homeless (Gardner 2012; Mittal and Fraser 2018; Pastoralists' Indigenous Non-Governmental Organizations Forum 2017). The evictions involved burning homes, confiscation of livestock, shootings, torture, and several cases of other human rights violations of local people, carried out by security forces and wildlife rangers (Loliondo Joint Fact Finding Mission 2015). Exact figures, particularly for recent evictions, are hard to access, as the process is still an ongoing and involves active conflict, making the area inaccessible to reporters and researchers. According to a report by the Pastoralists' Indigenous Non-Governmental Organizations Forum (2017), eviction of pastoralists in four selected villages between August and November 2017 involved violent measures such as the burning of c. 1200 homes, as well as torture, beatings and arrests of many residents who resisted the evictions. Another report revealed that 19 people were arrested, 11 seriously injured and 5800 homes were damaged, leaving over 23,000 people homeless in Loliondo between August and November 2017 (Mittal and Fraser 2018). The report also indicated that on several occasions livestock found nearby the national park, i.e. the contested area, were confiscated and publicly auctioned off by the government (Mittal and Fraser 2018). One of the local people I interviewed described the eviction process as follows: "They bring ... the rangers ... beat people, seize the cattle, nobody will ever go there. They want some way to evict people. This is what's happening."

The violence in Loliondo does not seem to be an isolated incident. More subtle and hidden forms of violence in the name of community conservation have been previously reported elsewhere in Tanzania (e.g. Benjaminsen et al. 2013). Overt forms of violence against local populations similar to the Loliondo evictions have

Figure 1: SENAPA rangers burning Maasai houses in Ololosokwan, a village in Loliondo (source: Author, 13 August 2017) [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonline library.com]

been reported across different parts of Tanzania such as Manyara (Goldman 2011), Ruaha (Walsh 2012) and Kilombero (Bergius et al. 2020). Furthermore, the legal basis for the eviction in Loliondo can be traced back to policies that sought to expand conservation spaces beyond existing formal protected areas. In the Wildlife Conservation Act of 2009, a "buffer zone" refers to an area surrounding a protected area, which the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism may declare in relation to the conservation area (United Republic of Tanzania 2009). In the same Act, a "migratory route" refers to "an area of a strip or zone of land used by herds of wild animals during their migratory cycles or seasonal movements" (United Republic of Tanzania:13). Similarly, a "dispersal area" is defined as "an area habitually used by wild animal species for feeding, laying, storing eggs, rearing or feeding their young, and includes breeding places" (United Republic of Tanzania 2009:11). One of the aims of the Act is to:

> protect and conserve wildlife resources and its habitats in game reserves, wetland reserves, game controlled areas, wildlife management areas, dispersal areas, migratory route corridors, buffer zone and all animals found in areas adjacent to these areas, by putting in place appropriate infrastructure, sufficient personnel and equipment. (United Republic of Tanzania 2009:17)

The 2009 Wildlife Conservation Act also places further restrictions on grazing in GCAs, unless written permission is granted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism and requires existing GCAs to be reviewed. Accordingly, the Conservation Information Monitoring Unit (CIMU), a section of the Tanzanian Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI), carried out an assessment and produced a report in which it concluded that Loliondo GCA was under threat from increasing human and livestock populations, due to "lack of clear boundaries" between communities and protected areas, as well as "poor control and overseeing of boundaries", that had led to a decline in biodiversity (see Endnote 2). As a solution, it suggested the establishment of clear boundaries demarcating reserved land (i.e. national parks, game reserves, or any other land reserved for conservation) from village land and emphasised the need to establish physical border markings and to enforce stricter rules (see Endnote 2):

> having stable and socially accepted GCA boundaries delineating reserved land from village land will ensure effective wildlife conservation in GCAs, reinstate lost GCA land, clearly define village land and eventually lead to a more stable situation, avoiding resource use conflicts leading to improvement in people's livelihood as well.

More specifically, the report suggested that the 4000 km^2 Loliondo area should be divided into two segments: a 1500 km^2 area along the border of the Serengeti National Park as an exclusive protected area in which wildlife would be concentrated; and a 2500 km^2 area to be "given" to local people (i.e. in which humans would be concentrated) as shown in Figure 2. However, the new conservation areas are not devoid of people, as many key tourist facilities are located within the "upgraded" wildlife concentration area, including the land leased by the OBC and several safari camps; rather, only local people have been casted out.

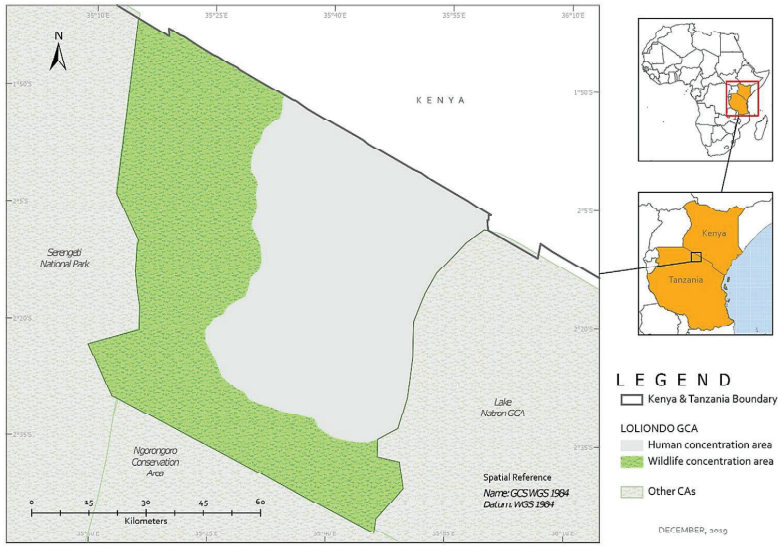

Figure 2: The new Loliondo GCA proposed in 2011, with green areas to be "upgraded" for wildlife conservation and grey areas to be "downgraded" for human concentration (source: map created by Michael Ogbe, Department of Geography, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, and used here with permission) [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

In August 2017, the villagers were ordered to vacate a 5–10 km wide strip of land (green in Figure 2) along the boundary of the Serengeti National Park. As one key government informant expressed, the aim was to have an "upgraded buffer zone" between the exclusive conservation area (the park) and community lands by expanding protected areas into what used to be pastoral grazing spaces adjacent to the Serengeti. However, the communities that claimed they had official documents to prove their ownership of the land resisted the proposed expansion. Previous plans from 1980s to 2008 to create a "buffer zone" had been rejected by villagers (Gardner 2016; Ngoitiko et al. 2010). Village leaders provided evidence that the area was demarcated as village land and used many tactics to pressure the government to stop the expansion plan, including working together with local and international civil society organisations and threatening physical action (Gardner 2012; Ngoitiko and Nelson 2013; Ngoitiko et al. 2010). The fierce resistance from communities apparently left the government with little option other than either to abandon the goal of expanding the park boundary or to use brute force to achieve it. In 2013, due to mounting local and international pressure (The Guardian 2013), the government temporarily abandoned the eviction plan, only to come back to it a few years later (Reuters 2018).

Justifying Violence

From interviews with representatives of key Tanzanian authorities, two justifications for the evictions in Loliondo in 2017 were prominent: growing population pressure and invasion by Kenyan pastoralists. On the one hand, the key interviewees argued that the number of people was increasing and, this combined with the Maasai's tradition of keeping big herds of livestock, was destroying the ecosystem. The evictions and violence were thus due to the assumption that the villagers were encroaching on the Serengeti National Park and the land on which they built their houses was an important wildlife migration route and water catchment area for the Serengeti. Furthermore, during interviews, key government officials argued that the catchment areas from which some of the rivers originated were located within village lands and argued that the presence of people in those areas led to the drying of the water sources for the Serengeti (Interview, 13 August 2017). Loliondo and particularly the areas nearby the Serengeti are important migratory corridors, breeding zones, and dispersal areas for wildlife (Bartels 2016). Hence, the authorities argued that population growth in those areas degraded the important wildlife spaces. Furthermore, they emphasised that the settlements were within a GCA in which, under the Wildlife Conservation Act of 2009, people were not permitted to settle. One influential Tanzanian conservation researcher I interviewed stated:

> That is not their land, because they [the communities in Loliondo] are living in a Game Controlled Area. Legally, they did not have land. They are living in GCA because human activities [are] allowed, but legally it is not their land. So, the government wanted to give them their own land so that they could cultivate their own land. At the moment, they cannot plan because that is a Game Controlled Area.

He further argued:

> So, our proposal is to upgrade important areas for conservation and water catchment and downgrade a major part to be a village land, so that they can decide to cultivate or whatever they want to do. The communities, I think, are somehow resisting that. They are saying "this is our land" but, legally it is not because they are living within a conservation area.

Key government informants also argued that the Maasai, despite their history of friendly relationships with the wildlife, had changed their lifestyle in recent years due to their interaction with other sections of society. Their new lifestyle was not as compatible with conservation as it used to be and there was a need to establish a clear boundary between people and the conservation areas. In doing so, the authorities drew on wider international debates on biodiversity decline and extinction, protected areas connectivity, and the need to protect the last remaining wildlife populations (see Endnote 2). One key government official interviewee stated:

> For the sustainability of the entire Serengeti ecosystem, the areas around Loliondo GCA should remain undisturbed. These are migratory areas used by different species, catchment areas that drain into the Serengeti. So, the area should remain undisturbed and that is the purpose of the relocation.

