

Green grabbing and the contested nature of belonging in Laikipia, Kenya: A genealogy

by

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Abstract

Global demand to protect endangered wildlife at any cost has corresponded to increasingly more Large-Scale Land Acquisitions being carried out for conservation purposes. This dissertation focuses on how and why different rural groups have such diverse experiences with, and reactions to, this phenomenon (i.e. green grabbing). Recent studies emphasize the need to depart from stereotypes of rural groups as either passive victims or unified resisters of green grabbing. Such studies show that green grabs have differentiated impacts and are met by variegated political reactions from below – including resistance, acquiescence, and incorporation. While making important contributions to the literature, these insights lead to additional questions. For example, how do the political reactions of certain rural groups align or depart from those of others and why? In responding to such questions, this dissertation makes green grabbing a subject of ethnographic and historical analysis in Laikipia, Kenya. Through a genealogical approach to studying green grabbing, this dissertation brings literature on ethnicity and belonging in Laikipia into dialogue with recent green grabbing literature. The findings suggest that in settler societies, certain aspects of green grabbing may be understood as

acts of white belonging. Likewise, green grabbing presents other rural groups with opportunities – however marginal – to re-assert different notions of belonging in the landscape through resistance, acquiescence, or incorporation. Based on these findings, this dissertation argues that green grabbing is central to longstanding contestations over belonging in Laikipia. The phenomenon has been made possible by, but has also reproduced, ethno-spatial divisions rooted in colonial expansion. By tracing the shifting contours of these divisions in time, this dissertation contextualizes how and why different rural groups experience and react to green grabbing. In doing so, it builds a case for ethnographic and historical analyses of green grabs in other places, spaces, and times.

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This dissertation is the product of personal relationships and life encounters that stretch well beyond my time at the University of Toronto between 2012 and 2017. In the following paragraphs, I acknowledge the depth and breadth of support I received while researching and writing this dissertation. Although I am only able to mention a few individuals by name, countless others helped shape this project over the course of many years.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“I know that safari guide, there. I worked with him before”. My safari guide, Caleb, whispered to me as I leaned out the passenger window of the military-green Toyota Land Cruiser we occupied. I was peering through binoculars at a small pride of lions resting in a scant bit of shade on offer under the midday, equatorial sun. Less than thirty minutes before spotting the lions, Caleb collected me from a dusty airstrip in Lewa Wildlife Conservancy – a large private conservation area in the northern foothills of Mt. Kenya. The lions were an efficient find on his part, and a highly coveted sight among safari tourists. I must be lucky. At least, that is what Caleb told me. I put down my binoculars and looked in the direction that Caleb was motioning toward. I was surprised to find a white safari guide sitting in the driver’s seat of a nearby vehicle (also a Land Cruiser painted the same shade of green) filled with tourists watching the lions pant and shake away flies from their ears, eyes, and noses.

“Oh yes?” I probed, shifting my gaze between Caleb, who self-identifies as Il Ng’wesi Maasai, and the white safari guide.

Caleb explained that he and his colleagues sometimes take on short term work with this *mzungu* (“a white person”), who hires them to help spot game for his safari clients. It was immediately clear, however, that working with this guide was not a desirable experience. “I worked with him recently”, Caleb explained, “and he told me that I should not speak to him in English in front of clients. I should only speak Swahili.” Caleb stopped talking. Not wanting to force the issue, having just met Caleb, I directed my gaze back to the lions.

Caleb spoke again, a few minutes later. I returned my gaze to the *mzungu*, who was now hushing his boisterous clients – “lower your voices, lower your voices” he scolded.

“When we work with him”, Caleb went on, “he does not want us to speak English in front of clients. We must speak only to him and it must be in Swahili.” Caleb paused again. “Imagine being told not to speak English. That is worse than colonialism”.

I clicked my tongue in agreement and disgust. “Do you still do work for him?”, I asked.

Caleb shrugged. “Not really”.

Not really? What did this mean? Did Caleb mean: “Not at all”? “Only when money is tight”? or “Yes, but on completely different terms”? Perhaps Caleb still worked for this *mzungu* – begrudgingly murmuring away in Swahili with his old-world boss, despite likely being able to converse in more refined English than many clients from mainland Europe – but was too proud to admit it. Another possibility is that Caleb did not want to discuss the issue further with me. “Not really” was his polite way of ending that line of conversation.

Whatever the original intention was behind Caleb’s ambiguous response to my question, I have admittedly co-opted it by making it a problem that lies at the core of this dissertation. In basic terms, this problem is: why would anybody consent to terms of employment perceived as “worse than colonialism” – not *like* colonialism or even *colonialism*, but *worse than* colonialism? Importantly, although Caleb’s expectations for, experiences with, and ideas about the safari industry are not unique to him, they are also far from universal in the part of Kenya where he works and calls home. While some pastoralists in the area have pursued incorporation into the industry, such as Maasais, others have engaged in open resistance. Among other ethnic groups, attitudes and behaviours toward the wildlife sector differ further still. The problem I trace back to Caleb, therefore, is just one piece in the larger puzzle of why individuals and groups have such markedly different experiences with and reactions to the wildlife sector.¹

This dissertation is an attempt to piece this puzzle together by engaging with key historical moments in the genealogy of green grabbing in Kenya, beginning with processes of colonial enclosure in the late 1800s and ending with efforts to transform land belonging

¹ The term “wildlife sector” is used in this dissertation to describe any for-profit or not-for-profit industries associated with wildlife conservation.

to Maasai pastoralists into spaces for conservation today. I hope to elucidate some of the profound effects that colonial encounters and their legacies have had in the arid/semi-arid lands adjacent to Mt. Kenya's western and northern foothills, and to illuminate how green grabbing has been made possible by and re-produced certain attributes of colonial ethno-spatial relationships. In responding to the problem of how and why different rural groups have diverse experiences with and reactions to the wildlife sector, I make green grabbing a subject of ethnographic and historical inquiry.

Before proceeding to introduce the research context in greater detail, I clarify the goal and purpose of the research behind this dissertation. I then discuss the context and key contributions of this research. Before situating this research in relevant scholarly debates in *Chapter 2*, this chapter concludes by providing an overview of each chapter in the dissertation and how it relates to the conclusions that are ultimately presented.

1 Research purpose, context, and contribution

1.1 Research goal and purpose

Scholars contributing to related literature on land and green grabbing have recently re-problematized a longstanding topic of inquiry in peasant studies literature; this is that it is surprisingly rare for peasants to mobilize in widespread revolt against various forms of marginalization that might plague their notions of livelihood and wellbeing (Wolf 1968; Scott 1976; 1985; Borras and Franco 2013; Hall et al. 2015). This appears problematic, in part, due to the othering of peasants as radically different, oppressed, and political subjects of inquiry (Mamonova 2015). Peasants, in fact, frequently opt *against* revolt – acquiescing to existing and new forms of hardship. In very general terms, the subsistence ethic of peasants involves tolerating exploitive or unfair conditions to avoid the risks associated with revolt (Hobsbawm 1973; Scott 1976; 1985; Feierman 1990). When peasants do resist, however, it is rarely uniform or widespread in nature. Resistance manifests in petty ways commonly understood as everyday resistance or “the weapons of the weak”, not in uprisings (Scott 1985). Increasingly more attention in the literature is

also being given to cases where peasants mobilize to demand incorporation into new large-scale commercial land deals and emergent labour economies, rather than to resist such deals (Borras and Franco 2013; Hall et al. 2015; Larder 2015).

The return to the question of peasant agency in the land and green grabbing literature has led to updated insights into the nature of peasant politics (Borras and Franco 2013; Hall et al. 2015). It remains clear that peasants are neither homogenous nor predictable in the ways they react to changing rural economies (Hall et al. 2015). Yet such insights also demand answers to additional questions: how do the political reactions of certain rural groups align or depart from those of others? What politics explain why different rural groups react the ways they do? Why, ultimately, do the interests of some rural groups seem to prevail at the expense of others? This dissertation aims to respond to such questions by adopting an analytical focus that is both narrow and deep. Through this approach to analysis, this dissertation avoids making generalized claims or law-like statements – e.g. “if X then Y” – pursuing instead a comprehensive, yet situated, understanding of green grabbing and the types of social relationships it consists of and makes possible and why (Edelman 2013; Oya 2013; Millar 2016).

Green grabbing represents the aperture of my inquiry into the socio-economic and political landscape of the diverse countryside surrounding Mt. Kenya. The goal is to contextualize green grabbing and reactions to it amid diverse – often contending – place-based histories with colonialism, enclosure, and the green economy, as Kenya transitioned from a protectorate to a colony to an independent nation. Two main objectives guide me toward this goal. These are to determine (1): how and why green grabbing works in certain place, spaces, and times, and (2) how and why different rural groups have such diverse experiences with and reactions to green grabbing as a result. In pursuing these objectives, I do not restrict the scope of my analysis to experiences with and reactions to green grabbing from below (Wolford et al. 2013). Rather, I attempt to draw “elite” and “non-elite”² voices into dialogue about what it means to live, work, and

² I do not use the terms “elite” and “non-elite” unproblematically. Just as people exhibit multiple notions of identity and subjectivity, divisions of power and privilege are not clear cut. Instead, they differ according to

belong in a state of green grab, and to clarify points of historical continuity and departure in the process. The result is meant to be an intellectual engagement with green grabbing that is contextually nuanced and historically enriched in its spatial and temporal considerations (Edelman 2013). Building on recent land and green grabbing literature, this goal also foregrounds the temporality of green grabbing, the ripple effects it has on ethnicity and belonging, and the reactions it elicits from below. My analysis is also critical and reflexive, drawing inspiration from feminist epistemology and methodology in human geography to highlight the situated knowledge of green grabbing produced through this research and dissertation (McDowell 1993; D. Rose 1993; Staeheli and Lawson 1995).

1.2 Research context and contribution

Green grabbing is a theoretical concept used to describe “the appropriation of [typically large amounts of] land and resources for environmental ends” (Fairhead et al. 2012, 238). Green grabs are, in other words, Large-Scale Land Acquisitions (LSLAs) for conservation-related purposes. The green grabbing literature emerged from broader debates on land grabbing, as increasingly more grabs were being justified in conservation terms. Related studies sought to analyze, more specifically, the outcomes of green economy interventions that were being rolled out across the Global South in the name of sustainable economic development and growth (Benjaminsen and Bryceson 2012). Researchers have implicated green grabs that transferred “ownership, use rights and control over resources that were once publicly or privately owned – or not even the subject of ownership – from the poor (or everyone including the poor) into the hands of the powerful” in outcomes that failed to contribute to social equity and environmental sustainability or directly contradicted such goals (Fairhead et al. 2012, 238). Such outcomes include the displacement of human populations from their land and/or territories, new limitations on access to land and other natural resources, threats to customary livelihoods and alternative visions of development, and new or perpetuating

place, space, and time, as well as to ever-shifting contours of class, gender, identity, race, etc. When these terms are used, therefore, they are meant to indicate positions of *relative* power, privilege, and wealth.

forms environmental conflict and exclusion (Adams and Hutton 2007; Benjaminsen and Bryceson 2012; Fairhead et al. 2012; Gardner 2012; Ojeda 2012; Robbins 2012; Snijders 2012; Holmes 2014; Lunstrum 2016).

The green grabbing literature has helped keep the spotlight on these and other socio-economic and political controversies underlying the wildlife sector in Africa³ and around the world. One of the main contributions has been evidence on how green grabbing involves the ongoing dispossession of subsistence land users to facilitate capital accumulation for transnational actors and entities via conservation under the premise of environmental wellbeing (Benjaminsen and Bryceson 2012; Büscher et al. 2012; Fairhead et al. 2012; Snijder 2012; Holmes 2014; Büscher and Fletcher 2015; Lunstrum 2016). This aspect of the literature owes much to related critiques of the neoliberalization of conservation. The term “neoliberalization” signifies the global restructuring of conservation to facilitate accumulation through the privatization of land and other natural resources, commodification of nature in its pristine form, re-scaling of environmental governance, and other socio-economic and political reforms (McCarthy and Prudham 2004; Igoe and Brockington 2007; Fletcher 2010). For policy- and other decision-makers, the outcomes of green grabbing are often intended to be “win-win”, serving the interests of conservationists and business people (McAfee 1999; Igoe and Brockington 2007; Grandia 2007). The types of Market-Driven Conservation (MDC) rolled out when green grabs hit the ground are sold as the most desirable way to protect the environment, contribute to local economies, and improve life in rural communities, while fostering economic growth at national, regional, and global levels (Gardner 2016). The green grabbing literature, in conjunction with that on the neoliberalization of nature through the green economy, has demonstrated that related processes of accumulation and dispossession often directly undermine the win-win objectives of MDC (Adams and Hutton 2007; Igoe and Brockington 2007; Arsel and Büscher 2012). In short, green grabbing is a response to, but cannot escape, fundamental contradictions in capitalist development (Büscher and Fletcher 2015).

³ “Africa”, in this dissertation, refers mainly to the eastern and southern regions of the sub-continent.

Throughout Africa, as in other parts of the Global South, green grabbing is associated with conservation interventions that continue to have contradictory and undesirable outcomes – particularly for targeted beneficiaries who stand to gain the most from such interventions. The literature on green grabbing documents numerous cases in which Local and/or Indigenous Peoples (L/IP) have been displaced from their land or territory, stripped of their access rights, and suffered damaged livelihoods from green grabbing and the imposition of MDC at local, national, and global levels (Adams and Hutton 2007; Igoe and Brockington 2007; Kelly 2011; Benjaminsen and Bryceson 2012; Corson and MacDonald 2012; Fairhead et al. 2012; Holmes 2014). Beyond impinging on the access and autonomy of rural land users (Ribot and Peluso 2003; Brosius 2004; Adams and Hutton 2007; Fairhead et al. 2012; Snijders 2012; Barret et al. 2013), green grabs have also been linked to human insecurity and rights violations (Chapin 2004; Lunstrum 2010; Massé and Lunstrum 2014). Similarly, although the institution of MDC has benefited some people, it has also perpetuated and led to new forms of environmental conflict, exclusion, and inequality (Chapin 2004; Adams and Hutton 2007; Grenier 2012; Lunstrum 2014; 2016; Büscher 2016a). Community-Based Conservation (CBC) and eco-tourism arrangements, such as safari tourism in Africa, have become prominent examples of appropriations with green pretexts that often fail to live up to their promises or contradictorily undermine their own stated objectives (Songorwa 1999; Alexander and McGregor 2000; Igoe and Croucher 2007; Ojeda 2012; Büscher and Davidov 2013; German et al. 2016). Through such initiatives, the benefits and burdens of conservation are often simply redistributed in new uneven ways throughout rural society rather than redressed (Brockington et al. 2008). Related to these social concerns is the fact that green grabbing does not always lead to improved conservation outcomes, often failing to achieve its environmental objectives (Brockington et al. 2008; Duffy 2014a).

These and other undesired outcomes of green grabbing are not brand new, however. Conservation in Africa, as in many other parts of the Global South, is intertwined with colonial efforts to conquer, control, and exploit indigenous lands, peoples, and livelihoods (Neumann 1998; 2001; Nelson 2003). Many scholars have demonstrated that the wilds of Africa are not the final remnants of pristine, Garden-of-Eden-like landscapes – a myth that still features prominently in global imaginaries (Neumann 1998; Brockington 2002;

Büscher 2011). Such spaces are the product of colonial imaginaries, institutions, and relationships, not to mention the outbreak of epidemics, imposition of racialized land use and tenure systems, and fortress conservation models (Neumann 1998; 2001; Brockington 2002; Büscher 2016b).⁴ In short, colonial conservation had disastrous implications for the rights, livelihoods, and wellbeing of L/IP in Africa. Many of these implications continue to reoccur, sometimes in new guises, in and through green grabbing. In settler colonies, such as Kenya, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, socio-economic and power inequalities in the wildlife sector are typically re-produced along racial lines (Kepe 2009; Mollett 2013). Race, in such contexts, is often an indicator of class, power, and privilege (Hall 1980; 1986). Yet, despite these realities, MDC is still promoted as a tool for redressing the very inequalities and injustices that conservation creates (World Bank 2013).

In the wake of studies that document how green grabbing works against the interests of already marginalized groups in rural society, scholars are now emphasizing the need to research why green grabbing persists and why it seems to have gained momentum around the world (Norgrove and Hulme 2006; Brockington et al. 2008; Igoe et al. 2010; Brockington and Duffy 2011; Büscher 2013; Goodman and Salleh 2013; Gardner 2016). The need to better understand how and why peasants react to green grabbing on the ground is crucial in this regard: does green grabbing persist in the face of resistance, implying that the phenomenon is contingent on the use of coercion or force? Or do those groups that stand to be impacted see potential in green grabs and, therefore, react in ways that serve to facilitate their incorporation into related interventions? The answers to such questions are complicated by the fact that there are many types of green grabs; moreover, these occur in vastly different spatial and temporal contexts. In short, there is no single answer to the question of why green grabbing persists despite routinely failing to catalyze development that is sustainable in economic, environmental, *and* social terms.

⁴ The rinderpest epidemic of the mid-1800s devastated livestock herds across the continent at a high cost to human life and wellbeing. Outbreaks of the disease altered the ecology of entire landscapes in some cases, as domestic animals thought to once dominate the plains of eastern Africa were temporarily removed from ecosystems (Dobson 1995; Murray and Nightingale 2011; Hornsby 2012).

It is for such reasons that some scholars have identified an urgent need for research on how and why peasants react to green grabs (Hall et al. 2015).⁵

As indicated above, peasants may resist, acquiesce to, or seek incorporation into green grabs. They may also engage in multiple overlapping reactions depending on the place, time, and their position in society. But what do reactions themselves suggest about how land is being acquired, about the nature of social relationships between grabbers and grabbees? For those attuned to the contingent and heterogeneous nature of rural society, such information is still not sufficient for making claims about why green grabbing persists. There is an equally urgent need to situate green grabs and reactions to them in rigorous ethnographic or historical analysis, with the goal of avoiding the production of spurious claims about the politics behind peasants' reactions to green grabbing and the types of changes green grabs introduce in rural society. Oversimplified claims about green grabs may counter existing efforts to resist land or green grabs, divert attention away from less publicized grabs and grabbers, or ignore social relationships that may be solidified or transformed by green grabs (Edelman 2013). In addition to calls for research on the diverse impacts of and variegated reactions to green grabs (Borras and Franco 2013; Hall et al. 2015), therefore, more specific calls are being made for ethnographic or historical analyses of how and why green grabbing works at the intersection of different – sometimes contradictory – reactions (Edelman 2013; Millar 2016). Building on this recent work, this dissertation contributes an additional case study to the existing literature.

The claims I make about this case study are derived from an ethnographically and historically situated analysis of green grabbing in Laikipia County, Kenya – an analysis that has also been shaped by my positionality as a cisgender male settler-researcher

⁵ When the term “peasant” is used in this dissertation, it mainly describes rural land users that rely on small-scale, subsistence forms of livelihood for survival – be they agricultural or pastoral. Yet the livelihood portfolios of peasants are diverse and include participation in the formal and informal labour economy. This diversity corresponds to various notions of identity and belonging, social histories, traditions of struggle, and, therefore, different experiences with and reactions to green grabbing. The findings of this dissertation re-emphasize the importance of differentiating between agricultural and pastoral groups in rural society when considering how and why peasants react to green grabbing, as well as between different groups within each of these broad categories (Agrawal and Gibson 1999).

(*Chapter 2*). Laikipia was selected as a case study for research, in part, because the county has served as a laboratory for MDC since the early 1990s, if not earlier (AWF 1999). Transformations in the county's wildlife sector reflect broader trends associated with the green economy (*Chapter 2*), making it an ideal case for examining green grabbing from an historical perspective. That MDC has flourished in this part of Kenya's "white highlands", is no coincidence; it owes virtually everything to colonial processes of land alienation, enclosure, and settlement. Lessons from Laikipia are not only relevant to the wildlife sector in Kenya, or in Africa for that matter, but to other settings where colonial projects have primed the conditions for green grabbing.

Through this case study, I bring literature on the shifting contours of ethnicity and belonging in north-central Kenya into conversation with critical literature on LSLAs (Mollet and Faria 2013). This literature complicates notions of peasants as a fixed, homogenous unit in rural society, demonstrating instead the fluid, heterogeneous nature of identity and belonging (Agrawal and Gibson 1999). Alongside such scholarship, I bring relevant literature on white belonging in Africa into the conversation. Hughes (2010) argues that conservation and white identity have both shaped and co-produced each other in Africa's settler societies. Following this line of thought, I suggest that whiteness remains an important, but to-date under-explored, piece in the puzzle of how and why green grabbing works in places such as Laikipia. Rather than posit that colonialism is synonymous with green grabbing or whiteness or white green grabbing, however, I draw from these sub-sets of literature to illuminate how the racialization of space and re-spatialization of race has occurred amid the seemingly innocuous intentions of actors and entities that have been drawn into the green economy – be they black or white, elite or non-elite, local or transnational. *Chapter 6*, for instance, focuses on the most recent moments and spaces of green grabbing in Laikipia. It demonstrates how the implementation of conservancies in lands belonging to Maasai pastoralists has had contradictory effects among communities hoping to use the wildlife sector to improve their livelihoods, secure their land, and enhance their wellbeing. What has occurred instead is a form of green grabbing now referred to as "colonialism 2.0" by community members.

Insights into how ethnicity in this part of Kenya has been produced and re-produced are pertinent to the problem at hand, as struggles to belong in Laikipia have shaped and been shaped by the contestation of power asymmetries that run along historically constructed fault lines of culture, identity, and race. Some of these fault lines can be traced backward in time beyond early colonial encounters, although most have been drawn and re-drawn through processes of colonial land alienation, enclosure, and settlement, as well as through related processes of land grabbing, green grabbing, and white green grabbing in the post-independence era. By critically engaging with the genealogy of green grabbing in Laikipia, this dissertation reveals some of the ways that different groups have come to understand their relationships with land, nature, and each other amid successive waves of enclosure that have been fueled by colonial imaginaries of nature and cultural notions of the green economy. In short, it examines the role green grabbing has played in reproducing ethno-spatial relationships in Laikipia. Understanding these relationships helps contextualize how and why different groups react politically to green grabbing.

This dissertation argues that green grabbing, from a genealogical perspective, is central to longstanding contestations over livelihood, territory, and belonging. Key aspects of green grabbing can be understood as acts of belonging among the white community that settled Laikipia, a community still fighting to be able to call this part of Kenya home – albeit from a privileged societal position. Likewise, reactions to green grabs from below often represent acts of belonging among ethnic groups engaged in prolonged struggles over disparate notions of livelihood, territory, and wellbeing, over the right to belong *differently* in Laikipia. These notions have been displaced time and again by various forms of green grabbing that have culminated in present-day acts of defiance, demands for benefits accruing from green grabs, and formation of uneasy political allegiances, among other reactions. Although such reactions often entail subversive politics, they are far from uniform in their strategies and techniques. By sifting through the genealogy of green grabbing in Laikipia, this dissertation elucidates how and why different rural groups react politically to green grabbing in the present. Lest the persistence of green grabbing be misconstrued as indicating its agreeability to the desires, politics, and values of disenfranchised rural groups, attention to both history and the micro-spaces of green grabbing suggest a more complicated state of affairs.

In addition to pursuing a research and writing style that is critical and reflexive, this dissertation pursues a dialogical approach to research by operationalizing Pratt's (2008) notion of the contact zone alongside feminist critiques of the production of geographical knowledge (McDowell 1993a; 1993b; G. Rose 1993). *Chapter 3* expounds on this in much greater detail but, in simple terms, it involves concerted efforts to act with the knowledge that research itself is comprised of ...

... social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination – such as colonialism and slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today ... [The contact zone] invokes the space and time where subjects previously separated by geography and history are co-present, the point at which their trajectories now intersect (Pratt 2008, 7–8).

As a cisgender male settler-research studying the politics of belonging at play in green grabbing, the need to situate myself in relation to ethnographic research – and to situate my ethnographic claims in relation to my positionality – is paramount, given the colonial nature of conservation in the part of Kenya being studied. Is it problematic, for instance, that I admittedly co-opt Caleb's otherwise ephemeral comment – “not really” – as a problem for academic inquiry? Such are the questions that demand further inquisition in the contact zone of research.

Inspired by feminist geographers, I attempt to (1) uncover the complexities of oppression, power, and privilege behind common representations of green grabbing in Kenya, as well as to (2) interrogate how my own identity, privilege, and politics influence the claims made about green grabbing in this dissertation (G. Rose 1993; England 2006). Calls for such an approach are surprisingly few in the land grabbing literature, underscoring the need for scholars to assess the assumptions that invariably influence questions asked, methods used, and approaches deployed in interpreting evidence (Oya 2013, 516). The notion of the contact zone demands that researchers seriously reflect on the question of whose interests are ultimately served by the knowledge-claims circulated about green

grabbing – perhaps most especially if such claims are purported as being critical, objective, or pro-poor (Pratt 2008; Oya 2013).

2 Dissertation outline

Chapter 2 situates this research in relation to a series of relevant scholarly debates on green grabbing. This serves as theoretical framework informing this dissertation's analytical engagement with green grabbing in Laikipia. *Chapter 2* begins by reviewing the literature on green grabbing and the green economy. Next, this chapter considers how relatively recent shifts in globalized spaces of development and environmental governance have made conservation a tool for opening new spaces (both figurative and literal) for green investments in the Global South. It then discusses related conservation initiatives in Africa, as well as some of the detrimental implications such interventions can have for rural groups. Afterwards, *Chapter 2* returns to the land grabbing literature for insights into how and why different rural groups react to green grabbing. Here, I draw insights from Scott's (1976; 1985) work on the moral economy of the subsistence ethic, everyday resistance, and the weapons of the weak. After considering more recent studies on the diverse impacts of, and reactions to, green grabbing with Scott's insights in mind, this chapter concludes by reflecting on the need to historicize green grabbing to better understand how the phenomenon works, the type of work it does, and how the politics of place invariably shape peoples' reactions to green grab.

Chapter 3 describes this study's efforts to operationalize Pratt's (2008) notion of "the contact zone" in the research design, methods, and processes informing this dissertation. It offers a reflexive account of the approach taken to encounter, observe, and talk about the wildlife sector and its history in Kenya through the political act of doing research. *Chapter 3* begins by discussing why I decided to study Laikipia's wildlife sector in the first place. It discusses my personal penchant for safari and how my position as a cisgender/male/settler/researcher impacted the research. The chapter then describes the processes involved in tracking the shifting moments and spaces of green grabbing in Kenya's highlands. It first discusses the research design, before considering how the

research unfolded. *Chapter 3* then provides an overview of key events in the research, describes the types of experiences pursued and people interacted with, and accounts for the methods used to collect information. This chapter concludes with a discussion on the logistical and moral dilemmas that surfaced during research (Ekers 2010), as well as how these and other factors determined the findings presented in this dissertation.

Chapter 4 represents this dissertation's first major empirical contribution to the literature on green grabbing. Specifically, this chapter offers an historical analysis of the land alienation, enclosure, and settlement policies that transformed Laikipia from a pastoralist rangeland into a white highland during the colonial era. In doing so, it sets the stage for subsequent engagement with the contemporary green grabs in Laikipia by demonstrating how the culture and economy of safari in colonial-era Kenya helped prime the conditions for more recent conservation interventions associated with the green economy. Part I of this chapter discusses how colonial representations of nature in Kenya were used to legitimize racialized dispossession, or "white green grabbing", documenting some of the historical claims that Maasais, and other L/IP, have to land and other natural resources in Laikipia. Part II focuses on the role that safari played in making the highlands white in practice, following the original wave of green grabbing. It documents the ideas, representations, and practices associated with early forms of safari in settled highland areas such as Laikipia, as well as key moments contributing to the development of a for-profit wildlife sector in the colony. Investigating the lineage of green enclosure in Laikipia helps to reveal important points of continuity and departure in the strategies used by extra-European whites in Laikipia to grab onto, and maintain control over, land and other natural resources. It also further contextualizes expectations for, experiences with, and reactions to green grabbing on the part of different rural groups in rural society.

Building off the contextual, historical analysis of enclosure offered in the previous chapter, *Chapter 5* investigates strategies used by settlers, settler-conservationists, and conservation organizations to intensify and expand their control over land, resources, and capital through the green economy. This analysis offers an account of how historical enclosures have been re-interpreted and re-institutionalized through present-day forms of green grabbing. *Chapter 5* begins by discussing a key piece of national legislation that

was recently passed in Kenya, which includes several provisions that facilitate the enclosure of land and other natural resources for MDC. It illustrates some of the ways that national institutions have been seized by the transnational project of the green economy, before describing the ethno-spatial dimensions of Laikipia's conservation landscape. After describing how transnational conservation actors and organizations helped transform settler cattle ranches into spaces ripe for green grabbing in the 1980s and 90s, *Chapter 5* presents the reader with a view of the wildlife sector from below. It discusses frictions that have emerged in rural society, as an expanding green economy has encountered disparate notions of land, livelihood, and wellbeing. Considering what the wildlife sector looks like from below also provides important insights into why certain strategies have been pursued to grab onto, and maintain control over, the ability to accumulate capital from contested lands via conservation. The remaining sections in *Chapter 5* draw attention to two specific strategies used to grab green in Laikipia, as well as how these strategies have been made possible by a global community of conservation-minded citizens. These strategies are: (1) the militarization of private enclosures and (2) social investments in human settlements surrounding private wildlife ranches and conservancies. Throughout the chapter, *Chapter 5* also illustrates how wildlife become enrolled in practices that re-produce ethno-spatial configurations. This chapter concludes by briefly considering what such spatial configurations suggest about the types of social relationships that green grabbing consists of and makes possible.

At this point, this dissertation has examined the historical geography of land and green grabbing in Laikipia, as well as the strategies used by extra-European whites and other conservation elites to grab onto, and maintain control over, land, resources, and capital through conservation. These points of inquiry reflect, what I describe loosely as, the first and second waves of green grabbing in Laikipia. The first wave involved racialized dispossession and the original enclosure of land and resources in Kenya's highlands (c. 1883–1963). The second wave involves the greening of settler properties in Laikipia through the green economy (c. 1980–present). Thus far, consideration has also been provided for how and why green grabbing works socially, as well as for how and why different rural groups react to green grabbing.

As the last empirical chapter in this dissertation, *Chapter 6* “zooms in” on efforts to incorporate pastoralist communities, livelihoods, and rangelands into the green economy through CBC. This marks the third and most recent wave of green grabbing in Laikipia, which began in the mid-1990s but really took off in the early 2000s. This third wave of green grabbing has been expansionary or offensive in nature, rather than defensive as in the greening of original colonial enclosures. In these new spaces of conservation, pastoralists are represented as grateful recipients of conservation in the dominant narratives of CBC. One organization, the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), goes so far as to call itself an indigenous organization. But are such claims substantiated by the expectations for, experiences with, and reactions to CBC among pastoralist groups? *Chapter 6* demonstrates that the historical-material reality of Maasais in Laikipia has limited the political options available to them when reacting to green grabbing. Moreover, it suggests that their historical traditions of struggle – including shifting ethnic and political allegiances – has shaped, re-shaped, and made certain types of green grabs possible (Hall et al. 2015). Green grabbing in Laikipia is never *just* white green grabbing, in this regard; it is also a venue for L/IP to re-assert different notions of belonging into the landscape through resistance, acquiescence, and/or incorporation.

Chapter 6 is preceded by a prelude that recounts an oral history of CBC in one pastoralist community. This prelude introduces the reader to oral histories that document experiences with colonialism, safari tourism, and CBC. This prelude serves as essential background reading for the analysis that follows in *Chapter 6*. It also demonstrates some of the qualitative differences that exist between MDC in community conservancies, owned by pastoralist groups, and private wildlife ranches and conservancies owned by settlers and/or conservation organizations. Following this prelude, *Chapter 6* examines the multiple, overlapping reactions that pastoralists exhibit toward green grabbing through CBC. It contextualizes these reactions in relation to historical relationships between pastoralists and settlers in Laikipia, as well as how these relationships translate in the institutional and organization structures of the NRT. Although these reactions have been shaped by shifts in ethnicity and ethno-political allegiances that pre-date colonial rule, they have also been shaped by the spatiality of ethnicity in Laikipia – a spatiality that has displaced, and continually threatens to displace, pastoralists from their notions of identity,

livelihood, and territory. *Chapter 6* provides a detailed account of how the re-spatialization of race in Laikipia has catalyzed pastoralist reactions to green grabbing that differ from those of other ethnic or livelihood groups in the region. In doing so, it constructs a narrative of how these reactions have failed to achieve many of their desired outcomes and why. This narrative describes the structural dimensions of green grabbing that limit the political actions and re-actions available to pastoralists, trying to avoid robbing pastoralists of the agency they do have in this story at the same time.

Chapter 6 begins by reviewing the critical literature on CBC in Africa, before linking these broader patterns and trends to the implementation of community conservancies in Laikipia. It then describes the institutional and organization structure of the NRT, and of its relationship with pastoralist group ranches, before introducing the case study of “Wild Laikipia” (not its real name). This chapter uses the case of Wild Laikipia to elucidate more general research findings from community conservancies throughout in Laikipia. Subsequent sections explore the frictions produced when green grabs hit the ground in Maasai group ranches specifically, as groups that have pursued incorporation into the green economy contradictorily find themselves caught in all too familiar forms of struggle over livelihood, territory, and individual and collective wellbeing. These sections document the different types of reactions that individuals and groups *within* community conservancies exhibit toward specific programme areas of the NRT. *Chapter 6* concludes with a summative discussion that re-emphasizes the importance of historicizing reactions to green grabs on the part of certain rural groups (i.e. pastoralists), but also of further contextualizing reactions to green grabs within these groups and considering why such reactions differ according to class, gender, etc. Yet again, the importance of grounded, ethnographic research is evident when making claims about what lies at the core of different experiences with and reactions to green grabbing.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation by synthesizing its main argument, findings, and contributions in greater detail. To do so, it engages more specifically with the literature on the ever-shifting contours of identity and belonging in Africa’s settler societies. This chapter also provides additional consideration for the limitations of this research, as well as the avenues these leave open for future research. The concluding section briefly

summarizes this chapter, and re-states the merits of approaching research on green grabbing from an ethnographic and historical perspective.

3 Summary

This introductory chapter describes the overarching problem motivating this dissertation, as well as its goal and purpose, research context, and main contributions. As discussed, this research focuses on why different rural groups have such diverse experiences with and reactions to green grabbing in Laikipia County, Kenya. It is concerned with questions such as: how does green grabbing work in this context and what work does it do? What politics are at play when rural groups resist, acquiesce to, or seek incorporation into green grabbing? Moreover, how have such politics been shaped by the passage of time? In more general terms: What social relationships does green grabbing consist of and make possible and why? The answers to such questions are necessarily place-bound, but are important for understanding the social contexts in which green grabbing occurs and persists, especially since the green objective of catalyzing sustainable economic development and growth has had minimal, uneven, or contradictory effects.