A Frankfurt Zoological Society official and ex-director of Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA) summarised the contradictory notions behind evictions as follows:

> The Serengeti of my dreams has no livestock problems. The pastoral neighbouring communities have embraced a new lifestyle. They have settled at known addresses, they live in modern houses. Their cattle do not roam any more. They graze in paddocks and their numbers are reasonably small yet healthy.[6]

His argument seems to have been that conservationists wanted the "traditional" pastoral system to end. One way of ensuring this would be by settling the Maasai in fixed villages and by dividing up land into human and non-human spaces (as shown in Figure 2). To this end, there is ongoing "land use planning" to "give" land to communities, as one key government interviewee stated:

> What the government plans to do is the lasting solution because now they [locals] will have their own land and they should have plan about how many animals they need to keep because if they keep more animals than the area can support the population will crash.

Nevertheless, according to interviews with two village officials, the government was not giving land to people, as argued by the conservationists, but instead taking away land to which the local Maasai previously had access. Similarly, a key informant, who was a legal expert from a local NGO advocating for community land rights, argued that the state was appropriating land from communities to create an exclusive hunting space for the OBC:

> The government will tell you ... that "this is a protected area [and] they [local people] have invaded a Game Controlled Area [and] they are destroying the environment" all other things, but [the government's] interest is that 1500 square kilometres of land. That is what they want for them, for the OBC. Out of 4000 square kilometres ... they are saying they have given 2500 square kilometres to the people while it is not giving; it is depriving them [of] 1500 square kilometres.

According to interviews with locals, it is designated as a protected area, land and benefits generated from it cease to belong to communities as arrangements for direct sharing of benefits with locals are non-existent. Hence, the only way that communities can ensure that they benefit from their land is by keeping it non-protected. Locals also argued that the current violent interventions have more to do with profits than concerns for wildlife. One local Maasai interviewee argued:

> How do you claim to protect animals in that buffer, while the hunting company is there? If you really want to protect the animals, if you think it is a breeding zone and hunting is going on there, how do you justify conservation of the breeding area?

Another explanation for the eviction was based on a narrative about increasing numbers of Kenyan pastoralists crossing the border into Tanzania to graze livestock in the Serengeti (Mittal and Fraser 2018). In a statement on 3 October 2017, John Magufuli, the president of Tanzania, said "Tanzania is not a grazing ground for Kenya" emphasising that movement of people and livestock from

Kenya into Tanzania in search of pasture during dry seasons would no longer be tolerated (The EastAfrican 2017). Interviews with government authorities also confirmed that evictions were an attempt to protect the Serengeti from Kenyan herders who take advantage of Tanzania's lax grazing regulations. A government official interviewee explained the presence of Kenyans in Loliondo as follows:

> Historically, because they [the Maasai] are [in] clans … the same clans are also found on the border on the other side. So, it is possible and there is intermarriage, it is possible that some of them are coming from there … I heard some time ago that the former Member of Parliament for Loliondo … got married [to] a wife from Kenya, a Maasai, and last year or two years ago, they had to interrogate her [as to whether] whether she has ever denied her Kenyan citizenship and there were some issues related to it. So, they have been bringing livestock. This year I am told there have been about 30,000 cattle from Kenya to Loliondo. When they [the authorities] tried to remove them, the people went back to Kenya and they left their animals back here with their relatives. This now has caused the government to brand these animals [livestock] … So, they are doing census, human census and livestock branding, to prevent migration … from Kenya.

Another interviewed government official stated:

> Those people [evictees] … are not Tanzanians. These are Kenyans, we know them. We have the evidence. We had 175 people from Kenya with a stock of 33,000 cattle. We are talking about real evidence because in the villages not all keep the secret to hide people [Kenyans] … and when we are burning the houses, inside the houses, we saw the motorbikes with Kenyan license plates. So now, the government is saying "OK! If that is the case, we need to protect the five-kilometre wide strip of land for the sake of the country, for the benefit of the people and for the benefit of conservation." Without protecting it, tourism will be finished in the Serengeti.

Similarly, an interviewed TAWA official argued that the Maasai on both sides of the border, despite speaking the same language and having many other similarities, differed in their "behaviour" with regard to land use:

> … the Maasai in Tanzania, they do not have a behaviour to demarcate their area. They do not have what they call their area. They just build what they call a *boma* [traditional house], where they keep their livestock, burn it and move. They do not have an area they call … "this is mine". If you go in all areas where these Maasai are living, they have started such kind of areas [demarcated] … Now, these people when they came … [and] started to demarcate their own areas. When it started, people were saying "why are you demarcating?" These people [Tanzanian Maasai] started saying "We are Maasai, and in Tanzania we do not do demarcation and those people [those who demarcated] are Kenyans." That is how we find the Kenyans.

According to interviews with both locals and key government and non-government officials, evictions from the area designated as a buffer zone were indiscriminate. For the conservation authorities, the evictions of Tanzanians along with "the Kenyans" was a "collateral damage" (Interview, 2017). For local interviewees and key interviewees from local NGOs, the fact that the evictions were indiscriminate was a clear sign that the government's intention was to clear land for

conservation businesses[7] and to control resources, and that the narrative about the presence of Kenyans was formed to brand it as a matter of national security in order to make military intervention justifiable. Mr Mar, a resident of Loliondo, argued that the deployment of national security forces and the use of violence in internal matters, which under other circumstances would have been considered highly problematic, was made justifiable by depicting the Tanzanian Maasai as Kenyans and as conservation's enemies:

> It is politically easy to say it is Kenyans rather than saying you are evicting a Tanzanian. But even if it was a Kenyan, I believe the use of bullets is not allowed. Shooting people, I don't believe it is acceptable.[8]

When I travelled to Maasai Mara, on the Kenyan side of the border between Tanzania and Kenya, during the peak of the eviction process in October 2017, I met several Tanzanian herders who had escaped the violence in Loliondo and together with their cattle to seek refuge with their Kenyan friends and relatives. The state's competition with the locals for resource control and access culminated in the eviction of locals to make way for full state control, which would have been more difficult without framing locals as invaders, immigrants or anti-conservation. By directing the focus on citizenship and rebranding pastoralists as "invading Kenyans", the government effectively concealed the real purposes of the evictions. The presentation of the Loliondo Maasai as trespassers and as Kenyans made their evictions justifiable and necessary for saving wildlife, which was presumed to be under threat of extinction. Furthermore, rendering conservation a security question provided the government with support from Tanzanian public and conservationists, as well as the ability to use the more capable national security apparatus in internal matters to quell resistance whenever civilian mechanisms failed to achieve the government's goals.

However, the situation in Loliondo should be seen in the context of wider changes in Tanzania. Generally, there has been a shift towards reconsolidating government control over increasing ecotourism profits (as noted in the preceding section). The formulation of the Wildlife Management Act of 2009 and the establishment of TAWA, a paramilitary unit responsible for the protection of wildlife outside existing state-owned protected areas,[9] are signs of a shift towards recentralisation of conservation management. Furthermore, there are ongoing efforts to exclude people from within protected areas where local people were previously allowed to remain.[10]

The Impacts of Green Violence on People's Relations with Wildlife

Violent interventions in the name of conservation lead to troubled relations between wildlife conservation authorities and communities (Brockington and Igoe 2006; Duffy et al. 2019; Lunstrum 2014). On the one hand, the retaliatory relations between communities and conservationists (more broadly) that I was told about while doing fieldwork had much to do with the presence of a sense of resentment among communities towards conservationists, and communities'

perception that any wildlife related research was a plot to appropriate their resources. On the other hand, the retaliatory relations may contribute to loss of livelihoods for local communities that are evicted, along with those who are supposedly outsiders, and thus harm the relation between local communities and the wildlife, as they would lead to changes in how communities see the wildlife, as well as the creation of "polarised landscapes" (Brockington et al. 2008), with a "rift" between human and non-human spaces (Foster et al. 2010). One interviewed Maasai village leader expressed this as follows:

> ... this [wildlife conservation] is a curse for us, for our grazing, because why should they [conservation authorities] otherwise take our land from us if it doesn't give benefit as well to us. It is ... clear to us that wildlife are not a blessing, and what's even worse is the attitude of game officers towards them [the Maasai]. They beat them, shoot at them, [and] arrest their cows, and the enmity as a result is a very strong one.

He further argued that people would no longer easily accept conservation authorities' decisions:

> In the future, whatever decision the government will come with, we will fight it. We will never accept it. They make decisions as government, but the people will fight it when it comes to the ground.

Resistance may take various forms. It can be outright confrontation, as in the numerous instances during which the residents of Loliondo allegedly swore to fight for their land (e.g. Patinkin 2013; The Citizen 2018). It may be manifested in surges of organised revolts by people affected by violent conservation, like the conditions that pressed pastoralists in Mali to join "jihadist" groups (Benjaminsen and Ba 2019). As Dowie (2009:xxvi) notes, evictees can be driven to take "desperate survival actions" against conservationists' interests. Such developments may serve to legitimise further militarised interventions to disarm locals, as Lunstrum (2014) argues. This could have negative implications for wildlife and general security. By contrast, resistance can also take the form of "weapons of the weak", as less symbolic actions to avoid confrontation with authorities (Holmes 2007; Scott 1985). Increasing incidences of wildlife poisoning and retaliatory killings by communities in Tanzania have been reported in recent years (Mariki et al. 2015; Masenga et al. 2013). As one village leader whom I interviewed argued, "they [conservation authorities] need communities more than they need guns to do conservation". He also argued that conservation authorities needed to engage communities through participatory decision-making.

Conclusions

In this paper I set out to analyse why violence is used in conservation and how the practice is legitimised in specific contexts. Through the analysis, I have aimed to contribute to the debate on militarisation and the use of violence in conservation by examining how the use of overt violence has been justified in a specific non-poaching context in Tanzania. At national level, the Wildlife Conservation Act of 2009 clearly underscores the need for the establishment of a paramilitary unit

under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism in order to protect wildlife outside existing protected areas. This points to a return to the old "fences and fines" approach in which violence played a crucial role in the establishment of protected areas, but this time expanding them outside the existing protected areas. At national level, the official explanation for militarisation seems to be linked to poaching and narratives of decline in wildlife numbers.

With regard to specific contexts, such as Loliondo, the emergence of militarisation and use of violence has had to do with more than saving iconic species that might be threatened with extinction. It has been a way to ensure the expansion of exclusive protected areas. Violence, both in its overt and covert forms, has been an integral part of Tanzania's conservation history. In the 1990s, the Tanzanian government, partly pressed by international and local pressure groups and partly to present a "people-friendly" façade to capture donor funding, shifted its focus towards recognising communities' role in conservation, and allowed partial local control over resources and direct engagements between villages with tourism operators (Igoe 2005). However, direct engagement of communities with businesses at a time when tourism became lucrative reinvigorated the government's interest in reconsolidating control over local resources (Benjaminsen et al. 2013). The state then started sabotaging such arrangements by allocating the same land to new investors, which was fiercely resisted by communities. Violence thus emerged as a response to the different forms of resistance that arose from the communities challenging the state's resources claims. In so doing, conservation authorities in Tanzania drew on two narratives. On the one hand, they drew on biodiversity extinction narratives, to show how population growth, fragmentation of ecosystems and isolation of core protected areas were discursively linked to this decline. According to the authorities, the Serengeti was facing serious threat from a growing population along its boundaries, which called for the creation of a buffer to be managed by the new paramilitary unit. This was part of the wider process of militarisation in Tanzania, the justification of which has been linked to poaching and wildlife trafficking. On the other hand, Loliondo is located near the border with Kenya and there is a long history of cross-border seasonal migration of wildlife, pastoralists and their livestock. One narrative that has emerged among Tanzanian authorities in recent years is that many of those living in Loliondo are Kenyans who take advantage of Tanzanian resources. This historical migration pattern has thus been "rebranded" as invasion in order to make it acceptable to many non-Maasai local actors and other national and international actors, and thus justify the state's use of force to "protect" Tanzania and its resources. The rebranding has curbed any opposition to evictions that otherwise might have emerged from the Tanzanian public and international community, helped the state to gain support from conservationists, and justified military-like actions and the use of violence. Additionally, rebranding the resistance by locals as "encroachment" has depoliticised locals' fundamental political questions regarding landownership and benefit sharing.

This paper also contributes to the debates on the role that crisis narratives play in promoting violence in conservation. Specifically, my findings raise the following questions: What does expansion of protected areas at the scale proposed by

neoprotectionist extinction narratives really entail? How does it unfold in different contexts? What are its social and ecological implications? It should be noted that biodiversity loss is real, but the choices of whether, how and where to conserve are political decisions with social and ecological consequences (Brockington et al. 2008). For example, wildlife numbers in the East Africa have significantly declined despite collective expansion of exclusive protected areas in recent decades (Ogutu et al. 2016) and it is important that we question the scholarly legitimacy of arguments that are in favour of further expansion of protected areas. I argue that framing biodiversity loss, whether due to poaching or habitat destruction, as an urgent matter or as an issue of national and global security helps to legitimise authorities' claims as guardians of conservation while simultaneously undermining locals' negotiating positions and it makes violence justifiable. The sense of emergency communicated by such narratives creates what Naomi Klein calls "democracy-free zones" (Klein 2007:140), a situation in which the customary need to gain consent from and an agreement with local people does not appear to apply. It serves long-standing interest in controlling resources, particularly financial benefits from wildlife tourism, and it legitimises violence. In the case of Loliondo, the absence of media coverage of an event that displaced and ruined the lives of c. 25,000 people is partly a testimony to the legitimising effect of such narratives.

The violence in Loliondo might not be representative of how the use of extinction narratives turns out elsewhere. However, given conservation's history of dependence on predominant narratives and violence, it is likely that similar experiences exist elsewhere (for a possible example, see Bocarejo and Ojeda 2016). As Schleicher et al. (2019) note, proposals for large-scale expansion of protected areas may affect the lives of up to one billion people globally. However, the Tanzanian state does not necessarily entirely depend on global extinction narratives to legitimise violent evictions. It has a long history of violently evicting people in the name of conservation and crisis narratives only give existing state interests to control resources a further nudge. Whether there is a direct relation between militarisation at national level and its use at local level could be a subject for future research.

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Endnotes

[1] I later learned that there had been similar incidents in which villagers had attacked researchers due to their perceived affiliation with the Tanzanian government.

[2] Source: document titled "Evaluation of Game Controlled Areas in Tanzania: Phase I, Loliondo and Kilombero" dated 2011 and accessed from the Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI).
[3] The IPBES platform is at https://www.ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment
[4] As Tanzania is a very centralised state, "the government" in this paper refers to the national government.
[5] For example, Major General Gaudence Milanzi, an ex-army commander, currently serves as the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. Similarly, Major General Khamis Semfuko leads the Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA).
[6] Article by Gerald Bigurube titled "The Serengeti of My Dreams" in *Gorilla*, a subscription magazine published by the Frankfurt Zoological Society, in 2014.
[7] Some interviewed locals claimed that some businesses were involved in supporting and facilitating the evictions. Although it was hard to find reliable evidence, local eyewitnesses claimed that the OBC provided support. Also, reports of previous rounds of evictions showed that operations were sponsored by the OBC (e.g. http://www.tanzaniapastoralist.org/uploads/1/0/2/7/10277102/loliondo_land_conflict_has_ended_-_22_sept_2013.pdf)
[8] Source: a video interview at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMPfjIKy2pM
[9] Financial support for the establishment of TAWA was provided by both the Frankfurt Zoological Society and GZS (https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/28017.html)
[10] To the south of Loliondo, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA), a World Heritage Site since 1979 and multiple land use system since 1959, is moving towards a non-multiple land use model. According to an unpublished CAA report produced in August 2019, more than 70,000 people may face relocation, (unpublished). The UNESCO World Heritage Committee has been pressuring the Tanzanian government to "voluntarily relocate" people out of the NCAA. In its assessment reports from 2012 and 2019, the committee noted that population growth within the NCA was a grave concern to the integrity of the World Heritage Site and suggested that the state should take measures, including voluntary relocation of people of the NCA. A map in the NCAA's report shows "zoning" arrangements with reduced settlement sizes and livestock grazing areas, and includes the strip of land in Loliondo (c. 1500 km^2) where evictions took place in 2017, in the NCA, confirming that the intention is to expand exclusive protected area space.

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Paper IV

Making land grabbable: Stealthy dispossessions by conservation in Ngorongoro Conservation Area, Tanzania

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Abstract

This paper seeks to answer the question: how does land become grabbable and local people relocatable? While recognizing the important contributions thus far made by the critical literature on land grabbing, this paper moves forward towards understanding specific processes that befall before land is grabbed and its original users relocated. Based on an empirical analysis of policy and practices of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Tanzania, the paper proposes that land grabbing, particularly in the context of conservation in rural Africa, is not necessarily an instantaneous phenomenon and does not happen in a vacuum. It is a result of long-term structural marginalization of rural land users that produces scarcity and the deterioration of life conditions, which make people relocatable and used to justify land grabbing. Local people either relocate themselves because they could not make a living due to systematic disinvestments on basic social services or life is made unbearable through restrictions imposed on their production practices to make "voluntary" relocation possible. Insight from this study can be used in other cases of land grabbing where large swathes of ostensibly empty land are made available for investment. Furthermore, the paper highlights the need to focus on the stealthy dispossessions instead of major events of grabbing as starting points of analysis.

Key terms: indigenous, Maasai resettlement, scarcity, wildlife,

Introduction

Tanzania is one of the countries with the highest proportion of land (currently around 40 %) under protected areas. It has also a long history of evicting people for conservation (Neumann, 1992; Walsh, 2012). While many of the protected areas exclude local people and were created through evictions, the Ngorongoro Conservation Area in Arusha region is notable exception as people have been allowed to remain within a protected area. The government and proponents of conservation claim that Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) which was established in 1959, is "one of Africa's longest experiments" (Thompson, 1997) where people have been allowed to continue to live within a protected area, under what is commonly known as a *Multiple Land Use Model* (MLUM). MLUM precedes the popular 'community based conservation models' of the 1980s and 90s (Goldman, 2003; Turner, 2004). While it resembles the community-based conservation models in terms of allowing people to remain within a PA, the structure of its management and goals are different.[1]

The NCA became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1979 for its unique combination of landscape, wealth of wildlife and cultural heritage. Sixty years after its establishment, UNESCO and conservation authorities in Tanzania now claim that this experiment has failed and that there is a need for relocating people. In its assessment reports in 2012 and 2019, the UNESCO World Heritage committee requested the Tanzanian authorities to 'voluntarily' relocate the residents by 'increasing incentives to relocate' (UNESCO, 2019; UNESCO, 2012). The 2019 report argued that the NCA is under threat from a "increasing human population" and "lack of enforcement of protection arrangements related regimes" among others (21). Similarly, a recent unpublished draft report by the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA), the government enterprise the manages the NCA, indicates that the Tanzanian authorities also seem to agree with the UNESCO that majority of local people need to be "voluntarily" relocated from the area in order to address the conservation problems of the World Heritage Site. Plans are thus underway for the relocation of up to 70,000 people[2].

[1] In community-based conservation models, local communities' participation in the decision making about the management is a goal, whereas in the NCA the communities' influence on decision making is not guaranteed.

[2] URT (2019) The Multiple Land Use Model of Ngorongoro Conservation Area: Achievements and lessons learnt, challenges and options for the future (final report). Dodoma: Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism.