To-date, activists, journalists, and scholars have grappled with the distribution and scale of both land and green grabbing globally, trying to improve accountability and transparency in decision-making processes surrounding these LSLAs (Anseeuw et al. 2013; GRAIN 2013). Such researchers have also grappled with questions related to the specific impacts that green grabs have in rural societies around the world and whether, in certain cases, such impacts should be considered beneficial or detrimental from an economic, environmental, and social (justice) perspective (Scoones et al. 2013). Amid the flurry of advocacy, articles, and reports surrounding LSLAs since the early 2000s, little attention has been paid to the differentiated impacts green grabs have in rural societies and the variegated political reactions they elicit from below – at least until recently (Hall et al. 2015). In striving for a more nuanced, comprehensive understanding of peoples' experiences with LSLAs in different contexts, recent work has examined how and why different rural groups react politically to grabs. The result is a necessarily inconsistent,

heterogeneous picture of rural politics. Clearly, there is no single “global land grab” or “global green grab”; nor is there a general theory for when and how different rural groups react to LSLAs. This does not mean, however, that researchers’ work is done.

The literature on green grabbing is prolific with speculation on the impacts of LSLAs without substantive empirical evidence, just as there are plenty of descriptive or documentary reports that lack conceptual framing (Oya 2013). Recent empirically grounded studies have attempted to remedy or reverse this trend (Hall et al. 2015). Yet it is still common for studies to demonstrate overly descriptive, temporally shallow engagements with different rural groups’ experiences with and reactions to LSLAs. This is particularly true in the green grabbing literature, which has attracted less attention and empirical investigation than land grabbing. This dissertation, therefore, contributes an ethnographically and historically grounded study of green grabbing to the literature. Such an approach is important when examining how and why certain spaces become green grabs, the social relationships made possible by green grabs, as well as the political reactions that green grabs elicit from below. Perhaps it is most necessary when researchers make claims about the political convictions of certain groups, lest present-day reactions to green grabs be divorced from the historical social, cultural, economic, and political contexts that have shaped the socio-ecological terrain of rural politics.

By adopting a critical genealogical perspective, this dissertation demonstrates just how intricately intertwined, yet deeply contested, green grabbing is in the social fabric of Laikipia. Key aspects of green grabbing, I argue, can be understood as acts of white belonging on the part of settlers, settler-conservationists, and some conservation organizations, as well as political maneuvers in defense of white property. Likewise, although some rural groups contest green grabs on these very grounds, others, such as Maasais, have pursued incorporation into the green economy as a strategy for re-asserting their right to belong *differently* in Laikipia. It is, after all, due to historical processes of colonial land alienation, settlement, and rule that Maasais have experienced the structural violence that limits the viable political options at their disposal in the first place. Divorcing their reactions from this history risks dispossessing them from their capacity for political thought and action – from what agency they do have in shaping the

conditions that influence their lives. Although the chapters that follow have their own constraints, limitations, and politics, they strive towards a plausible account of green grabbing and the contested nature of belonging in Laikipia.

Chapter 2 situates this research in a series of relevant scholarly debates on green grabbing, the green economy, and peasant studies literature more broadly.

Chapter 2

Green grabbing and political reactions from below

1 Introduction

Recent years have witnessed, what seems to be, a surge in global support for efforts to protect wildlife in Africa at all costs. This support – financial, moral, and political – has been matched by conservationists' efforts to: increase the amount of land in Africa that can function as wildlife habitat; protect existing and new habitat from external land pressures, resource degradation, and poaching; and provide subsistence land users with incentives to behave in ways that support conservation. Thanks to global advocacy and media campaigns, more and more people around the world understand wildlife conservation in Africa as an urgent cause that deserves unwavering support. The sense of ownership that people in Europe and North America, for example, routinely express over wildlife in Africa may not be a new phenomenon (Neumann 1998; Nelson 2003; Büscher 2011; Snijders 2012), but some scholars suggest that emotionally charged demands to protect wildlife in Africa have adopted a dubious tone and a renewed sense of urgency (Büscher 2016a; 2016b; Lunstrum 2016b).

Although such demands are often expressed by lay people in virtual fora (e.g. social media) they appear capable of influencing how conservation is understood, practiced, and, in some respects, governed. The killing of an elderly male lion in Zimbabwe in 2015, known as "Cecil" only to a small collective of conservationists before his death, is a profound example of this phenomenon. On 1 July 2015, the aged lion was lured outside the boundaries of Hwange National Park by hunting guides, where an American dentist from Minnesota shot him with a crossbow before later killing him with a rifle. News about the lion's death went viral, re-igniting popular discourse on the urgency of protecting wildlife in Africa. People who had never stepped foot in Zimbabwe, or Africa for that matter, demanded justice for the dead lion. Jimmy Kimmel, host of the television show

“Jimmy Kimmel Live!”, managed to bring himself to tears while shaming the dentist for killing the lion. Some people hurled death threats at the dentist via Facebook, Twitter, and online discussion boards (Walsh 2015). Even children were filmed by news agencies directing outrage towards the dentist (CBC 2015). More organized actors, including some conservation organizations, used the opportunity to campaign for a ban on hunting in Africa or for airlines to stop transporting hunting trophies off the continent until governments imposed such a ban. In response to pressure from global civil society, at least 42 airlines stopped shipping buffalo, elephant, leopard, lion, and rhinoceros (AKA Big Five) trophies within months of the Cecil the Lion’s death (HSI 2015). In this case, virtual media proved to be an effective platform for people around the world to wield power and help influence decisions around conservation.

The case of Cecil the Lion illustrates how supporting conservation is now seen, almost without question, as both the “hip” and “right” thing to do in many western societies (Büscher 2016a; Lunstrum 2016b).⁶ The case exemplifies the extent to which moral support for conservation efforts in Africa has proliferated the daily lives of people around the globe, based largely on widespread imaginaries of nature in Africa – “images of a ‘Wild Eden’, rugged, ‘pristine’ landscapes, and some of the most charismatic global ‘megafauna’ (elephants, gorillas, rhinos, etc.) are etched in the mainstream connotations attached to the continent” (Büscher 2011, 84). Reactions to the lion’s death are also linked to global patterns and trends in which conservation organizations use media campaigns to obtain financial, moral, and political support for their mission from well-meaning individuals that may be unaware of or indifferent towards the complexities, power dynamics, and inequalities associated with conservation in practice (Igoe 2010; Igoe et al. 2010; Büscher 2016a; Lunstrum 2016b). As many activists, scholars, and targeted beneficiaries are well-aware, protecting wildlife in Africa is not immune to controversy. This is something that is frequently overlooked, intentionally or otherwise, by conservation organizations that require donor funds to operate (Igoe 2010).

⁶ Not long after Cecil the Lion died, Taylor Swift released a music video for her song *Wildest Dreams*. At the end of the music video, featuring a Cecil the Lion look alike, the audience is informed that some of profits generated by the song will be donated to the African Parks Foundation. This aside, the video has been accused of romanticizing colonization in Africa.

Within scholarly literature, there are seemingly endless examples of how conservation interventions routinely work to the disadvantage of L/IP both in Africa and other parts of the Global South (West et al. 2006; Igoe and Brockington 2007; Brockington et al. 2008). Related topics within this literature range from the imposition of modern ideologies of nature in developing or pre-capitalist settings (Neumann 1998) to myriad forms of coercion, conflict, and displacement that tend to go hand-in-hand with the creation of protected areas (Adams and Hutton 2007) to changes in pre-existing socio-ecological practices (including land use/tenure regimes) that may not, contradictorily, be all that desirable from a conservation perspective (West et al. 2006; Duffy et al. 2015). Some scholars have started to use emergent ideas about green grabbing to critically engage with these, and other negative implications of conservation, linking them to global patterns and trends associated with the global political economy of late capitalism (Fairhead et al. 2012). As discussed in *Chapter 1*, green grabbing refers to the appropriation of large-scale land areas for conservation purposes. Green grabbing is a widespread phenomenon that has brought enormous amounts of land in the Global South under the control of corporations and other elite actors in the name of the environment. As will be discussed in this chapter, green grabbing does not simply involve Large-Scale Land Acquisitions (LSLAs) by elites, but also a redefinition of conservation, and the purposes it should serve, in a manner that facilitates the extension of capitalist markets and relationships into poor rural areas via foreign investment (Büscher et al. 2012).

Reading through the critical literature on conservation in Africa, and on green grabbing more specifically, it may be difficult to comprehend why people who identify as progressives end up support something like green grabbing. As the case of Cecil the Lion demonstrates, the present age of conservation has not been realized through efforts by conservation or other transnational organizations to stimulate critical inquiry on the part of donors (Igoe 2010; Igoe et al. 2010). Moreover, some conservation organizations have been accused of ignoring or glossing over the problematic outcomes that green grabs, and related interventions, can have in rural society (Igoe 2010; Igoe et al. 2010). This problem emphasizes the need to understand how green grabbing impacts people on the ground, as well as how disaffected groups react behind the façade of conservation constructed by green elites. This overarching problem should also hasten efforts to

uncover, and patch together, counter-narratives of green grabbing derived from the experiences and perspectives of different groups of rural land users on the ground.

The remainder of this chapter discusses green grabbing, and some of its controversies, in much greater detail. In reviewing literature related to the topic, at least one issue becomes clear. Questions remain about why green grabs are not simply rejected or resisted by disaffected groups on the ground. There is a consensus in the critical literature that green grabs can have dire consequences for rural groups that depend on access to land and other natural resources for their subsistence and survival. Yet such groups often seem to support or even to participate willingly in interventions that threaten their autonomy and notions of livelihood. For scholars engaged with this dynamic in rural society, this apparent passivity has become a significant point of consternation (Scott 1976; Borras and Franco 2013). Such scholars often highlight the undesirable effects green grabs can have in rural society; yet those who suffer as a result often appear to consent to conditions that enable their exploitation or marginalization in one form or another. When resistance does occur, moreover, it often manifests in peculiar ways. Responding to this conundrum requires more than just a thorough investigation into what drives green grabbing and what its consequences are globally. Significant effort has already been exerted along this line of inquiry. What is also needed are systematic approaches to studying the linkages between place,⁷ society, and peoples' expectations for, experiences with, and reactions to green grabs.

This chapter reaches slightly beyond the green grabbing literature slightly, into the broader peasant studies literature, to aid such an investigation into the genealogy of green grabbing in Laikipia. It also turns to the related green economy literature to understand how shifting ideas about conservation in globalized spaces have served to re-configure historical power relationships around the conservation experience in the present. For example, ensuring the participation of marginalized groups in Market-Driven

⁷ The term "place" is used in this dissertation to refer to a part of the earth's surface that has been transformed by human activities and social relationships because of cultural meanings attached to notions of livelihood, territory, wellbeing, etc. Places are cultural representations, meaningful material constructions, and power-laden fields of human activities and social relationships (Gregory et al. 2009, 540).

Conservation (MDC) is now accepted as a progressive stance on how to resolve rural poverty, environmental degradation, and species extinction without compromising economic growth. Why then do the disenfranchised, who would be well-justified in revolting against green grabs, participate in conservation interventions that fail to redress or even exacerbate the hardships they encounter daily? To further inform my analysis of peoples' reactions to green grabbing on the ground, I turn to Scott's (1976; 1985) work on the moral economy of the subsistence ethic and everyday resistance. Although I depart from Scott's risk-centered conception of the subsistence ethic, and consider how gender fits into the moral economy of green grabbing (at least more than Scott initially did), his work yields pertinent insights on how and why different rural groups have such diverse experiences with and reactions to green grabbing.

This chapter begins with a review of the literature on green grabbing and the green economy, briefly situating green grab in relation to the overarching literature on land grabbing. In reviewing these related sets of literatures, this chapter draws attention to key insights from the approach to Marxist Political Economy (MPE) that has informed scholarly work on green grabbing to-date. Next, this chapter considers how global level shifts have made conservation a tool for opening new space (both figurative and literal) for green investments in the Global South. Focusing on Africa, specifically, this chapter discusses the detrimental implications such shifts can have in rural society. I then return to the land and green grabbing literature for insights into peasant politics. After reviewing studies on some of the diverse impacts of and reactions to green grabbing documented around the world, this chapter concludes by reflecting on the need to historicize green grabbing to better understand how the phenomenon works on the ground, the type of work it does, and how place factors into peoples' reactions to green grabs.

2 Green grabbing and the green economy of conservation

Green grabbing owes its conceptual existence to the overarching body of literature on land grabbing. The now diverse body of land grabbing literature emerged out of criticism for the renewed rush to invest in land and other natural resources in the Global South that

the world experienced in the early 2000s – a rush driven primarily by large-scale agricultural investments initiated by governments and transnational corporations in the global north (Carmody 2011; De Schutter 2011; Cotula 2013). Initially, land grabbing referred mainly to acts of corporate greed in the agricultural sector. However, land grabbing is now understood more generally as “large-scale land acquisitions for the purposes of securing access to the means of producing natural resource commodities” (Wolford et al. 2013, 189). The reasons behind this refined definition of green grab are largely twofold. (1) Recent scholarly work has demonstrated that both elites (e.g. transnational corporations, international organizations, governments, and local businesspeople/landowners) and non-elites (e.g. various strata of peasants) play equally diverse, and at times seemingly contradictory, roles in land grabs (Hall et al. 2015). Hence, large-scale agricultural investments in land are no longer understood as the only form of land grabbing. (2) As the following paragraph discusses, it is now evident that land grabbing has multiple drivers, goals, and outcomes that are not squarely centred on commercial food production. Rather, land grabbing facilitates the production of numerous natural resource commodities (Wolford et al. 2013).

Departing from simplified narratives of powerful corporations displacing hapless peasants to make way for large-scale corporate agricultural production, scholars have demonstrated that land grabbing is not simply driven by global demand for agricultural products (Benjaminsen and Bryceson 2012; Fairhead et al. 2012; Cotula 2013; Schneider 2014). Following this turn in the literature, land grabs have been linked to investments in: carbon sinks, energy (i.e. hydro, oil, natural gas, solar, and wind) food, (bio)fuel, infrastructure, livestock, medicine and narcotics, minerals and metals, timber, tropical goods, and wilderness and wildlife (Zoomers 2010; Borras et al. 2011; McMichael and Schneider 2011; Peluso and Lund 2011; Fairhead et al. 2012; Wolford et al. 2013; Lyons and Westoby 2014; Schneider 2014; Enns 2016). Many scholars have dropped “land” from their framing of certain LSLAs as a result, as some grabs target: marine resources, livestock, and wildlife, as well as subterranean resources and atmospheric processes such as carbon sequestration (Zoomers 2010; Benjaminsen and Bryceson 2012; Schneider 2014; Appel et al. 2015). This dissertation is primarily concerned with green grabbing – land grabs driven by conservation and environmental agendas.

The concept of green grabbing emerged as increasingly more land grabs were justified in conservation terms. In the introduction to a seminal issue on green grabbing, Fairhead et al. (2012) address both how and why such enormous amounts of land in the Global South are being appropriated for environmental reasons, as well as some of the problematic outcomes of green grabs for rural groups on the ground. Despite the impressive scale of green grabbing, however, the phenomenon itself is not new. Rather, the history of alienation, displacement, and enclosure behind the creation of hunting reserves, national parks, and other types of protected areas is well known (Thompson 1975; Singh and Houtum 2002; Adams and Hutton 2007). Like early enclosures in Great Britain (Thompson 1975), colonial powers in Africa created institutional and legal frameworks that legitimized the robbery of common property resources from L/IP in the name of conservation or otherwise (Neumann 1998).

Yet Fairhead et al. (2012) still maintain that something about green grabs makes them qualitatively different from historical forms of enclosure. Fairhead et al. claim that there is “something quite new afoot [as far as green grabbing is concerned], in terms of the actors, as well as the cultural and economic logics and political dynamics involved ... today there are many more players implicated, who are more deeply embedded in capitalist networks, and operating across scales” (2012, 239). Transnational actors and entities have become preoccupied with re-defining conservation to create new space for investment in the Global South, promoting forms of conservation that aim to make environmental protection, economic growth, and social development commensurable projects (Fairhead et al. 2012). Where green grabbing may depart the most substantially from historical projects, in other words, is that it represents another wave of primitive accumulation – recent forms of enclosure that enable capital to accumulate and flow in ways that elites have deemed to be sustainable. Whether this shift represents a radical departure from transnational colonial projects of previous eras or, equally as radical, their re-implementation, it has profound implications for the governance of land and other natural resources (Benjaminsen and Bryceson 2012; Fairhead et al. 2012).

Because green grabbing involves dispossessing rural land users from natural resources to facilitate capital accumulation by elites, it is often understood as an example of primitive

accumulation (Kelly 2011; Fairhead et al. 2012; Benjaminsen and Bryceson 2012; Cavanagh and Benjaminsen 2015). Marx (1971) used the term primitive accumulation to describe actions taken to divorce subsistence land users from the means of production. In England, he observed that this involved appropriating and enclosing common property through individual acts of violence and legalized forms of robbery. Through such acts, elites granted themselves private rights to otherwise common property and made themselves accountable, by law, to their peers (for example, Kenya's Crown Land Ordinance of 1902, discussed in *Chapter 5*, legalized the robbery of indigenous lands by the British colonial administration) (Thompson 1975; Glassman 2006). This transformation turned subsistence producers into wage labourers and the social means of production (i.e. human relationships) into capitalist relationships. In Kenya, as in many other colonial settings, the creation of a labour reserve for settler capitalism had socio-economic, political, and spatial effects; actually-existing reserves were created to contain the (surplus) labour population (Li 2010; 2011). Marx's framing of primitive accumulation – the act of divorcing producers from the means of production to facilitate capital accumulation – is evident in green grabbing. Accumulation is also apparent, as profits accrued from market-driven approaches to conservation are re-invested by elites to intensify their control over capital and the means of production (DeAngelis 2001; Glassman 2006; Fairhead et al. 2012).

This understanding of primitive accumulation has been informed, not only by Marx, but by scholars such as Luxemburg (1951), DeAngelis (2001), and Harvey (2003), who insist that primitive accumulation is not simply a one-time precursor to capitalist production. Rather, such scholars argue that primitive accumulation is a basic ontological condition of capitalism – a continuous necessity (Glassman 2006). Harvey's (2003) notion of accumulation by dispossession departs from misconceptions of primitive accumulation as *an* historical event. Rather, accumulation by dispossession involves ongoing interventions that aim to forge new spaces for capital accumulation. Although Harvey (2003) drops "primitive" from his conception of the relationship between accumulation and dispossession to avoid chronological confusion, the term primitive accumulation still has merit. "Primitive" does not simply indicate an early stage of capitalism, but may evoke sentiments of crudeness, brutality, and even violence (Prudham 2013). The term forces

the reader to grapple with the harsh emotional, psychological, and social implications that come with drawing humans into capitalist relationships with each other and nature (Blomley 2007; 2008; Prudham 2009; 2013; Hall 2012).

It is partly for such reasons that efforts to roll out the green economy can indeed face political opposition. One might expect to find, or even hope for, push back as the disenfranchised and their allies struggle for autonomy in a state of alienation – a lack of control over land and natural resources, their livelihoods, and wellbeing (Polanyi 1944; Prudham 2013). However, as indicated above, despite its discontents, green grabbing can be met with puzzling passivity in rural society. Before proceeding to reflect on how and why rural groups react to green grabs, subsequent sections consider how nature has been re-interpreted and re-institutionalized in the context of the global green economy to create new space for capital accumulation. Additionally, certain political-economic and social reforms that help facilitate “accumulation by conservation” are discussed before some of the negative implications of green grabbing and the green economy are reviewed (Büscher and Fletcher 2014). This discussion serves to contextualize reactions to green grabbing in “broader” and “deeper” patterns of authority, control, and power.

3 The global machine of green grabbing

The global green economy came of age in the 1990s, with a growing desire to make the seemingly contradictory interests of business and conservation mutually compatible (Sachs 1999; MacDonald 2010; Brand 2012). A core tenet of the green economy is that MDC – including biodiversity offsets, carbon trading, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), eco- and wildlife tourism, green consumerism, and payment for ecosystem services (PES) – can generate economic growth, create jobs, and even contribute to eradicating poverty while protecting the environment (Igoe 2010; Arsel and Büscher 2012; Brockington 2012; MacDonald and Corson 2012; Sullivan 2013). On the surface, this approach to development seems rather straightforward: the best way to protect the environment is to put a price tag on nature in its pristine or protected form (McAfee 1999). Yet green interventions often have contradictory, unexpected, and problematic outcomes

in rural society. Because the idea of the green economy pose no real threat to the world's dominant political-economic order, however, it became a prominent mantra among transnational corporations, international organizations, governments, and many NGOs in the buildup to the *Rio+20* conference in June 2012. This mantra reflects well-known discourses of sustainable development, which had been circulating globalized spaces of international development for decades (Brockington 2012).

Rio+20 (i.e. the *United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development*) was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20 years after the first *Rio Earth Summit* in 1992. *Rio+20* aimed to resuscitate the UN's earlier approach to sustainable development, which was espoused during the first *Rio Earth Summit*, and to get relevant actors around the world – ranging from private investors to national governments – excited about pursuing economic growth in green (i.e. environmentally friendly) ways. In the build-up to *Rio+20*, influential green economy actors, such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), talked about the green economy as an ambitious new idea. Yet the idea represents a mutated version of sustainable development that was first produced by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987.

In 1987, the WCED experts published the Brundtland Report, which (in)famously describes sustainable development as that which “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED 1987, 16). The report adds that, “technology and social organization can be both managed and improved to make way for a new era of economic growth” (WCED 1987, 16). Discourse on growth-oriented sustainable development spread like wildfire in global development circles during the early 1990s, sparking further efforts to forge partnerships between businesses and conservation organizations – two sets of non-governmental actors that have, historically, been at odds with each other (Arsel and Büscher 2012). The first *Rio Earth Summit* was created as a space for “capitalists” and “conservationists” to bond over their newfound mutual interest in sustainable development (Redclift 2005). *Agenda 21*, an output of the *Rio Earth Summit*, proposed a framework for regulating local, regional, and global economic activities with the goal of protecting the environment while breaking down barriers to economic trade and growth (UNSD 1992). Twenty years after *Rio*,

however, this approach to sustainable development was generally regarded as a failure (Brand 2012). *Rio+20* reflects the UN's current adaptation of sustainable development, which seeks to foster opportunities for economic growth by creating and strengthening green industrial sectors. As discussed, the rush to invest in sectors like alternative or green energy, carbon sequestration, biofuel and forestry (broadly defined), and eco- or nature tourism is now driving land grabbing globally (Fairhead et al. 2012)

Despite so much talk about the green economy, including multiple global agendas, agreements, and conferences devoted to it, there is no universally agreed upon definition of the green economy; nor is there a clear framework for achieving green growth and its promise of a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable future (UN 2015). In the build-up to *Rio+20*, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) promoted its ideas about how best to achieve green economic growth. UNEP defines a green economy as:

... one that results in *improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities* ... In a green economy, growth in income and employment should be driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services (2011, 2).

For UNEP, bringing the green economy into reality involves making natural capital (i.e. the economic value embodied in natural resources) an economic asset and source of individual/collective gain, especially for rural groups that rely directly on land for their livelihoods (Corson and MacDonald 2012). This logic is visible in other prominent discourses of nature and conservation that circulate global development spaces. The UN's new Sustainable Development Goals, for instance, are explicitly shaped by *Agenda 21*, *The Convention on Biological Diversity*, and input from related governing bodies such as the *Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity* (Corson and MacDonald 2012; MacDonald and Corson 2012).

4 Selling the wild: Market-Driven Conservation

As the prevalence of green grabbing around the world indicates (Fairhead et al. 2012), the green economy is becoming a prolific mode of development. Global discourses that frame conservation as a responsible and profitable investment opportunity coincide with changing material relationships on the ground. This section situates green grabbing in relation to market-driven approaches to conserving wildlife and their habitats in Africa – recognizing that green grabbing and the green economy are intricately connected in the global political economy of conservation. Here consideration is afforded to different types of MDC associated with green grabbing on the continent, as well as political-economic reforms that, alongside green economy discourses, relationships, and practices, have helped forge actually-existing green economies on the continent. As the empirical chapters in this dissertation demonstrate, the discourses, ideas, and reforms associated with the green economy in Africa bear remarkable similarity to those that facilitated the alienation, settlement, and transformation of land during the colonial era. The discussion in this section, however, is limited to consideration for the recent neoliberal turn in governing Africa's land and other natural resources (Büscher 2011).

To avoid essentializing Africa, it is worth acknowledging that the principles of MDC are not relegated to on continent; they also appear in Europe, North America, and in many developed countries. For example, it is *extremely* difficult to access a protected area in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), where I currently live and work, without paying an entry fee and agreeing to an enforced code of conduct. This basic economic transaction, tied to conduct, reflects an ideological tenant of the green economy. This is, effectively, that it is possible for nature to pay for its own protection. In the GTA, provincial and local governments generate revenues from entry fees, which are then reinvested in management activities such as the maintenance of trails, campsites, and ecosystem health. Jobs are created, and salaries paid, both directly in conservation and in other supporting sectors (i.e. outdoor apparel, camping gear, tourism, etc.).

However, although the political economy of conservation in Canada and Kenya may share similar principles (Igoe 2004), key differences remain. In many countries of the

Global South, green interventions are usually “win-win” approaches to sustainable development that seek to create economic opportunities, improve human livelihoods and wellbeing, and incentivizing people to protect biodiversity and the environment in the process (Büscher and Dressler 2012; Roth and Dressler 2012). MDC assigns economic value to nature with the goal of incentivizing people to behave in ways that protect the environment without compromising economic growth (Roth and Dressler 2012).

Moreover, as Grandia (2007) points out, green grabs and related green interventions in the Global South are often justified by win-win-win-win-win-win-win (or win⁷) discourses. They are promoted as solutions to environmental degradation, rural poverty, and demand for economic growth that benefit: biodiversity, conservation organizations, corporate investors, development agencies, local people, national economies, and western consumers. In addition to facilitating new sustainable investment opportunities, therefore, green grabs and MDC occur in tandem with efforts to re-scale (to responsabilize non-conventional actors for) the governance of conservation.

As Fletcher (2010, 172) discusses, conservation policy has become infused with a neoliberal economic philosophy that promotes:

- 1) the creation of capitalist markets for natural resource exchange and consumption; 2) privatization of resource control within these markets; 3) commodification of resources so that they can be traded within markets; 4) withdrawal of direct government intervention from market transactions; and 5) decentralization of resource governance to local authorities and non-state actors (Fletcher 2010, 172).

Beyond creating new opportunities for accumulation via the green economy, such reforms displace the state from its traditional role in governing conservation and “roll out” the responsibility for managing and regulating the environment to non-governmental actors such as international non-governmental organizations, private corporations, and local communities. Büscher refers to such processes as the neoliberalization of conservation, describing the “re-interpreting and re-institutionalizing African natures within ideologies of

power and systems of rule dependent on market competition, commodification and intensified capital accumulation” (2011, 86).

Many scholars have, in fact, implicated MDC in global patterns and trends associated with the neoliberalization of conservation. Very briefly, neoliberalism “is characterised by an institutional realignment away from state-centric (public-sphere) to market-based (private-sphere) forms of governance” (Bridge and Perreault 2009, 486). In addition to liberalizing trade, privatizing state controlled industries, and incorporating market mechanisms and actors into governance practices, neoliberalism involves “rolling back” state functions and responsibilities – a phenomenon particularly apparent in social service provision (Jessop 2002; Heynen et al. 2007; Bridge and Perreault 2009). Through such processes, neoliberalization also stretches (i.e. extending “the spatial reach of particular commodities into new or larger markets”) and deepens (i.e. increasing “the appearance of more and more things as commodities”) capitalist logics, values, and relationships into increasingly more aspects of everyday life (Prudham 2007, 412). Although there will likely always be people, spaces, and things that are extra or surplus to the material needs of capitalism, such processes transform how people relate to each other and nature at individual and collective levels, facilitating the expansion of capitalism through conservation rather than traditional forms of resource exploitation or extraction (Büscher et al. 2012). As a form of primitive accumulation, green grabbing plays a definite role in neoliberalizing conservation around the world.

In practice, the neoliberalization of conservation has had noticeable effects on the political economy of wildlife conservation in Africa. To begin with, non-governmental actors have become authorities in conservation governance. NGOs play an increasingly prominent role in controlling how land and other natural resources are managed and regulated across the continent, even in community-owned lands through CBC (West 2006). Notable organizations include African Parks; African Wildlife Foundation; Conservation International; Fauna and Flora International; Peace Parks Foundation; The Nature Conservancy; the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization; and The World Wide Fund for Nature. In Laikipia, most of these organizations played some role in re-interpreting, re-institutionalizing, and re-vitalizing the county’s safari industry

during the early 1990s (*Chapter 5*), which had gone dormant after a nation-wide ban on hunting was implemented by the post-independence government in 1977. Some of these organizations, such as Fauna and Flora International, have a long history of promoting enclosures for private conservation (Prendergast and Adams 2003). More recently, in line with global patterns and trends in conservation governance, Kenya's new Wildlife Conservation and Management Act of 2013 devolved wildlife conservation to the local level (e.g. to individuals, communities, local governments, and organizations), granting landowners increased authority over wildlife (*Chapter 5*). Within this context, non-governmental actors have become adept at raising financial, moral, and political support for wildlife conservation, which they effectively use to expand and intensify their control over land in places such as Laikipia.

Corporations have also become essential to Africa's green wildlife sector. Like many NGOs, private companies invest capital in rural areas, create conservation-based livelihoods, extract profit from conservation, and re-invest it to accumulate capital and consolidate their control over it (Brockington and Duffy 2010; 2011; Brockington and Scholfield 2010; Fairhead et al. 2012). Through the green economy, routine corporate behaviours have been re-defined as being responsible and as serving the best interests of the biodiversity and rural communities. Through CSR, many companies also "give back" to communities surrounding their operations. More than just filling gaps in the provision of rural social services, CSR initiatives may fit into the moral economy of subsistence land users, serving as leverage for conservation (*Chapter 6*). Through strategic social investments in education, moreover, companies collaborate with international organizations and governments to responsabilize rural groups to behave in ways that support the status quo, not only in wildlife conservation but, in rural class relationships (Brockington and Scholfield 2010; Fletcher 2010; Robbins 2012). Such strategies are used by elites to nurture support for conservation among disenfranchised groups that might otherwise exhibit little or no interest in conservation.

Relatedly, celebrity philanthropists play an important role in the green economy. They inspire people around the world to support conservation in Africa (as the introduction to this chapter discusses), donate significant funds to conservation organizations, lobby

governments, and even acquire large areas of land for conservation/tourism ventures (Brockington 2009; Ramutsindela et al. 2013). Initially the task of presidential and royal figures, this role is increasingly played by business moguls and movie stars. The shift towards privatized conservation and increasing reliance on market actors and mechanisms in environmental governance, as well as spectacular representations of celebrities (Debord 2005),⁸ reflects the neoliberal trends discussed above.

The contribution that NGOs, private corporations and philanthropists, and everyday people around the world have made to Africa's wildlife sector cannot be overlooked. People in Europe and North America, especially, routinely donate to conservation organizations, raise awareness about species extinction in their local communities, demand action on the part of conservationists, and even go on safari – contributing to local green economies. A well-known conservation organization in Laikipia, which is extremely active on social media, regularly highlights the role that children in the global north play in raising support for Kenya's wildlife sector. In April 2015, Ol Pejeta Conservancy launched an online fundraising campaign to support its efforts to protect "Sudan", the world's last male northern white rhino, and other northern white rhinos in the conservancy. In addition to marketing rhino t-shirts and flying in celebrities for photo shoots, the conservancy used social media to garner global support for its cause. People around the world responded quickly by hosting fundraising events and starting social media campaigns, such as #poacheggsnotrhinos. Unsurprisingly, the conservancy quickly achieved its fundraising goal of £70,000. Such trends mark notable developments in approaches to governing conservation in Africa, while displaying some remarkably consistent patterns (Igoe et al. 2010).

⁸ Debord (2005) suggests that representations of individuals perceived as embodying the freedom and happiness promised by capitalism project onto society the permitted roles that good, capitalist subjects should strive towards. "[These celebrities] embody the inaccessible results of social *labour* by dramatizing the by-products of that labour which are magically projected above it as its ultimate goals: *power* and *vacations* – the decision making and consumption that are at the beginning and end of a process that is never questioned" (Debord 2005, 29). In this regard, spectacular representations of celebrities, such as Taylor Swift, serve to mediate certain relationships between people and nature (Igoe 2010).

5 MDC and its contradictions

As will be discussed, MDC has been critiqued for re-institutionalizing poverty and power asymmetries in the current exercise of conservation. This does not mean, however, that the goals used to justify interventions such as green grabs lack all merit. It is reasonably admirable that green economy discourses recognize a need to ensure that conservation works to the advantage of relatively poor, marginalized groups in rural society – especially those that have been disenfranchised in or through conservation (Martin et al. 2013). As in other parts of the Global South, conservation has long worked to the detriment of L/IP in Africa. Neumann (1998) discusses how many early settlers travelled to Africa with the belief that they were on their way to encounter unspoiled wildernesses akin to the Garden of Eden, which they perceived as having been lost in Europe. In reality, however, colonial administrations worked hard to create unspoiled wildernesses through the creation of national parks and game reserves that usually involved evicting subsistence land users and outlawing their customary forms of livelihood (Neumann 1998). To justify such actions, it was “necessary to dehumanize Africans who lived and worked in this virgin landscape so that reality would fit within the vision” (Neumann 1998, 128). In short, subsistence land users were represented as being ignorant of the land’s symbolic significance, squandering their natural inheritance, and degrading valuable natural resources (Neumann 1998; Berry 2002; Moore 1993; 2005).

Conservation interventions by colonial administrations and post-colonial governments have long assumed that the interests of conservationists are inherently at odds with, and superior to, those of local communities. MDC represents one approach to making conservation serve the needs of all those included in Grandia’s (2007) win⁷ scenario – including local people, many of whom have been routinely disadvantaged through conservation interventions. Although green economy interventions reflect “the will to improve” (Li 2006), the ongoing expansion of capitalist relationships through conservation continues to have detrimental consequences for many rural groups (Neumann 1998). Such outcomes result from interventions justified as serving the interests of relatively poor, marginalized groups on the ground. In other words, through green grabbing,

wilderness is still being imposed in Africa; only it is being imposed by private and non-governmental authorities instead of colonial administrations (Büscher 2011).