The 2019 report by NCAA states "…conditions of resident pastoralists are deteriorating, it is unlikely for the MLUM to bring the desired outcomes that will benefit conservation and indigenous residents" (URT, 2019: xii). While the Maasai residents of the Ngorongoro were allowed to remain within the protected area for decades, it now seems that authorities are planning for their relocation. The 2019 NCAA report indicates that there have already been attempts to relocate people out of the NCA in recent years.

The literature on land grabbing[3], which refer to the swift transfer of land often by force, presents a variety of ways of land appropriations as well as for different purposes. It can take the form of a large-scale and abrupt forms of appropriations (White et al., 2012) or it can be more incremental (Benjaminsen and Bryceson, 2012). It can be for food production, mining, infrastructure and urban development, or it can be for environmental ends, which is often referred to as "green grabbing" (Benjaminsen and Bryceson, 2012; Fairhead et al., 2012). The general focus in the existing literature is on the moment of large-scale grabbing involving evictions. however, land grabbing can be "*in situ* displacement" and it does not necessarily involve evictions (Ince, 2014). Land grabbing, particularly in the name of conservation, may take more subtle forms of expropriation (Napoletano and Clark, 2020). While land grabbing is often used to refer to swift transfers of land often by force, here it is used to refer to dispossession to include the incremental takeover of land by non-local land users.

Using Ngorongoro as an empirical case, I seek to explore the process by which land becomes grabbable and people relocatable. I examine the basic assumptions behind the multiple land use system using empirical material from a total of about 3-months long fieldwork that I carried out on four rounds between February 2017 and June 2019. The fieldwork involved in-depth interviews with 30 local people, 15 key informants including, representatives of conservation agencies, ministries, conservation and development non-governmental organizations as well as conservation experts. The analysis also includes review of documents such as legal acts, management plans, assessment reports, news articles and others.

In this article, I argue that Tanzanian conservation authorities involved in the management of the NCA both encourage and hinder the practice of traditional pastoralism at the same time. While local people are allowed to stay within the NCA, they can only stay so long as they

[3] Land grabbing refers to the swift transfer of land often by force

practice pastoralism, as it is the only production practice that is considered compatible with wildlife conservation. At the same time livestock production practices have been made difficult through the imposition of restrictions on access to grazing on important parts of the conservation area. Local people are not allowed to settle in fixed villages, but seasonal mobility is also curtailed. Locals argue that such contradictions in conservation policy and practice resulted in increasing poverty and dependence, which are again used by the state to legitimize resettlement. Ngorongoro is a unique case and the analysis results from this study are thus difficult to transfer to other cases where the context maybe is different. Nonetheless, there are useful lessons that can give insight into how land generally becomes available for grabbing. First, land grabbing does not happen in vacuum. People are, through long processes of marginalization, made relocatable. Local people either relocate themselves because they could not make a living due to systematic disinvestments on basic social services or life is made unbearable through restrictions imposed on local people to make voluntary relocation possible. The precedents to the transfer of large swathes of supposedly empty land for conservation and other uses should be carefully investigated.

I will first briefly present a review of the literature on land grabbing in the name of conservation also called *green grabbing*- i.e. 'the appropriation of land and resources for environmental ends' (Fairhead et al., 2012: 237) followed by a review of a historical background to the formation and nature of the Multiple Land Use Model (MLUM) in Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA). I will then investigate the policy and practices of the MLUM, which may have paved the way to the current calls for the relocation of locals through analysis empirical materials from Ngorongoro and draw some conclusions.

How does land become grabbable and people relocatable?

There is an increasing body of scholarly work on land grabbing and specifically on green grabbing. Research works on land grabbing in recent years particularly intensified following the 'global land rush' in relation to the 2007/8 global financial and food crisis (e.g. McMichael, 2012; Cotula, 2012; Hall, 2013; Fairhead et al., 2012; Li, 2014). This literature generally tends to focus on the event based and hasty expropriation of land, often by states on behalf of corporate capitalists, and the resulting dispossession of local land users. While analyzing land grabbing in relation to major events such as the 2008/9 financial and subsequent food crisis is in itself very important, there is another side of the story of how land becomes available for grabbing when it comes to rural areas in the "third world" which has not been focused on..

Land grabbing can take the form of step-wise process of dispossession of land users in the name of conservation (Benjaminsen and Bryceson, 2012). Moreover, not all land grabbers always evict people as evictions may galvanize media attention and resistance (Li, 2014). In some cases, local people are enclaved within the appropriated land and left to continue their lives in smaller spaces- a tactic that Li (2014) argues, only postpones the problem of how people will survive on limited or no land, a problem that may become evident in next generations. In others, displacement can be an "*in situ* displacement" (Ince, 2014: 126) or "economic displacement" (Brockington and Wilkie, 2015) in which local people are not physically driven out of land, but find their lives made difficult due to restrictions placed on their production practices. It is a subtler form of relocation in which people are not displaced spatially but socioeconomically.

Kelly (2011) draws parallels between land grabbing in the name of conservation and Marx's concept of 'primitive accumulation'- the enclosure of commons in favor of private property- but also warns us that there are limits to drawing such parallels. Primitive accumulation generally involves the enclosure of commons in favor of private property, whereas protected areas generally create public, not private property. For conservationists, the argument is that land allocated for conservation is converted to public and not private property and is thus for the greater good (e.g.Kopnina et al., 2018). However, Kelly (2011) argues, even though land under protected areas is converted into public property, benefits from conservation are appropriated by private tourism investors.

For critical social scientists, unlike the original primitive accumulation by Marx, dispossession in the name of conservation is not for the creation of labor reserve, but open spaces devoid of the original land users for conservation and tourism (Benjaminsen and Bryceson, 2012). The interest is in land and not the people and in such cases land grabbing create *surplus populations* whose labor will never be needed (Li, 2010).

Levien (2015) argued that there are three basic means available for doing land dispossession: coercion, material compensation, and normative persuasion. Where open coercion is considered difficult to carry out because of fears of resistance, states turn towards using ideological and nationalistic justification to convince people to relocate. When ideological justifications and/or material compensations fall short in convincing people to relocate and resistance emerges, the ability of the state to dispossess gets decided by the balance of political forces (Levien, 2015: 149).

The relation between people and nature has always been a contested topic throughout conservation's history (Hutton et al., 2005). People have often been perceived as outsiders, invaders, or spoilers of the 'original', 'pristine' or 'wild nature' (Adams and Mcshane, 1996). Large numbers of local populations have as a result been relocated from or denied access to historical grazing and settlement spaces in the name of protecting nature (Neumann, 1992; Neumann, 2005; Adams and Mcshane, 1996). In other cases, communities have been enclaved within conservation areas (Nelson, 2010; Nakamura and Hanazaki, 2017). In such cases, land may be incrementally taken over through the impositions of restrictions on traditional land use practices which force the local population to choose wage labor over traditional production (Brockington and Duffy, 2010). This is, however, problematic given that conservation creates limited non-traditional wage labor opportunities (Li, 2010). In the absence of such opportunities, land users are left to live under circumstances that affect both their own lives and the ecosystem they live in, making eventual relocation justifiable (Dowie, 2009). So, what kind of processes make people relocatable and the land that they occupy available for grabbing, i.e. grabbable? In the rest of this section, I will discuss the roles that scarcity narratives and discourse on indigeneity play in making eventual relocation of local land users possible.

Scarcity narratives

Conservation policy making are often shaped by "scarcity narratives" in which discrepancy is assumed to exist between infinitely growing human needs and finite means to realise them (Mehta et al, 2019: 222). Neo-Malthusian conceptions about the relation between population growth, resource scarcity and environmental degradation play a central role in conservation debates, policy making and practice (Dean, 2015; Leach and Fairhead, 2000). Policies guided by such assumptions include proposals for reducing human population in wildlife rich landscapes; for example, through evictions and restrictions or other deleterious ways such as calculated neglect and impoverishment of local populations (Agrawal and Redford, 2009; Bergius et al., 2020).

Critics of neo-Malthusianism argue that population numbers are meaningless without the social-political conditions that affect the people-nature relations (Napoletano and Clark, 2020). Mehta et al. (2019) argue that scarcity is socially produced and used by powerful actors to justify the need for exclusive conservation spaces that limit local people's access to resources. Scarcity is an ideologically charged notion and shapes political possibilities (D'Souza, 2019). While it may be presented as neutral and absolute category and its deployment apolitical, scarcity arguments may also be produced to fit certain interests (Scoones et al., 2019). Scarcity

thinking has been widely challenged in the last decades of the 20th century. Widespread criticism of scarcity thinking helped forge new conservation models in which humans are viewed not as drivers of environmental decline: and thus, resulted in more participatory models to conservation.

Indigenizing locals (as a discursive tool) for land grabbing

The central argument by conservation models that allow to remain within conservation areas is that local communities, particularly indigenous groups can harmoniously coexist with their surrounding nature (Büscher and Fletcher, 2020). The implicit suggestion is that certain type of communities with a particular production practice can lead more wildlife friendly lives than others and are thus more suited to conservation. The impact of such conceptualizations is difficult to overstate.

In her article *Articulating Indigenous Identity in Indonesia: Resource Politics and the Tribal Slot*, Tania Li (2000) argues that defining a group as indigenous can facilitate appropriation of the group's resources as it may prevent the group from making claims beyond what is considered sufficient. Defining locals as indigenous is problematic as it obliges them to remain faithful to the kind of articulations in order to make claims over access to resources (Hall et al., 2011). The assumption that the lifestyles of indigenous groups are more harmonious with nature, Hall et al. (2011) noted, carries within itself the argument that 'indigenous'/ traditional people have unique capacities for nature management and it obliges them to perform accordingly (173). It carries a "romantic baggage" (Adams, 2004). Even though the formation of such identity creates an opportunity to mobilize broad social movements to defend local peoples' rights, there are also risks as such movements are based on simplifications of social boundaries and connections (Li, 2000).