Scholars studying MDC have developed pointed critiques about the contradictory nature of green economy interventions. Fletcher (2010) identifies a range of critiques that have been levied against MDC, arguing in Büscher and Fletcher (2014) that accumulation by conservation represents the “ultimate denial” of the negative impacts of capitalism:

[W]hat [accumulation by conservation] denies at root is that the fundamental unsustainability of capitalist production threatens the future not only of the contemporary world-system but of the basis for the existence of life, both human and non-human, in much of the globe ... More than denial, even, [it] is an effort to obfuscate the daunting implications of capitalist production by claiming that capitalism has the ability to effectively address these problems through the same mechanisms that created them (Büscher and Fletcher 2014, 21).

Büscher and Fletcher (2014) argue that, despite proponents' will to improve, MDC has not yet proven to be – and is incapable of being – a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable approach to conservation. In support of such claims, green economy critics point to the many contradictory outcomes of MDC.

To begin with, scholars take issue with MDC for its philosophical assumption that individuals can be expected to respond favourably to economic incentives (McCauley 2006; Sullivan 2006). Rarely do individuals behave purely as the ideal-type rational, self-interested actors upon which many green economic principles are founded (Burkett 2006; Fletcher 2010). It should go without saying that people are not just economic beings, but social, cultural, political, and ecological ones too. Yet the idea that enabling people to profit off conservation, directly or indirectly, is incentive enough for them to alter their belief, knowledge, and livelihood systems and embrace MDC is a major premise of the green economy in Africa. Critical scholars argue that imposing economic value on nature – something fraught with a near infinite array of cultural meanings – is imperialism (Fletcher 2010). Trying to forge new monetary relationships between people and nature

is not only morally questionable, it can have detrimental consequences for peoples' ability to derive other types of meaning, livelihood, and value from nature (Sullivan 2006; West 2006; Büscher and Dressler 2012). In many cases, the livelihood systems of subsistence land users have proven to be effective, not only at production but, at managing and regulating land and other natural resources in a reasonably equitable or sustainable manner (Scott 1976). These risk being radically altered as a result of green grabbing.

Relatedly, incorporating land and people into the green economy invariably excludes certain groups from accessing or using land, potentially impinging upon peoples' autonomy and rights in the process (Neumann 1998; Brockington et al. 2008; Hall 2012). Transferring the power to exclude to private and non-governmental authorities is by no means a seamless process, but a contested one that often fuels conflicts (Hall et al. 2011). Authority, control, and power must be wrested from some one or group and granted to another. In short, somebody is always likely to lose out from green grabbing (Watts 2000). Some scholars and activists have attributed human and Indigenous rights violations to MDC (Chapin 2004; Adams and Hutton 2007). Adams and Hutton (2007) point to evictions of Indigenous Peoples from their territories in Botswana and Ethiopia to transform their land into public and private protected areas as all too common examples of the rights violations associated with green grabbing.

Next, the withdrawal of national governments from conservation because of neoliberal reforms has afforded transnational actors greater authority over who gets to use land and how it gets to be used (Fletcher 2010). By transferring the responsibility to manage and regulate conservation to private actors, decentralized governance structures risk being exploited by elites, compromising the capacity of marginalized groups to influence decision-making processes as a result (Levine 2002). However, it has also led to gaps in the provision of social services. Along with the rolling back of state functions and responsibilities, non-governmental conservation actors play an increasingly prominent role in providing social services to rural communities. In Laikipia, for example, such services include education, health, and security services, as well as transportation, water, and other forms of basic infrastructure. However, non-governmental authorities have not

proven to be all that effective at ensuring that the benefits of MDC are fairly distributed in rural society (*Chapters 5 and 6*).

Lastly, scholars have demonstrated that the green economy often fails on its own terms. As discussed, MDC seems incapable of achieving more just forms of conservation (Langholtz 1999; West 2006; Duffy 2014a). Human concerns aside, MDC does not always stop, and may even accelerate, environmental degradation in certain places (Robbins 2012; Duffy 2014a). Reducing degradation in one area may simply displace it to another, or allow it to persist somewhere else (Brockington et al. 2008). In short, within the green economy, environmental “goods” and “bads” are rarely distributed evenly or fairly (Brockington et al. 2008; Fletcher 2010).

Although the contradictions of green grabbing and the negative socio-economic and political outcomes associated with related interventions are many, green economy actors are rarely ever outspoken advocates for evictions, rights violations, or violence in the name of conservation; nor are they quick to demonstrate responsibility. Such outcomes are usually downplayed or pinned on local governing authorities that provide the muscle for green grabbing (Cavanagh and Benjaminsen 2015). Ignored altogether are, as Cavanagh and Benjaminsen (2015, 728) discuss, “the slow, ‘everyday violence’ of uncompensated crop and wildlife raiding, exclusion from common pool resources and routine abuse by conservation personnel[, etc.]”. As increasingly more examples surface of the contradictory, undesirable outcomes of green grabbing for already marginalized groups, the need to understand how people on the ground react to green grabs, and why they react in the ways that they do, is even more pressing. More specifically, such outcomes underscore the importance of understanding why disaffected groups often appear to accept, or willingly participate, in green grabs that may threaten their autonomy and livelihoods (Borras and Franco 2013; Hall et al. 2015).

6 Reactions to green grabbing from below

To speak of rebellion is to focus on those extraordinary moments when peasants seek to restore or remake their world by force. It is to forget both how rare these moments are and how historically exceptional it is for them to lead to a successful revolution (Scott 1976, 203).

6.1 Diverse impacts and variegated political reactions⁹

Critical scholarship on green grabbing and broader, historical patterns of agrarian change have long drawn attention to the agency peasants retain amid dispossession, exploitation, oppression, and new forms of social stratification (Hall et al. 2015). The evolution of the land grabbing literature has recently experienced a return to the issue of peasant agency in relation to LSLAs, exemplified by a rush to study reactions to land grabs from below – from subsistence land users and marginalized groups that often operate outside the domain of formal politics, under the authority of powerful, state, and transnational elites (Borras and Franco 2013). In response, a recent special issue on land grabbing in the *Journal of Peasant Studies* asks: “in the midst of the ‘global land grab’, what are the political reactions ‘from below’?” (Hall et al. 2015, 467). Whether addressing green grabs, specifically, or the overarching phenomenon of land grabbing, the articles in Hall et al.’s (2015) special issue contain important insights on differentiated expectations for, experiences with, and reactions to LSLAs on the ground.

While it is commonly assumed that land grabbing *a/ways* dispossesses subsistence land users who *a/ways* suffer as a result and, therefore, *a/ways* resist land grabs, Hall et al. (2015) demonstrate that what happens on the ground is far more complex:

⁹ Hall et al. 2015

When land deals hit the ground, they interact with social groups within the state and in society that are differentiated along the lines of class, gender, generation, ethnicity and nationality, and that have historically specific expectations, aspirations and traditions of struggle. These reshape, limit or make possible different kinds of land deals ... political debates and academic research have increasingly picked up *differentiated impacts* and *variegated political reactions* to land deals (Hall et al. 2015, 468).

In seeking to capture the complexity of actually-existing land deals, Hall et al. (2015) use the terms “resistance”, “acquiescence”, and “incorporation” to categorize the diverse and sometimes conflicting ways people experience land deals. This marks a dramatic effort to avoid misconceiving or romanticizing peasants as *either* passive victims *or* unified resisters, emphasizing instead their aptitude in the areas of adaptation, risk aversion, and political struggle (Hobsbawm 1973; Scott 1976; 1985; Feierman 1990).

For example, Hall et al. (2015) document cases in which rural groups: appear indifferent or accepting towards land grabs (Visser et al. 2012; Mamonova 2015), struggle to be incorporated into land deals (Larder 2015), mobilize against grabs or resist incorporation (Cavanagh and Benjaminsen 2015; Gingembre 2015; Martiniello 2015; Moreda 2015), or even counter-resist those resisting land grabs – a phenomenon Hall et al. (2015) refer to as “poor-on-poor” conflict (Fontana 2014; Alonso-Fradejas 2015; Brent 2015; Grajales 2015). Moreover, instances of non-traditional forms of resistance and the formation of transnationalized alliances also appear to be growing in response to land and green grabbing (Alonso-Fradejas 2015; Corson et al. 2015; Gingembre 2015; Grajales 2015; Enns 2016). As these and other studies demonstrate, the varied forms that resistance and non-resistance take in response to green grabbing highly depend on contextual factors such as the type of land deals in question, their terms of inclusion, class and identity relationships on the ground, local institutional contexts, and historical patterns of access and accumulation (Borras and Franco 2013; Hall et al. 2015).

The return to studying reactions from below is both explicitly and implicitly informed by Scott’s (1976; 1985) preoccupation with a puzzling feature of rural class dynamics. The

puzzle is that only rarely do exploitive or unfair conditions in rural society lead to widespread social upheaval (i.e. “revolt”) on the part of oppressed peasantries. As Scott writes, “the fact is that, for all their importance when they do occur, peasant rebellions, let alone peasant ‘revolutions’, are few and far between ... [Moreover,] the revolts that develop are nearly always crushed unceremoniously” (1985, 29). Problematizing the fact that revolt does not feature more prominently in peasant politics, Scott (1976) considers the alternatives to rebellion in the countryside, asking if peasants are ideologically mystified about their situation or simply have little choice but to accept conditions that contribute to their exploitation and marginalization.

On the one hand, one may claim that the peasantry, because of its religious or social ideology, accepts this exploitation as a normal, even justifiable, part of the social order. This explanation for the absence of revolt – for peasant passivity – assumes a fatalistic acceptance of the social order or what Marxists might call “mystification”. One may claim, on the other hand, that the explanation for passivity is not to be found in peasant values, but rather in the relationships of force in the countryside (Scott 1976, 227).

In the above quote, Scott is referencing the problem of hegemony articulated in Gramscian strands of MPE (Gramsci 1971; Burawoy 2001; 2003). This problem is concerned with how elite classes achieve dominance, not only over the material forces of production but, over the attitudes, beliefs, and cultural values of diverse groups in society (i.e. the symbolic means of production) (Gramsci 1971; Scott 1985; Iggoe et al. 2010; Robbins 2012). By analyzing the “moral economy of the subsistence ethic”, Scott offers pertinent insights for determining if the absence of revolt suggests that green elites (e.g. agribusinesses, conservationists, green NGOs, state agencies, etc.) have successfully obtained hegemonic control over relatively less powerful groups in rural society.

Scott suggests an empirical solution to the thorny issue of hegemony – “a way of deciding, in any particular situation, what weight to assign to values as an obstacle to revolt and what weight to assign repression in memory, fact, and potential” (Scott 1976, 228). As hegemony is obtained and maintained through the consent or compliance of subordinate

groups, rather than through coercion (Gramsci 1971), the use and/or intensification of coercive power on the part of elites indicates the incompleteness of a green hegemonic project (Scott 1976). It suggests that subsistence land users do not necessarily comply, ideologically, with green interventions. Likewise, a reliance on irregular or paramilitary forces to enforce the conduct of subordinate groups also indicates a lack of hegemonic control: “When the landlord takes care to visit his [sic] fields only with an entourage, when the tax collector begins to appear in the company of a policeman, when the large landowner builds a wall around his house and hires a nightwatchmen [sic], the evidence accumulates” (Scott 1976, 230). The presence or intensification of both coercion and surveillance is, in other words, tied to defiance on the part of subordinate groups and signal deficiencies in the power of elites (Scott 1976).

Beyond the presence of coercion – which may be used to expand or maintain control over land, livelihoods, and people for conservation – determining if subsistence land users *actually* consent to green grabs may be difficult when such groups do not overtly resist land deals or when they actively seek incorporation into such deals. For example, Scott (1976) demonstrates that the adaptive strategies of peasants may involve seizing “opportunities” elites create to reduce the threat of revolt among subordinate groups, such as make-work projects, employment opportunities, or corporate delivery of social services. In this regard, peasants may demonstrate tolerance for exploitive or unfair conditions to avoid the risks associated with non-compliance (Scott 1976). Yet, to use Scott’s terminology, this adaptive skill and reasoning does not necessarily make subordinate groups “coconspirators in their own victimization” (1985, 318). If one is to claim that rural groups are either indifferent toward, accepting of, or seeking incorporating into green grabs due to a green hegemony, compliance for the green economy among subordinate groups should reflect in their moral, social, and technical arrangements – evidenced not only by everyday practices, but the values expressed in the spaces where they speak their culture freely (Scott 1976; 1985; 1990). Evidence of contradictory or deviant values in the sub-culture of subordinate groups, therefore, suggests that a lack of revolt may owe more to “relationships of force in the countryside” than to mystification.

Here, consideration for what Scott (1985) calls everyday resistance, or the weapons of the weak, indicate major points of friction between elite values and the normative dimensions of peasant politics (Thompson 1971; 1991). Scott uses the term moral economy to refer to: “[peasants’] notion of economic justice and their working definition of exploitation – their view of which claims on their product [a]re tolerable and intolerable” (1976, 3). The moral economy, explains Scott, is rooted in a subsistence ethic: both technical (e.g. traditions of seed varieties, livestock production, planting techniques, or grazing patterns) and social (e.g. communal land management, patterns of reciprocity, and sharing) arrangements derived to stave off hunger and ensure collective wellbeing – often at the expense of individual autonomy/excess.¹⁰

The subsistence ethic, then, is rooted in the economic practices and social exchanges of peasant society. As a moral principle, as a right to subsistence ... it forms the standard against which claims to the surplus by landlords and the state are evaluated (Scott 1976, 7).

Scott’s inference suggests that the absence of revolt in rural society may not simply indicate ideological compliance with the logics and values of the green economy on the part of subordinate groups, or their consent to the imposition of unequal/unfair class relationships. Rather, it may result in part from the economic and social arrangements used by subsistence land users to mitigate threats to subsistence and to avoid uncertain or undue risk. In other words, the disenfranchised remain capable of penetrating those logics, practices, and values of the green economy that can be used to serve their material and symbolic class interests (Scott 1985, 304).

It is here that Scott (1985) claims to depart from Gramsci, albeit slightly, by asserting that subordinate groups are more constrained by elites in the realm of behaviour than in the realm of beliefs and values. “If, behind the façade of behavioural conformity imposed by elites,” Scott writes, “we find innumerable, anonymous acts of resistance, so also do we

¹⁰ Although this notion risks romanticizing the peasant way of life (Mamonova 2015), such arrangements draw attention to the normative dimensions of peasant politics. According to Scott (1976, 5), the subsistence ethic “impl[ies] only that all are entitled to a *living* out of the resources within the village, and that living is attained often at the cost of a loss of status and autonomy”.

find, behind the façade of symbolic and ritual compliance, innumerable acts of ideological resistance. The two forms of resistance are, of course, inextricably joined” (1985, 304). Such acts of resistance usually fall well-short of widespread social upheaval, as numerous cases in the land and green grabbing literature suggest (Borras and Franco 2013; Hall et al. 2015). Rather, they entail “the ordinary weapons of relatively powerless groups: foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so on” (Scott 1985, 29).

Although the weapons of the weak typically avert direct confrontation with elite norms and values, and usually have only modest objectives, they can reveal major points of friction in an imposed class order. As Cavanagh and Benjaminsen discuss, “what separates these acts from petty crime or mere opportunism are the ‘hidden transcripts’, laden with political meaning, which accompany them” (2015, 729). Such hidden transcripts may include folklore, speech, and practices, “ordinarily excluded from the public transcripts of subordinates by the exercise of power” (Scott 1992, 27), promulgated in social spaces where the “moral universe” of peasants is free to diverge from that of elites (Scott 1976; Cavanagh and Benjaminsen 2015).

As indicated, however, Scott’s (1976; 1985) conception of the moral economy is far from problem free. As Robbins (2012, 63) explains quite succinctly, scholars have critiqued Scott’s “top down’ view of ideological control ([Mitchell 1990;] Akram-Lodhi 1992), his risk-centred view of producer logic (Roeder 1984), and his overlooking of gender and the extraction of female labour value in peasants’ households (Hart 1991)”. This dissertation aims to respond to such critiques explicitly and implicitly. Yet Scott’s work marked a turning point in the peasant studies literature and continues to inform the ways in which scholars approach the question of peasant agency in relation to contemporary forms of land grab (Cavanagh and Benjaminsen 2015).

6.2 Green grabbing and the question of (non-)resistance

As Hall et al. (2015) document, resistance against green grabbing takes diverse forms and is motivated by common factors. Although there is much enthusiasm for the green economy at the global level (Brockington et al. 2010; Corson et al. 2015), the re-territorialization of land for conservation involves excluding existing rights holders, instituting new markets for exchange, and incorporating subsistence land users into new economic, social, and political relationships (Hall 2011; Cavanagh and Benjaminsen 2015). Through green grabbing, moreover, rural groups may be subjected to the authority, control, and power of states, private corporations, and other transnational actors, as national governments roll back and roll out responsibility for managing and regulating the environment. It is not surprising, therefore, that disaffected groups engage in various forms of overt and covert – structured and everyday – resistance. Such resistance has been well-documented in the land and green grabbing literature.

To begin with, it is common for rural groups to openly mobilize in reaction to green grabbing to advance and defend their interests. Alonso-Fradejas (2015), for example, discusses overt reactions to the expansion of oil palm plantations in the northern lowlands of Guatemala. Reactions to green grabbing, in this case, are framed as “defense of territory” and strive for self-determination over how land and other natural resources are accessed and used, as well as for sovereignty over the production and distribution of food. Alonso-Fradejas describes the emergence of a “repertoire of contention in defense of territory” (2015, 501), a repertoire that includes structured *and* everyday forms of contention. Overt, structural forms of resistance in this case include efforts to strengthen communal governance mechanisms and livelihood arrangements (i.e. defensive strategies). Whereas, offensive forms of contention endeavor to repossess lost land, gain access to resources, and/or improve the terms of inclusion into land deals. Overt, structural reactions to green grab seek to manipulate (in)formal institutional and regulatory frameworks in a manner that defends the interests of subsistence land users and improves the discursive/legal terms of inclusion into land deals.

Overt, structural forms of contention in response to green grabbing are neither limited to the case of oil palm plantations in Guatemala nor to disputes over territorial sovereignty

(Perreault 2006; Baletti 2012; Gardner 2012). Such reactions are also increasingly capable of being influenced by, and influencing, related struggles in other parts of the world, leading to the formation of transnational alliances that contend with grabs through diverse strategies and forms of expertise (Pye 2010; Gingembre 2015; Rocheleau 2015; Enns 2016). Not only is green grabbing a transnational project, so too are the repertoires of contention that surround green grabbing (Alonso-Fradejas 2015; Corson et al. 2015; Grajales 2015;). Although this can lead to the formation of transnational advocacy, awareness, and movements, resistance itself may also be appropriated by larger and wider constituencies for better or worse (Alonso-Fradejas 2015).

Within repertoires of contention also exist covert, everyday forms of resistance. In the case of oil palm plantations in Guatemala's northern lowlands, Alonso-Fradejas (2015) identifies common strategies such as: walking away from plantation work duties or "foot-dragging", engaging in arson on plantations, or keeping title deeds to land a secret. Such weapons of the weak are meant to counter exploitive and unfair class relationships between subsistence land users and large-scale landowners, as well as in/between social groups, and to undermine the goals of agribusiness (Scott 1985; Alonso-Fradejas 2015). Importantly, such repertoires are not isolated from broader or historical struggles over land concentration, re-distribution, or territorial recognition/rights (Fairhead et al. 2012; Borras and Franco 2013; Hall et al. 2015).

The renewed emphasis on peasant agency in the literature has birthed a plethora of evidence on the types of everyday resistance that L/IP engage in to retain autonomy over their notions of livelihood, territory, and wellbeing (Martiniello 2015; Moreda 2015). In Mount Elgon National Park in Uganda, for example, Cavanagh and Benjaminsen (2015) analyze everyday resistance to conservation among three different groups of farmers. Much like Alonso-Fradejas (2015), these authors suggest that the strategies used by small-scale farmers are a form of "guerrilla agriculture" – a term they use to describe illegal food production and other strategies to circumvent state regulations and insert farmers (and farming) into the spaces from which they have been excluded. Similarly, in Kenya, Butt (2010; 2012) describes "pastoralist incursions" into protected areas as acts that circumvent, not only state regulation, but the power of tourist (colonial) imaginaries

that create demand for and help sustain green grabs. In such cases, L/IP subversively insert their bodies, livelihoods, and values into realms otherwise reserved for tourists and wildlife. Such strategies are also fueled by memories of colonial dispossession and different cultural meanings attached to land (Moore 1993).

Yet, as Borras and Franco (2013) and Hall et al. (2015) emphasize, reactions to land grabs do not always involve resistance. More recent studies than Scott's (1976; 1985) suggest that some rural groups are willing to accept land deals and/or actively pursue incorporation into them (Borras and Franco 2013; Franco 2014; Castellanos-Navarrete and Jansen 2015; Larder 2015; Mamonova 2015). "Critiques of the global land grab initially focused largely on rights violations: land dispossession and displacement of people from land they ... owned", overlooking the fact that some participants in rural society may try to ensure that they benefit from land deals through agrarian or labour union struggles (Borras and Franco 2013; Hall et al. 2015, 478). Growing evidence of this effect unsettles long-standing assumptions that subsistence land users are the most prominent opponents and victims of LSLAs, as well as the need to understand how different groups of peasants experience and react to land grabs and why (Hall 2011; Baglioni and Gibbon 2013; Hall et al. 2015).

What factors, specifically, motivate people to actively seek incorporation into land deals? Borras and Franco (2013) point to numerous case studies which suggest that subsistence land users pursuing incorporation into land deals may have had their land acquired as part of an LSLA and seek *improved* compensation, livelihood opportunities, or other benefit sharing arrangements (i.e. more favourable terms of inclusion). In such cases, demands to be incorporated into land deals may be considered reactions against "adverse incorporation" – e.g. incorporation into corporate business and value chains that exclude previous landowners/users from processes of accumulation (Hickey and du Toit 2007; Borras and Franco 2013; Hall et al. 2015; Mamonova 2015). Additionally, subsistence land users unable to demonstrate formal rights to their land may want to avoid the risks associated with resistance, given their already vulnerable position in society – "it is probably a matter of a 'second best option' for them" (Borras and Franco 2013, 1735). Likewise, already disenfranchised, landless, and/or migrant groups may

pursue opportunities to sell their labour in green sectors. Moreover, it is foreseeable that, in very remote or marginalized areas neglected by the state, the costs of being incorporated into land deals may simply not outweigh the benefits (McAllister 2015). In this regard, recent examples of alliances, deals, and protests demanding incorporation into land deals also demonstrate the need to understand how the “terms of inclusion” influence reactions to green grabs (McCarthy 2010; Mamonova 2016).

Mamonova (2015) does just this by engaging with the case of land grabbing and large-scale agricultural development in Ukraine. Mamonova suggests, first, that the terms of inclusion (e.g. illusive inclusion, subordinate inclusion, and competitive exclusion) influence how rural land users react to LSLAs and, second, that individual material gains – rather than collective interests – often take precedence over ideological concerns in their reactions. These findings present challenges to common assumptions about peasants and their reactions to land grabbing, including those attributed to Scott (1976). These assumptions are: (1) that peasants inherently oppose LSLAs, (2) that peasants are unable/unwilling to adapt and coexist with market interventions associated with land grabbing, and (3) that “the peasant way” (i.e. territorial and food sovereignty, economic and environmental justice) is a primary factor motivating reactions to land grabs.

Importantly, Mamonova (2015) builds on the land grabbing, and related peasant studies, literature somewhat by placing adaptation and resistance on opposite ends of the spectrum of peasant reactions to land grabs – rather than locating them within a broader repertoire of contestation that considers, for instance, everyday resistance. Recall, as Scott (1985) suggests, that subordinate groups are often more constrained in their behaviour than in their beliefs, ideas, and values. To what extent, then, do the adaptation strategies that Mamonova (2015) documents suggest that rural land users actually consent to the new class dynamics introduced with large-scale agricultural development? This point is not explicitly discussed in relation to Mamonova’s study. Do adaptive strategies also reflect ideological compliance – is hegemony at play? If so, what factors make Mamonova’s case distinct from others in the literature? Mamonova’s (2015) analysis heightens the need for research that aims to contextualize reactions to land and green grabbing. Failing to do so, as Mamonova (2015) indicates, may lead to inaccurate

conclusions about peasant politics, misinformed social movement policies, or misguided recommendations for governments and investors.

7 Conclusion

This chapter has tracked the evolution of the land grab literature, discussing the multiple forces that are now understood as drivers of the phenomenon globally. In considering recent global level shifts that have positioned MDC as an intervention that is logical and necessary for managing the planet's natural resources sustainably, this chapter draws attention to the forms of MDC commonly rolled out when green grabs hit the ground. For instance, due to the re-interpretation and re-institutionalization of nature within the green economy, safaris are now often sold as win⁷ approaches to conservation in Africa (Grandia 2007; Igoe et al. 2010). Yet major contradictions associated with market-driven approaches to conservation in Africa have also been discussed. The mounting evidence of these detrimental outcomes necessitates further consideration for how rural groups react to green grabs, as well as why they react in the ways that they do.

As discussed, there has been a recent push in the land grab literature for research into the differentiated impacts of, and variegated reactions to, land deals from below. This marks an intentional sidestep away from binary depictions of peasants as *either* passive victims *or* unified resisters of land grabs. By contextualizing land grabs in the nuanced realities of life on the ground, scholars have now demonstrated that repertoires of contention surrounding grabs include strategies that range from covert, everyday forms of resistance that aim to undermine land deals to overt, structural forms of contention that seek to improve the terms of inclusion. Some efforts to contextualize and nuance reactions to land grabbing, namely that of Mamonova (2015), suggest that contention is not necessarily even a defining feature in political reactions from below. By analyzing the terms of inclusion into LSLAs in Ukraine, Mamonova (2015) dislodges adaptive strategies among peasants from resistance, potentially implying a greater degree of cultural hegemony than has been suggested in the literature to date.

Alongside other scholars now contributing resurgent evidence on the diverse, and sometimes unexpected, ways that rural groups react to the imposition of exploitive and unfair class relationships (Borras and Franco 2013; Hall et al. 2015), Mamonova's analysis emphasizes the need for continual efforts to ground analyses of land grabs and reactions to them through empirical, systematic research. This may entail analyzing LSLAs based on the expectations for, experiences with, and perspectives of different rural land users by mapping such evidence in relation to the terms of inclusion, local institutional and regulatory frameworks, pre-existing class and identity politics, and historical patterns of access and accumulation. As Hall et al. suggests, such approaches "can help us to understand what conditions responses, including resistance of various kinds as well as the absence of resistance, and so deepen our critical inquiry into the global land grab" (2015, 475). With this in mind, this dissertation's contributions to the green grab literature derive from a deep and narrow line of inquiry into the history of a green wildlife sector in Kenya's former white highlands.

Although much of the recent work on green grabbing involves brief consideration for histories of primitive accumulation, colonization, and related political struggles (Hall et al. 2015), few have attempted a grounded history of green grab. Land grab scholars rightly speak of primitive accumulation or enclosures for conservation as precursors to the general phenomenon of green grab; yet they often neglect to account for the very different ways that such interventions unfold in certain places, spaces, and times. Despite sharing similar patterns and trends, actually-existing primitive accumulation in the colonial era involved diverse strategies and techniques, outcomes and reactions – much like contemporary forms of green grabbing today. Through an ethnographically and historically grounded analysis, this dissertation presents a genealogy of green grab. By analyzing the *longue durée* of green grabbing in Laikipia, it offers an account of how historically shifting contours of identity and belonging in this part of Kenya have both shaped and been co-produced by green grabbing.

Next, *Chapter 3* describes the research design, process, and methods behind this dissertation. It also engages with my positionality as a researcher in the contact zone.

Chapter 3

Research methods

1 Introduction

When I was 15 years old, I acquired my first field guide for identifying insects, mammals, and reptiles in Africa, called *Tracks and Tracking in Southern Africa*. I purchased the pocket-sized book at a small shop in Harare, Zimbabwe, while travelling with my family to Hwange National Park from our home in Kitwe, Zambia, during a school holiday. I was captivated by the book's vivid images of wildlife and fascinated by its accounts of animal behaviour – especially of small predators, such as genet cats and mongooses. That holiday, I did my best to memorize the behaviours and spoor of animals that I documented during my family's safari in Hwange National Park, thumbing through the book's pages in the backseat of my parents' Toyota Hilux or while lounging by a pool at camp. As this chapter discusses, my fascination with wildlife was not new; nor has it ceased. Although I have since graduated to more comprehensive field guides, such as Richard Estes' (1999) *Safari Companion*, my first field book still occupies a shelf in my library. When I initially began to draft a research proposal for this dissertation late in 2013, I returned to this field guide hoping to find some form of inspiration.

I managed to find inspiration in the field guide's introductory chapter, titled *The Art of Tracking*. A paragraph from the chapter reads as follows:

To the untrained eye the wilderness can appear desolate, but to someone who is "spoor conscious" it will be full of life. Even if you never actually catch sight of the animals, you know that they are there, and by reconstructing their movements from the signs they leave behind, you will be able to visualize them, "see" them in your mind's eye. In this way a whole story will unfold – a story of what happened when no-one was looking (Liebenberg 2000, 4).

The term “spoor”, in this context, refers to any sign left by an animal that can be used to identify it and its key attributes, as well as to deduce information on the animal’s behaviours and movements. Such signs might include imprints, scat (e.g. dung), scent, and other indications of feeding or territorial markings. For example, many mammals have scent glands that produce chemical secretions used to mark their territories and transfer information to like species, such as their reproductive status (Estes 1999).

When I turned to my old field guide for inspiration, I was wrestling with how to frame my dissertation – with identifying the problem motivating my inquiry, as well as the scholarly debates I would draw from, contribute to, and how/why (*Chapters 1 and 2*). Although I do not mean to exaggerate the extent to which *The Art of Tracking* informed the design of this study, the author did unknowingly challenge me to think differently about how to approach researching an industry that hinges on wild animals and their behaviours. With this in mind, I set out to design a research project that would enable me to become conscious of and track a different kind of spoor – that of green grabbing and the trajectory of its movements in Kenya, a former British colony in eastern Africa that is generally considered to be the birthplace of the modern-day safari.

Because green grabs are altogether different animals from those informing Liebenberg’s (2000) method of tracking, the type of spoor I sought to identify and track was also radically different. Re-constructing a genealogy of green grab required me to analyze spoor such as: beliefs, ideas, and representations of nature (essentially what people assume, know, and say about the environment), as well as the conditions, behaviours, and relationships re-produced through green grabs. By strategically placing myself in positions to observe such spoor from different vantage points in space and time, I hoped to glean insights into the unseen story of green grabbing in Kenya. I aimed to insert myself into the contact zone of green grabbing, and to locate and interrogate my own position in the contact zone of research itself. This chapter presents the research design and methods behind this dissertation, both exposing and unsettling the act of doing research.

This chapter describes the approach I pursued to encounter, observe, and learn about green grabbing in Kenya. It begins by discussing why I decided to devote so much time,

energy, and resources to researching green grabbing in the first place. I discuss both my personal interest in safaris, arguably the most historically prominent form of Market-Driven Conservation (MDC) in Africa, and my positionality to contextualize my role in the research process. To avoid discussing my positionality in an overly procedural manner, I interrogate it both explicitly in this chapter and more subtly throughout the dissertation. My intention is to continually illuminate how nuances in my personal life and daily relationships informed my research approach and interests and, invariably, influenced the outcomes of this study. Next, this chapter describes the process I used to study green grabbing – to track, through space and time, the grabbing of land and other natural resources on environmental grounds. I discuss the research design, before describing how the research unfolded in reality. This chapter then provides an overview of key events in the research, describes the types of experiences I pursued and people I interacted with, and accounts for the methods I used to collect information along the way. This chapter concludes with a discussion on the logistical and moral dilemmas that surfaced as I muddled through the research contact zone (Ekers 2010), as well as how these and other factors influenced the arguments I ultimately make.

2 Research design and positionality

Safari has played an important role in my life for some time. This is not something I simply stumbled on during my doctoral studies. My first ever safari experience occurred in Hwange National Park, in 1996, when I was ten years old. This was another family holiday, preceding the one I describe above, that we embarked upon with friends who lived in Harare at the time. These friends had two boys, my best friends at the time, who were roughly the same age as my sister and I. Driving through the Zimbabwean countryside, us kids sat in the boot of a Toyota 4X4 drinking sodas, playing Nintendo Gameboy, and anticipating our evening game drive. We had excellent viewing in Hwange National Park that safari. We saw everything from herds of elephants hundreds-strong to elusive Cape hunting dogs to lions.

Spending time with friends was, perhaps, the best part of safari. Often, during school holidays, my family would plan a trip from our home in Zambia to meet up with friends in other parts of the region – usually in South Africa or Zimbabwe. We tended to spend a few days shopping and enjoying restaurants in the cosmopolitan centres we passed through *en route*, such as Pretoria or Harare, before heading to “the bush” for safari. Sometimes, we were joined by friends from North America. Introducing them to the African bush and its wildlife was something I looked forward to for months in advance of their arrival. I would spend weeks brushing up on my knowledge of African wildlife while falling asleep at night, hoping to impress first-time safari goers. In short, safaris were a distinctly social part of my upbringing – one that I relished every moment of. My experience tells me that this is true for most settler families in the region. I do not have a single bad memory of safari from my childhood or youth. Even when game was scarce, as a kid, one could run around camp barefoot, climb trees, trap insects, swim, drink endless amounts of soda, etc. Life was good on safari; from my perspective, nothing was better. In time, however, I became conscious of other social dynamics at play on safari, some of which unsettled the romantic notions I had internalized about life in the bush.

I distinctly remember the time when my perception of safaris began to change. I had returned to my family home in Zambia for the winter holiday, before beginning the third year of my undergraduate studies in British Columbia, Canada. I had just switched my major of study from a BA in Art and Design to a BA in Political Studies, a shift that made me increasingly aware, and critical, of the privileged role I occupy in society as a white cisgender male. My growing consciousness of class and other power relationships would also begin to grow in relation to safaris, specifically, during that winter holiday.

My family organized a safari in Zambia’s South Luangwa National Park for the end of December 2006. My parents rented a small chalet located in a camp just outside the entrance to the national park, on the sandy banks of the Luangwa River. I recall that the game viewing was exceptional that trip, despite it being the peak of rainy season. We saw elephants, leopards, Cape hunting dogs, scores of antelope, and a lot of small game as well. At one point, we came upon a large pride of lions that had chased an adult Cape

buffalo into a rather deep conduit and killed it. For days, the lions stayed by the buffalo carcass feasting on its smelly meat.

My family returned to the site of the pride's kill each day for the rest of our safari. One day, while sitting in our Toyota Hilux with our elbows out the windows, a lorry approached on the dirt road behind us. The lorry was open in the back and filled with a type of safari goer I had never encountered before, "local tourists". The vehicle was filled with men and women who appeared to be on safari – albeit a completely different type of safari than the one I was accustomed to. The spectacle was so strange to me, that I photographed it (Figure 1). A few people in the lorry had binoculars, which were passed around. Some looked intrigued, others disinterested, by the lions lounging nearby. A gentleman in the left foreground of the photo appears simultaneously surprised and disgusted by the lions and their kill. After just a few minutes, the lorry creaked on its way. I craned my neck to watch it pass before turning to my dad and asking, "what was that?" My father later asked the owners of our camp – a couple from England – if they knew about the lorry. The owners explained that it belongs to a local businessperson who charges people employed in camps and lodges a few hundred Zambian Kwacha (less than US \$1) for a brief drive through the park, "... so they can see what it's like" the owners told my dad.

Figure 1: Photo from safari in South Luangwa NP, Zambia, c. 2006



The image of this lorry, filled to the brim with people who work in the safari industry but never really go on safari, stuck with me for years. It seemed to embody the many questions I would come to have about safaris. For example, why had I virtually never seen Indigenous Africans on safari before this experience, unless they were working at safari camps/lodges or for national wildlife authorities? Do people working in the safari industry even get paid well? They must not, if they cannot afford a *regular* safari. What are their lives like outside their places of work? Moreover, what about safaris makes it acceptable for them to have racialized social and power relationships?

During my master's studies at the University of Guelph, about four years after my encounter with local safari-goers in South Luangwa, my questions about safaris became more sophisticated. My master's research examined the cultural politics of famine relief in an arid/semi-arid region of Kenya, called Turkana – something I had developed a keen interest in during a brief visit to Turkana before beginning my master's programme. It was not until I began my doctoral studies at the University of Toronto, in 2012, that I was introduced to a vast literature that touched on many of the questions I had about wildlife conservation and safari tourism in Africa. As the first year of my PhD programme concluded, I decided to make safaris the focus of my doctoral research. It was at that time that I began to see safari in the light of green grabbing.

While at the University of Toronto, I was introduced to a compelling literature on the political ecology and economy of conservation in Africa. This literature fueled my intellectual curiosity in safari. These literatures help me think about and respond to the types of questions outlined above from a critical and reflexive perspective, and to discuss the information I would eventually collect and analyze for this dissertation. Reading through these literatures motivated me to embrace my personal history with safari, problems and all, to make an academic contribution to this broader field of study. At the time, I was influenced by work being produced by scholars such as Fletcher (2010), Büscher et al. (2012), and Büscher (2013) on neoliberal conservation and on the spectacle of nature as well (Igoe 2010; Igoe et al. 2010). Although my efforts to study the wildlife sector in Kenya assumed a slightly different analytical tone, the work of such scholars heavily informed my approach to research.

Adapting aspects of Igoe et al.'s (2010) proposed research framework, I describe this dissertation as a qualitative case study that uses feminist approaches to geographical research to collect and analyze information on Laikipia's wildlife sector (D. Rose 1993; G. Rose 1993; McDowell 1993a; 1993b; Mollet and Faria 2013). Oya states that a lack of reflexivity on the part of activists and researchers reflects an "extreme failing in the context of 'land grab' debates" to-date (2013, 516). I attempt to take this failing seriously in this dissertation through my engagement with this case study. I seek to integrate Igoe et al.'s (2010) insights on carrying out ethnographic research in Africa's wildlife sector with emergent perspectives on the importance of ethnographic and historical research in the land and green grabbing literature (Oya 2013; Edelman 2013; Millar 2016). Beyond simply pursuing an ethnographic and historically situated analysis of green grabbing, however, I also operationalize Pratt's (2008) notion of the contact zone to animate the reflexive and dialogical nature of this study (Rose 1994).

Much like tracking wild animals, studying green grabbing requires a certain method. My inclination is that, in addition to allowing for historical consideration, such a method should ideally involve collecting information on the ground where green grabbing and its related interventions are rolled out. Such spaces include national parks and reserves, private wildlife ranches and conservancies, as well as spaces *within* such spaces: in safari camps and the bars, dining halls, lounges, pool areas, and offices that comprise them; the 4X4 vehicles, camel and horse caravans, and guided walks on which people come and go on safari; as well as sites where cultural performances and curios are sold to tourists. This method should, from my perspective, also be adapted for gathering information in the formal spaces where decisions about conservation and development are made, such as organizational headquarters and the offices of community, local, and national government representatives, even if these are located far from the spaces where things like safari take place. Additionally, this method should enable a researcher to collect information from the edge of green grabs, where the negative outcomes of such interventions are absorbed, contested, and negotiated. These are the spaces where people reconcile themselves with the ill-effects of green grab, often with provocative flare. In Laikipia, such spaces included: human settlements outside wildlife areas, community-owned conservancies and group ranches, small-scale farms, and everyday settings beyond the earshot/sightline of elites

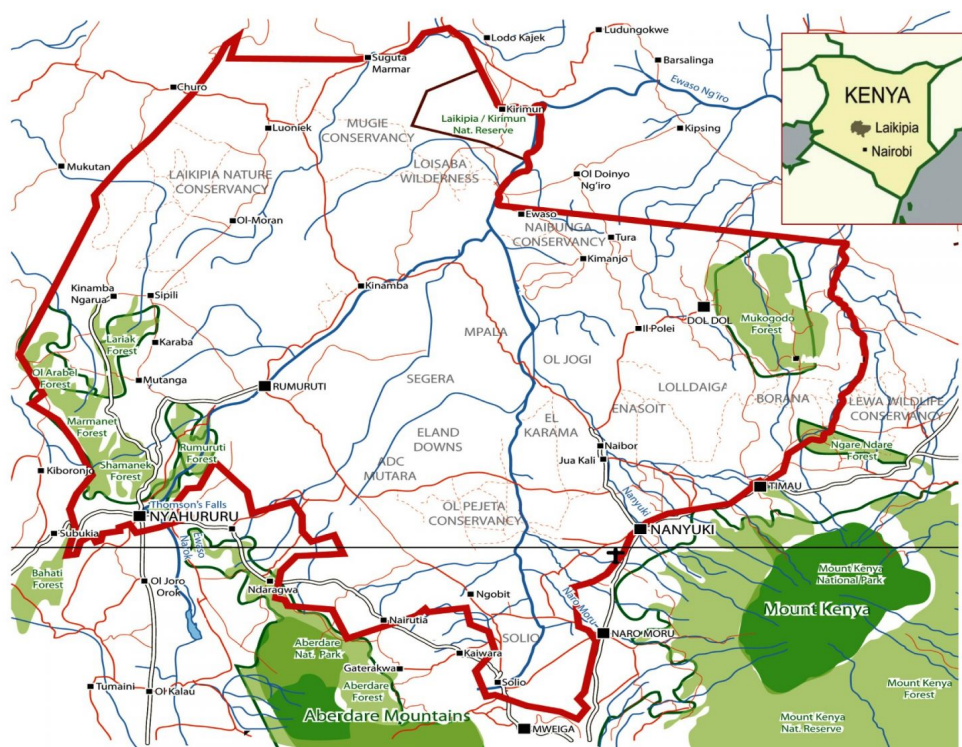
– e.g. in bars, *boma* (“corrals”), houses, restaurants, taxies, and even virtual fora such as Facebook and Twitter. In short, this method should be “multi-sited” and “multi-scalar”, affording an adequate portrait of how safaris are shaped by, but also shape, “power-laden practices in multiple, interconnected arenas of everyday life” (Hart 2006, 996).

Doing an ethnography of green grabbing, with this in mind, is perhaps comparable to studying the making of a Hollywood film. Trying to get an in-depth picture of how films reach their finished product might entail visiting different sets; participating in directing a scene to learn about the intricate processes of filmmaking; watching sets being constructed, footage edited, or sound effects added; documenting how decisions are made about the film, including what does and does not get included in the final product; and interviewing producers, directors, actors, and crews to learn about the factors that influence their decision-making processes. By engaging in such activities, various power dynamics would become clear, such as who calls the shots and what influences their decisions. Additionally, efforts to change sets, lines, or entire scenes in response to crises or due to divergent creative perspective may also become evident. A Hollywood film would probably seem like an incomplete, inconsistent, or even feeble creation after this type of research than it would if one simply watched the final product in a cinema. It would also reveal insights into the production process itself, and how seemingly mundane factors influence the final product. These outcomes are, essentially, why I approached this research from an ethnographic perspective.

3 Research approach and case study

I selected Laikipia (Figure 2) as a case study for this research based on background interviews that I carried out with researchers at academic institutions in Kenya, as well as with practitioners involved in local/regional conservation efforts. Through these initial conversations, I was encouraged to focus my research efforts in Kenya on either Laikipia County or community conservancies in and around Maasai Mara National Reserve. Early participants in the research considered both areas to be important sites of innovation, transformation, and contestation in the region’s wildlife sector. However, participants also

Figure 2: Map of major centres, conservancies, rivers, and roads in Laikipia (LWF 2012)



noted a definitive lack of “social research” on Laikipia’s wildlife sector, specifically, which has been dominated by research on ecology, environmental biology, and technological innovation (Thouless and Sakwa 1995; Mizutani 1999; Gadd 2005; Young et al. 2005; Frank et al. 2006; Odadi 2007; Graham et al. 2010; Patten et al. 2010; Graham et al. 2012; Kinnaird and O’Brien 2012; Nyaligu and Weeks 2013). I selected Laikipia as a case study largely for this reason. Since the early 1990s, Laikipia has functioned as a conservation laboratory where various forms of MDC have been implemented, tested, and adapted (AWF 1999). This offered me the opportunity to engage with multiple contexts, forms, and sites of MDC, rather than just CBC in Maasai Mara. The evolution of Laikipia’s wildlife sector also mirrors the historic trajectory of the global green economy, which made it attractive for examining how the green economy has been re-produced and transformed in real world scenarios. As a “land use mosaic” (Georgiadis 2011), Laikipia is considered to be one of the most important conservation areas in eastern Africa, as wildlife is protected outside national parks and reserves on private- and community-owned land (LWF 2012). Wildlife conservation in Laikipia, accordingly, has serious implications for land use, tenure, and livelihoods, with pastoralists and small-scale farmers being the most impacted by conservation. Added to this mix is a property regime that was imposed and remains dominated by an extra-European white minority.

In Laikipia, I targeted numerous different sites of research. I began by lining up safari activities in the context of different land use, tenure, and conservation arrangements. I organized safaris in wildlife conservancies belonging to international organizations (such as Conservation International and Fauna and Flora International); wildlife ranches and conservancies belonging to individuals (mainly settlers), including “mixed-use” ranches where wildlife conservation and safari tourism occur alongside commercial livestock production; as well as in community conservancies belonging to groups of pastoralists (mainly Maasais) that rely on the customary production of livestock as a main source of livelihood. I did my best to ensure that my research activities were spread throughout the county’s unique conservation areas, ecosystems, and livelihood zones. This effort took me into private-, community-, and government-owned conservation areas, as well as into diverse landscapes that had been shaped by a history of equally diverse livelihoods. I also planned research activities in sites such as government offices, organizational

headquarters, local restaurants and bars, and public corridors along fences and highways. Doing research in these diverse and geographically removed sites proved to be anything but straightforward. For example, covering vast distances on relatively poor roads ate up significant amounts of time and resources. Despite the logistical factors that would inevitably impact the fieldwork, such challenges also presented me with many more research opportunities than I originally anticipated.

After carrying out preliminary interviews and identifying ideal research sites, my strategy for selecting additional research sites and recruiting additional participants involved convenience and snowball sampling (Creswell 2009). People that I spoke with would often recommend additional sites for me to visit and participants for me to talk to, once they had a better sense of who I was and what I was doing in Laikipia. This is just one way that research participants played a role in shaping the research activities, data, and findings. To protect the anonymity and confidentiality of people who participated in the research, I do not use the actual names of wildlife ranches and conservancies when discussing sources of information. I use pseudonyms when referring to specific research participants, although I am as descriptive as I can be without jeopardizing the confidentiality of my sources. It is worth noting that, in some cases, I do refer to specific conservancies and/or organizations by name. This is only when such entities represent a topic of discussion and not a confidential source of information. Appendix A includes a list of research participants, which provides details about their affiliation, occupation, and approximate date of interview.

While going through the process of selecting Laikipia as a case study and beginning to identify research sites and participants, I also began to refine my research strategy and carry out research. I organized my research activities around an overarching goal, as well as a set of objectives that would help me achieve this goal (*Chapter 1*). This helped me determine the type of information I needed to collect in the field, as well as the methods best suited for doing so. Conceptualizing my research in this way was not only useful for developing a research proposal for my supervisory committee and applying for funding from granting agencies, it also provided me with a framework that could be fine-tuned as

I progressed deeper into the research. As informational and representational gaps became evident, I adapted my research activities to ensure that I was talking to the appropriate people in the appropriate places and spaces. Additionally, as I encountered conditions, settings, and relationships on the ground, I worked to refine my research objectives and questions. In this sense, I not only adopted an iterative, inductive approach to analyzing the information I collected, I also used my experiences to sharpen my approach to the research to ensure that my overarching strategy was informed by what I was hearing, observing, and learning in real-time.

In addition to selecting multiple research sites, I used a variety of methods to triangulate the information I collected (Creswell 2009; Denscombe 2010; Bryman et al. 2012). As mentioned, I designed this study by building on the work that other like-minded scholars have carried out on the political ecology of conservation in the region (e.g. Igoe et al. 2010 and Büscher 2013). I also chose each method with the hope of examining different intersections of class, cultural, social, political, and temporal perspectives.

4 Research methods and analysis

To avoid implying that the research unfolded seamlessly through a series of well-orchestrated events, I admit outright that it did not. As I discuss in concluding this chapter, I originally planned to research safari tourism in one of Tanzania's newest national parks, called Saadani. In fact, before I even planned to do research in Saadani, I had planned to return to Zambia to study the Lower Zambia-Mana Pools Transfrontier Conservation Area (TFCA) on the country's border with Zimbabwe. From both a personal and logistical perspective, this site would have been ideal. I would have been able to stay in my parents' house in Zambia's capital, Lusaka, and commute a few short hours to-and-from the stunning landscapes of the TFCA. This dissertation, it seems, had other plans.

This dissertation is based on empirical fieldwork carried out in Kenya between September 2014 and June 2015, as well as during a follow-up trip in May 2016. As mentioned, the research process stretches well beyond the time I began fieldwork in Kenya in October

2014. Beyond reviewing scholarly literatures and analyzing secondary sources of information in 2013, I also conducted research for my master's degree in Kenya in 2012 (Bersaglio et al. 2015). Additionally, my understanding of pastoralism in Kenya, specifically, is derived from consultancy work that I carried out for the UK's Overseas Development Institute between October 2014 and February 2015 (Enns and Bersaglio 2015a; 2015b; and 2016). In addition to past research experience in Kenya, I have a long personal history in the region. During 2011 and 2012, I worked for an NGO in neighbouring Tanzania, in the coastal city of Dar es Salaam. During this period, I made regular trips to Kenya to visit family and friends and to carry out my master's research. Previously, I worked in Kisumu, Kenya, for about six months in 2009 and, before then, attended a boarding school in the country's central highlands between 2001 and 2003. These experiences all culminated in experiences and relationships that, in one way or another, influenced this dissertation. From a research perspective, however, my pre-existing experiences, ideas about, and relationships in Kenya do not give my work any more or less legitimacy. They simply reflect the multiple, overlapping positionalities that individuals occupy during the research experience (Acker 2000).

The information in this dissertation was collected using participant observation, key informant and (in)formal interviews, and document analysis. Most of the research activities occurred in Laikipia. However, I did carry out participant observation and interviews in the neighbouring counties of Isiolo, Meru, Nyeri, and Turkana. Next to Laikipia, Nairobi County, which is also Kenya's capital city, was the most important research site. There I interviewed representatives from international organizations, government representatives, and local civil society organizations, as well as other practitioners, researchers, and scholars working in related fields.

I spent nine months in Kenya doing fieldwork for this study, during which time I carried out participant observation, formal/informal and semi-structured/un-structured interviews, and archival/document analysis. As indicated above, participant observation was both a strategy for identifying new research sites, participants, and perspectives and a research method; it also informed my analysis. I spent 32 days, in total, on safari as a tourist during this study. This enabled me to access activities, spaces, and people, as well as

experiences, perspectives, and relationships, that I would not have been privy to as a researcher from the outside trying to organize interviews with people involved with or impacted by the wildlife sector. Observing the wildlife sector as a participant also allowed me to better understand the contexts, relationships, routines, and struggles that make up everyday life for people in the wildlife sector (Cook 1997; Brockington and Sullivan 2003; Angrosino 2005; Musante 2014). This approach also enabled me to ground what I learned about the wildlife sector through interviews and secondary sources in deeper, meaningful contexts – including oral histories and personal biographies (Brockington and Sullivan 2003; Angrosino 2005; Bryman et al. 2012). I documented my observations from safaris in a journal, where I transcribed conversations, recorded activities and events, and reflected on my experiences and positionality. My research activities as a participant observer ultimately informed each chapter of this dissertation.

By strategically positioning myself as a tourist on safari and experiencing day-to-day life in safari camps and conservation areas, I participated in and observed the everyday behaviours, routines, and relationships that make up the wildlife sector (Angrosino 2005; Musante 2014). I was also able to talk to people, formally and informally, about their daily routines, how they ended up involved in wildlife conservation or safari tourism, as well as their perspectives on and critiques of the sector they contribute to (Musante 2014). I would disclose my unique position as a researcher when interviewing people, and was able to recruit additional participants and build relationships in doing so (Denscombe 2010; Bryman et al. 2012). For example, I hired a safari guide as a research assistant during low season, when safari camps close due to a lack of tourists. Participant observation was also intended to mitigate ethical dilemmas around observing and/or interacting with research participants. Rarely did I consume peoples' time outside their places of work, for instance, which might have placed undue additional burdens on them (Denscombe 2010). The method also served to break down some distinctions between the researcher and the researched, as those I interacted with on safari engaged in casual conversations with me and, more often than not, interrogated my personal experiences with and understanding of the wildlife sector. I also recorded observations in open spaces, from time to time, rather than in the privacy of my tent, or other closed quarters, which gave

other people on safari (e.g. tourists, workers, etc.) opportunities to approach me, inquire about what I was doing, and contribute to the research if they wished.

During participant observation, I carried out many interviews. Most were informal and unstructured; but I did schedule some formal interviews while on safari. Formal interviews on safari were usually carried out with managers, owners, or conservation practitioners, people that are further removed from tourists. In total, I carried out 150 interviews with 98 different people. Additional information about who I talked to, who or what they represented, and how many times I talked to them can be found in Appendix A. Most of the people I interviewed were key informants, “someone who offers the researcher, usually an ethnographer, particularly perceptive information about the social setting, important events, and individuals” (Bryman et al. 2012, 370). The context, setting, and type of information I was pursuing influenced whether an interview was formal, informal, semi-structured, or unstructured.

I used interviews to collect various types of information related to contextual, historical factors that influence the social and ethno-spatial configuration of Laikipia’s wildlife sector. Through interviews, I relied “on the research subject to provide insight into the subtle nuances of meaning that structure and shape everyday lives” (England 1994, 241). Interviews allowed me to fill in gaps, clarify, or obtain a different perspective on the information I collected during participant observation (Peräkylä 2005). Through interviews, I documented oral histories related to Laikipia’s colonial past and the evolution of its wildlife sector. I also recorded peoples’ personal histories about how they ended up participating in or being impacted by the wildlife sector. It was rarely possible to have in-depth, uninterrupted discussions during safari activities, so interviews proved to be invaluable to the research. Formal, semi-structure interviews gave me opportunities to ask specific questions and to strategically negotiate conversations – using follow-up questions and probing – to ensure that I ended up with a better grasp of people’s subjective experiences and perspectives (Brockington and Sullivan 2003; Peräkylä 2005; Denscombe 2010; Bryman et al. 2012).

Just as I did during participant observation, I attempted to carry out interviews in ways that collapsed formal boundaries between researcher and researched – at least as much as possible (Fontana and Frey 2005; England 2006). For example, I discussed my analysis with some key informants to judge the extent to which it aligned with, or departed from, their perspectives. This is one tactic that helped keep my analytical efforts accountable to the insights and judgments of those who participated in the project (Brockington and Sullivan 2003; Peräkylä 2005; Madison 2005; Denscombe 2010; Bryman et al. 2012). Similarly, I often let research participants direct the line of questioning, influence my future inquiries, and interrogate my own experiences with, perspectives on, and positionality in the wildlife sector (England 1994; Rose 1997; Fontana and Frey 2005). This involved fostering awareness about my own positionality and engaging with participants at an emotional level (Dwyer and Buckle 2009; Ekers 2010). Rather than agonize in solitude over my privilege, I tried to address my complicity in green grabbing with participants. I strove to unlearn my privilege and make myself a possible site of everyday resistance (Scott 1985; England 2006). Beyond carrying out ethical research, this approach was meant to contribute to the broader objective of analyzing, exposing, and understanding the nuances of green grabbing (England 2006). I also became conversational in Kiswahili to aid this goal, familiarizing myself with one of the languages commonly used by participants – in addition to English.

Beyond participant observation and interviews, I scrutinized seemingly endless amounts of articles, (auto)biographies, books, images, maps, policies, reports, and videos produced by a range of actors, including civil society and international organizations, colonial administrators, explorers and settlers, governments agencies, safari companies, scholars and researchers, and tourists. I sourced these documents using Factiva, Google Alerts and Scholar, and the University of Toronto's Library. I also made use of social media accounts and websites belonging to international organizations, safari companies, and wildlife conservancies to access their fundraising, informational, and promotional materials. In some cases, participants recommended documents to me, even opening their personal libraries to me. Lastly, I accessed relevant historical documents from Kenya's National Archives (KNA). I spent 7 days in KNA documenting, gathering, and

analyzing information that served to further contextualize green grabbing, and the green economy, in the Laikipia of the past.

I took a critical approach to analyzing information in such documents (Schmidt 2006; Schnegg 2014). Recognizing that discourses are neither produced nor circulate in a vacuum, detached from actual human relationships and material reality (Farnell and Graham 2014), I paid close attention to representations of events, nature, and people in the documents I analyzed. I treated them as cultural and historical artifacts that could offer me snapshots into dominant ideologies of the past and present (Peräkylä 2005; Schmidt 2006; Schnegg 2014). As Farnell and Graham suggest, “discourse analysis also provides a means to understand the precise mechanisms of power and authority that perpetuate social injustices and ways that language can be pressed into the service of hegemonic agendas”. From a historical perspective, I developed critical insights on how different groups interacted with each other and nature by analyzing colonial policies in light of settler folklore, personal histories in light of news media, etc. Additionally, gendered, racialized, and violent representations of nature provided insights into class and power dynamics in colonial-era and present-day Kenya. Throughout the research process, I was concerned with examining the interplay between attitudes, beliefs, and values, discourses and institutions, and material relationships (Schnegg 2014). I did so by approaching both elites and non-elites as legitimate research subjects.

In analyzing the information documented in field notes, interview transcripts, and secondary sources, I began by sorting data according to sources of information. This involved reading through the data and reflecting on the general meanings that can be ascribed to different sources of information (Creswell 2009). Next, I examined the information and coded data according to common themes (e.g. “land”, “race”, “colonialism”, “benefit”, “burden”, etc.), which became evident across sources of information. Often, questions I asked during conversations or interviews influenced how information was coded. However, there were many surprises in the data as well. For example, “race” emerged as a key theme, even though I did not ask any *explicit* questions about race – at least not initially. Similarly, I was guided towards interrogating how the Maasai Agreements of 1904 and 1911 (*Chapter 5*) influenced the development of

Laikipia's wildlife sector, based on how frequently the issue was raised. As I continued to re-visit the data throughout the research process, I developed more refined categories. By taking an iterative, inductive, researcher-centred approach to collecting information and analyzing it (Creswell 2009), I continually revisited my data throughout the research process. By repeatedly working through data, I engaged in the arduous process of crafting a cohesive narrative, set of arguments, and conclusions out of disparate sources and types of information. As I have mentioned, however, the research process itself was anything but smooth, which, along with my position as a settler-researcher, influenced the type of information I was able to collect, how I analyzed this information, and the narrative I ultimately constructed about Laikipia's wildlife sector.

5 Conclusion

As indicated throughout this chapter, the various research processes that culminated in this dissertation were fraught with logistical challenges, moral dilemmas, and power asymmetries. As I have already discussed, I ended up changing my case study from Saadani National Park in Tanzania to Laikipia County in Kenya. While applying for research permits in Tanzania, it became clear that the government was in no hurry to approve my efforts to dig around in the country's newest national park. The political situation in and around Saadani had become tense just as I filed my research permit application with the Tanzanian government. This is partly because another social researcher, who I later met in Nairobi, had been linked to organizing protests to dispute the park's official boundaries. The researcher was subsequently banned from entering Tanzania and, after more than six months of waiting for my research permit to be approved with no sign that it would be, I made the decision to jump ship to Kenya. The change of case studies had little bearing on the research I carried out. However, it did contribute to a period of heightened anxiety on my end, not to mention temporary financial constraints, as granting agencies that had agreed to fund my initial work in Tanzania put a hold on my funds until I could convince them that the research in Kenya would be worth their while. I was ultimately able to do so.

Beyond this initial logistical or procedural constraint, the research was impacted by myriad other logistical challenges. For example, carrying out the research in Laikipia required me to cover vast distances in relatively short periods of time. Because I was travelling in remote areas where human-friendly infrastructure is not always prioritized, roads were often in poor condition, prone to flooding during rainy seasons, and allegedly frequented by bandits – although I never encountered any. The little Suzuki 4X4 that was my primary mode of transportation managed to get me around the county safely, but not without frequently breaking down, getting stuck, or generally underperforming (Figure 3). As much as these challenges presented obstacles to the research, they sometimes led to opportunities that I might not have pursued otherwise. While broken down, attempting minor repairs, or waiting for a mechanic to arrive on a motorcycle, it was sometimes possible to strike up conversations with pastoralists grazing their livestock along the roadside or other bystanders. In this sense, the research context also shaped my project, just as planning, preparation, and participants did.

Beyond contextual, logistical factors, the findings in this dissertation were also shaped by my position as a white cisgender male researcher. I have done my best to weave reflection on my positionality into this dissertation. It would have been impossible for me to divorce myself from the experiences, perspectives, and privileges that I embody as a settler during the research (England 2006). I am fully aware that this position influenced my approach to the research, ability to access certain spaces, and analysis, as well as the narrative, arguments, and conclusions that I constructed out of the research – just as it sparked my initial interest in safaris. Whenever feasible, I tried to make myself, my ideas, and this research process vulnerable to participants. In striving to incorporate the voices of others into the research without colonizing them (Bishop 2005; Robbins 2006), I embarked on the journey of continuously navigating the tensions of being an “inside” and “outside” researcher (Acker 2000).

Figure 3: The “logistics” of fieldwork in rural areas (stalled Suzuki)



Navigating “insider-outsider” spaces in research reflects the complicated reality of social life in post-colonial Africa (Acker 2000; Levkoe 2014). As a settler, I often found myself welcomed into Laikipia’s relatively large settler community. Yet, because there is not just one type of settler, I was also held at arm’s length by some white Kenyans. Rather than growing up in Kenya’s white highlands, I grew up in Zambia’s Copper Belt. My parents were born in North America rather than Europe. Moreover, I was the first generation in my family to be raised in Africa. I was, in other words, a distinct class of settler. However, precisely because I was atypical of settlers in Laikipia, I was often welcomed as an ally by research participants of African descent – an ally that was familiar with, and even had some claims of belonging in, Kenya, but was not as directly implicated in Kenya’s colonial past. For obvious reasons, I remained an outsider in such circles as well.

Navigating insider-outsider spaces can be emotionally and psychologically alienating. Oftentimes, doing so required me to “park” my moral and political convictions (Ekers 2010). I sometimes had to leave racial stereotyping by participants unchallenged to prioritize the pursuit of information or development of rapport. Additionally, because my research activities were fully covered by granting agencies, participants in the research often assumed I was independently wealthy. Safaris are expensive activities by virtually any standard and, in Laikipia, *everybody* is aware of this fact. This led to many uncomfortable situations, as well as efforts on my part to be transparent about my research funding while still being sensitive to class dynamics (Rose 1997). Relatedly, given the amount of grant money I spent, I routinely questioned the “value” of my research – whether contributing to the problematic economy of safaris was truly worthwhile. Research is like an existential maze that scholars negotiate at a deeply personal level. Navigating such tensions can be aided by genuine attempts to be transparent about the assumptions, biases, and positionalities that impact research (Rose 1997; England 2006; Denscombe 2010, Bryman et al. 2013). It also requires gracious research participants. Although there is no fix for the discomforts, tensions, and problems inherent in any research project, it is still possible for research to have some positive outcomes.

Remaining in dialogue with participants during and after fieldwork, as I have done, can help fine tune the research strategy, validate findings, and enhance the social impact of

the results (Levkoe 2014). In other words, from a research perspective, engaging with positionality can be advantageous. Navigating insider-outsider spaces may also lead to new personal and professional relationships, as well as the formation of strategic alliances across traditional zones of class – zones further differentiated by gender, identity, and race. Lastly, as a participant in the contact zone of research, and in that of a green wildlife sector more broadly, I have an obligation to account for the cultural, economic, social, political, and even ecological, relationships that I have contributed to through this study (Rose 1997; England 2006). I hope that exposing these relationships, as I have begun to do, and critically interrogating them in this dissertation, may help dislodge me from the higher rungs of authority that researchers often seem to cling to under the guise of objectivity. By no means do I claim to be a purely objective source of information. I simply offer an account of Laikipia's wildlife sector that differs radically from the way it is most commonly represented and understood.

Having situated this research in relation to broader, relevant sets of literatures (*Chapter 2*) and described the research design, methods, and process, *Chapter 4* represents the first empirical chapter of this dissertation.

Chapter 4

The green history of Kenya's white highlands

Up in this high air you breathed easily, drawing in a vital assurance and lightness of heart. In the highlands you woke up in the morning and thought: Here I am, where I ought to be – Karen Blixen (Dinesen 1992, 3)

1 Introduction

In her 1953 biography of Lord Delamere, Elspeth Huxley describes Delamere's first impressions of a highland area in central Kenya called the Laikipia Plateau (now Laikipia). Delamere was one of Kenya's earliest settlers and became unofficial leader of the British colony's nascent white community as settlement progressed during the early 1900s. Huxley imagines what Laikipia must have seemed like to a young Delamere, as he neared the end of a hunting safari that began in 1896:

The open, wind-swept downs of Laikipia, running from the green foothills of Kenya's mighty peak to the cedar-forested slopes of the Aberdare mountains, are lovely enough to an eye attuned to the beauty of an English landscape. What must they have seemed like to an eye which, for over a year, had seen nothing but stretches of vicious thorn, wastes of lava rock, rivers that were waterless and sandy courses, trees that were stunted acacias and fleshy euphorbias? To be able to drink clear, cool water from running streams *congenial to the alien trout rather than to the indigenous crocodile*.... Here, indeed, he must have thought, was a promised land (Huxley 1953, 53—54, emphasis added).

Huxley's description of Delamere's first encounter with Laikipia is significant for a few reasons. First, it illustrates how Kenya's settlers thought and talked about nature in the

highlands. For example, Laikipia was, and still is, compared to a “park-like country”, “god’s country”, or “white man’s country” by many settlers (Thomson 1887). Second, Huxley’s description of Laikipia demonstrates how central nature was to the colonial project (MacKenzie 1988). Infusing the highland climate and ecology with racial attributes, and vice versa, was a discursive maneuver that justified the colonial administration’s efforts to create a white reserve in places such as Laikipia – to racialize space or spatialize race, in Moore’s words (Wasserman 1976; Moore 2005).

This chapter explores the spatial configurations of power that emerged in colonial-era Kenya, in which a minority settler population came to enjoy special rights to land and resources in “white highlands” that were not afforded to Africans in “native reserves” (Kanyinga 2009). Specifically, this chapter investigates some of the strategies and techniques used by colonizers, and subsequently settlers, to grab control over land, natural resources, and labour – legitimizing such acts through discourses of nature. In doing so, this chapter considers the discursive-institutional context of racialized dispossession, as well as the cultural, economic, and social implications that got all tangled up in the otherwise innocuous practices of safari. In seeking to historicize green grabbing, this chapter focuses on the role that safari played in making Kenya’s highlands “white”. As this chapter suggests, this lineage of green grabbing primed the conditions for what has since become Laikipia’s wildlife sector.

Today, highland areas, such as Laikipia, are not officially white reserves; but they remain strongholds for white culture, privilege, and property rights (*Chapter 7*). As *Chapter 5* discusses, settlers continue to dominate the county’s wildlife sector and control the majority of land that safaris and other forms of MDC take place on (Letai 2011; LWF 2012). By focusing on the history of green grabbing in Laikipia, this chapter demonstrates how the wildlife sector emerged out of, but also facilitated, the transformation of indigenous territories into white highlands. It offers a critical history of safari that identifies historical patterns of access and accumulation – domination and subordination – in the fabric of its political ecology. Safari, I argue, not only helped consolidate foreign control over land, natural resources, and capital, but also extended colonial relationships into socially constructed realms of nature. In this regard, safari was and is a contact zone; a

Figure 4: Nanyuki town, Mt. Kenya in background



Figure 5: Map of Kenya showing Laikipia County



venue in which colonizers struggled to re-enact their rights to indigenous lands, their dominance over nature, and their superiority over subordinate groups. As discussed in *Chapters 5 and 6*, this contact zone continues to produce frictions in rural society that shape the socio-ecological terrain of political struggle. Safaris are not simply harmless tourism activities or benign forces for wildlife conservation in this regard; they *are* prolonged struggles over what it means to belong, and the right to belong, in Laikipia.

This chapter continues by providing an account of the colonial land alienation and settlement policies that helped transform Laikipia from a pastoralist rangeland into a white highland. The sections in Part I of the chapter consider colonial representations of nature in Kenya, how these are connected to racialized dispossession, as well as historical claims that Maasai groups have to land and resources in Laikipia. Part II demonstrates the role that safaris played in making the highlands white during the settlement era (c. 1902–1963, when Kenya achieved independence). It documents ideas, discourses, and practices of early safaris, as well as key moments in the development of a for-profit wildlife industry in Kenya. This further contextualizes how the culture and economy of safari helped prime the conditions for what is now understood as green grabbing and the green economy in present-day Laikipia, along with the expectations for, experiences with, and reactions to the wildlife sector on the part of non-elite land users.