A further risk of being defined as indigenous is that local communities may end up accepting the articulations because they see them as a defense line from encroachments into their resources by outsiders. Acceptance of such labels by locals can be due to three different reasons. First, defining themselves as indigenous can be due to what Harvey[4] termed as 'a politics of nostalgia' towards a past that has been lost. Second, accepting these labels provides them with global solidarities against state and capitalist aggressions against indigenous groups

[4] Harvey D (2003) *The New Imperialism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press..

(Igoe, 2006). Global movement against the 'fences and fines' approaches in conservation in the 1970s and 80s compelled states and conservation actors to recognize the presence of indigenous communities. Neumann (2005) argued that "…repressed and marginalized ethnic groups around the world are embracing the indigenous label as a means to defend and regain autonomous control of land and resources" (128). According to Salazar (2009), when human agents occupy a contested space that they are striving to legitimize control over, they reproduce their identity through the confirmation of cultural representations that speak to their conceptions of themselves and their interpretation of what they perceive to be others' perceptions of them (p. 64). Third, tourism often plays important role in reconfiguring these images as it uses "indigenous" groups as its objects and leads to extreme form of assimilation in which indigenous people are integrated with the dominant society purely as objects of curiosity for the industry (Mowforth, 2014).

This eventually leads to 'soft evictions'- less coercive, gentler and benign forms of displacements- caused by restrictions that make living within a protected area uneasy (Dowie, 2009). This is particularly common in places where eviction from ancestral homes is illegal or difficult to carryout and broad restrictive rules of human use and habitation are instead set and enforced. Displacement in such cases is carried under the veil of 'voluntary relocation' or 'co-management' arrangements which put restrictions on livelihoods of local populations (Dowie, 2009). The absence of freedom facilitates dispossession. Essentialization of locals as ecological villains, heroes or as passive recipients of power is problematic and simplistic. It does not take into account how local people's relation with their non-human cohabitants is shaped by the capitalist system within which they interact (Napoletano and Clark, 2020).

Ngorongoro and the multiple land use model

The world-famous Serengeti National Park in Tanzania has undergone several stages of drawing and redrawing of boundaries both before and after its establishment as a National Park in 1951 (Sinclair et al., 2008; Århem, 1985b). A rather small area of 2,286 km^2 was established as a game reserve mainly for sport hunting in 1930. This land was later given a protected area status in 1940 and became a national park in 1951. The size of the protected area, which was initially limited to southern plains, also expanded throughout this upgrading process (Sinclair et al., 2008).

In 1956, a group of about 4000 Maasai living on the Serengeti plains were asked to resettle in the highlands of Ngorongoro and in the Loliondo area, outside the eastern borders of the then Serengeti National Park (Igoe, 2017). The colonial authorities made promises to locals that they will never be troubled again and that these areas will be their homes and signed a deal with some 'representatives' of the communities (Århem, 1985a; NCAA, 1996). However, in 1959, only three years later, authorities pressed by conservationist interest groups such as Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS) returned to Ngorongoro now claiming that the highlands were too important to be left for communities (Århem, 1985a; Homewood and Rodgers, 1991; Igoe, 2017). The Ngorongoro highlands, conservation authorities argued, were vital for the whole Greater Serengeti-Mara ecosystem as the highlands make up an essential part of the annual wildlife migration route, as well as providing access to water and pasture during the dry seasons (Århem, 1985a).

At the same time, in the 1950s, there were fears of the spread anticolonial unrests in Kenya to the rest of the British colonies in East Africa making relocation of people for the second time problematic, as it may drive people to join the ongoing anticolonial struggles (Igoe, 2017). As a result, while the fundamental assumption in conservation around this period was that people and 'nature' should be kept apart (Igoe, 2017), authorities in Tanzania were not prepared to relocate people for the second time, as some of the residents of Ngorongoro had already been resettled there only three years earlier to its establishment. The establishment of the NCA in 1959 was thus based on claims that peaceful coexistence of people and wildlife could be possible. Under a Multiple Land Use Model (MLUM), pastoralists were to coexist with vast number and diversity of wildlife and tourism activities that depend on both the wildlife and '*authentic cultural experiences*' (Igoe, 2017), which the Maasai provide to tourists. The priority, according to the then governor of the Maasai District Council, quoted in Homewood and Rodgers (1991: 72), is;

> …to protect the game animals of the area, but should there be any conflict between the interests of the game and the human inhabitants, those of the latter must take precedence.

This may have seemed like a good deal for the locals given the violent evictions that were common elsewhere during the time. However, some conservation actors such as Bernhard Grzimek, the director of Frankfurt Zoological Society at the time, bluntly opposed the idea of allowing the Maasai to graze their livestock in NCA from the beginning and worked behind the scene to undermine its founding principles (Adams and Mcshane, 1996). In his *Serengeti*

Shall Not Die book, which he co-authored with Michael Grzimek, his son, Grzimek openly argued for the removal of the Maasai from Ngorongoro (Grzimek and Grzimek, 1959).

Thus, even though the initial promises seemed to prioritize the human residents' interest, this started to change and particularly so after independence when the initial management structure that included local representatives, was replaced by an advisory board which excluded the Maasai (Homewood and Rodgers, 1991; Shivji and Kapinga, 1998). Furthermore, the NCA became the responsibility of the Ministry of Natural resources, whose main priority was the management and utilization of natural resources, shifting from the initial promise to prioritize local peoples' interests (Shivji and Kapinga, 1998). The interests of the residents of the NCA were thus relegated with the increasing focus of the authorities towards promoting tourism.

In 1975, the NCA authorities decided to ban cultivation, claiming that it was incompatible with conservation (McCabe, 2003). Even though the Maasai are traditionally pastoralists, historical evidence show that they have also in periods practiced small-scale subsistence cultivation to avert food shortages (Shivji and Kapinga, 1998).

In 1979, the same year the UNESCO inscribed the area into its World Heritage Sites list for its uniqueness of harmonious coexistence of people and wildlife, the authorities raised a concern regarding the "carrying capacity" of the area and the need for eventual relocation of people from it (Homewood and Rodgers, 1991). According to Homewood and Rodgers (1991), the conservation authorities requested UNESCO to commission a 'planning study', but the report from this study was later rejected by the authorities, as the results of the assessment did not support their plan and interest to relocate people. Despite the founding ordinance emphasizing the need to balance between protecting natural resources and the rights of people, Homewood and Rodgers argued, the NCAA has for most of its history prioritized the first goal over the Maasai's interests (Homewood and Rodgers, 1991: 2).

More than sixty years after its establishment, Tanzanian authorities as well as international conservation organizations now claim that the conditions for people in Ngorongoro have worsened and that locals should be resettled. In 2012, a UNESCO World Heritage assessment committee urged the Tanzanian government to work towards relocating the residents of Ngorongoro 'voluntarily' by 'increasing incentives to relocate'(UNESCO, 2012). There are ongoing preparations to relocate people to areas outside the NCA. Schools are being built outside the area to accept Maasai pupils who are willing to resettle. Moreover, some households

have been relocated out of the NCA through a project known as Jema, named after a village outside the NCA where people were relocated to (URT, 2016).

As I stated in the introduction, in the 2019 NCA report Tanzanian authorities assert that even though the conditions for conservation of natural and cultural resources and tourism are improving it is unlikely for MLUM to bring the desired outcomes in terms of bringing benefit to 'indigenous' residents and that the situations of the local pastoralists are deteriorating (URT, 2019: 3). The alternative, authorities both during interviews and in the report seem to suggest is to relocate people out of the NCA.

Revisiting the discourses and practices of MLUM

Analysis of interviews with different actors as well as a review of documents reveal that multiple interlinked processes are paving the way for the relocation of people from the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. The first aspect is related to the shifts in the legal and institutional basis of the management of the NCAA. Even though the British administration in 1959, allowed the Maasai to stay within the NCA, the agreements made at the time did not provide a guarantee against the possibilities of land grabbing at a later stage. The legal and institutional arrangements have changed over time. A second, process is related to the weakening of the Maasai's position through conservation discourses about that focus on colonial imaginaries of local people and their practices as pristine and harmless to wildlife conservation. Such discourses discourage locals' deviation from these ideal imaginaries. Tourism played a vital role in instituting these imaginaries, by presenting the Maasai as authentic objects of tourism.

Finally, a third and crucial process in paving the way for land grabbing is how the Maasai internalized and accepted their own place in relation to conservation, as Hodgson (1999) also argued. During colonial rule, the Maasai were presented as the "exotic other", and a "nomad warrior race" by Europeans (Hodgson, 1999; Salazar, 2018). Pressured by the above discourses and as a result of continuous desocialization, locals, accepted and brought into existence a certain image of themselves as "indigenous", "exotic" and whose social practices are harmonious with wildlife conservation, in the process of fighting back for land control. This self-image is then used by powerful actors, including the Tanzanian state, local elites, tourism sector and international conservation interest groups to impose restriction on social practices that deviate from the accepted imaginary. In the rest of this section, I will present empirical

material demonstrating how these interlinked aspects made the human residents relocatable and their land grabbable.

Legal and institutional arrangements

A review of the legal acts since the 1959 up until today reveals that authorities did not keep the promise of safeguarding the interests of local people. Nor did they provide the basic social services they promised to improve the living conditions of the people as the priorities shifted towards conservation and tourism over time (Århem, 1985b). Legal documents governing the NCA changed through time, reflecting dominant ways of thinking of different periods in Tanzania's conservation history (see *Table 1* below).)

The various legal documents have over time gradually weakened the position of the residents by restricting local production practices. This is partly done through a gradual shift in the way the locals are defined in the documents and the gradual imposition of restrictions on their production practices. The ways the locals are presented changed through time, from local communities a main priority and partner in the early days to their eventual sidelining in recent years. *Table 1* below summarizes how local people are defined in the different NCA related documents since 1959.