Part I

During a humid morning in May 2015, I sat in the dimly lit lobby of the Beisa Hotel in Nanyuki, Kenya, where I waited for a representative from a local civil society organization to arrive for an interview I had requested as part of my doctoral research. Nanyuki is a scenic town in Laikipia County, situated at the base of Mt. Kenya's westerly foothills (Figures 4 and 5). When the individual I had been waiting for arrived, he dropped into an empty chair next to mine and removed his cap with a sigh. We shook hands and

introduced ourselves before he wiped sweat off his forehead with a handkerchief. We ordered a round of sodas from the bartender and proceeded with the interview.

I began the interview by providing Adam (not his real name) with an overview of my personal and professional background, as well as what had brought me to Nanyuki – namely, my doctoral research project. I briefed him on my research and explained that I was examining issues surrounding wildlife conservation and safari tourism in Laikipia, where Nanyuki is located, including the benefits and burdens associated with these industries that make up the wildlife sector. I mentioned to Adam that I would value his insights on the wildlife sector given that he was the chairperson of an organization engaged with local communities, conservation organizations, and government bodies to mitigate natural resource conflicts in the county. Adam’s organization also worked to influence the development of conservation policies and practices that are friendly to agricultural, pastoral, and other land-based livelihoods typically seen as being at odds with conservation. Adam’s expertise in such areas was based on decades’ worth of experience working in the wildlife sector in various capacities. In light of his diverse yet overlapping professions as a rights advocate, safari guide, and small-scale farmer, Adam had experienced the good, the bad, and the ugly of the wildlife sector.

During our meeting at the Beisa Hotel, Adam and I discussed a wide range of issues related to Laikipia’s wildlife sector. Adam, however, was keen to discuss a controversy that featured prominently in local news media at the time – an issue that now dominates news headlines from Laikipia (*Chapter 7*). The issue was that of “land invasion”. Land invasion is a politically loaded term that is used to describe the act of trespassing on private property and using the natural resources located on it for various reasons. In Laikipia, the title land “invader” is commonly ascribed to pastoralists who ignore the boundaries of private wildlife ranches and conservancies when migrating with their livestock in search of pasture and water. The large-scale private ranches and conservancies that provide habitat for wildlife in the county are common targets for land invasions, especially during times of drought, because they harbor precious natural resources. Some 48 large-scale ranches occupy 531,581 ha of land in Laikipia. All but two of these ranches are associated with the wildlife sector (LWF 2012). When herders

break through the fences that surround these properties, conflicts erupt between invaders, landowners, and conservationists (Weru 2015; Jerome 2016).

Although land invasions in Laikipia arguably differ from the “land occupations” associated with Zimbabwe’s fast-track land reform programme in the early 2000s (Matondi 2012; Moyo and Yeros 2013; Letai 2015), there is at least one major similarity. This similarity is that invaders in Laikipia typically belong to Maasai, or other indigenous, groups whose ancestors were dispossessed of land and other natural resources by the British colonial administration during the early 1900s. The properties targeted by invaders often belong to settlers who occupy land that was appropriated from L/IP for white settlement during the colonial era, much like the case of Zimbabwe. Wambuguh (2007) suggests that between 50 and 70 per cent of land in Laikipia is still owned by non-African settlers. As this chapter demonstrates, the class dynamics of land invasion – and of broader class struggles in rural society – is a distinct legacy of a racialized land use and tenure system that was imposed by the colonial administration and upheld, to various extents, by successive post-colonial governments.

There are many interpretations of land invasion in Laikipia, as well as conflicting ideas about whether invasions and corresponding efforts to defend private property by landowners are justified. For Adam, and many other representatives from civil society organizations in Laikipia, land invasions are symptomatic of decreasing quantities of quality land available for pastoralists and other subsistence land users (Letai 2011; 2015). Land pressure is due, in no small part, to ongoing efforts by settlers/conservationists to consolidate their access to and control over land by intensifying their grip on – and acquiring increasingly more – private property to serve as wildlife habitat. Adam shared this interpretation of land invasions with me during our meeting, saying:

All those cows that come into Laikipia from the north, they won’t be able to make it to the forests [in the southern, fertile parts of the county] because grazing land has shrunk. That means there will be more conflict as the cows come up – more breakages into those private conservancies that we are talking about. This is because our people won’t agree that their livestock

are going to die along the road when the water is on the other side of that fence. It doesn't make sense! So what is the value of a fence to them? For how long can we keep those fences?¹¹

In this context, conservationists and pastoralists are commonly understood as being at odds with one another, as both require secure access to large amounts of land to satisfy their values and notions of livelihood and wellbeing. Both groups, generally speaking, also have conflicting perspectives on who has legitimate claims to land in Laikipia, how to manage natural resources and to what end, and the value of wildlife.

Rather than acting solely with disregard or malice for settler-owned properties, Adam explained to me that land invaders are just trying to survive in a landscape in which they feel excluded and marginalized. Disrespecting the boundaries of private ranches and conservancies could mean the difference between death and survival for herders' livestock, and for their identity as pastoralists.¹² I do not use the term land invasion or invader uncritically in this dissertation for such reasons, given that such language privileges the perspectives and positions of already elite groups in rural society. Following the advice of people such as Adam, I understand incursions into wildlife ranches and conservancies as one expression of pastoralist agency (Catley et al. 2013; Butt 2014).

To be fair, Adam's take on land invasion is just one of many that circulates in Laikipia. Other people that I interacted with in the county, such as some conservationists and settlers, argue that pastoralists essentially over-produce their livestock out of ignorance and/or greed, degrading land and impoverishing themselves in the process. From this perspective, private ranches and conservancies are unfair targets for pastoralists, and pastoralism is a threat to the wellbeing of people, livestock, and wildlife. This interpretation reflects colonial beliefs that indigenous land use and livelihood systems are backward, unproductive, destructive, and in need of improvement (Neumann 1998; Nelson 2003; Li 2007). Others that I interacted with during this study, such as representatives from local

¹¹ Interview, 2 May 2015

¹² Interview, 18 May 2016

civil society, suggest that elected leaders incite land invasion to elicit votes from pastoralists who are otherwise unlikely to vote during elections. By encouraging pastoralists to seize land that was taken from their ancestors during the colonial era, such politicians encourage pastoralists to take justice into their own hands. These and other accounts of land invasion are common; but Adam's account is by far the most common of those I documented during the two years I spent researching Laikipia's wildlife sector. As the following section indicates, understanding why fences around private wildlife habitats in Laikipia are so contentious requires a grasp of how the colonial imposition of private property altered historical patterns of access to and control over land, as well as the role that wildlife has come to play in struggles for over notions of livelihood, territory, and wellbeing (Evans and Adams 2016).

Maasai oral histories provide fairly consistent accounts of what life might have been like on the Laikipia Plateau before Europeans arrived as explorers, administrators, and eventually settlers. Yet, like virtually all sources of historical evidence, these narratives remain incomplete, fragmented, and contested. Moreover, the effects of passing time and urgency of recent events inevitably impact the accuracy of collective memories. With this in mind, this chapter is not concerned with determining the factualness of oral histories. Rather, it endeavours to provide the reader with an opportunity to be influenced by what such histories *mean* – the faintest of glimpses into a set of worldviews that interpret the history of Laikipia's wildlife sector from an altogether different starting point. Drawing oral traditions and personal biographies from elite and non-elite groups in rural society into uneasy dialogue reveals how central nature was to the colonial project and the role that safari played in priming the conditions for contemporary expressions of green grab.

1 Pre-colonial considerations: The Iloikop Wars and the dispersion of Laikipiak Maasais

Although there are uncertainties about the history of human activity on the Laikipia Plateau before Europeans arrived, one aspect of this history is fairly certain. This is that the plateau had been used by groups of hunter-gatherers and pastoralists for hundreds

of years before the colonizers arrived, and that struggles for dominance on the plateau long pre-date those sparked by colonial dispossession. This has become evident through oral histories of Maasais, and other indigenous groups, as well as various anthropological studies carried out in Kenya's highlands.

To begin with, archeological traces of flaked stones, iron furnaces and slag, pottery, and rock paintings suggest that pastoralism first appeared on the Laikipia Plateau some 4,500 years ago (Lane 2011). Many scholars assume that the earliest evidence of pastoralism on the plateau is due to the southward expansion of small herding groups from northern regions that are now Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Sudan (Taylor et al. 2005; Lane 2011). The southward expansion of pastoralists into Kenya's highland areas may have been sparked by factors such as climate aridification,¹³ increasingly unreliable rainfall, and resource conflicts further north (Marshall and Hildebrand 2002). Though any number of factors may have ultimately caused northern pastoralists to move southwards, it is also likely that hunter-gatherers already on the plateau slowly adopted domestic livestock over time – including aspects of the knowledge, material culture, and technology of northern pastoralists. In short, early evidence of pastoralism in Laikipia does not indicate the mere relocation of northern pastoralists; it may reflect gradual changes in the subsistence strategies of hunter-gatherers on the plateau as they began to produce livestock for subsistence purposes (Taylor et al. 2005; Lane 2011).

When, exactly, the Maa speaking pastoralists (Maasais) that came to dominate Laikipia first began to use the plateau for grazing land remains debated. Some scholars believe that ancestors of modern Maasais first appeared in Kenya's Rift Valley at the end of the 800s, with archeological fragments leaving open the possibility that Maasais were using the plateau by the mid-1400s (Sommer and Vossen 1993). However, other scholars argue that early Maa speakers need to be differentiated from modern Maasais, whose dominance on the plateau is only evident from the 1800s onwards (Galaty 1993; Sutton 1993). Despite fragmented and incomplete anthropological evidence, most scholars agree that Maasai pastoralists were established as the dominant group on the plateau by

¹³ "Climate aridification" refers to the process of a region becoming drier over a prolonged time.

the mid-1700s – particularly one Maasai group, called the Laikipiak (Lane 2011). This confidence is based on triangulation with various Maasai oral histories, as well as those of other groups (Spear and Waller 1993).

Unlike archeological studies, documented oral histories provide nuanced accounts of human activity and significant events on the Laikipia Plateau before Europeans arrived. Such evidence may be circumstantial and subject to change, but they offer culturally rich insights on important events in the pre-colonial history of Laikipia. For example, one important insight from the oral histories of different Maasai groups is that, even before colonization began, power and identity on the plateau were convoluted, in flux, and often violently contested. This assertion is largely based on narratives of the Iloikop Wars and the military defeat of Laikipiaks by a coalition of other Maasai groups during the mid-1800s. Many oral histories document the ripple effects that this defeat had throughout the socio-natural fabric of the plateau (*Chapter 6*).

The Laikipiak are regarded as the first Maasai group to dominate the Laikipia Plateau, which they called “Entorror”. The name Entorror is supposedly derived from the Maa verb “a-rror”, meaning, “to trip or fall down” (Hughes 2006). Though interpretations of this meaning vary, “falling down” may refer to people being killed in wars over the plateau’s precious resources (Waller 1978; Hughes 2006). The Laikipiaks dominance over Entorror’s vast, fertile rangelands has been accepted to the extent that the plateau’s modern name is a corrupted version of the Laikipiak’s true name, Il Aikipiak. Maasai histories place the Laikipiak on the plateau as early as 1600 – a claim unsubstantiated by archeological evidence (Lane 2011). However, studies of archeology and oral histories agree that, from the mid-1700s onwards, the plateau was inhabited by numerous Maa speaking groups – including the LeUaso, Mumonyot, Purko, and Samburu pastoralists as well as hunter-gatherers such as the Il Ng’wesi and Mukogodo (often referred to using the derogatory name “Il Torrobo” or Dorobo) – and that the Laikipiak were the most prolific and dominant of these groups socially and politically. Other pastoralist groups have also been known to use the plateau throughout history – such as Kalenjins, Borans, Rendilles, and Turkanas, to name but a few – and some hunter-gatherer and farming groups have long inhabited different parts of the plateau, such as Kikuyus and Merus (*Chapter 7*).

The Laikipiak remained the dominant group on the plateau until a coalition of Purko and other Maasais overthrew them during the Iloikop Wars that occurred between the 1840s and the 1880s (Cronk 2004; Lane 2011; Stapleton 2013). It has been wrongly suggested that the Laikipiak were completely wiped off the plateau during the Iloikop Wars – a claim often initially attributed to Joseph Thomson, one of the first Europeans to explore the plateau (Lane 2011). By the time that Thomson arrived in Laikipia, the Laikipiaks had already been dispersed throughout the region and Laikipia would have appeared devoid of human activity and settlement to his European eye. Yet the Laikipiak identity persisted on the plateau into the 1890s and much later, with many Laikipiak survivors forming new identities while still inhabiting the plateau – the Mumonyots are a well-documented example (Sobania 1993; Cronk 2004). Other Laikipiak survivors were absorbed into Maasai groups such as the Il Chamus, Purko, and Samburu, as well as non-Maasai groups such as the Il Ng'wesi, Kikuyu, Meru, Mukogodo, and Turkana. The Il Ng'wesi and Mukogodo would later identify as Maasai through ethno-political allegiances that were largely engaged to serve territorial interests (Cronk 2004; Lane 2011).

Changes to Maasai, and other, identities after the Iloikop Wars led to tensions in and between Maasai groups. Maasais who retained their language and pastoralist way of life after the Iloikop Wars began to differentiate themselves from those who joined groups that spoke other languages or practiced non-pastoralist livelihoods. As a result, Maasais began to refer to groups such as the Il Ng'wesi, Mukogodo, and Mumonyot collectively as Dorobo.¹⁴ The name Dorobo derives from a derogatory term applied to groups that Maasais saw as poorer than themselves, living like wild animals by hunting and gathering food rather than keeping livestock (Cronk 2004). The name Dorobo was a “kind of symbolic ‘antipraxis’”, which was used to distinguish between socio-economic groups much like western notions of class (Cronk 2004, 64; Galaty 1979). In later years, the colonial administration exploited these crude ethnic divisions to justify the racialized division of land and labour. Because groups of hunter-gatherers had used the plateau before Maasais arrived, some colonial discourses legitimated dispossessing Maasais

¹⁴ While the correct Maa term is Il Torrobo, I use the English version Dorobo. My use of Dorobo reflects the most common pronunciation of Il Torrobo in contemporary Kenya.

from the plateau given racist assumptions that Maasais likely “stole” it in the first place (Spear and Waller 1993; Hughes 2006; 2007; Lane 2011).

2 Dismantling Enterror

2.1 Thomson treks through Maasai land

Around the time that the Iloikop Wars were ending and the Laikipiak had lost their dominance on the plateau, Scottish explorer Joseph Thomson made a trek through Maasai land that became famous in Kenya’s white folklore (Thomson 1887; Trzebinski 1985; Huxley 1948; 1953; 1999). In 1883, Thomson set out from the Kenyan port of Mombasa with 140 porters and KSh 2,000 from the Royal Geographical Society, the sponsor of his expedition. One hundred and forty porters were considered satisfactory, but Thomson complained bitterly about the quality of those he recruited. He wrote: “I felt mighty ashamed of the lot, though I vowed within my inmost soul that I would bring them back ... better men, morally and physically” (Thomson 1887, 23). In Thomson’s view, his expedition was not just about opening Kenya for commerce; his mandate was also to improve the cultural values of Indigenous Africans – priming them, so to speak, for western modernity. Thomson deemed the imagined rugged, wild territory of Maasais as an appropriate venue for such an education.

Officially, however, the Royal Geographical Society had tasked Thomson with ascertaining “if a practical direct route for European travelers exists through Masai country from any one of the East African ports to Victoria Nyanza, and to examine Mount Kenia [sic]” (Thomson 1887, 6). In his account of the expedition, Thomson states that no serious attempts to explore Maasai land had been made before the 1840s. He also claims that the few expeditions that preceded his had been unsuccessful, allegedly being cut-short by Maasai warriors at the threshold of their land. Thomson admitted that he was spurred on by the promise of “a rich reward of interesting discovery to the man who might dare to face the terrible Masai” (Thomson 1887, 5). Note that, at this stage, colonial discourses acknowledged that Laikipia was Maasai land.

Thomson's successful trek through Maasai land proved invaluable to the development and settlement of British East Africa.¹⁵ Practically speaking, his expedition paved the way for settlers to enter Laikipia – once shrouded in fear and mystery – which was not serviced by rail until the 1930s (Morgan 1963; Duder and Youé 1994). At times, some of the earliest settlers in Kenya literally followed in Thomson's footsteps (Huxley 1953; Trzebinski 1985). Ideologically, Thomson's representations of Maasai land and culture also provided empirical justification, not only for white rule but also, for dispossession.

The latter point is particularly true of Thomson's assertion that Laikipiak Maasais had been all but wiped out during the Iloikop Wars, rendering vast parts of the plateau empty and idle. Recalling observations from his expedition, Thomson wrote, "the greater part of Lykipia [sic] – and that the richer portion – is quite uninhabited, owing, in a great degree, to the decimation of the Masai of that part" (1887, 238). "Proof" of a vast, rich plateau lying idle in the highlands was justification enough for transforming Laikipia into a white settlement – where the land could be put to sound, economic use (Huxley 1948; 1953; Collett 1987). This transformation was further justified by Thomson's depiction of the plateau as an English countryside in the heart of Africa – a "park-like country". In Thomson's (1887, 237) eyes, "a more charming region is probably not to be found in all Africa". As much as the colonial project shaped Thomson's interpretation of Laikipia, his depictions of the plateau informed later discourses on Maasais and their land.

Thomson's narratives of emptiness, and Laikipia's likeness to a vast expanse of English gardens, are evident in subsequent representations of Kenya's highlands by early colonial administrators and settlers (Figures 6 and 7). These narratives severed Kenya's highlands from equally prominent narratives of Africa as the "dark continent" in the geographical imaginaries of would-be settlers. The emergence of a powerful metaphor, a "white man's country" at the very heart of Kenya, juxtaposed the colony's highlands to tropical regions of the continent's interior, which had become known as a "white man's grave" (Izuakor 1988). In 1901 – the same year the Uganda Railway (called the "Lunatic

¹⁵ British East Africa became the Colony of Kenya in 1920. For ease of reading (at the expense of historical accuracy) I refer to pre-1920 British East Africa as Kenya.

Express” by settlers) reached Lake Victoria from Mombasa – Sir Harry Johnston, Special Commissioner to Uganda at the time, reported that the highlands:

... [are] admirably suited for a white man’s country ... for the country in question is either utterly uninhabited for miles and miles or at most its inhabitants are wandering hunters who have no settled home, or whose fixed habitation is the lands outside the healthy area (Morgan 1963,140).

Elsbeth Huxley, perhaps one of the most influential contributors to Kenya’s white folklore, captures countless other examples of how the early colonial administration seized the highlands in discourse – dispossessing the plateau from L/IP via the art of representation (*Chapter 7*). Yet she manages to do so in a remarkably uncritical fashion.

Figure 6: Pamphlet for settlers representing Laikipia as an English countryside (n.d.)

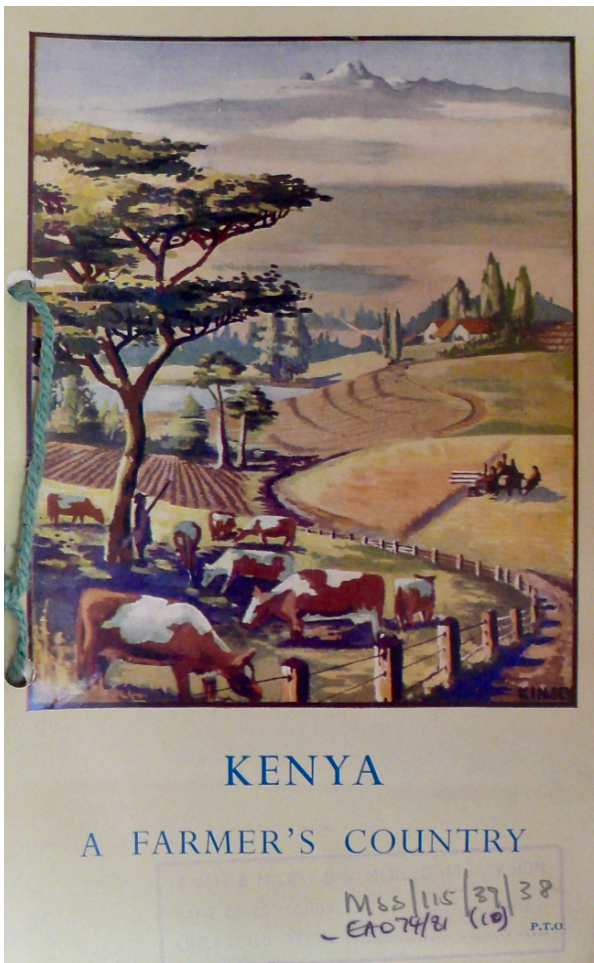


Figure 7: Photo of an actual English countryside near Broadway, Worcestershire, UK



In Huxley's book, *White Man's Country: Lord Delamere and the Making of Kenya*, she documents some of the earliest firsthand accounts of Kenya's highlands – often using creative license. Her work is a rich source of colonial narratives and tropes about the emptiness of Laikipia, and how its landscape was ideally suited to the happiness and wellbeing of extra-European whites. Huxley (1953, 73-74) writes that:

It was inevitable ... that the emptiness of the land should be the first feature to strike and even astonish the European eye. A man could walk for days without catching sight of a single human being save perhaps for a wild little Dorobo hunter ... or a slim Masai herdsman standing alone with his spear and his sheep on a plain that stretched to meet a fair horizon. It was only natural that some of the early-comers should begin to ask for the land.

As much as the emptiness of Laikipia featured prominently in such discourses, so too did the patronizing language directed at Indigenous Africans. These discursive manoeuvres justified white control over land and resources in highland areas such as Laikipia, as well as over people who – paradoxically – clearly did inhabit the land.

In April 2015, a settler in Laikipia who I later came to know quite well invited me for *chai* ("tea") on his family's ranch just outside Nanyuki Town. We discussed, among other things, his family's history in Laikipia and the role that certain members of his family played as conservationists and safari operators. As I was preparing to leave at the end of tea, this settler, who I call Ernest, said, "When my grandfather first came here, he wrote home saying this was God's country...". This powerful phrase articulates the depth of this white Kenyan's connection and sense of entitlement to the land his family owns in Laikipia. This belonging is something whites in Kenya have become very accustomed to (if not fatigued by) defending (*Chapter 7*), finding themselves in subaltern positions in some circumstances (Coronil 1994). Although I can empathize with Ernest and, as a side

note, do not classify him as “a bad guy”, such statements have highly contentious undertones. God, of course, did not infuse Laikipia’s climate and ecology with whiteness. As subsequent sections of this chapter demonstrate, settlers helped transform Laikipia into a white man’s country; and safari played an important role in this project.

2.2 The colonial dream of “a white man’s country” becomes real

It is given to others to yearn for the great grass plains of whistling thorn which stretch for miles down the Great Rift and northwards across Laikipia to the deserts of the Turkana ... In these lands a man can only see the thorn trees and the clouds, and far away, the snow peaks of Mount Kenya or the towering cliffs of the Rift which light to gold in the evening when the sun sinks into a cauldron of smoke and haze. This is the weft and weave of life for those who love the plains (Whittall 1956, *Dimbilil: The story of an African farm*, in Huxley 1991, 190).

But Delamere came at it from another angle. He saw it, from the first, as a country of great latent wealth only waiting for development ... a friendly and temperate patch of Africa where a white man could feel alive and invigorated and keep healthy; an empty land, under-populated everywhere and uninhabited altogether in regions such as Laikipia most favoured to the European; a place, in short, of fine possibilities – but possibilities that could only be realised by large-scale development (Huxley 1953, 54).

By 1895, just 12 years after Thomson set off on his trek through Maasai land, Laikipia was declared part of Britain's East African Protectorate – along with the rest of the lands that now make up Kenya (Izuakor 1988). Although Kenya's first Land Regulations were published in 1897, land alienation for white settlement did not really begin until after the Uganda Railway reached Lake Victoria in 1901 following five years of construction (Huxley 1948; Morgan 1963; Matheka 2008). One of the individuals responsible for turning the brewing vision of a white man's country into reality was Sir Charles Eliot, who was appointed Commissioner of Kenya in 1900. It was Eliot who initiated the policy of settling whites in Kenya's highland areas, which he too viewed as "admirably suited for a white man's country" (as cited in, Izuakor 1988, 318). Eliot's primary motivation for transforming Kenya into a settler colony was the colony's dwindling economic prospects, which became increasingly apparent as the Uganda Railway neared completion (Huxley 1953; Bull 1988; Izuakor 1988; Nicholls 2005).

The risk of Kenya becoming an economic embarrassment was a real threat to the administration during Eliot's time as Commissioner. The Uganda Railway cost £5.5 million to build (about £530 million at today's value) and "every train that ran along it did so at a heavy loss" (Huxley 1953, 77; Izuakor 1988). Eliot had to find a way to make the railway profitable. His conundrum was compounded by the view that Indigenous Africans were reluctant sources of labour, perceived as being incapable of contributing to Kenya's economic development (Askwith 1955).

The native population alone, Sir Charles Eliot realised, could not, within measurable distance of time, produce enough surplus goods to feed the railway. The natives were not accustomed even to producing enough for themselves. Famines came at frequent intervals and even when the season was good there was great difficulty in obtaining enough grain to provision caravans passing through.... The whole idea of producing a surplus was foreign to the native mind. It had never occurred to him [sic] to do so; for centuries there had been no market for it but rats (Huxley 1953, 77).

Given such sentiments, Eliot's answer to Kenya's economic woes was white settlement. It was to fill the "empty, dead spaces with settlers who would turn the fertile but now wasted soil to useful account, who would grow crops for the railway to carry out and buy machinery and other goods for it to carry in" (Huxley 1953, 78).

If Kenya was to make the jump to a settler colony, however, the 1897 Land Regulations had to be replaced by legislation that was more attractive to prospective settlers. The Crown Lands Ordinance (CLO) was introduced in 1902 and gave the Crown the power to alienate land, drawing all "unoccupied" land under the purview of the colonial administration. Ultimately, the Crown would not recognize any claims to so-called unoccupied lands made by Indigenous Africans (Hughes 2006). The CLO, derived from Canadian land laws, allowed the colonial administration to provide freehold titles – which could be used as collateral for bank loans – to white settlers for 99-year leases, who could also purchase freehold plots of 1000 acres or less (Huxley 1953). One of the CLO's provisions was the Canadian homestead principle. This principle allowed successful land applicants to acquire 160 acres initially, becoming eligible for another 160 acres should they successfully meet the administration's development criteria (Huxley 1953). "This process could be repeated twice more, until the grand total of 640 acres, or one square mile, was reached" (Huxley 1953, 85). Following the introduction of the CLO, Kenya's white population increased by 520 people by 1903 and 1,554,000 ha of land was alienated under the CLO before 1915 (Nicholls 2005; Hughes 2006).

Eliot's efforts to recruit settlers to Kenya and boost the protectorate's economy proved to be relatively successful, although he retired from his post in 1904. His departure followed a disagreement with the Foreign Office over land grants he extended to two British South Africans in the Rift Valley, involving 12,900 ha each. The Foreign Office would not endorse the grant, as the lands in question belonged to Maasais (Nicholls 2005). With Eliot's principled departure, the Foreign Office – replaced by the Colonial Office in 1905 – pursued the now infamous Maasai Agreement of 1904, in which the Maasais "agreed" to be moved into separate native reserves. Eliot had dissuaded such forms of segregation during his tenure as Commissioner, as he believed that assimilating Maasais into European society would force Maasais to become civilized (Nicholls 2005; Hughes 2006).

Eliot eventually conceded that “the stupidity of the Maasais [and] the brutality of Europeans” were irreconcilable (as cited in, Hughes 2006, 28), and his predecessors set out to move Maasais onto native reserves. This ultimately involved two moves that were anything but straightforward.

The Maasai Agreement of 1904 was initiated by Sir Donald Steward, Eliot’s successor, and was signed by the now famous Maasai leader, Olonana, and 19 other Maasai representatives. By signing the agreement, Olonana and the other signatories agreed that any Maasais occupying land in the Rift Valley would move into two reserves – one to the north, on the Laikipia Plateau, and another to the south along the border with German East Africa (now Tanzania) (Hughes 2006). These reserves were promised in perpetuity to Maasais and compensation was guaranteed should any future changes occur. Little to no resistance was documented, but most Maasais were opposed to the move (Morgan 1963; Hughes 2006). Hughes (2006) discusses evidence that Olonana had been on salary with the British since 1901 and had signed on to both the treaty and moves before his fellow Maasai representatives agreed. She also argues that other Maasai leaders were, quite literally, forced to sign the agreement.

The Maasais that were moved to the northern reserve on Laikipia used the plateau’s rich pastures to their advantage, tripling their livestock numbers in just 5 years (Hughes 2006). However, this situation would not last long. In 1910, the colonial administration defied the 1904 agreement and initiated a second move, one that sent Maasais that had been moved to the northern reserve on Laikipia in 1904 to join those that had been moved to the southern reserve. According to the District Commissioner for Laikipia, the second move was designed to “free Laikipia from Masai” and to open additional parts of the plateau for white settlement (as cited in, Hughes 2006, 38). However, this reason was not publicly admitted. Rather, the move was said to meet the interests of Maasais and the wishes of Olonana (Hughes 2006).¹⁶

¹⁶ The irony of the 1904 Maasai Agreement should not escape the reader, as decades of colonial narratives claimed that Maasais had all but erased their rights to the plateau. The colonial administration moved Maasais onto Laikipia in 1904, only to move them off the plateau again some 7 years later.

Yet a section of the Laikipia District Commissioner's 1910 annual report, titled *Political arrangements with natives*, suggests that Maasais on Laikipia were far from pleased by the idea of a second move. This is reflected in the following quote:

After his return to Laikipia the D/C [District Commissioner] had a large conference of all the leading men in Laikipia; he put the situation before them, pointing out that they would probably be squeezed out of Laikipia, that anyhow Laikipia was not big enough for them, and that now was the time for them to move and re-unite with the rest of the tribe in one area. He pointed out that the Government was prepared to make water reservoirs for them. The Masai answer was that if the Government ordered them to move, they would do so, but they didn't want to; and they didn't consider the proposed area large enough or suitable.

Despite the documented unwillingness of Maasais to leave Laikipia, the second move was sanctioned by a 1911 agreement that overruled the original of 1904.

It is not difficult to accept Hughes' (2007) evidence that Maasai representatives were physically, or otherwise, coerced into signing the 1911 version of the Maasai Agreement. In addition to the documented unwillingness of Maasais to move to the southern reserve, it later came to light that Kenya's Governor at the time – a Canadian named Sir Percy Girourard – had already promised land on Laikipia to prospective settlers in 1910, well before the second treaty had been agreed to or approved (Maxon 1989). Thus, whether physical coercion was at play or not, Laikipia was “free” of Maasais by 1913 for settlers that had already “cast envious eyes at the grazing grounds of Laikipia” (Huxley 1953, 265; Duder and Simpson 1997).¹⁷

White settlement in Laikipia was likewise “free” to continue uninhibited by Maasais and their livestock, albeit in a somewhat stunted fashion due to complications with the Maasai

¹⁷ Early Kenyan historians, such as Huxley (1953, 264), blame Maasais for breaching the 1904 agreement by failing “to keep within their boundaries”, necessitating their move to the southern reserve. It is therefore not surprising that Huxley's account of the conditions under which the 1911 agreement was signed by Maasai authorities differs significantly from more recent accounts, such as Hughes' in 2007.

Treaty and later World War I (Duder and Youé 1994). In response to the lagging pace of settlement in Laikipia, updates to the CLO in 1915 intended to make Kenya more attractive to would-be settlers. These updates extended the lease period on free hold titles for white settlers to 999 years (from what was previously 99 years), and placed more explicit restrictions on ownership. Only whites – whether of European or North American descent – could own freehold property, whereas blacks were confined to own land within native reserves (Morgan 1963; Izuakor 1988). As discussed in *Chapter 6*, the legacies of Laikipia’s racialized land use and tenure systems remain a serious point of contention to this day. Numerous times during this study, representatives from Maasai groups and civil society organizations recounted how the British extended the lease period on freehold titles for settlers from 99 to 999 years. “Nine. Hundred. And. Ninety. Nine!”, I was emphatically explained by clearly agitated participants. It was not until the 1920s that white settlement on Laikipia really took off, buoyed by the Ex-soldier Settlement Scheme of 1919 and further updates to the CLO in 1921.

By the onset of the Second World War, Kenya’s colonial administration had transformed Laikipia from an indigenous, pastoralist rangeland into a settler society. But while Kenya’s highland areas had long been referred to as white, it was not until the White Paper of 1923, followed by the report of the Kenya Land Commission (or Carter Commission) in 1933, that a “white reserve” was formally established in the highlands (Huxley 1948; Lipscomb 1955; Morgan 1963). The White Paper and Kenya Land Commission formally excluded Indigenous Africans from owning land within the boundaries of the white highlands, formalizing a racialized property regime in the process (Huxley 1948; Lipscomb 1955). Importantly, however, the report of the Kenya Land Commission also inhibited the formal expansion of white-only land. Thus, in the span of about 40 years, a white man’s country had been carved out of the highlands – although it would be restricted, in spatial terms, to the heart of the colony.

Despite the hype and high expectations that surrounded the white highlands for nearly half a century, many settlers lacked the experience, information, resources, and technology required to achieve large-scale commercial success (Bull 1988; Matheka 2008; Jackson 2011). As a result, the pace of agricultural development lagged; and the

percentage of the highlands actually being used for commercial agriculture and/or ranching waxed and waned throughout the colonial era. The District Commissioner for Laikipia wrote in 1924 that “Laikipia as an alienated area has up to date been an economic failure”. In that same year, settlers had only managed to get 17,000 cattle onto the plateau, compared to the 200,000 that the Maasai had on the land before the second move (Duder and Simpson 1997, 443). By 1933, as little as 12 per cent of lands designated for whites were occupied by settlers. “Of the rest, 40 per cent was grazing land, 20 per cent was occupied by African squatters and nearly 28 per cent was empty” (Matheka 2008). The economic woes of Laikipia forced most settlers to remain vigilant for new economic opportunities that they could pursue to diversify their livelihoods. Part II of this chapter discusses how settlers began to diversify their incomes through Kenya’s burgeoning safari industry, which solidified the white highlands of Kenya as zones of white belonging and laid the foundations for Laikipia’s contemporary wildlife sector.

Part II

1 Accumulation by safari: Class, identity, and property

One of the main justifications the Kenya Land Commission gave for formalizing the white highlands was, essentially, that such areas had become the rightful property of whites over time and that maintaining them as such was in the best interests of the colony, contrary to voiced opposition on the part of many L/IP (KLC 1933). This rationale directly contradicts earlier colonial discourses that legitimized the alienation of indigenous lands on the grounds that the climate and ecology of highland areas gave whites a kind of natural right to them (Izuakor 1988; Huxley 1991). Yet the latter sentiment persisted in the ideology of settlers well after the Kenya Land Commission’s report. Moreover, the peculiar ways that settlers re-enacted their identity and belonging in the highlands – largely via the culture and economy of safari – played a vital role in maintaining Laikipia as an unofficial white territory long after independence.

The rest of this chapter discusses the role that early forms of safari played in transforming Laikipia from a pastoralist rangeland into a settler society, and in solidifying it as such. I discuss how safari became a venue in which settlers re-enacted their rights to otherwise indigenous lands time and again. This culminated in ideal conditions for Laikipia's green wildlife economy to take root in the post-independence era (*Chapter 5*), as large amounts of wildlife compatible land came under the private authority of settlers who retained special rights to nature on the plateau and who were disposed to using, managing, and profiting off land in ways now understood as MDC.

1.1 The hunting class: Gentleman hunters, white leaders

Unlike the British Colony of Southern Rhodesia, Kenya tended to attract settlers from the upper echelons of European society until the Ex-Solider Settlement Schemes of the post-World War era (Bull 1988; Steinhart 2006; Jackson 2011). According to Steinhart (2006, 92), “the dominant figures of the Kenya settler community from before the Great War until the post-Second World War era were extremely wealthy, landed, and often titled aristocrats and gentlemen”. Hunting for these types of settlers was far more than a pragmatic activity, carried out in defense of their livelihoods, properties, or safety (as it was for other settlers); it was sport. Hunting for sport – for its own sake – was one way that settlers self-identified as elite and expressed their notions of superiority over other classes and races in the colony (Bull 1988; Steinhart 2006).

For many settlers, tracking and shooting game in Kenya's highlands was “their chief joy in life” and was pursued with the devotion of a life calling (Steinhart 1989, 251). This “safari calling” is evident in the lives of many notable settlers, with Delamere's extreme passion for hunting being a prime example. In fact, Delamere's safari calling likely influenced his decision to settle in Kenya far more than his vocational interest in agriculture did (Huxley 1953; Steinhart 2006):

Delamere first went on safari in Somaliland with several other young bloods in 1891. They were escorted by a professional white hunter who complained

to Delamere's trustee about the youths' profligacy and intemperance. But the hunter admired young Delamere's hard stalking and his courage with lion. Thereafter the young [Delamere] returned yearly, poorer but more skilled, hunting on his own, until 1894 he was savaged by a lion that seized him by the leg ... Back again in [Somaliland] in 1896, Delamere set out to the south with a doctor, a photographer, a taxidermist and two hundred camels (Bull 1988, 188).

It was near the tail end of this latter safari that Delamere was first encountered in this chapter, "many lions and hardships later ... [when he] emerged from his desolate sandy trek into the green, park-like highlands of central Kenya" (Bull 1988, 188).

In many ways, Delamere set the tone for the high-class culture of Kenya's early settlers, and his love for sport hunting was widely shared among the colony's white community (Huxley 1953; Bull 1988; Steinhart 1989). In time, the "gentleman hunter" came to personify Kenya's ideal type of settler and white leader.

To be a leader of society, one must be a gentleman and a Kenya gentleman [in the colonial era] was synonymous with being a hunter and a sportsman ... The importance of Delamere as a 'role model' for settler society can hardly be overstated. He would be a model hunter, landowner, political figure, and socialite, *primus inter pares* [first among equals] of that dazzling set that would make up Kenya's 'Happy Valley' social in-crowd by the 1920s. 'The feudal system was in his bones and blood', as Elspeth Huxley observed, 'and he believed all his life in its fundamental rightness'. Those who shared both his ideas on deference and leadership and his commitment to hunting would shape Kenyan traditions very much in the image of this lordly and lusty hunter (Steinhart 2006, 92-96).

Although Delamere both typified and inspired the ideal gentleman hunter, and thus occupies a privileged position in Kenya's white folklore, he was most certainly not the only influential settler with a safari calling.

Most of Delamere's elite contemporaries shared his obsession with hunting and boasted as many tales of hunts, trophies, and adventures as Delamere himself. Notable examples of Delamere's fellow gentlemen hunters include Lord Cranworth, the Cole and Seth-Smith brothers, William Northrup MacMillan, Ewart Grogan, and later Bror Blixen and Denys Finch Hatton – all educated, wealthy settlers with class credentials that were also renowned hunters (Bull 1988; Herne 1999; Steinhart 2006). Notably, Cranworth saw gentlemen hunters as so central to the success of Kenya's settlement project that he made a concerted effort to recruit sportsmen to the colony from 1912 onwards (Steinhart 2006). Although the colonial administration had, under Eliot, pumped-up the highlands for their white-friendly climate and ecology, Cranworth emphasized the unrivalled opportunities to shoot and kill game (Izuakor 1988; Steinhart 2006).

Cranworth was no doubt looking to recruit suitable hunting companions to the colony. However, he likely also shared the belief that gentlemen hunters had the disposition required to influence LIP widely perceived as backwards, destructive, and deviant – a stumbling block to progress and a threat to white rule. The East Africa Women's League captured this logic rather succinctly in a recruitment pamphlet (Figures 8 and 9), entitled *Are you coming to Kenya? A guide for the woman settler*. The pamphlet reads:

More than ever does the progress of our peoples depend on European leadership in the next uniquely important years ... This is inevitable in a country where British people are so much in the minority, for the other races look to every one of us as examples of the new way of life they are trying to follow (EAWL 1953, 6).

Early efforts to recruit gentlemen hunters to Kenya for their leadership qualities had a long-lasting influence on strategies for recruiting settlers to the white highlands, basically right up until the era of independence. Put differently, "colonial, white masculinity" became institutionalized (informally) in the constitution of safari (De Luca and Demo 2001).

Figure 8: Information pamphlet for the
"woman settler" (EAWL 1953)

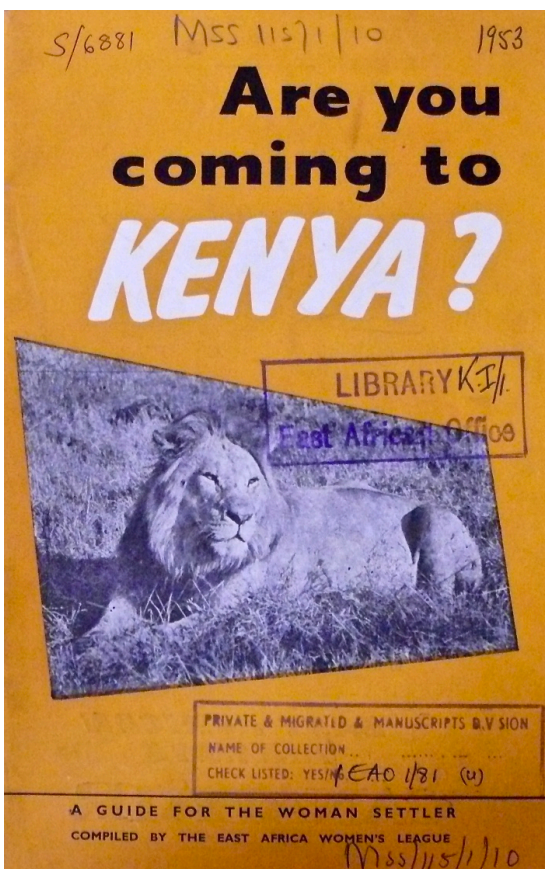


Figure 9: Beer adverts also targeted would-be settlers (EAWL 1953)



Throughout the colonial era, recruitment paraphernalia focused on the natural features of places such as Laikipia to entice would-be settlers to the colony. Numerous brochures, pamphlets, and posters in the 1950s stuck with the age-old approach of portraying the highlands as a vast, idyllic European countryside. Such materials boast about opportunities for trout fishing, big game hunting, nature photography, and horticulture. As one pamphlet, titled *Settlement in Kenya: Information for intending settlers*, states, “rough bird shooting and, more especially, big-game shooting are generally associated with the name of Kenya. The fisherman, too, has ample opportunity, for well stocked trout streams abound in the colony ... the standard of life in the colony is high ...” (ND, 5). The EAWL informed potential settlers that, “the Colony of Kenya may appear to you at first glance to be very like England; we eat English food and most of us in the European section of the community live after the English pattern of life” (EAWL 1953, 5). Although circumstances changed after the First World War, leading to an influx of non-aristocratic settlers, the colonial administration and white civil society continued to portray the highlands as *naturally* white in their efforts to recruit ideal settlers – settlers whose leadership abilities were tied to their outdoorsy disposition.

After the First World War, the Ex-Solider Settlement Scheme brought war veterans and other “lower classes” of settlers to Kenya. By and large, these settlers did not value aristocratic hunting traditions in the ways their predecessors did. But this does not mean that they were opposed to hunting or imposing themselves, in various ways, in the landscape. The offspring of post-World War era settlers would “grow up on the edge of the bush with rifles in their hands” (Bull 1988, 224). Many of these youngsters shaped Kenya’s wildlife conservation and management policies, often enforcing them with missionary zeal and military force well into the post-colonial era.

In April 2015, a 70-year-old white Kenyan named Richard Leakey was appointed Chairperson of the Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) board. Leakey – son of renowned archaeologists Louis and Mary Leakey – had previously been head of Kenya’s Wildlife Conservation and Management Department in the 1980s. His tenure as such is well remembered due to the Department’s highly organized, military-like approach to combating illegal hunting. Even though the Leakeys, along with most of their

contemporaries, were not aristocrats (the Leakeys first came to Kenya as missionaries), they proved capable of political influence and leadership. But as the next section demonstrates, the second wave of settlement also led to some of the most destructive forms of hunting that Kenya has ever seen, as increasing numbers of settlers carved their plots out of the white highlands and tried to make them productive.

As I sought feedback on early versions of this chapter from colleagues, I was pressed to be more explicit about the gendered dimensions of safari – particularly in relation to the above section on gentleman hunters. I was asked questions such as, “What about the spouses of guides, trackers, and porters who were left at home to care for their children, animals, and crops? What about the African women who were most likely abused, beaten, and raped by men travelling in safari caravans? How did women, specifically, experience and influence safaris?” I had wrestled with such questions myself, but struggled to find much historical evidence of Indigenous African women on safari. Yet the absence of women from white folklore, historical records, and academic sources does not mean that African women were absent from the safari equation. They were undoubtedly impacted by, and impacted, safari in the ways suggested by my colleagues. Their absence from the history books reflects the enduring privilege of white men in Kenyan society, a deep-seated privilege forged at the expense of virtually all other groups in colonial society. The political ecological relationships that define safari have contributed to making the wild a space dominated by masculine, white individuals (De Luca and Demo 2001).

Although most indigenous women have been erased from the history of safaris, a few white women have, conversely, been immortalized in safari folklore. Most have been cast in rather peripheral roles, praised as pioneers who extended the culture of their class and gender into perilous wildernesses while accompanying their spouses in the bush. Safaris attended by the Duchess of Connaught in 1910 and the Duchess of York (later Queen

Elizabeth) in 1924-25 are significant in this regard, as they became inspiration for Kenya's ideal-type settler woman (Steinhart 2006) – women who extended the “gentleness” of their class into the wilds of Africa.

In later years, however, Karen Blixen and Beryl Markham re-defined the role of women on safari by portraying the wild as a space for strong, sexually liberated white women. Both women called attention to their own passion and skill for hunting; but their romantic lives and sexual activities, instead, became the fascination of Kenya's white community. Today, the romantic and sexual encounters of both women seem to occupy just as much, if not more, space in safari folklore than their skill, knowledge, and leadership ability (Huxley 1991; Herne 1999; Barnes 2013). For example, the Hollywood film *Out of Africa* portrays Karen Blixen as a lovesick companion to her adventurous real-world counterpart, Denys Finch Hatton, confining most of Blixen's story to domestic life on her farm. Blixen and Markham, along with Elspeth Huxley, played extremely influential roles in documenting Kenya's white folklore, but they were unable to escape the patriarchy of settler society – a patriarchy intertwined with safari and vice versa.

In more recent years, women such as Joy Adamson and Daphne Sheldrick have forged important roles for women as conservationists, rather than as hunters, based on their work with lions and elephants respectively. Both women are regarded for being exquisite caregivers to animals. They are praised for bringing a kind of feminine touch to the cold-blooded world of safari by loving, sheltering, and even protecting the very animals hunted so ferociously by their male counterparts. Such women embody the changes that later occurred in Kenya's white community, as settlers became concerned with protecting the animals that their economic and leisure activities had contributed to destroying (Huxley 1990). Such women are heroines of new wave safaris. Not only are such examples few and far between in safari folklore, however, women continue to be largely portrayed as emotional caregivers for men and wildlife rather than agents of history.

1.2 Property hunters: Securing land, shooting vermin

As the project of settling Kenya's highlands continued in the post-World War era, the hunting practices of settlers became less about preserving aristocratic hunting traditions and more about securing white property. If settlers were, after all, to take up land in Laikipia and make it productive, they had to be free to defend their property, crops, and livestock from wild animals without worrying about legal reprisal. One of the primary motivations for creating a white reserve in the first place was to ensure that Kenya's fertile highlands were put to productive use for the economic good of the colony.

Centuries of customary rangeland management practices by Maasais and other groups before settlers arrived in the highlands had maintained suitable wildlife habitats in Laikipia. Accordingly, in the early years of settlement, wildlife was not only seen as game to be hunted for sport, but also as a threat. As a result, most settlers in Laikipia treated wild animals as vermin:

A Nanyuki settler was mauled by a lion in 1921 and another was lucky to survive an encounter with a rhinoceros in 1923. Arnold Paice also lost five cattle to a lion in 1924. With concerns like these there can be little doubt that *the vast majority of local whites regarded all game as either vermin or target practice* ... a concerted campaign was launched in 1925 to destroy the zebra herds in the district, using free government ammunition and the employment of Afrikaner hunters. This campaign not only culled the zebra, but also effectively drove most of the rest of the game from the district (Duder and Youé 1994, 266, emphasis added).

Many settlers understood their ability to hunt wildlife was a vital exercise in converting unruly shrub- and bushlands into productive farms and ranches, and for maintaining them as such. In time, this view was shared by the colonial administration, which prioritized the economic development of the highlands over the preservation of wildlife (although the

administration frowned upon certain forms of hunting when its lucrative ivory supply was threatened) (Collett 1987; Bull 1988; Steinhart 1989; Matheka 2008; Kabiri 2010).

The administration classified predacious species that were prone to stalking domestic animals as vermin, most notably leopard and lion. Settlers were free to kill these big cats freely without paying for a license and without fear of penalty. Settlers also targeted other species that depleted resources, destroyed crops, and damaged private property – with elephants, rhinoceroses, and zebras being prime examples. In short, virtually “any animal found on private (i.e. settler) land was fair game that could be killed with impunity and without a game license by the landowner or his agent, while most settlers also possessed a license which allowed the killing of animals on Crown Land” (Steinhart 1989, 253). The government’s lax approach to regulating settler hunting failed to stop settlers from hunting for sport or “blood thirst” on or around their land. For example, it was common for predators to be killed in acts of rage or retribution.

In one of Huxley’s (1959) memoirs, a young English settler named Tilly – a character based on Huxley’s real-life mother – describes leopards as “one of the country’s natural hazards”. In the story, a young Elspeth Huxley suspects a resident leopard of eating her pet duiker, “Twinkle”. She describes, at length, a hunt that was organized to shoot and kill the suspect, who was also the main suspect in the more serious crime of eating-off domestic goats. In the book, the hunt proves to have many purposes. The settlers involved are not just interested in killing the leopard to protect goats; they also appear to approach the hunt as an act of retribution and, at least for one settler, an opportunity to profit off the leopard’s pelt.

Tales of vengeance – acts of violent retribution directed at wildlife – appear to occupy a significant place in the settler moral code. This is something that continues, at a smaller scale in more covert fashion, on settler ranches in present-day Laikipia. While visiting one ranch, I listened to a tale about a domestic dog that had recently been killed by a puff adder bite during a morning walk with the ranch owner. Over subsequent days, the ranch owner enlisted the help of friends to track and kill the snake he suspected of biting the dog. Ultimately, whether the actual culprit or not, one “puffie” paid the price for the sin of

biting the rancher's dog. I was even shown proof by the storyteller: a photograph of the dead reptile hanging from a stick. Such tales hint at the threads of colonial violence that became entwined with everyday attitudes, behaviours, and values on settler-owned properties (Shadle 2012). Even Delamere, "gentleman hunter", is known to have cleared game off his ranch using a Maxim gun (Steinhart 2006).

Unsurprisingly, settlers were opposed to virtually any formal restrictions on their freedom to manage wildlife on their property as they saw fit, including the restrictions imposed on professional hunters and their clients. Regulations, such as hunting licenses, quotas, fees, and demarcated game reserves did not bode well with many early settlers, who felt that such mechanisms inhibited their ability to defend their property and livelihoods and to participate in the hunting traditions of their ancestors (Kelly 1978; Bull 1988; Steinhart 1989; 2006; Kabiri 2010). Settler opposition to government interventions influenced the stipulations of the 1909 Game Ordinance, which allowed settlers to sell licenses to shoot game on their private property to visiting hunters and to charge different rates depending on the species (Kabiri 2010). This gave settlers a unique degree of autonomy over wildlife on their land and enabled them to extract additional capital from wildlife in addition to hunting freely on their property. This sense of entitlement still exists in the moral code of settlers in Laikipia, as discussed in *Chapter 4*.

The authority that settlers were granted over wildlife during the colonial era contributed to what was arguably the most enduring and therefore most devastating style of hunting that Kenya has experienced:

The extermination of wildlife was a frequently stated objective of the settler-hunter. In this objective, hunting was merely the sharp, cutting edge of the sword. The heavy mass destructive force was created by the clearing of animals' habitats and their conversion to privately-owned farmlands and grazing areas, fenced and cleared of all but the smallest animals and birds (Steinhart 1989, 252).

The ability of settlers to shoot and kill wildlife at their discretion was not only seen as a right, but also as an inevitable byproduct of modernization (Steinhart 1989). Accordingly,

the colonial government seemed more than willing to accept the extermination of wildlife on white-owned land, as they needed to keep settlers happy and were committed to making settlement work economically despite its failings.

It is likely that the hunting carried out by settlers from 1905 onwards was more devastating to Kenya's wildlife than the hunting practiced by ivory hunters in the late 1800s, or even than the game control services later offered to ranchers by Kenya's Game Department – both notoriously destructive forms of hunting (Bull 1988; Herne 1999; Steinhart 1989; 2006). This is because settler hunting went hand in hand with the destruction of wildlife habitat, mainly through the clearing of bushlands, enclosure of resources, and disruption of migratory routes. The hunting practices of settlers led to the near-extinction of elephants, lions, and black rhinos, as well as other less famous species such as Grevy's zebra, Jackson's hartebeest, and reticulated giraffe – all of which are now the focus of aggressive conservation campaigns in Laikipia.

The disappearance of highland game also increased Indigenous Africans' suspicion toward colonial game policies, and many Africans later came to regard wildlife as state property reserved for whites (Steinhart 1998) – sentiments that are still prominent in Laikipia. The devastation to wildlife populations wrought by settlers cannot even begin to be compared to the subsistence hunting practices of Indigenous Africans, which were exempted from early game laws because their impacts were so insignificant (Steinhart 2006; Kabiri 2010). Unlike settlers, who continued to hunt their land uninhibited for decades, Indigenous Africans were prohibited from hunting altogether (except for rare circumstances) despite the low-impacts of their hunting (Collett 1987; Steinhart 1989; 2006; Matheka 2008; Kabiri 2010). The effects of this unfair treatment remain evident in contemporary Laikipia, where many rural groups perceive the wildlife sector as privileging the wellbeing of whites at the expense of other livelihoods – such as pastoralism and small-scale agriculture (*Chapter 5 and 6*).

1.3 Hunting for profit: Settlers and the safari industry

In addition to hunting for sport, or to defend their livelihoods and protect their property, many settlers also hunted to supplement their incomes. For many years, settlers could dip into an economy organized around the trade of wildlife parts, such as the skins of lions and zebras or ivory extracted from elephants and rhinoceros. Additionally, demand for hosted hunting safaris began to increase substantially among wealthy international clients following the widely-publicized safaris of President Roosevelt and the Duke of Connaught in 1909 and 1910 respectively. In late 1907, Donald Seth-Smith, a pioneer of Kenya's early safari industry, wrote: "the country is crawling with big-game shooters. Thirty more parties are coming in the next boat or two" (as cited in, Bull 1988, 207). By 1914, Newland & Tarlton was booking as many as three hundred clients per year (Bull 1988).

With demand for safaris on the rise, many settlers morphed into part- or full-time professional hunters. This new breed of hunters, who emerged from the farms and ranches of Laikipia and other highland areas (Prettejohn 2012), was desired for their knowledge of local landscapes, wildlife, and languages, as well as their expertise navigating difficult terrain and stalking dangerous game. As Bull explains, transitioning between farm life and safari duty was both easy and enjoyable for most settlers:

Ivory, lion skins and clients were profitable, and a safari was merely an extension of their normal life on farm or ranch. They would no more be without a gun than without their boots, and it was a natural step from shooting lion to protect one's cattle to hunting lion with well-paying clients. When the coffee failed or the rams died, it was the wild animals that paid the bank loans (1988, 197).

Not only did professional hunting require minimal investment on the part of settlers; it empowered settlers to earn a living doing what they liked best – hunting.

Settlers who wished to enter the safari industry experienced few barriers. Most settlers for hire as professional hunters faced far greater costs to their personal health and safety than to their bank accounts. In 1913, a simple £50 license permitted safari clients to kill

or capture two Cape buffalo, elephant, hippo, rhinos, and zebra in addition to almost 200 antelopes or gazelles. Because lion and leopard were classified as vermin, safari clients were also free to kill them without fee or penalty (Trzebinski 1985; Bull 1988).

The relatively low financial costs of getting into the safari business allowed most settlers to combine their passion for safari with the knowledge and skill sets they had acquired from hunting their land (Bull 1988; Steinhart 1989; 2006; Herne 1999; Prettejohn 2012). Although most settlers in Laikipia continued to use safaris as a diversification strategy until the independent government banned hunting in 1977, some made safari a full-time job. Cranworth, for example, was a notorious hunter. He eventually capitalized on his safari calling by investing in Newland & Tarlton, which was the largest employer in the colony by 1914. “Some government officers even blamed the safari business for the labour shortage [experienced mainly on settler farms], as hunters often paid double the usual native wage and drew off the most willing workers” (Bull 1988, 197).

As consumer demand for outfitted safaris began to grow in the colony, the term “white hunter” was used to identify settlers for hire as safari hosts and guides by travelling hunters, photographers, cinematographers, and novelists – ranging from Roosevelt to Hemmingway to Ruark (Steinhart 2006). According to Steinhart, the qualifications of a white hunter included:

... an acquaintance with ‘the districts his employer desires to shoot..., previous experience with the game of the country’, and the ability to arrange the preservation of trophies, interpret for, and advise his visiting hunter client. If necessary, he had to be able to use his guns to protect his client, to follow up wounded animals, and to advise him on licence limits, acceptably sporting hunting methods, and the best methods of pursuit and shooting the animals his client required (2006, 131).

Safari outfitting was essentially organized around two key elements: The first was the provision of transport and equipment, which was primarily provided by African labourers. The second was the local knowledge and skill set of competent settlers who could be hired to host, organize, and lead safaris.

With increasingly more settlers hosting safaris on their land or selling their services, an association of white hunters was formed to protect the interest of white hunters and ensure that the Game Regulations were being followed in the bush. The Association of White Hunters or Guides was formed in 1911 and came to include notable white hunters, such as J.A. Hunter, Phillip Percival, and R.J. Cuninghame, among others (Steinhart 2006). Although gentlemen hunters such as Cranworth, the Cole brothers, and Delamere continued to host safaris on their land, men like Blixen and Finch Hatton were sought after by safari clients for their hunting prowess, even though their tenure in the colony was dwarfed by that of their predecessors (Steinhart 2006, 133).

Perhaps ironically, it was the newcomers that came to the colony following the explosion of Kenya's safari industry that were immortalized in Kenya's white folklore. The names of everyday white hunters, such as Dyer, Grant, Hunter, Prettejohn, and Russell, may be well known in Laikipia – where their children own land or practice their profession – but their contributions to shaping Kenya's modern conservation and safari tourism industry are often overshadowed by the glamour, scandal-ridden characters of Kenya's Happy Valley. The latter now occupy a special place in the imagination of Kenya's white community and in the imaginaries of present-day tourists from Europe and North America that most pioneer hunters are not granted.

Whether a newcomer to Kenya or a long-time settler, a white hunter “had to be courageous and had to know the terrain as if born on it. He must speak Swahili, understand the African, know the uncertain nature of the bush and game: but he also had to have the manners of a society club man and the tact of a diplomat” (Trzebinski 1985, 137-138). Safari clients expected white hunters to act as both gentlemen hunters and pragmatic settlers, capable of relating to the likes of lords and ladies, princes and presidents, and high maintenance celebrities, as well as protecting their clients from wild animals, tropical ailments, and “natives”. In this sense, the “white” in white hunter ascribed sentiments of virtue and strict moral conduct to settlers, juxtaposing them to Indigenous Africans who were touted as being neither trustworthy nor of sound moral judgment. White hunters guaranteed the superiority of their clients by acting as a kind of class buffer between them and Africans (Steinhart 2006) (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Safari brochure by Shaw & Hunter advertising white hunters (n.d.)



White hunters offered their clients snippets of life as settlers in Kenya – albeit condensed, highly romanticized, and much more luxurious versions than reality. Safaris were both microcosms of settler society and ritualistic performances. Even in the wilds of Kenya, settlers controlled the means of production. White hunters organized the capital, resources, and labour to produce the safari experiences that their clients desired. Indigenous Africans represented labour power, just as they did on settler farms and ranches. Although there were some black guides and trackers; most were employed to transport goods from Point A to Point B and to set up camp, keep camp clean, and cook for clients. The way the ritual of safari was performed – the way labour was organized, goods were distributed, and who got to call the shots, for instance – was as an ongoing expression of the rights that whites self-assigned themselves to in indigenous lands. Safaris constrained the actions of Indigenous Africans to subaltern positions, and dominant representations of safaris erased African agency rights.

It should be clear, based on Part II of this chapter, who the protagonists are in the folklore of safari. They are white men who made their mark on the colony as gentlemen hunters, property hunters, and/or white hunters. There are a few exceptions to this rule, such as Karen Blixen, Beryl Markham, Joy Adamson, and Daphne Sheldrick – all white women who are respected as hunters and/or conservationists. There is far less evidence of Indigenous Africans on safari, however, never mind the essential role they played in the bush. When black men are cast minor roles in safari tales, this is usually done using patronizing colonial language. Indigenous women, on the other hand, appear to have been all but written out of the history of safari.

Yet white men did not write the history of safaris alone. Nor were safaris a victimless sport played only by gentlemen of the old world, as safari enthusiasts have been taught to imagine. Rather, safaris were an integral part of the settlement project and, thus, contain the legacies of colonial alienation, dispossession, and violence. This chapter's account of these legacies still does not draw adequate attention to the victims of safaris whose voices have been silenced in the annals of history, whose stories are not easy to decipher in safari folklore. Their stories remain, at least for now, little more than best guesses and most likelys. Despite the fact that white men have been lionized in the history of safaris,

however, “they were in fact standing on the shoulders of the thousands of Africans who had gone before them” as cooks, caregivers, trackers, and porters (Steinhart 2006, 137).

2 “Free” to labour on safari: The question of resistance

Laikipia was, like the rest of Kenya’s highlands, a rural society organized around the dominance of a minority white population who controlled most of the county’s land and resources in the context of a racialized property regime backed by the power of a colonial government. As discussed, white settlers were permitted to own land on an individual basis in highland areas such as Laikipia. Indigenous Africans, however, were restricted from owning land outside communal native reserves. Organizing the landscape in this way ensured that settlers not only controlled the colony’s prized land, but that they had regular access to labour from native reserves where the land uses and livelihood practices of Indigenous Africans were regulated by the government via direct and indirect forms of rule (Duder and Youé 1994; Steinhart 2006). Labour reserves were a spatial effect of settler capitalism (Li 2010; 2011) and, as artifacts of settler capitalism, now contain a labour population that is largely surplus to the needs of the wildlife sector.

Because Laikipia’s settlers were primarily engaged in cattle ranching, requiring a relatively low input of labour, and because its economy was slow to develop and notoriously up-and-down, ranchers rarely faced labour shortages like farmers elsewhere in the colony did. It is partly due to the precarious nature of ranching that many settlers got into the safari business in the first place. But safaris also gave settlers opportunities to “keep on” labourers they desired, reassigning certain workers to safari duty when necessary. Consequently, this is still a common practice among mixed-used settler ranches in present-day Laikipia.¹⁸ As evidenced by the social organization of safaris in the past and present, these labour management practices extended the racialized division of labour and power off settler farms and ranches and into the bush (Bull 1988).

¹⁸ Interview, 19 April 2015

In the early days of Kenya's safari industry, when caravans travelled great distances using ox-wagons and foot power, at least 30 porters were needed on a simple hunt. Two or more safari clients, however, typically required 80-100 porters depending on just how comfortable the safari was intended to be. "Sometimes three to four men were taken on just to carry the whisky supply" (Trzebinski 1985, 140). Clients were also, often, accompanied by vast quantities of champagne (hence the term "champagne safari"), carried in armchairs by Africans, and consumed up to eight course meals. Safaris were, essentially, grand re-enactments of earlier expeditions that had opened the colony, such as Thomson's 1883 expedition through Laikipia. Theodore Roosevelt's famous 1909 safari, for example, had as many of 500 porters, not counting gunbearers, trackers, personal servants, cooks, skimmers, or "tentboys" – all decked out in khaki shirts, shorts, and matching jerseys (Trzebinski 1985).¹⁹ While these grand, luxurious safaris embodied the labour regime of colonial exploration, the smaller safaris more commonly offered by white ranchers embodied that of settler capitalism. Although settlers often imply that there was no room for racial differences in the bush when danger mounted, "back in camp, each [race] generally went back to his separate fire" (Bull 1988, 202).

This does not negate the fact that camaraderie, or even mutual respect, was possible between "blacks" and "whites", but that safaris were never a venue for transforming the status quo – far from it. As Steinhart (2006, 133) explains:

Africans may have been employed by the white hunters principally to perform the necessary tasks of portage, skinning and preserving trophies, making camp, cooking, and driving. However, they were also required to behave with deference, accepting their class subordination and playing the roles of 'dark companions', whose language and bearing always carried the stigma of savagery against which the hunter's whiteness was protection.

In short, settler ideologies of race – performed in the daily routines of life on ranches or in the bush – shaped the very essence of the safari experience. The legacies of such

¹⁹ The word "safari" itself arguably took on its English meaning due to Roosevelt's highly publicized excursion, which kick-started Kenya's safari industry (Steinhart 2006).

ideologies reflect in contemporary safaris, as the “servility” of Indigenous Africans has, rather paradoxically, been re-configured as “liberatory” in the economic and political philosophy of the modern day green economy (*Chapters 5 and 7*).

Despite the racialized division of power and labour on safaris, Indigenous Africans should not be misunderstood as being “slaves” to safaris – nor have safaris been immune to resistance from subordinate groups. True: armed guards were often stationed at the front and rear of early safari entourage to dissuade desertion and theft, as well as to keep an eye on the general conduct of the labourers (Trzebinski 1985). This does not mean, however, that safari labourers never resisted exploitive conditions or challenged their oppression in the bush – even if historical evidence of this is lacking. During early safaris, jesters often accompanied safari entourage. Jesters were employed to boost the morale of safari workers. The jester “would run up and down the line of porters, full of puns, grimaces and gestures, poking fun, making lewd jokes and best of all, mimicking his employers” (Trzebinski 1985, 140). One can imagine the myriad other forms of resistance that permeated the earliest safaris. The act of erasing such forms of agency from the history of safaris has proven to be a discursive maneuver with long-lasting effects. It has played a role in maintaining safaris as zones of white identity and belonging, even in the face of land invasions and other forms of overt and covert resistance.

3 Conclusion

Steinhart (2006) writes that the “struggle over hunting and the control of wildlife in Kenya always took second place to struggles over land” (Steinhart 2006). This chapter demonstrates, however, that safaris *are* struggles over land – that they have been since the dawn of the colonial era in Kenya. Since the earliest colonial encounters in Kenya’s highlands – stretching back to the likes of Thomson and Delamere, if not beyond – explorers, administrators, and settlers infused the climate and ecology of highland areas such as Laikipia with racialized attributes. Thomson compared Laikipia to a “park-like country”, an “English countryside”; early administrators named it a “white man’s country”; and settlers emphasized the whiteness of the plateau to justify the natural rights they

assumed over its prized resources. The Huxley quote at the beginning of this chapter reflects such sentiments, in which settlers are likened to alien trout that found the “cool, clear” streams of Laikipia more agreeable to them than did indigenous crocodiles (i.e. Africans). Discursive maneuvers such as these were used to legitimize alienation, settlement, and domination in the highlands, as well as to re-construct property claims to contest lands over time (*Chapter 7*). Such representations also reflect in the ways that settlers behaved in nature, re-enacting their rights to indigenous lands through practices that might otherwise risk being overlooked as commonplace.

Tracing the lineage of green grab backwards in space and time, as this chapter has tried to do, provides further details about how and why the green economy works in the present. It does so by focusing on safari and the important role it played in the cultural, economic, and social aspects of everyday life in colonial Kenya. This chapter, therefore, uncovers evidence of how the culture and economy of safari helped transform entire landscapes in a manner that has led to the endurance of colonial class relationships in rural society – in a manner that primed the conditions for what is now understood as green grabbing. Colonial land alienation, settlement, and enclosure drew vast amounts of land and other natural resources, including wildlife, under the control of a white population that was disposed to safari as an expression of identity and belonging. Safari had not only contributed to the social organization of Laikipia long before the term “green economy” dominated transnationalized spaces of conservation; it had been a primary avenue extra-Europeans whites pursued to insert themselves into the landscape.