Table 1: Summary of important documents pertaining to NCA and their definition of the local population who live within the Protected Area

Documents reviewed	How the residents of Ngorongoro were defined
The 1959 Ordinance	*Maasai citizens* of the United Republic of Tanzania engaged in cattle ranching and dairy industry within the Conservation Area
Game Parks Act of 1975	*Masai citizens* of the United Republic engaged in cattle ranching and dairy industry within the Conservation Area
UNESCO 1979	*Semi-nomadic Maasai* pastoralists practicing traditional livestock grazing
The 1996 General Management Plan	*…indigenous residents of the area [who] control their own economic and cultural development in manner that leaves exceptional resources intact.*
The 2009 Wildlife Act	Defines traditional people as; *"…an assemblage of people ordinarily resident on areas habitually occupied by wildlife and whose social, cultural and ordinary lifestyles are dependent upon wildlife…"*
2019 NCAA report	The notable changes likely to cause stresses in NCA include human population growth and their spatial distribution over the landscape, social structure, *change of lifestyles of the indigenous people* and neighboring communities, land use patterns and effect of climate change (p.2)

The 1959 ordinance makes no mention of the nature of the resident population. It only presents locals as '*Maasai citizens of the United Republic of Tanzania* engaged in cattle ranching and dairy industry within the Conservation Area'. Similarly, the 1975 amended ordinance defines the residents as "*Maasai citizens of the United Republic engaged in cattle ranching and dairy industry within the Conservation Area'*. The residents are defined slightly differently when Ngorongoro was inscribed into the UNESCO World Heritage sites list in 1979 in which the UNESCO described Ngorongoro as a site where wildlife "*[…coexist] with semi-nomadic Maasai pastoralists practicing traditional livestock grazing.*" Whereas the earlier documents give more room for various expected production practices (cattle ranching and dairy industry), the UNESCO description of the Maasai as "semi-nomadic Maasai pastoralists practicing traditional livestock grazing" marks the new imaginary of "semi-nomadic" pastoralism as the accepted practice within the world heritage site.

In the 1996 General Management Plan (GMP), one of the aims of the NCAA is stated as 'to safeguard and promote the rights of indigenous residents of the area to control their own economic and cultural development in manner that leaves exceptional resources intact.'(URT, 1996: 10), indicating a shift towards from defining locals as "citizens" and residents to "indigenous" and "traditional". Similarly, the 2009 Wildlife Conservation Act (URT, 2009) solidifies this by defining traditional communities in Tanzania as an assemblage of ordinary people whose life depends on wildlife. By defining traditional communities in this way, authorities seem to exclude pastoralism as a production practice that historically have been highly compatible with the conservation of wildlife.

Institutionally, the conditions for the residents of NCA worsened when the new independent government reformed the management system of the NCA. The Ngorongoro Conservation Area Ordinance (Amendment) Act, (1963), shifts the mandate over decisions on NCA matters from 'members of the authority', i.e. the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority that initially included local representatives, to the 'conservator', a single person appointed by the country's president and whose goal was 'conserving and developing the natural resources in the conservation area'. This shifted focus towards wildlife conservation and tourism and away from protecting the interests of local people (Shivji and Kapinga, 1998; Homewood and Rodgers, 1991). Even though the term "authority" in the name of the organization that manages the NCA was reconstituted through later amendments, the Maasai's representation in organization was permanently erased. The 1963 act also put the NCA under the jurisdiction of

the Minister of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism instead of the regional government.

Moreover, while the Tanzanian Village Land Act, No. 5 of 1999 decentralized control over land to villages in order to guarantee tenure security, land within the NCA has been and still is categorized as 'reserved land', a category in which people are not allowed to settle. Only few villages within the NCA have village registration numbers but then without any physical boundaries defining their ownership of land. Most of the villages do not even have the registration numbers (URT, 2019). Thus, villages in the NCA are unique because they do not have any legal control over the land they live on. The NCA, which constitutes 59 percent of the area of Ngorongoro District, is managed by the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA)- a special parastatal organization that is responsible for the management of Ngorongoro Conservation Area. This means that the NCA is outside the jurisdictions of other lines of ministries and government structures responsible for the provision of social services and citizen political engagements.

Currently, the residents of NCA neither have representation within Tanzania's political structures nor in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA). The board of the NCAA consists of a chairperson appointed by the country's President, the conservator (i.e. the director of the NCAA) and other six to eleven people, all appointed by the Minister of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. Locals are 'represented' by a single person who is directly appointed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism.

Even though the NCA was established with a triple mandate; i.e. protecting wildlife, safeguarding the interest of the local population and promoting tourism- studies in the 1980s and 90s revealed that life conditions of the Maasai residents of Ngorongoro were deteriorating(e.g. McCabe et al., 1992; Århem, 1985a; Shivji and Kapinga, 1998; Rogers, 2009).

In response to the widespread criticisms in the 1980s and 1990s, the NCAA established *Pastoralist Council* (PC), a separate management unit that exclusively deals with benefit sharing with communities in 1994. Pastoralist Council can be seen as a sort of corporate social responsibility branch of the NCAA and receives its budget from the NCAA. In 2017/8 the PC's budget amounted to 4.8% of the annual tourism revenue of the NCAA (URT, 2019). According to interviews with members of the local communities, the establishment of PC did not really address the fundamental questions of the communities. While the locals hoped that

PC would represent their interests in NCAA's decision makings, it ultimately became a body that merely distributes food handouts for the poor and pays small amount of school bursaries for selected students. Locals I interviewed argued that by establishing PC, the authorities managed to divert attention away from the real questions of political representation and benefit sharing. Furthermore, its establishment helped authorities to pacify growing criticisms by communities, researchers and advocates of environmental justice regarding benefit sharing and continuous imposition of restrictions that further disadvantaged local 'traditional' production practices. Following the establishment of PC, Shivji and Kapinga (1998) noted that they have seen circular letters from the Tanzanian National Parks Authority (TANAPA) banning social science research in conservation areas, which may have made it difficult to access such areas for critical social science scholars.

The traditional-ness/indigenousness trap

Even though Tanzania does not recognize the presence of 'indigenous' communities (IWGIA, 2011)[5], NCA legal documents, as I stated earlier, make specific references to 'traditional communities' defined as those who practice mobile pastoralism and depend on wildlife/nature for their livelihoods. The ways that local Maasai are defined progressively shifted from one that considers them as ordinary citizens of the republic in the 1959 ordinance to 'indigenous' in the recent legal documents contrary to the fact that Tanzania does not legally recognize any group as indigenous but just as Tanzanian as (Igoe, 2006) also noted.

As a result of years of restrictions, many locals have lost touch of livestock production practices and have not been able to move on to other forms of production. "We have nothing to look forward to when we wake in the morning" said a Maasai woman from Oloirobi village near the Ngorongoro Crater whom I interviewed in August 2017, explaining the fact that they have neither livestock to care for nor a replacement for it. Lack of flexibility due to the many restrictions imposed by the NCAA, locals argued, has led to their impoverishment and dependence of on state support. A young Maasai woman I interviewed in august 2017 explained.

> the problem with the current arrangement is that we are not allowed to interact with the outside world, with the assumption that we are nomads and

[5] *International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs*, IWGIA (2011) Indigenous peoples in Tanzania. https://www.iwgia.org/en/tanzania/654-indigenous-peoples-in-tanzania.html

> we have to stay nomads, to be able to live with wildlife. But we are not nomads anymore because we have settled in permanent settlements without developing any skills for such lifestyle. This is because we have been systematically prevented from interacting with the outside world. Even the modern houses we build are not very much different from our traditional manyatta because we never got any experience from outside.

Local Maasais seems to have accepted the idea of identifying themselves as traditional/indigenous. In the 1990s, grass-root NGOs linked to global indigenous peoples' movements, which focused on local land rights revived ethnic identities and territories, countered longstanding efforts by the Tanzanian government to discourage ethnic based claims over land (Igoe, 2017). Local leaders and NGOs, Igoe noted, argued that the Maasai's transhumant lifestyle as well as their lack of interest in bushmeat makes them highly compatible and thus should be allowed to coexist with wildlife (42). Local Maasai present themselves as indigenous, in the hope that they could tap into benefits that tourism provides (Salazar, 2018). People have been persuaded that they will benefit from tourism that is based on the "pure" cultural experiences that the Maasai provide to tourists (Igoe, 2017). As Salazar (2009) rightly noted,

> Many Maasai themselves, like other indigenous groups, seem to be selling their own marginality. Were they not marginal to and different from the tourists, they would not have attracted the latter's attention. In order to sustain such commodity and to continue attracting customers, they have to maintain their difference.

The downside was that locals had to live up to expectations prescribed by not only the conservation authorities, to prevent evictions- but also their own in response to tourist expectations of authenticity. However, this is dangerous as the uncritical deployment of the 'indigenous lenses' writes indigenousness into the communities' mindset. That is to say, the process of making a tradition visible is also a process of creating it, as Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) noted[6].

While it is true that the Maasai have in the past lived in harmony with the nature, redundant focus on this idea alone leads to reinforcing of imaginaries created by tourist promotions that local people are part of the landscape just like the rest of the biota (Adams and Mcshane, 1996:

[6] P 30.

42). This contradictory position left the Maasai in dilemma, between securing their livelihoods and maintaining this reconstituted image handed to them, in order to secure access to land in Ngorongoro. A major actor in constructing these stereotypical imaginaries of the Maasai is the ecotourism sector. One of the first things anyone who visited NCA notices is are groups of local residents standing by the roadsides waiting for tourists as well as the small 'cultural villages' both staged for showing traditional dances and songs for the tourists. According to Salazar (2009), instead of providing an accurate representation of Maasai history and culture, the tourism industry "continued to present the colonial images and stereotypes concerning the Maasai as a backward community that provide additional anecdotes to western tourism lurking for exoticism and adventure in the African wilderness" (Salazar 2009, p. 64).

The discursive production of scarcity and tradition

Two recurrent claims emerge from analysis of empirical material about the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. One is based on the notions of carrying capacity and resource scarcity, the idea that resources are limited and can only support a certain number of people. The second is related to changes in lifestyle- which involve a deviation from what has been defined as traditional.

According to the first narrative, the NCA is being degraded because of increasing human population and rising number of livestock needed to support this growing population. The authors of the 2019 assessment report, for example, argued that "with an average annual growth rate of 3.5%, human population will reach 200,000 people by 2038" (xiii). Population growth, they argue, implies declining of the well-being of the people as resources can hardly sustain the number of people and their increasing livestock. Maintaining the current *status quo* is therefore not a viable option. An official at the NCAA said the following explaining what will happen if they do not relocate people;

> I know Ngorongoro is going to change a lot. With the number of livestock, we are seeing today, if things are not taken seriously, we are going to lose quite a number of [wildlife]. Even the threatened species, we are going to lose them because they will be squeezed until when they cannot survive anymore. In that case, if we reach at that point maybe in 10 or 20 years to come and nothing has been done to rescue the situation, Ngorongoro Conservation Area will not be there anymore. A lot of changes will take place. A lot of changes have happened in the last few years alone. The temperature itself, Ngorongoro is not the way it used to be in the 1970s. It has changed. Rain pattern has changed, I don't know, maybe because of too

> much human impact or something. If you want things to remain as natural as possible, there should be very! very! minimum human disturbance because humans are destroyers of the environment.

With increasing numbers of people, authorities argue, they tend to settle near to key wildlife. When I argued that people have been here throughout history, he responded,

> Where they [stay] matters. People are settling near where the wildlife are, which was not the case before. The closer people are to wildlife, the more the conflicts are. That is the problem.

He further argued that the problem legal basis of the MLUM is that it did not clearly stipulate about the numbers of people who could be allowed to stay within NCAA. He said,

> From the very beginning, it was supposed to be stipulated directly like 'if livestock reaches this number, no more livestock for you'. It has to be that way. If human beings increase to this number, no more people should stay inside, maybe they find somewhere else to stay. This is so as to maintain that carrying capacity, carrying capacity in terms of resource use, carrying capacity in terms of range land use, water, settlement and so forth. That is one. Another thing it [the MLUM] was supposed to say is, the types of settlements which would be allowed in the area. but, because this one was not much insisted, not that much said about, not that much documented, now people are building any house they want. But that is not proper. This shows that something is missing. It was supposed to be documented but also enforced. (key informant interview, August 2017)

Similarly, another NCAA official argued,

> When they [the authorities in 1950s] were shifting people from Serengeti, when they took them to Ngorongoro, they thought these people will run away after missing social services in Ngorongoro. The mistake they did is, they brought in the social services to the people in Ngorongoro. For instance, you bring people here, and you bring them the services such as hospitals, with schools, you give them water and the basic needs. What do you expect? They will reproduce… [laugh], from 8000 to 10,000 to 20,000 and so on. But, if they could have done like; they bring people to Ngorongoro and these people, they find out they do not get those basic needs, they will [would have] run away.

When NCA was established in 1959, there were about 8000 people residing in inside the new conservation area; about 4000 were original inhabitants of Ngorongoro and the other 4000 were relocated into it from the Serengeti plains in 1956. Currently, there are close to 100,000 inhabitants. NCA has some of the poorest households in Tanzania. A report from 2013 (URT, 2013) shows that more than 80% of the population lives under poverty line, nearly 74% of the population have no formal education and only 0.3% of the residents of NCA have attended higher education. The same report also shows that 89% of the population has no formal employment (URT, 2013).

However, interviews with locals and review of documents reveal that scarcity is an outcome of the restrictions imposed by the conservation authorities that led to lack of flexibility of the Maasai's production practices. The Tanzanian authorities had official consultations with UNESCO with regard to relocating the Maasai out of Ngorongoro since 1979. Even though results of the study commissioned to assess the carrying capacity of the area did not support the need for relocation, the authorities have since then been implementing measures to ostensibly reduce human impact on the ecosystem. Such measures among other include; the *zoning* of the NCA into human settlement, pastoralist development (grazing) and exclusive protected areas for wildlife in 1996, and restrictions on production practices such as small-scale cultivation since the early 1990s.

There is little evidence to support the claim that there has been increase in livestock despite the growth in population. Official reports show that the number of livestock remained almost constant ever since the conservation area was established. Tropical Livestock Units (TLUs) per capita declined from 11.6 in 1959 to 2.3 in 2017 (URT, 2019: xii), a number that is far below the estimated 8.0 TLU minimum needed to sustain pastoralist livelihoods (Haan, 2016).

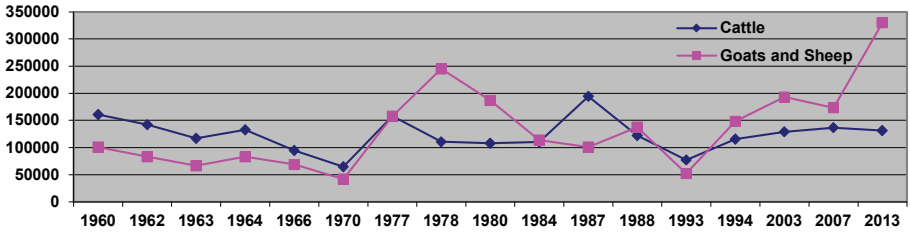

Figure 1:Number of livestock in NCA 1960 to 2013 (Source: NCAA)

Key government officials I interviewed argue that the Maasai are changing their ways of living; such as permanent settlements, new food habits and education among other changes. Such changes, authorities argue, affect the Maasai's relation with wildlife. Such views are also reflected in the August 2019 report by the NCA authorities.

> Transhumance mode of livestock production system, which indigenous residents practiced for many decades allowed pastoralists to move from one area to another within and outside NCA in search of pasture and water basing on seasonality. However, increase in human and livestock populations is disrupting traditional pastoral systems, which is detrimental to natural resources and leads to ecological changes. Thus, maintaining acceptable limits in livestock production is advocated. (URT, 2019: 13)

The Maasai have over generations developed a system of communal land use, where on seasonal rotation based grazing arrangements that enabled them to co-exist with abundant wildlife. However, such arrangements have over the last century been disrupted by interventions that prioritize the creation of exclusive protected areas and the conversion of communal pastoral land into permanent agriculture.

The conditions for pastoral practice in Ngorongoro particularly worsened when authorities introduced "zoning" in the 1996 General Management Plan. Even though the MLUM initially put no restriction on livestock movements within the NCA, the 1996 General Management Plan (URT, 1996) introduced 'zoning' in which human residents and their livestock were banned from accessing historical grazing spaces, water access points and other vital resources. Through the zoning process, pastoral mobilities were curtailed, and people were forced to gather around fixed settlements, i.e. in what is defined as the "Pastoralist Development Zone" (see *Figure 1 below*).

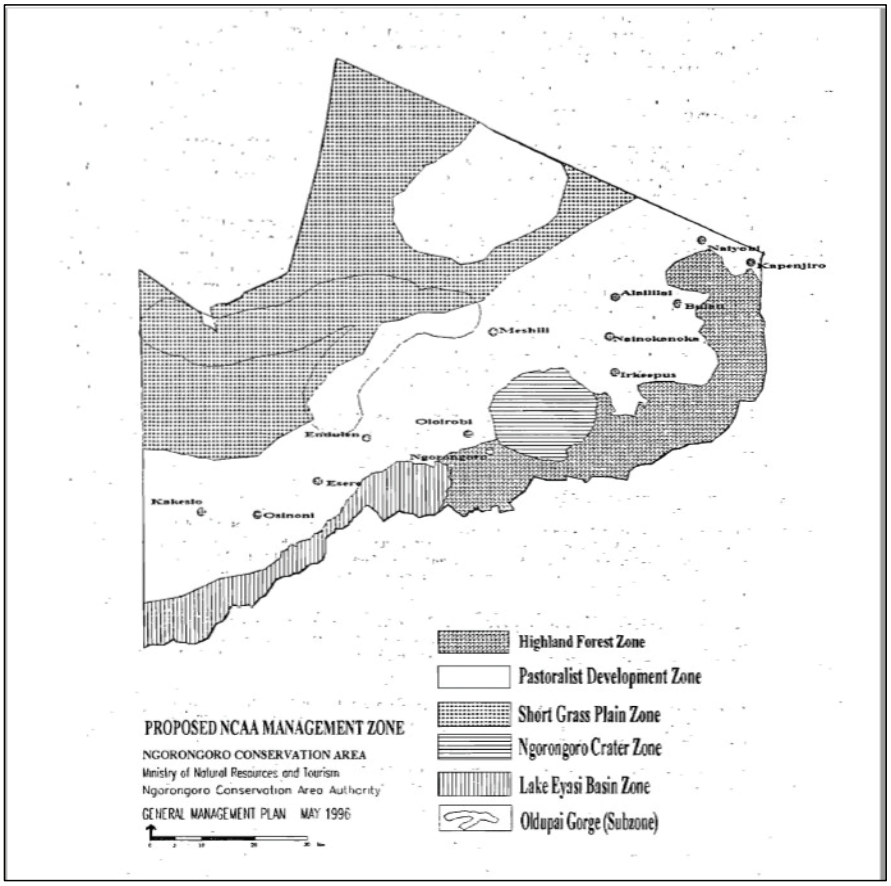

Figure 2: Zoning of the NCAA in the 1996 General Management Plan. Source: (NCAA, 1996)

Official portrayals of local people as traditional pastoralists, many local interviewees argued, are problematic as the Maasai were required to stay traditional to be able to be able to live in in the NCA. First, such portrayals condescendingly elevate locals as guardians of wildlife while the benefits of conserving wildlife are only appropriated by the state and other local and non-local powerful actors. By defining the locals in such a way, the Maasai are othered from the rest of society in a way preventing them from interacting with the rest. Despite official portrayals of local people as traditional pastoralists, many of the households in the NCA try to diversify their income sources, among others through seasonal migration for non-pastoralist jobs elsewhere.