This chapter has tried to “disassemble” green grabbing, historically. But it has painted a rather one-sided portrait of power and struggle in doing so. It has described, in depth, how colonizers struggled for control over land, natural resources, and labour in and through safari. Problematically, however, it has left the forms of political struggle that Indigenous Africans pursued in response largely unexamined. The same can also be said about the gendered history of safaris. With these shortcomings in mind, I have also tried to draw attention to the forms of discontent, politicking, and resistance expressed by historically marginalized groups where evidence of it exists in historical records and safari folklore. In light of Scott’s (1985; 1992) insights into the “arts of resistance” and “weapons

of the weak”, we can presume with near certainty that everyday forms of resistance proliferated native reserves, farms and ranches, and safari caravans. Behind the belittling, patronizing, and racist tones, and undertones, of safari folklore assuredly lies myriad strategies pursued by subordinate groups in their struggle to retain and regain control over their notions of livelihood, territory, and wellbeing. In this regard, tracing backwards the roots of present-day reactions to Laikipia’s wildlife sector might also serve to “dust off” hidden transcripts buried in the archives of green grabbing.

That private wildlife areas in Laikipia remain prone to land invasions, such as those described by Adam earlier in this chapter, should not be surprising considering the history of the county’s wildlife sector. Yet as subsequent chapters in this dissertation suggest, this form of resistance is not the only way that relatively poor or marginalized groups react to colonial legacies in the wildlife sector. *Chapter 4* builds off this historical analysis of land alienation, enclosure, and settlement in colonial-era Kenya by analyzing some of the more recent strategies used by conservationists to grab control over land and other natural resources in the name of conservation. It discusses the institutional, spatial, and social organization of the green economy in doing so, contextualizing perceptions of, and reactions to, the wildlife sector from below.

Chapter 5

The greening of colonial enclosures

1 Introduction

In January 2015, a group of small-scale farmers marched on the gates of Ol Pejeta Conservancy in a peaceful demonstration. This privately-owned wildlife conservancy occupies more than 36,400 ha of land in Laikipia, and is famous among safari enthusiasts for housing the world's last three northern white rhinos. A few days before the protest, wild animals such as baboons and warthogs had destroyed a number of crops ready for harvest not far from the conservancy. The protestors, weary from the perpetual threat wildlife poses to their livelihoods, blamed Ol Pejeta for their damages. The group of small-scale farmers demanded that the conservancy take additional measures to protect farmers from the wild animals the conservancy harbours – measures, the protestors argued, the conservancy has long promised but failed to deliver.

Although this protest made national headlines (Waweru 2016), small-scale farmers and pastoralists in the region have long been vocal about the burdens they experience living alongside wildlife. During the nine months of fieldwork that informed this chapter, I spent significant periods of time on safari as a participant observer, as well as interviewing key informants with different experiences with, and perspectives on, the wildlife sector. I spoke with landowners and wildlife managers, safari guides and other tourism labourers, representatives from conservation organizations and government bodies, as well as a number of small-scale farmers and pastoralists from settlements surrounding wildlife ranches and conservancies like Ol Pejeta. I heard countless stories of “human-wildlife conflict” during these conversations. I was often told that it is common for farmers to have their crops damaged or destroyed when baboons, elephants, or warthogs break into *mashamba* (“gardens”). It is also common for pastoralists to lose livestock to predators. It was explained to me that, when Cape hunting dogs get inside a *boma* (“corral”), they

can kill 20-plus goats or sheep in a matter of minutes. This represents a significant source of household income and wealth.

Hearing of these, and other burdens, I wondered again at how the wildlife sector became such a dominant land use and economy in Laikipia, despite having detrimental impacts on rural households. In addition to human-wildlife conflict, the distribution of land and other natural resources is highly skewed in the favour of a small minority of settlers, foreign nationals, and transnational organizations, which own about 40 per cent of Laikipia and, arguably, control over half the county (Letai 2011; 2015; LWF 2012). Most wildlife benefits are experienced by landowners, tourists, and safari workers behind the fences of private wildlife ranches and conservancies, leaving communities to absorb most of the burdens that come with living and labouring among wild animals. Moreover, since most wildlife areas in Laikipia are privately owned, the wildlife sector has the effect of confining people in colonial relationships in the context of a racialized landscape and property regime – a remnant of Laikipia’s past (*Chapter 4*). Although progress has been made to mitigate the burdens and redistribute the benefits of the wildlife sector throughout rural society, the sector has changed relatively little over the past 100 years. What specific factors might help to contextualize this lack of change?

This chapter represents an investigation into the strategies used by conservationists to grab onto and maintain control over land, resources, and capital in Laikipia. It is particularly interesting to consider how a small population of elites has managed to evade revolt against class and property relationships that relatively poor or marginalized groups in Laikipia often find to be highly undesirable, as this chapter discusses in greater detail. The similarities between the socio-economic and power relationships of colonial-era Laikipia and those of the present are, in fact, remarkable; yet recent developments warrant closer examination. This chapter analyzes how Laikipia’s private enclosures have been re-interpreted and re-institutionalized in the context of the green economy, as well as what the outcomes of related interventions have been in rural society.

This chapter examines key factors that led to the conversion of settler cattle ranches into wildlife ranches and conservancies, focusing on the role transnational conservation actors

and organizations played in this greening process. Specifically, this chapter discusses how conservationists have deployed endangered wildlife species on large-scale landholdings to justify, and obtain support for, the militarization of private wilderness enclosures. This strategy for intensifying, and in some cases expanding (*Chapter 6*), control over land for conservation involves hiring, arming, and training paramilitary forces that defend private wildlife areas against pastoralist incursions, poaching, and other threats from rural society – symbolizing the dominance of the wildlife sector in rural society. At the same time, conservationists have invested heavily in providing essential social services in human settlements bordering private wildlife ranches and conservancies in an explicit effort to shape future generations of Laikipians that support the wildlife sector. Given the lineage of green grab in Laikipia, this serves as a strategy for nurturing consent for colonial class and property relationships – for the ethno-spatial configuration of the county – among younger generations.

This chapter begins by discussing the passing of Kenya's new Wildlife Conservation and Management Act (WCMA) in 2013. This key piece of legislation includes several measures that facilitate the enclosure of land for Market-Driven Conservation (MDC), reflecting the extent to which the green economy is perceived as a key pillar for Kenya's future economic success. This section draws attention to at least one instance in which national institutions appear to have been seized by the transnational (neoliberal) conservation project, before describing the landscape of the green economy in Laikipia. These initial sections provide important contextual information on the nature of the wildlife sector in Laikipia, before the chapter begins to map out how the green economy emerge out of settler-owned cattle ranches with the help of transnational conservation actors and organizations. Next, this chapter offers an account of how and why this transformation occurred, before offering a glimpse of the wildlife sector from below. This sub-section discusses some of the frictions that have emerged in rural society, as the green economy interventions and their outcomes encounter divergent notions of livelihood, territory, and wellbeing. This sub-section, too, provides contextual insights necessary for understanding the strategies pursued by conservationists in Laikipia to grab onto, and maintain control over, the ability to accumulate capital from land and other natural resources via conservation. I focus on two overarching strategies: the militarization of

private enclosures and social investments. The chapter concludes by briefly reflecting on “relationships of force in the countryside” (Scott 1976), and what these suggest about green grabbing and the contested nature of belonging in Laikipia.

2 Territories of safari

On 10 January 2014, Kenya’s WCMA of 2013 became operational (GoK 2013b). This piece of legislation replaces the Wildlife Act of 1976 and was developed through collaborative initiatives involving civil society groups, such as the National Environment Civil Society Alliance of Kenya (NECSA-K), representatives from the tourism sector, and government bodies.²⁰ The WCMA departs from past legislation by recognizing wildlife conservation and management as a formal land use on public-, private-, and community-owned land. Additionally, the WCMA protects new rights that landowners have to use wildlife on their land to generate revenues, which are meant to offset the costs of conservation and protect the economic value of wildlife. In stark contrast to the previous Wildlife Act, the WCMA grants consumptive use rights (e.g. game farming, culling, and cropping) and non-consumptive use rights (e.g. wildlife tourism, education, and research) to registered landowners. Additionally, the WCMA increases the amount of financial compensation available to individuals who have suffered damages, injuries, or deaths from wild animals, while placing stiffer penalties on “wildlife crimes” – including a fine of 20 million Kenyan Shillings (KSh) (about US \$200,000) or life imprisonment for anybody caught hunting illegally or dealing in wildlife parts from endangered species.

Many conservation organizations like the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), The Nature Conservancy, Wildlife Direct, USAID, and World Wide Fund for Nature were quick to heap praise onto the WCMA – mostly for the harsh penalties it places on wildlife crimes. Such organizations also praised the Act for recognizing wildlife conservation as a formal land use and for granting more rights and authorities to landowners over wildlife on their land.

²⁰ NECSA-K is comprised of both local and international NGOs, including the East African Wildlife Society and the World Wide Fund for Nature.

In principle, the WCMA gives any landowner (whether an individual, group, or community) the right to implement a wildlife conservancy on their land and encourages landowners to use wildlife economically to offset the costs of conservation. Prior to the WCMA of 2013, most private land used for wildlife conservation and safari tourism was classified as agricultural. Although the Environmental Management and Coordination Act of 1999 allowed environmental easements to be placed on land through judicial rather than voluntary processes, this rarely if ever happened (Gitahi and Fitzgerald 2011). It is for such reasons that conservation organizations focused on trying to protect wildlife outside national parks and reserves were so quick to heap praise on the WCMA.

Importantly, the WCMA also reflects broader governance and regulatory developments in Kenya, which aim to make the country “a globally competitive and prosperous nation with a high quality of life by 2030” (GOK 2007, 2). Called “Vision 2030”, this goal has been supported by a new constitution and other pieces of legislation that devolve key government functions to county levels. Vision 2030 seeks to facilitate the devolution of wildlife conservation and management responsibilities to the local level while creating conditions on the ground that are attractive to foreign investors and tourists (GOK 2007; GOK 2013a). These mandates clearly reflect in the new WCMA. In addition to improving land tenure security for investors in the wildlife sector and granting more rights and authorities to landowners over wildlife, the WCMA devolves government responsibilities related to wildlife to newly created County Wildlife Conservation and Compensation Committees (CWCCCs) (NRT 2014). Kenya’s WCMA, in line with broader trends in conservation governance, reflects a formal shift towards a green approach to national economic development (*Chapter 2*).

Yet not all conservation organizations are of like mind about the direction the WCMA is taking wildlife conservation in Kenya. Some civil society members are wary of the consumptive use rights that have been granted to landowners, which formalize the processing and sale of legally obtained wildlife parts and facilitate the exploitation of wildlife to offset the costs of conservation. One local organization, called Kenyans United Against Poaching (KUAPO), argues that wildlife cropping has not helped conserve wildlife

historically and is prone to corruption and mismanagement (KWS 2001).²¹ The NGO cites studies conducted by AWF and the Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) in the 1990/2000s, which suggest that granting more rights and authority to landowners over wildlife might correspond to a decline in wildlife numbers (Elliott and Mwangi 1997b; KWS 2001). Some civil society groups also fear that the WCMA will lead to the reintroduction of sport hunting in Kenya, which was banned in 1977 (Herbling 2014).²² Despite some evidence suggesting that sport hunting can inject more revenues into wildlife conservation and rural communities than safari tourism does (Elliott and Mwangi 1998), memories of the destruction that hunting safaris wrought on wildlife have left many Kenyans resistant against the idea of re-introducing sport hunting (*Chapter 5*).

Despite differing opinions about the WCMA, the Act sends a pretty clear message to local and global civil society. This is that the future of wildlife conservation in Kenya hinges on the ability of landowners to accumulate capital from wildlife. According to the assemblage of actors that contributed to the WCMA's development, securing the property and use rights of landowners, expanding the amount of land available for wildlife habitat, and protecting the economic value of wildlife through formal markets are all fundamental components of successful conservation efforts.

With this in mind, the WCMA can be understood as new legislation that facilitates the ongoing enclosure of land and other natural resources for MDC. Despite the minimal benefits and significant burdens enclosure has brought to subsistence land users in Laikipia, national institutions appear to have been seized by the transnational project of conservation – a project with equally deep roots in colonialism. As this chapter demonstrates, however, the trend toward neoliberal conservation has been particularly apparent in Laikipia since the early 1990s. Together with the history of green enclosure in Laikipia (*Chapter 4*), the county has become a stronghold for that privatized and

²¹ KUAPO's position on the consumptive use rights permitted in the WCMA, such as wildlife cropping, can be found at the following web address: <https://kuapo.wordpress.com/2013/08/12/wildlife-cropping-is-now-allowed-in-the-wildlife-conservation-management-bill-2013-but-what-are-the-dangers/>.

²² Although hunting was banned in Kenya in 1977, a handful of ranchers were permitted to crop wildlife from 1990 onwards under a pilot programme introduced by KWS (KWS 2001).

marketized approaches to conservation that were further enshrined in Kenya's discursive, legal, and policy matrix with the passing of Kenya's new WCMA.

3 The lay of the land

Laikipia County is located in the north-central highlands of Kenya, roughly 200 km north of the capital city, Nairobi, via a well-maintained highway (Figure 11). In total, Laikipia is 869,600 ha large; but the county contains one of eastern Africa's larger areas of contiguous wildlife compatible land uses at about 365,000 ha. For the sake of reference, no single national park or reserve in Kenya is larger, except Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks combined (LWF 2012). Laikipia is considered to be one of the most important wildlife areas in eastern Africa by conservationists, as most wildlife in the county lives on or regularly migrates through private land (LWF 2012). Protecting wildlife outside national parks and reserves is a priority for conservationists, as 75 per cent of Kenya's wildlife lives outside the boundaries of such areas. This is also true because conserving wildlife outside national protected areas allows for a wide range of value-added activities not otherwise afforded to tourists (LWF 2012). Laikipia's well-established private property regime, dominated by large-scale wildlife compatible land uses, has made it a paragon MDC not only in Kenya but throughout the region.

Although most of Laikipia is owned by relatively few individuals or groups in the form of private property, the county is a mosaic of land uses (Figure 12). Land is used for small and large-scale agriculture, horticulture, traditional and modernized livestock production, wildlife conservation and safari tourism, and mixed-use ranches used for both livestock production and wildlife conservation. Despite this diversity in land uses and livelihoods, 48 individuals own 382,400 ha of Laikipia in the form of large-scale ranches and conservancies. This translates to about 40 per cent of the county (Letai 2011; 2015; LWF 2012). Most of these landowners are extra-European whites, although organizations such as Fauna and Flora International and The Nature Conservancy are buying up land in the form of large-scale ranches and conservancies.

Of the 48 large-scale ranches in Laikipia, 29 are managed purely as wildlife conservancies; another 17 are “mixed-use”, used for livestock production and wildlife conservation combined (LWF 2012). There are 11 pastoralist group ranches in Laikipia, located mainly in the northeastern part of the county that is sometimes referred to as “Mukogodo” – the name of one of the Maasai groups historically associated with this geographical location in Laikipia. Group ranches are technically private properties; but membership-based groups own them rather than individuals (Mwangi 2009). Together, group ranches in Laikipia make up about 71,200 ha (or 7 per cent) of the county. Three of these group ranches have become spaces for community conservation, which combines pastoralism with wildlife conservation and tourism (*Chapter 6*). In light of the myriad forms of land use and tenure in Laikipia, efforts to consolidate control over land and other natural resources for the wildlife sector has involved efforts to both secure and expand a vast network of private properties.

Through such efforts, which will be discussed further in this chapter and *Chapter 6*, a diverse population of wildlife has come to call Laikipia home. Aerial surveys suggest that there are around 64,225 wild animals in Laikipia (LWF 2012). This accounts for the population of wild animals larger than the diminutive Thomson’s gazelle, which starts to weigh in at 13 kg and stand about 58 cm high. This is nearly 17,000 more animals than can be found in Amboseli, Nairobi, Tsavo East, and Tsavo West National Parks combined (Estes 1999; Kinnaird et al. 2008; Western et al. 2009; LWF 2012). Laikipia’s wildlife population is also incredibly diverse: “To date 95 species of mammals, 540 species of birds, 87 species of amphibians and reptiles, almost a 1000 species of invertebrates and over 700 species of plants have been recorded” in the county (LWF 2012, 10).

Despite its impressive species diversity, Laikipia is really prized among conservationists as a haven for relatively thriving populations of large, critically endangered mammals. Laikipia supports about half of Kenya’s black rhinoceroses – a species listed as “critically endangered” on the IUCN Red List – and the country’s second largest elephant population consisting of 7,000-plus individuals (LWF 2012). Additionally, Laikipia boasts a stable lion population that includes about 250 individuals (15 per cent of Kenya’s total population), as well as 200 endangered Cape hunting dogs (the world’s sixth largest

population) and a significant number of cheetahs. Some less well known endangered mammals are also being conserved in Laikipia. Two-thirds of the world's reticulated giraffe can be found in Laikipia, as can 80 per cent of all Grevy's zebras, and the Jackson's hartebeest is endemic to the plateau (LWF 2012).

Figure 11: Map of Laikipia showing land use (LWF 2012)

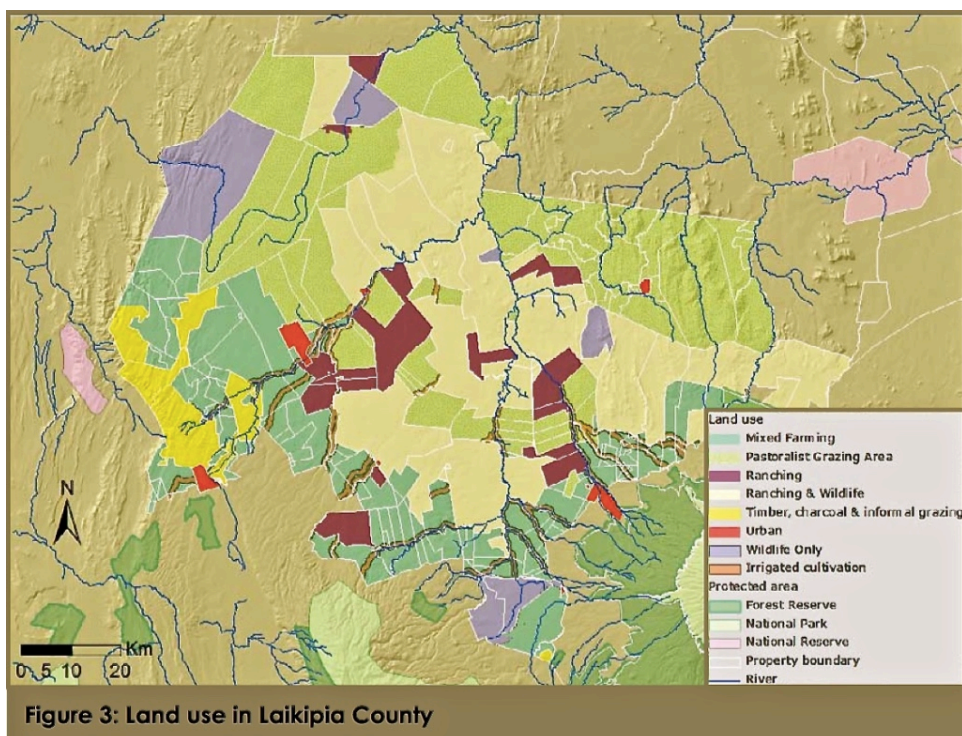
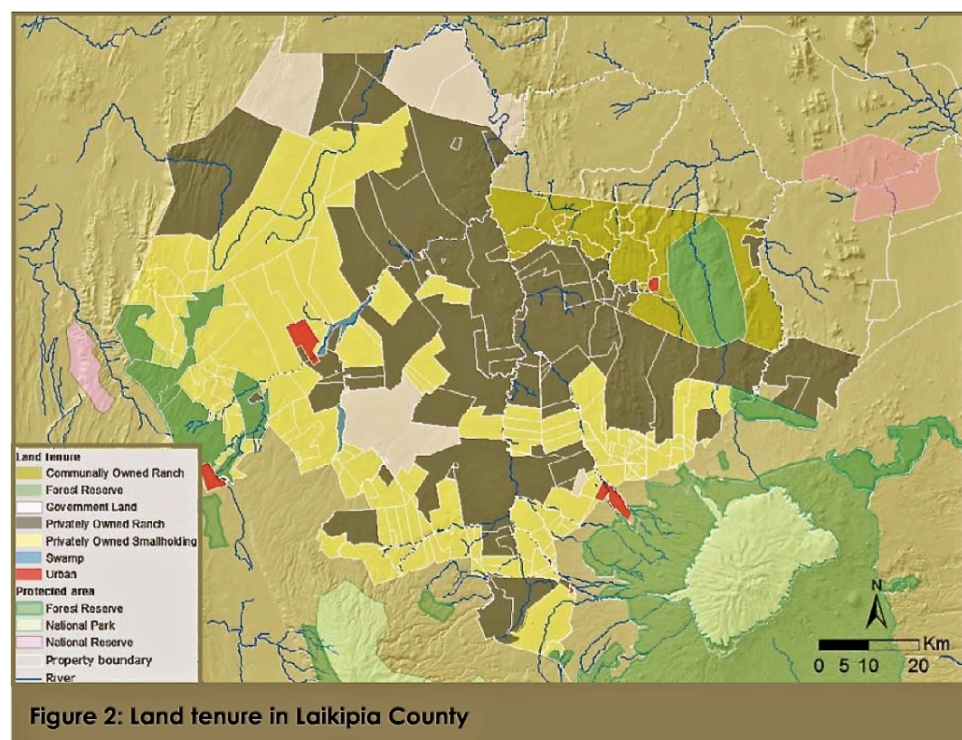


Figure 12: Map of Laikipia showing land tenure (LWF 2012)



Many species-specific conservation organizations have sprung up around Laikipia's endangered mammals, such as Ewaso Lions, Grevy's Zebra Trust, Living with Lions, and Space for Giants. These groups engage in research, fundraising, and various forms of activism geared around protecting endangered wildlife and securing their habitats. They have also played an active role in shaping conservation, development, and land policies in the region, particularly in the build-up to Kenya's new WCMA of 2013.

Although these smaller organizations play an important role in land use and policy, big international organizations are driving local conservation efforts financially. An up-scale safari tourism industry also generates financial, moral, and political support for wildlife conservation. Laikipia's tourism industry is marketed as an exclusive safari destination where tourists can get a real wilderness experience,²³ compared to overcrowded destinations like Maasai Mara National Reserve. The New York Times even ranked Laikipia 47 out of 52 "places to go in 2017". The logic in Laikipia is that wealthier tourists are willing to pay more for intimate wilderness settings, up-close encounters with endangered wildlife, and the freedom to engage in activities like walking safaris, horse and camel back safaris, and late night game drives that are not permitted in other protected areas. Compared to 5,000 beds in Maasai Mara – which is less than half the size of Laikipia's wildlife area – there are only 1,230 beds in 43 tourism facilities in Laikipia. Even though Laikipia attracts nowhere near the tourists that Maasai Mara does, the wildlife sector is the second most profitable industry in the county next to horticulture (beating-out livestock and agricultural production) (LWF 2013).

According to a report on Laikipia's rural economy, mixed livestock-wildlife ranches generate at least US \$19.5 million per year in total revenues and US \$1.7 million in national/local taxes, compared to minimum revenues of US \$800,000 (and US \$68,000 in taxes) per year on livestock-only ranches. Mixed ranches spend almost US \$6 million locally on supplies and US \$7.4 million on wages – up to 90 per cent on local labour. In terms of gross annual income, livestock-only ranches generate US \$6.84–\$17 per acre compared to US \$20–\$40 per acre on mixed livestock-wildlife ranches.

²³ Interview, 18 February 2016

Revenues generated from wildlife-only properties are more variable, depending on annual fluctuations in income brought-in through safari tourism, conservation fees, and donations from tourists/conservation organizations. Gross returns per acre range from US \$23—\$176 per acre. The minimum annual revenues for wildlife-only properties are US \$3.1 million per year and US \$127,000 in taxes. This corresponds to US \$1.5 spent on supplies locally each year, with US \$541,000 going towards local wages.²⁴ Although these numbers do not provide a comprehensive account of the economics of Laikipia's wildlife sector, they do suggest that mixed livestock-wildlife ranches appear to be more effective at distributing wildlife revenues throughout the county than wildlife-only properties are, which spend relatively little on local supplies and labour. It is important to keep in mind, however, that just a few settlers or foreign nationals own the mixed livestock-wildlife and wildlife-only properties being discussed.

4 Grabbing green

4.1 The culture and economy of safari

As discussed in *Chapter 4*, Laikipia's wildlife sector has a tumultuous social history that is intimately intertwined with the safari industry. This history dates back beyond 1902, when the colonial administration began to alienate land in Kenya's central highlands and demarcate it strictly for white settlement. By 1913, the British had moved thousands of Maasais and their livestock off the Laikipia Plateau to a native reserve in southern Kenya. This was done, in part, to appease Laikipia's nascent settler community – which complained that livestock belonging to Maasais was competing for fodder with white-owned cattle – and to facilitate the expansion of the colonial economy. It took multiple years to move Maasais and their livestock to the Southern Reserve, a process that contributed to numerous human and livestock deaths along the way (Hughes 2005; 2006). Although the total number of Maasais and their livestock forced off the plateau is uncertain, at least 10,000 Maasai, 175,000 cattle, and over 1 million goats and sheep

²⁴ All the above figures were taken from LWF (2013a).

were recorded leaving Laikipia (Hughes 2006). Only 12,202 cattle and 18,678 goats and sheep were recorded in Laikipia after the move was completed.

Laikipia's safari industry would emerge from the hunting practices of settlers that came to dominate highland areas. Such practices involved killing profuse amounts of game for sport, pragmatic purposes, and/or to diversify income sources (*Chapter 4*). Virtually "all the Europeans who came to Kenya in their capacities as explorers, missionaries, administrators, soldiers or settlers also hunted regularly and sometimes prodigiously" (Steinhart 1989, 251). Throughout the colonial era, settlers were essentially free to hunt (i.e. shoot wildlife for sport), crop (i.e. harvest wildlife for meat and/or trophies), and cull (i.e. reduce the breeding population of) wildlife on their land, so long as they obtained the proper permits. Some animals that are now considered endangered, such as leopards and lions, were classified as vermin by the colonial government and could be shot by settlers at will. Settlers were also able to profit from commercial hunting by hosting hunting safaris on their land and selling their services as guides to clients from Europe and North America. Within a relatively short period of time, settlers' hunting practices would decimate wildlife populations in Laikipia and throughout the country, leading to a nationwide ban on hunting in 1977 (Steinhart 1989; 2006).

In her book, *Nine Faces of Kenya*, Huxley describes how many settlers have reconciled with the fact that their ancestors "shot most of the animals on their land or drove them out" (1991, 229). Similarly, Duder and Youé suggest that "the vast majority of local whites [in Laikipia] regarded all game as either vermin or target practice ... even the sight of elephants was a treasured moment by the 1930s" (1994, 266). Many of the settlers that I spoke with in Laikipia corroborated these observations, often expressing bemusement at their ancestors' enthusiasm for hunting. One settler, whose family has a long history in the safari industry, told me that black rhinos used to be so numerous that they were considered pests: "rhinos were like fucking rabbits", he emphasized expletively while raising his hands in the air.²⁵ Another settler, who operates safaris on his mixed-use ranch, chuckled as he flipped through his father's old safari photo albums. He explained

²⁵ Interview, 8 March 2015

that he did not “know what to do with all the photos of dad with dead rhinos”.²⁶ The now critically endangered status of rhinos has made protecting them, and securing their habitat, a focal point of conservation in Laikipia, as well as a major draw for tourists.

4.2 Making wildlife pay for conservation

The hunting, livelihood, and rangeland management practices of settlers contributed to a rapid decline in wildlife numbers throughout the 20th century. Eventually, this led to an attitude shift among Kenya’s settler community, which began to demonstrate a collective sense of responsibility to protect the wildlife that their ancestors hunted relentlessly for decades (Huxley 1990). By the 1960s, most settlers in Laikipia had started to value wildlife on their land for both aesthetic and ecological reasons (Denney 1972). Yet the increasing volatility of beef markets in the 1980s (Heath 2000; Kahi et al. 2006; Georgiadis 2011) revealed that the passage of time had not made settlers less averse to using wildlife to generate income – so long as they could do so sustainably in their own eyes (Kock 1995). It is at this juncture that the need for economic diversification on settler ranches, coupled with growing support from an assembling mass of global conservation organizations, sparked efforts to rejuvenate Laikipia’s dormant wildlife economy.

The early 1990s proved to be a benchmark era for the development of Laikipia’s contemporary safari economy, and for its wildlife sector. Following the downturn in Kenya’s beef markets, some prominent cattle ranchers started to explore economic opportunities presented by the wild animals that had begun to repopulate their land after the nationwide ban on hunting (Georgiadis 2011; LWF 2012). Laikipia’s cattle ranching industry was and is dominated by second and third generation settlers that inherited land acquired by their ancestors during the first half of the 20th century. Despite the scale of land belonging to settlers in Laikipia, “settler farming – always the professed pretext for the appropriation of African land and labour in Kenya Colony – was, in truth, never up to much” (Jackson 2011, 355). As a result, settlers were always looking for ways to diversify

²⁶ Interview, 19 April 2015

their livelihoods, often through safaris (*Chapter 4*). It is not surprising that economic turmoil in the 1980s influenced many settlers to shift their gaze back to wildlife, although they were no longer able to profit off hunting specifically.

During this period, many high-profile conservation organizations entered Laikipia to help test the economic and ecological potential of Market-Driven Conservation (MDC) on settler ranches. One project played a particularly significant role in revitalizing Laikipia's wildlife economy, this time in a manner explicitly geared towards the conservation, rather than destruction, of wildlife. This pilot project, called the Wildlife Cropping Project, was launched by Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) in 1990 with funding from USAID. The project tested both the consumptive (e.g. hunting and cropping/culling) and non-consumptive (e.g. photographic) use of wildlife by granting special user rights to landowners. The project involved private landowners from Laikipia and five other districts in Kenya (Kajiado, Lamu, Machakos, Nakuru, and Samburu). Wildlife use rights were granted to 71 landowners (including individual and group owners) and 29 licenses were granted to commercial "croppers", most of which were also private landowners (KWS 2001). In Laikipia, specifically, wildlife cropping was authorized on 30 private farms and ranches and 11 community landholdings before the Wildlife Cropping Project came to an end in the early 2000s (Elliott and Mwangi 1997a).

The Wildlife Cropping Project aimed to reduce wildlife-related costs to landowners, develop economically viable markets for consumptive wildlife uses, and enhance KWS's capacity for governing the sustainable use of wildlife (KUAPO 2013). In 2001, an evaluation of the Wildlife Cropping Project was carried out, revealing important findings about what granting private landowners consumptive use rights to wildlife could mean for a wildlife economy (KWS 2001; KUAPO 2013). In short, poaching levels appeared to increase under the project in areas where cropping was authorized, at least in comparison to areas where communities too – not just private landowners – were benefiting from wildlife through cropping or safari tourism ventures. A project evaluation report states that only a few communities received any benefits at all from cropping (KWS 2001). The unequal distribution of wildlife benefits sparked conflict between landowners involved in the project and surrounding communities, as the former enjoyed full use rights to wildlife

on their land – some landowners allegedly abused these rights, whereas the latter were arrested for snaring animals as plentiful as dik-diks (KWS 2001; KUAPO 2013). Cases of private landowners abusing their use rights were indeed documented, with the cropping of common zebras being “more profit- than conservation-driven” (KWS 2001, vi). For KUAPO (2013), the inequalities associated with the pilot project revealed that KWS really had no consistent method, interest in, or capacity for ensuring the equitable distribution of wildlife benefits, placing group ranches and rural communities on the losing-end of the wildlife sector.

Despite disappointment surrounding the Wildlife Cropping Project in Laikipia, as well as some skepticism concerning its outcomes,²⁷ the project led to the development of the Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF) – an organization designed to coordinate conservation activities on settler ranches and conservancies – and catalyzed efforts to evaluate economic opportunities in Laikipia’s wildlife sector.²⁸ The African Wildlife Foundation’s Wildlife Economics Study is a notable example of further efforts to evaluate the viability of a green wildlife economy in Laikipia, targeting large-scale landowners through the AWF’s Conservation, Economics, and Commerce Program.

In the mid-1990s, AWF conducted a Wildlife Economics Study in Laikipia, focusing on both consumptive and non-consumptive forms of utilization. Two of the four discussion papers that document the study’s findings focused on landowner experiences with consumptive wildlife uses. The first of these discussion papers suggests that although the legal market for game meat grew by 35 per cent after the pilot Wildlife Cropping Project was launched, landowner earnings from cropping remained relatively low due to a restrictive regulatory environment, too much competition in a rather niche market, and

²⁷ The project was plagued by a host of other issues: methods used to count animals were not species-specific, yielding unreliable results. There was controversy as to who needed to undertake the census, what methods should be employed, and whether verification was necessary. The criteria used in allocating quotas were not based on scientific findings. Census and quotas were done on an individual ranch basis as opposed to an eco-system approach that would have been more appropriate (KWS 2001).

²⁸ For a time, the LWF was the most influential conservation organization in the county. Although the organization expanded its membership body to include community- and small-scale landowners, the owners of large-scale wildlife ranches and conservancies continue to dominate the mission and vision of the organization (Interview, 26 May 2016).

minimal value added from wildlife products (Elliott and Mwangi 1997a). The discussion paper states that landowners only received about 5 per cent of the value added from the meat and skins of cropped wildlife.

Another report produced by the AWF in 1998 accounts for the opportunity cost of Kenya's hunting ban for private landholders in Laikipia. The paper suggests that the opportunity cost of the hunting ban for private landowners is US \$1.6 to 2.2 million per year each, and that communities in Laikipia are missing out on about US \$136,000 per year (Elliott and Mwangi 1998b). It estimates that an 81 to 16,200 ha ranch – considered medium-sized as far as settler ranches are concerned – could earn about US \$500,000 per year (pre-tax) from a small hunting operation (Elliott and Mwangi 1998b). The paper also argues that sport hunting has the potential to compete with top-market safari tourism in terms of returns per hectare in Laikipia, and that sport hunting is both more profitable and equitable than wildlife cropping, cattle ranching, or agriculture – especially in the northern, more arid regions of the county. Although AWF used its study to lobby for the reinstatement of sport hunting, alongside similar calls from landowners and other conservation organizations, the hunting ban remained in effect.