Second, this view fails to consider the ongoing changes in areas surrounding the NCAA. According to an official[7] from the NCAA, overall change in the communities surrounding the protected area greatly affects what is going on inside. The Maasai historically depended on nomadic practices, which are based on seasonal migration including to areas outside the Ngorongoro as Homewood and Rodgers (1991) also noted. This tradition, the interviewee argued, has been affected by changes in land use in areas adjacent to NCA, where farmers have converted most of the wildlife and livestock migration corridors into cultivation fields (as can also be seen in the *figure 2* below).

Figure 3: Farmlands adjacent to the borders of the NCA, the vegetated part at the bottom of the picture is within NCA. Photo: Haakon Lein

Conservation authorities argue that changes in traditions among the residents of Ngorongoro is leading to degradation of the protected area. For people and communities to be able to stay in Ngorongoro, they must stay 'traditional', which means that they must practice pastoralism as they historically did i.e. should be nomadic and do seasonal migration, live in traditional homes and exclusively depend on livestock production as these supposedly traditional characteristics are presumed to have made the Maasai's ways of life compatible with wildlife. Based on this argument, people should stay culturally authentic to earn the right to live within the conservation area. A UNESCO report, for example, states;

[7] Interview, August 2017

> The shift from constructing "traditional houses" to modern styles and very large houses […] is not only impactful on the landscape, but also an erosion on the connection of the communities with their landscape. The bomas are a living testament of [a] harmony. (UNESCO, 2019)

Key informants from the NCAA also made similar arguments regarding the resource impacts of changes in Maasais' ways of life. The quote below from an interview with a high-ranking official at the NCAA summarizes the dilemma that the authorities face.

> […] if you improve the standard of living, indirectly you are also encouraging the usage of resources like water for example. When [the Maasai] are living in their Bomas [Maasai traditional homes], they do not need that much water, but if you improve their houses, they demand more water because they need to flush toilets, they need water for cattle, such kind of things. (Interview, August 2017)

Key authorities argue that many Maasai no longer practice pastoralism and should be relocated out of the NCA. One official at the NCAA argued;

> By law, the only people who are supposed to live within the NCAA are people who keep livestock. But, now there are poor people, people who do not own livestock. Once they do not have cattle, they are not supposed to be in there. (Interview, September 2018)

Similarly, a policy expert at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism whom I interviewed argued

> Tanzania is a country which has a huge chunk of land. Through discussion with the communities concerned, we can devise a system to get them a good piece of land where they can do their socio-economic activities more freely. They have been constrained in Ngorongoro and this could easily drive people out of abject poverty. (Interview, September 2017)

The Maasai are thus expected to live a scripted lifestyle, which necessitates that they subsist their livelihoods in ways that the management authorities presume are compatible with wildlife conservation. The problem with this notion is that the script fails to take into account the fundamental nature of society and particularly society in a changing and globalizing world where the script is supposed to change if it is to capture opportunities and cope with the challenges these changes bring about.

As Neumann (1995) noted, in Tanzania, what the Maasai could and could not do, have been and still is based on colonial stereotypes of the Maasai culture (p.138). The Maasai and their lands have been constituted to fit the colonial imaginaries of how Africa should look like (Igoe, 2017; Rogers, 2002). Maasai who deviate from the colonial imaginary and embrace change are often stigmatized and ostracized (Hodgson, 1999). As Igoe rightly argued, tourism in northern Tanzania recovers and perfects certain aspects of these colonial imaginaries and relations by infusing monetary value to such relations (Igoe, 2017: 56).

The management policies and in practice of the MLUM, which have their origins from colonial views of the Maasai are problematic. The Maasai were defined as traditional- which means that they must remain as nomadic livestock herders. However, in practice, the room for local peoples' "traditional" livelihood practices have through time been increasingly limited and constrained. Moreover, the notion that communities should stay traditional when everything around them changes, led to a situation in which the basic means of livelihood for local people are endangered and where there is no alternative in place. The internalization of these notions and acceptance of practices guided by such notions by the Maasai themselves left them under uncertainties. Such uncertainties resulted in lack of investment in basic social infrastructures by both the locals themselves and state or other development partners.

As presented in the background section, there were talks of moving the Maasai out of NCA since the late 1970s. A local interviewee summarizes his frustrations in relation to this as follows.

> I do not know where to go. We don't have permanent things such as houses or we do not have plans like that. We build the houses like this you see now [mud houses] because we know we are not here permanently because this is a conservation area and we do not know when the government will push us out. Our life is based on indefinite temporariness. Our future is uncertain.

Authorities in Tanzania are now considering "voluntary resettlement" of locals into areas outside the NCAA. In so doing, they are using the Maasai's deteriorating life conditions to legitimatize resettlement. However, resettlements are often problematic due to the circumstances in which they are carried out. As Schmidt-Soltau and Brockington (2007) concluded, we should be cautious about resettlement as it is often difficult to distinguish voluntary from involuntary displacement (p. 2182). People who live within or adjacent to protected areas are in most cases under pressure from the social costs of the restrictions that PAs place on them. In such circumstances, Schmidt-Soltau and Brockington (Schmidt-Soltau

and Brockington, 2007) argue, it is no surprise if people agree to move when they are asked to do so.

Conclusion

So, how does land become grabbable? How did the idea of relocating people out of NCA, which was not possible in 1959, apparently become acceptable today? Ngorongoro is a unique case and the analysis results from this study are thus difficult to transfer to other cases where the context maybe is different. However, there are important lessons to be taken from this case. First, land grabbing does not happen in vacuum. People are, through long processes of marginalization, made relocatable. Local people either relocate themselves because they could not make a living due to systematic disinvestments on basic social services or life is made unbearable through restrictions imposed on local people to make voluntary relocation possible. Insight from this study can be used in other cases of land grabbing where large swathes of ostensibly empty land is made available for investment.

The Multiple Land Use Model upon which NCA is based was introduced to safeguard the interests of communities who were pushed out of their historical homes to establish the Serengeti National Park. Despite initial promises, Tanzanian conservation authorities diligently worked to disincentivize the Maasai from staying inside the Ngorongoro. Since the late 1970s conservation authorities openly argued for eventual relocation of people (Homewood and Rodgers (1991). While the legal documents and management plans recognize and promote the need for maintaining traditional social practices, in practice the authorities introduced restrictions that curtailed mobility and access to vital resources for locals. The NCAA continued to enforce restrictions on the social practices that historically enabled the pastoralist Maasai communities to lead a relatively harmonious life with the wildlife.

After years of deprivation of basic social services and opportunities for change, people have become poorer, deskilled and ended up in a weaker negotiating position. The Maasai residents, authorities I interviewed argue, should be discouraged from staying within the NCA and encouraged to relocate themselves to places with better opportunities outside, leaving Ngorongoro for wildlife conservation. However, this is not a new argument, as some powerful forces such as the FZS have since the beginning opposed the idea of letting people stay within the NCA.

Locals have for the last 60 years struggled both to sustain livelihoods and maintain control over land under so much uncertainty. In so doing, they accepted narrowly defined labels such as traditional, indigenous in order to secure access to land, despite disadvantages associated with these labels. In other words, the Maasai were capitulated into the notions of traditional-ness, indigeneity and so on, in order to avoid forced relocation. This however sets a dangerous precedence as it leads to a situation where people have limited access to basic social infrastructures and services necessary for betterment of lives. Defining the Maasai as 'traditional', or 'indigenous', as Shivji and Kapinga (1998) also noted, set them apart from the 'social and political mainstream of the country'. While the choice of what parts of tradition to keep and which ones to drop should be left to the communities, as Amartya Sen (1999) famously argued, in Ngorongoro these choices were and continue to be imposed from outside.

This is a stealthy process of dispossession where the state and conservation authorities did not have to impose coercive measure to relocate people as in the neighboring sub-districts, such as Loliondo (Weldemichel, 2020), in order to grab the land. Here, the people are assumed to "voluntarily" leave the conservation area in search for better life outside. Even though, this has been the goal, for a long time, it is in recent years that authorities are openly pushing for the relocation of people from Ngorongoro. Pastoralist communities face increasing stigmatization and disregard of their knowledge, their historic pastoral arrangements are dismantled, and they are left at the mercy of the state and the market (ecotourism) for living. Neither are people turned into laborers as there is no demand for their labor. The main employer in this case is tourism and very few locals secure jobs in the conservation-based tourism sector.

This historical precedents for the current push towards relocating the Maasai can be located in the different debates both before and throughout the period following the formation of the NCA. While the argument for allowing people to remain within a protected area is based on the notion that traditional communities can coexist in harmony with nature and wildlife, in practice the focus on traditional-ness facilitated the imposition of restrictions on local people's daily lives. The lack of freedom then contributed to the deterioration of the living conditions of the locals which in turn is used to justify their relocation. Scarcity was thus discursively and materially produced. The material production of scarcity, as in the deteriorating living conditions of the locals, is in turn used to legitimize arguments for relocation of the Maasai from their lands. Through the imposition of restrictions on their production practices and denying of access to necessary services, the government has tried to encourage exit of local

population both from pastoral production and from the area and in order to render land in Ngorongoro grabbable.

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