By the 2000s, it was concluded that safari tourism was the most viable, but not the most equitable, way to make wildlife pay for its own conservation in light of the government's firm stance against sport hunting – one that remains unaltered in the new WCMA 2013 (Elliott and Mwangi 1997b; 1998a). A discussion paper produced by the AWF, called *Making Wildlife "Pay" in Laikipia, Kenya*, was particularly influential in promoting this view. In the discussion paper, AWF argues that safari tourism is the best economic justification for wildlife as a land use in Laikipia, with returns four times higher than that of livestock production. "Given that there is no incentive for new players to enter the livestock ranching business in Laikipia, the challenge for existing ranchers and for those promoting wildlife conservation is to improve the economic returns to combined livestock and wildlife land use" (Elliott and Mwangi 1997b, 9).

As the 20th century drew to a close, results from Laikipia's conservation laboratory²⁹ suggested that non-consumptive safari tourism was the most viable – but, admittedly, not the most equitable – way to make wildlife pay for its own conservation in light of the ban on hunting (Elliott and Mwangi 1997). It also became clear that making safari tourism the crux of Laikipia's wildlife economy meant that the vast majority of Laikipians would be excluded from entering, and benefiting in meaningful ways from, the industry. Entering the safari market, according to AWF, requires a “land area of at least 10,000 hectares, good access, excellent wildlife viewing opportunities, the right partners, access to capital and a defensible market niche, *factors which exclude most Laikipia landholders from becoming significant players*” (Elliott and Mwangi 1997, 1, emphasis added). The emphasis on safari tourism in the wildlife sector not only meant that diverse groups of land users were going to have to accept Laikipia's uneven distribution of land, resources, and capital, but also that property for wildlife would need to be secured, defended, and eventually expanded if the wildlife economy was going to grow.

Although it is not explicitly dealt with in documents associated with the Wildlife Cropping Project or Wildlife Economics Study, Laikipia's existing private property regime was, and remains, key to the success of its wildlife sector. This is due to a few factors, which I have already touched on. First, most wild animals in Laikipia either live on or regularly migrate through a well-connected network of private properties. Second, it has been relatively easy for conservation organizations to secure, or even expand, wildlife habitats in the county, since they are mainly found on the private properties of settlers that are already conservation-minded. Third, special rights have made it relatively easy for landowners to use wildlife as an accumulation strategy to offset the costs associated with conserving wildlife on their land. This is, in fact, an explicit aim of the new WCMA (Kaai et al. 2015). The LWF (2016) argues that “security of tenure and property rights, defended under the law, is a cornerstone of sustainable and wise land use”. Making private property the cornerstone of the wildlife sector has not only excluded most Laikipians from entering the sector and benefiting from it in meaningful ways, it has also skewed the benefits and

²⁹ By the late 1990s, Laikipia had come to be known as a “conservation laboratory” (AWF 1999).

burdens of wildlife in favour of a small but powerful group of settlers, settler-conservationists, and conservationists.

4.3 A glimpse at the wildlife sector from below

Despite wildlife being the second most profitable land use in Laikipia, much of the county is excluded from experiencing its benefits. The wildlife sector has proven to be profitable for a few landowners, but most of the county remains relatively poor and otherwise marginalized. As a crude illustration, 46 per cent of people in Laikipia live below the poverty line, with only 13.9 per cent of the population having obtained a secondary education (KNBS-SID 2013). It happens to be the relatively poor and marginalized segment of Laikipia's population that experiences the bulk of safari burdens.

For individuals that identify with, or represent, marginalized rural groups, but have managed to use wildlife to their advantage – by finding work as cleaners, cooks, guides, rangers, or porters, for example – precarious labour conditions limit the extent to which they value wildlife. Jobs in the wildlife sector are often low paying, part-time, and vulnerable to the ebb and flow of global travel (Büscher 2009). The latter, in particular, was evident during the time spent on safari in Laikipia for this study.

In February 2014, the Ebola virus began to spread throughout parts of western Africa. Despite only occurring in a few countries, global alarm bells rang well into 2015. The media relayed images of helpless chaos to the television sets of would-be tourists. Many governments advised their citizens against travelling to purportedly high-risk countries like Kenya and tourists that already paid for safaris in Kenya cancelled their holidays – despite many European countries being geographically closer to Ebola-affected countries than Kenya. Kenya's tourism industry would take an additional hit on 2 April 2015, when armed gunmen associated with the militant group al-Shabab stormed a university campus in Garissa County, took over 700 students hostage, and killed nearly 150 people. As a result, tourism numbers were abysmal across the country throughout much of 2014 and

2015. The majority of workers in Laikipia's safari industry, at least among those that I interacted with, feared for their jobs and the wellbeing of their families.

Although the precarious nature of work in the wildlife sector was exacerbated by global events in 2014 and 2015, it is not unusual for people to be hired on an as-needed or part-time basis in Laikipia's exclusive safari market. Many safari camps and lodges in Laikipia close their doors when there are not enough "bums in beds", meaning that safari guides and other staff are only called to work when a sufficient number of clients have booked. Many safari labourers are engaged in multiple livelihood activities. They may also be pastoralists or small-scale farmers, employed by multiple operations, or sell their labour on a free-lance basis (in the case of safari guides). Labour also tends to be more precarious on wildlife-only properties with large, internationally backed tourism operations on site. As has always been the case on Laikipia's settler ranches, mixed livestock-wildlife properties often transition their workers back-and-forth between safari and ranch duties – depending on the season or business in general (*Chapter 4*).

In addition to the income inequality associated with the wildlife sector, many people also take issue with the current distribution of land in the county. The fact that fewer than 50 individuals own about 40 per cent of the land is unsettling to individuals and groups in rural society that are unable to purchase, or secure, land for themselves. This is a major point of contention for Maasai groups especially, that were dispossessed of land in Laikipia during the colonial era to make way for settlement (*Chapter 4*). One ongoing legacy of this dispossession is that the most profitable, fertile, and secure land remains in the hands of a minority of the population – extra-European whites or "settlers". Maasais, on the other hand, have either been squeezed into group ranches at the margins of the county or forced to keep livestock on abandoned, insecure, or public land. It is common to see herders camped – in temporary structures made of branches and plastic bags – with their livestock along public roadways leading to wildlife ranches and conservancies that contain thousands of hectares of prime grazing land behind fences. Pastoralists who do break into private ranches and conservancies risk legal reprisal or other violent repercussions, should ranger teams that patrol private wildlife habitats catch them.

Lastly, human-wildlife conflict is prolific in settlements surrounding wildlife ranches and conservancies. It is very common for domestic livestock to be eaten by Cape hunting dogs, cheetahs, spotted hyenas, leopards, and lions. Conflict with wildlife can also lead to human fatalities, particularly when people clash with elephants foraging on their crops. Small-scale farmers are particularly vulnerable to wildlife. It is not uncommon for small-scale farmers to lose an entire crop in a single night, should one or more elephants decide to feast in their gardens. During my time in Laikipia, I heard many tales of crops – even fishponds – being destroyed by elephants. One man, now a committed activist in the wildlife sector for small-scale farmers, explained to me that a small group of elephants destroyed his main source of income in just a few hours while he slept one night.³⁰ In most cases, the victims of such damages do not receive any formal compensation from the government or conservancies. Although, efforts have been introduced in the new WCMA to make the compensation process more effective.

The remainder of this chapter focuses on two strategies used by conservationists to consolidate their authority over land, wildlife, and people in Laikipia, despite facing indifference, resistance, or even opposition on the part of subsistence land users that neighbor private wildlife ranches and conservancies and/or are more likely to be negatively impacted by protected wild animals directly. These two strategies involve using endangered mammals to secure land and to legitimate the use of force in defense of private property, while trying to incorporate current and future generations of Laikipians into the wildlife sector through a conservation-focused education system more covertly. Theoretically, the wildlife sector combines both the use *and* threat of force with consensual tactics aimed to obtain and maintain authority in rural society by appealing to the subsistence ethic of disaffected groups.

³⁰ Interview, 2 May 2015

5 Securing land, educating people

The black rhinoceros (*diceros bicornis*): Males can weigh-in at 1,364 kg (1.5 tons) and stand 1.6 m tall (Figure 13). They are “massive creatures with barrel-shaped bodies, supported on pillarlike limbs and 3-toed hooves”, as behavioural ecologist Richard Estes accurately describes them in his book *The Safari Companion* (1999, 190). The front horn of these animals can grow up to 80 cm long, which is the main reason why they are targeted by illegal hunters – for the ivory in their horns – and usually found under 24-hour surveillance of armed rangers. Black rhinos thrive in a variety of habitats ranging from semi-desert thornbush to montane rainforest, which can all be found in Laikipia. Unlike white rhinos (Figure 14), black rhinos are strictly browsing animals that feed on over 200 varieties of plants. Black rhinos can travel up to 25 km per day in search of water and tend to wallow in mud every day. The home ranges of female black rhinos can be as large as 770 ha and are usually undefended, whereas; males defend territories up to 470 ha that usually overlap with home ranges of multiple females.

“A lethal weapon (front horn), volatile temperament, and poor eyesight combine with speed and agility to make the black rhino unusually dangerous to predators – including people” (Estes 1999, 195). Yet, despite their fierce tempers, black rhinos’ fidelity to their home ranges and predictable daily movements leave them vulnerable to poaching (Estes 1999). The number of black rhinos in Kenya has plummeted rather steadily over the past 50 years. Kenya Wildlife Services estimates that the country’s total population of black rhinos dropped from about 20,000 individuals in 1970 to less than 400 in 1990, “mainly due to poaching” (2012, 16). Although Kenya’s black rhino population trend has been slowly increasing over the past 20 years, they are still classified as “critically endangered” on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature’s (IUCN’s) Red List.

Figure 13: Black rhinos visit a watering hole in Laikipia



Figure 14: White rhino (Beisa Oryx in background), Laikipia



Figure 15: The world's last northern white rhinos in a secure enclosure, Laikipia



Figure 16: Typical ranger post in Laikipia, with electrified wildlife enclosure (Laikipia)



In response to this “rhino crisis”, KWS began to promote discrete, fenced, and heavily guarded sanctuaries as best practice in rhino conservation. Since the 2000s, this approach has become the norm in Laikipia, where 53 per cent of Kenya’s rhinos can be found in the country’s only private rhino sanctuaries. Yet private enclosures have not only proved to be vital to rhino conservation; rhinos have proved to be an effective tool for settlers to reinforce their property claims to contested lands.

5.1 Making space for rhinos

In the early 1980s, the late Anna Merz approached a long-time settler family in Laikipia, the Craigs, about creating a rhino sanctuary on their ranch in the northern foothills of Mt. Kenya. Since the 1920s, the Craigs used their land as a cattle ranch; but they agreed to set aside 5,000 of their original 40,000 acres for the sanctuary, which was initially called Ngare Sergoi. Merz had planned to retire peacefully in Kenya, “but her revulsion at seeing the carcasses of rhinos strewn about a national park, each missing its distinctive double horn, compelled her to change her plans” (Martin 2013). Merz allegedly put US \$1.5 million, including her personal inheritance, towards funding Ngare Sergoi. She used these funds to build an eight-foot tall fence around the sanctuary, to acquire and translocate rhinos into it, and to hire armed guards, a surveillance plane, and build a network of spies and informants to curb illegal hunting. Merz also developed a strong network of international donors, including the American Association of Zookeepers, and raised millions of dollars for Ngare Sergoi and rhino conservation at large. In the mid-1990s, the Craigs transformed the rest of their cattle ranch into Lewa Wildlife Conservancy – 25,000-plus ha now recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The story of Lewa Wildlife Conservancy is widely known. Although, it was not the first settler ranch to get into the rhino business in Laikipia. Solio Ranch, in southern Laikipia, had been protecting and breeding rhinos to stock sanctuaries and reserves since 1970.

Both Ol Jogi Ranch and Sweetwaters Game Reserve established Rhino sanctuaries in the 1980s as well. Ol Jogi consists of 23,500 ha at the foot of the Lolldaiga Hills, north of Nanyuki town. Sweetwaters, now called Ol Pejeta Conservancy, has since become the largest black rhino sanctuary in eastern Africa at over 40,000 ha. Each of these conservancies was transformed from a settler ranch into a conservancy in the 1980s, during the rejuvenation of the wildlife economy.

Two other settler ranches in Laikipia, Laikipia Nature Conservancy and Mugie Ranch, recently had their rhino sanctuaries decommissioned due to high incidences of poaching. Il Ng'wesi is the only group ranch with a rhino sanctuary in Laikipia. The ranch's lone black rhino was killed in 2013; but the group ranch is still home to two southern white rhinos that are heavily guarded. In total, Laikipia is home to 280 black rhinos and 251 white rhinos, which represents 48 and 75 per cent of Kenya's total population respectively (KWS 2012; LWF 2012). Today, the bulk of Laikipia's rhinos reside in the large-scale conservancies of Borana, Lewa, Ol Pejeta, and Solio (i.e. the "big conservancies").

Deploying rhinos to private ranches and conservancies can attract significant support to conservancies from global conservation organizations, as well as tourists captivated by the possibility of seeing the Big Five in one location. Yet the amount of resources required to conserve rhinos on private land is substantial. The cost of creating and maintaining suitable, secure habitats for critically endangered black rhinos is a barrier to entering the rhino business in the first place. In a 2014 interview, John Weller – General Manager at Ol Jogi Conservancy – reported that it costs the conservancy about US \$5 per acre per year to protect its Rhinos. This may not seem like much, but it adds up to US \$3 million per year for Ol Jogi. Moreover, it is far from guaranteed that Rhinos translocated to private enclosures will survive long-term. Between 2008 and 2011, 71 per cent of all rhinos killed illegally in Kenya were on private land in Laikipia (KWS 2012). As mentioned, Il Ng'wesi lost its black rhino to a poaching incident in 2013. Nine rhinos were killed on Ol Jogi alone in 2014. Yet for conservancies with many rhinos – Ol Pejeta, for instance, has 109 black rhinos – the loss of one to illegal hunting from time to time is not *all* bad for business. Although organized rhino poaching is confounding conservationists in many parts of Africa, it is also increasing demand to intensify conservation efforts and heighten

repercussions for illegal hunting (Duffy 2014b; Büscher 2016a; 2016b; Büscher and Ramutsindela 2016; Lunstrum 2016). In this sense, conservationists are quite adept at using the rhino crisis to attract global financial, moral, and political support, as well as to consolidate their authority over land, resources, and people.

Laikipia's high density of rhinos has faced a disproportionate amount of Kenya's *successful* poaching activities in recent years – an outcome in contradiction with KWS's (2012) call for more discrete, fenced, and heavily armed sanctuaries. Yet at the same time, global support for Laikipia's conservancies appears to have reached fever pitch. As discussed, Laikipia's big conservancies are supported by conservation heavyweights, such as: African Wildlife Foundation, Flora and Fauna International, The Nature Conservancy, and USAID. "Up and coming" conservation organizations, such as Space for Giants and Tusk Trust, have gained serious notoriety in Laikipia. The fundraising carried out by these, and other, organizations have channeled a lot of money into the big conservancies. As recognition for the ecological significance of Laikipia has become more widespread globally, the county has become a focal point in the war to combat poaching and consolidate support for wildlife conservation on the subcontinent. Crisis narratives of rhinos have not only shifted the gaze of the international community towards Laikipia, they have added fuel to the fire of a wildlife war.

5.2 Rhino power: The militarization of private property

In response to narratives of rhinos in crisis, a global community of supporters has mobilized to invest significant resources into combating illegal hunting and consolidating support for Laikipia's wildlife sector. Stories of declining wildlife numbers, the immanent extinction of northern white rhinos (Figure 15), and ever-increasing threats from poachers are heard frequently on safari and are commonly used to attract money from willing donors around the world – ranging from the Duke of Cambridge to "10-year old Hillary from Ontario, Canada" (see OPC's Facebook page). Much of the resources raised from well-meaning donors are used to hire, train, and arm ranger teams and adapt military technologies for wildlife warfare.

Ranger teams are paramilitary forces that patrol conservancies, carry out anti-poaching reconnaissance, and engage in combat with poachers; they also do important work by appearing imposing and threatening to would-be land invaders. The ranger teams that patrol conservancies are mainly comprised of Kenya Police Reservists (known as “KPR”) equipped with military clothing and government issued rifles. But the big conservancies also deploy special units that focus their efforts exclusively on protecting rhinos, such as Ol Pejeta’s Rhino Protection Unit (RPU) or Borana’s Armed Anti-Poaching Unit. Some conservancy rangers also get special training that KPR might not otherwise receive, in conducting military operations or handling attack and sniffer dogs for example. Borana Wildlife Conservancy recently recruited a former British Special Forces instructor to train snipers for their anti-poaching unit. Other technologies of war feature prominently in Laikipia’s wildlife sector, including sophisticated electrical fences, communication technologies, and unmanned aerial vehicles more recently (Figure 16). In raising funds for the wildlife war conservationists in Laikipia have become quite successful at using crisis narratives to mobilize support for their cause.

Ol Pejeta’s efforts to raise funds for wildlife rangers using Sudan, the last male northern white rhino, are an excellent example of this. In reality, Ol Pejeta’s rangers have little to do with ensuring that northern white rhinos avoid extinction. With only one aging male left who is incapable of mating, the future of this subspecies is all but certain. Defending Ol Pejeta’s land and the wildlife on it will do little for the future of northern white rhinos, although the conservancy used this narrative very effectively to raise funding and support for its rangers. Perhaps for this reason, another online fundraising campaign for Ol Pejeta kick started a few months later. This time, the goal was to raise money for in-vitro fertilization – a complicated procedure that has never been successful with rhinos. Ol Pejeta is not the only conservancy using rhinos to get people around the world to support its mission in Laikipia, as well as to legitimate and fund their use of private militaries. Borana and Lewa, too, attract significant funding for anti-poaching operations from a variety of sources, including the Tusk-Safaricom Marathon held annually at Lewa and Running for Rangers marathons that also support rangers at Ol Jogi and Ol Pejeta. In 2015, the Tusk-Safaricom Marathon alone raised US \$500,000 for Borana and Lewa.

In a recent video documenting an interview with the UK's *Telegraph*, owner of Borana, Michael Dyer, was asked about the conservancy's approach to using paramilitary forces to defend his land and the wildlife on it (Madden and Madden 2014).

Interviewer: "Michael, is this the future of rhino conservation?"

Michael Dyer: "Yes. This is the frontline. This is relentless. Its 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and it's going to be like this until this crisis ends. We don't have any choice."

Dyer, along with many of his contemporaries, sees himself and his land embroiled in a wildlife war that requires the dedication, energy, and resources of any other war.

To borrow Neumann's (2004) insights from elsewhere on the African subcontinent, "war" has become both a compelling metaphor and common model for wildlife conservation in Laikipia. Many scholars have drawn a link between the rise and persistence of the green economy through the legitimization of violence in countries south of the Sahara in Africa. The link between MDC and increasing violence has been coined "green violence" in literature emanating mainly from South Africa (Lunstrum 2014; Duffy 2015; 2016; Büscher 2016b; Kelly and Ybarra 2016; Massé and Lunstrum 2016). The idea of green violence is meant to help describe the violent instruments and tactics used to protect wildlife and their habitat (Büscher and Ramutsindela 2016).

In Laikipia, the militarization of private property entails far more than the use of force to protect wildlife and their habitats. Rather, rangers do a good deal of symbolic work as well. On the one hand, their presence symbolizes the dominance of the wildlife sector throughout the landscape. But, on the other hand, some conservation organizations have also used the lure of "improved security" to draw indifferent or hostile groups into the wildlife sector. One organization, called the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), has implemented community conservancies in pastoralist group ranches. These conservancies come with the promise of ranger teams that, not only protected wildlife but, act as security forces and police reserves in group ranches to protect community members from cattle rustling and land invaders. This is just one way that conservationists

have been able to use the need for land and resource security among pastoralist communities to incorporate them into conservation efforts (Greiner 2012). With this in mind, *Chapter 6* focuses specifically on the NRT's efforts to implement community conservancies in Laikipia's pastoralist group ranches.

5.3 Conservation education: “Changing a community’s mindset”³¹

Visit any website for one of Laikipia's big conservancies and you will find a drop-down menu somewhere on the homepage referring to “communities”. Selecting this option usually leads to webpages devoted to conservancy outreach activities. On Borana's website, for example, the conservancy boasts of the funding it provides to a mobile health clinic, which provides immunizations, Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) for HIV, and health education in remote communities. “Roads, classrooms, food, peace – this is what Lewa represents in the minds of local people”, reads Lewa's “community programmes” webpage. Ol Pejeta community-focused webpages assure potential tourists and donors that the conservancy uses “regular socio-economic surveys” to “provide the support necessary to address real needs and to make a real difference to the lives of the people who live nearby”. Each of these big conservancies is engaged in various community development activities, which include education programmes, health care initiatives, and infrastructure projects such as schools, clinic, boreholes, renewable energy, roadways, and fencing aimed to minimize human-wildlife conflict.

The big conservancies attract at least US \$2.5 million per year from conservation organizations investing in community development, natural resource management, and social services in Laikipia (LWF 2013). The money that the conservancies help channel into community outreach projects is raised both locally and globally through online campaigns and local fundraising events, as well as from tourists who visit conservancies and want to “give back”. When visiting the conservancies, donation opportunities for safari tourists abound. The outreach activities of conservancies are made visible in multiple

³¹ This is taken from the title of a promotional video for Lewa's education programme (LWC 2016a).

venues – such as entrances to conservancies, offices and reception areas, dining halls, and even loos – where displays and pamphlets invite tourists to partner with conservancies in their “mission” (Figures 17 and 18). Although it is obvious how the conservancies attract funding, as well as who they attract funding from, determining the specific allocation and distribution of funds is no small feat.³²

The actual amount of money that conservancies, conservation organizations, and tourists have poured into Laikipia, although substantial, therefore, remains uncertain (LWF 2013). What is clear, however, is that investing in social services in rural society has become a major focus area, both for conservancies and the wildlife sector as a whole. Annual expenditures reported by conservancies and conservation organizations indicate an increasing trend in the amount of conservation funds being spent on education specifically. At one level, the outreach activities of conservationists reflect their will to improve life in settlements surrounding wildlife ranches and conservancies, as well as Laikipia at large (Li 2007). But investing in education, especially, is also an ideological project. Conservationists in Laikipia are not just funding education; they are funding an education in conservation (Parkinson 2012). This strategy has implications beyond simply increasing the percentage of Laikipians with a secondary degree, as it also serves to nurture support for a wildlife sector founded on an unequal property regime.

³² To-date, requests made to Laikipia’s big conservancies for official information about how much money goes into what development activities remain unanswered. Based on information that can be accessed online, OI Pejeta had raised US \$6.5 million for its community development programme by the end of 2014. While the timeline for this fundraising is unclear, it appears that the conservancy spent \$67,000 on community development in 2013, \$168,000 in 2014, and \$277,000 in 2015 – a total of \$512,000 in the past three years. From 2015 to 2020, the conservancy aims to invest another \$6.5 million into its community development programme (OPC 2015).³² Lewa’s (2016b) 2015 annual report does a significantly better job of breaking down expenditures than its past annual reports. Of the US \$4.5 million the conservancy raised in income in 2015, over US \$1.5 million went into its community development programme. This represents about 33 per cent of Lewa’s income, 10 per cent more than went into community development in 2014. More specifically, over \$1.2 million went into educational development initiatives – with community development and healthcare receiving \$140,000 and \$171,000 respectively. (Borana does not appear to publicize any of its financials.)

Figure 17: Promotional material at conservancy entrance: “community



Figure 18: A donations purse is provided to each conservancy guest



Figure 19: Private conservancy (left) versus “community land” (right), Laikipia



Figure 20: Small school in “community land” just outside a big conservancy, Laikipia



“So, what made you want to be a safari guide in the first place?” I posed this question to each of the safari guides I interviewed in Laikipia, most of who were born and raised in the county. I asked one guide, who I call Barak, this question during a scorching hot afternoon in mid-March 2015, as he drove me from a settler ranch northwest of Nanyuki to a large conservancy further south in his personal vehicle – a small 4X4 Suzuki, c. 1990. This was a relatively short journey, as we had chosen to bisect a rather large area of “community land” between the two properties as a short cut.³³ Driving through community land is nothing like driving through settler ranches or wildlife conservancies: compared to the vast expanses of green bushlands and fertile grasslands protected by electric fences and fed by the Ewaso Ng’iro via networks of pipes and dams, community land consists of dried-up plains and dust-covered thorn trees (Figures 19 and 20). On this day, a strong wind swept across the plains, obscuring the horizon behind towers of dust that stained the landscape the colour of cement mix. We drove with the windows down; the dusty hot air caused my eyes to water. Barak recounted his story for me along the way.

Barak grew up just outside the property lines of Borana Ranch in the far northeastern corner of Laikipia. It shares a now unfenced border with Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. When he was a boy, one of Barak’s uncles worked as a safari guide at Borana. This uncle used to tell Barak stories about his experiences as a guide and taught him to identify different species of birds, insects, mammals, and trees. When Barak was alone, tending to his family’s livestock, he would try to identify different birds and small mammals for himself. Barak later went to a school that was built and supported by a conservation organization, which financially supported his studies. Like many young men who grew up in the Laikipia of the early 1990s, Barak’s formal education became increasingly conservation-centric. In secondary school, he learned that he had the requirements to go

³³ On private wildlife ranches and conservancies, “community land” is used to refer to any land beyond the fences of the wildlife area in question. Such land may be government-, private-, or community-owned. In this respect, the term is often used uncritically to describe racialized communities of subsistence land users.

to tourism college. Like most other safari guides in Laikipia, Barak went to Kenya Utalii College in Nairobi. He was placed as an intern at Borana Ranch, where he was later hired full time. Barak's story is one shared by most of the safari guides that I interacted with – and by virtually all the safari guides I spoke with who grew up in Laikipia. His story also reflects the fact that education has become a strategic focus area for conservationists that have invested heavily in shaping future generations of Laikipians that not only support but actively contribute to the wildlife sector.

Most of the education programmes initiated by conservancies operate through partnerships with local civil society organizations such as LWF and NRT, a host of international organizations and donors (notably USAID), and government bodies such as Kenya's Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology. The education programme of the LWF is worth examining closely, as the organization is most explicit about the fact that investing in education is meant to shape future generations of Laikipians that fully support the wildlife sector.

The LWF's education initiatives occur under the organization's Environmental Education Programme (EEP). As mentioned, the LWF (2016b) is explicit about EEP's goal:

The long-term sustainability of conservation efforts in Laikipia is inextricably linked to the environmental awareness. Awareness is a pre-requisite for the development of attitudes and practices, and so we focus much of our attention on schoolchildren of primary school age ... We hope that by encouraging involvement through environmental education, the next generation of responsible, committed Laikipians will work for the sustained conservation of the Laikipia ecosystem.

In short, the LWF is strategically investing in education to create future citizens that have been responsabilized to conduct themselves in ways that support the wildlife sector.

One of EEP's core programme areas is supplementing the national curriculum in rural/remote schools with conservation-focused lectures and fieldtrips tailored around Laikipia's wildlife sector. Through the EEP, over 1,000 teachers have been trained using workshops and fieldtrips that provide detailed instruction on how to deliver educational content about conservation effectively. Additionally, some 13,000 students have been taken on fieldtrips to wildlife conservancies through LWF's educational bus programme, which the organization says covers over 1,000,000 ha. The bus programme offers experiential learning opportunities in wildlife conservancies to students that would otherwise, most likely, never be able to afford to pass through conservancy gates legally – certainly not as tourists. The LWF is also using film to spark an interest in wildlife conservation and management among young people in school, teaching them to value wildlife and other natural resources in ways that align with MDC (LWF 2016).

Even though the big conservancies may be of like mind about the role education plays in creating future safari subjects in Laikipia, they tend to be more explicitly concerned with improving conditions in settlements surrounding their land and providing tourists with opportunities to give back while on safari. On the webpage that Borana has devoted to its education programme, for example, the conservancy quotes Nelson Mandela's observation that "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" and states that education is "... an essential part of our conservation mission". In addition to simply providing education in the rural and remote areas surrounding its land, Borana's education programme aims to "enhance the conservation efforts for both wildlife and the environment through activities at the five schools" the conservancy supports. It does so by raising money for infrastructure, supplies, teacher salaries, and bursaries, as well as by organizing school activities to ensure that students "recognize the importance of the existence of wildlife" (BWC 2016).

Lewa is also proud of the role it plays in "shaping conservation's future" (2015, 9). Lewa provides assistance to 21 schools in the communities surrounding its 25,000-plus ha

property, for a total of 6,500 students at various levels of education. Specifically, Lewa funds infrastructure and curriculum development, student empowerment programmes, teacher training initiatives, and school supplies. Lewa also provides bursaries to students and facilitates a sponsorship programme for students through which well-meaning tourists and donors can support the education of a young person from a nearby community. “Secondary School bursaries come to \$1500/£900 per year including clothes, transport, school supplies, and tuition, and require a four-year commitment to see the child through graduation”, reads the conservancy’s website. According to Lewa, over 75 per cent of the 500 students that have received bursaries later graduated from college or university. “These students are also ambassadors of the Conservancy in their communities, representatives of Lewa’s efforts in holistic development” (LWC 2016a).

OI Pejeta’s website reads, “the benefits of wildlife conservation must be tangible to even the youngest members of local communities” (OPC 2016). By raising money for schools from tourists and other donors from around the world, OI Pejeta has contributed to the development of school infrastructure – a general term that includes classrooms, computer and science labs, dining halls, dormitories, greenhouses and green energy systems, kitchens, libraries, office blocks, and water systems – in over 36 schools surrounding the wildlife conservancy that provide educational services to over 9,000 young people. OI Pejeta focuses explicitly on addressing the issue of gender disparity in the local education system. They have tried to do so by offering 14 bursaries to young girls and constructing a girls-only dormitory at a nearby primary school. Focusing on gender – while important for ethical reasons – is also a strategic manoeuvre on the part of conservationists, as women often experience a disproportionate amount of burdens associated with the wildlife sector. Ensuring that women will support conservation, despite its burdens, is a key component in efforts to incorporate entire communities into the wildlife sector.

The efforts being made by conservation organizations to improve education and other social services in Laikipia have developed in response to very real material needs in settlements surrounding wildlife ranches and conservancies. Throughout much of the county, educational infrastructure is often dilapidated, teachers are poorly paid if at all, and it is often challenging for students – especially girls – to attend school. School fees

can be enormous burdens on rural households, which are often left to make difficult decisions about selling assets for school fees, taking on additional livelihood activities, or simply not sending children to school. In a county where only 14 per cent of the population has a secondary education, the programmes of conservancies and conservation organizations respond to the needs of underserved rural communities. Such efforts also serve to temporarily alleviate emergent frictions in the green economy and to hedge against the likelihood of future adverse reactions from below by trying to shape the expectations and desires younger generations have for the wildlife sector.

6 Conclusion

Laikipia's present-day wildlife sector is founded on a rather distinct lineage of green grabbing – a racialized land use and tenure system shaped, in large part, by the culture and economy of safari that emerged on settler cattle ranches during the colonial era. As this chapter discusses, Laikipia's history of enclosure was re-interpreted and re-institutionalized by green economy actors during the 1980s and 90s. Large-scale landholdings under white control were framed – not as colonial legacies that need to be redressed, but – as opportunities for capital accumulation via conservation. As the green economy came to fruition in the mid-1990s, new points of friction emerged between the land rights, livelihoods, and wellbeing of subsistence land users and an expanding green economy that offered only minimal benefits to non-elite groups. Pastoralist incursions, community protests, and alternative interpretations of the wildlife sector from below point to some of the more obvious areas of friction. With these frictions in mind, this chapter has discussed some of the strategies that conservationists have pursued in response to, or to pre-empt, undesirable reactions from rural society.

Specifically, this chapter demonstrates that conservationists have become adept at harnessing the symbolic power of endangered wildlife species – mainly black rhinos – to attract (global) financial, moral, and political support for green enclosures. Conservationists have channeled significant resources into militarizing private wildlife areas with highly-skilled personnel and specialized technology, including vast expanses

of electrical fences, military grade weapons, and advanced communications and surveillance technology, etc. The militarization of wildlife ranches and conservancies serves as a defensive maneuver in response to pastoralist incursions, poaching activities, and other threats to biodiversity. But it is also an offensive strategy that conservationists use to enforce desirable forms of conduct among subordinate groups in rural society.

Likewise, conservationists have also invested in providing essential social services in human settlements surrounding wildlife ranches and conservancies. By appealing to the interests and needs of relatively poor and marginalized groups through community development initiatives, conservationists seek to gain consent – and to quell sentiments of opposition when they bubble to the surface – for the wildlife sector. Conservationists explicitly target education as a tool for shaping the ideas and values of participants in rural society, as they seek to nurture future generations of Laikipians that behave in ways that prop up the wildlife sector. Yet the struggle for hegemony is not a frictionless process: some of the most pointed critiques of the wildlife sector documented during this study came from individuals that attended conservancy-funded schools and now work in the sector. This suggests, as Scott (1985) argues, that subordinate groups are often more constrained in the realm of behaviour than in that of beliefs and values.

The two-way “relationships of force in the countryside” suggest that relatively poor and marginalized groups in Laikipia are not at all mystified by conservation: they are actively engaged in a prolonged struggle over what it means to belong, and the right to belong, in Laikipia. Reactions from below – including pastoralist incursions, community protests, and even the willingness to be incorporated into the sector to varying extents – have very much shaped the strategies pursued by conservationists to grab onto, and maintain control over, land in the county. Although pastoralist incursions may be a more consistent threat to the conservation paradigm than sporadic protests are, both reactions reveal the frictions that exist between the green economy and the subsistence ethic (or ethics) in Laikipia – revealing too the normative roots of peasant reactions to green grabbing and the green economy. Just as Laikipia’s wildlife sector reflects the principles of the green economy, in this regard, it also reflects those of a peasant moral economy.

As this dissertation's final empirical chapter, *Chapter 6* analyzes the implementation of community conservancies in group ranches owned by pastoralists in Laikipia. It delves into acquiescence and incorporation in the context of CBC, analyzing both the institutional and organizational structure of the NRT and the social spaces where disparate notions of identity and belonging, livelihood and territory, encounter green grabbing in everyday life. *Chapter 6* is preceded by a short prelude that provides important contextual background about CBC in Laikipia, based on oral histories and personal biographies from one community conservancy in particular.

Prelude

Territories of difference³⁴

In mid-February 2015, I spent five days on safari using Wild Laikipia Eco-Lodge (not its real name) as a base for my safari and research activities. Wild Laikipia is a community conservancy in northern Laikipia. The eco-lodge was built on a small hill covered in thorny scrub, which protrudes out of the eastern base of the Mukogodo Hills. Facing north on the top of this hill, vast stretches of dry scrubland appear to ebb and flow against the distant rangelands of Isiolo and Samburu. When conditions are right, it is possible to discern the stern-looking face of Ololokwe on the horizon – a mountain that is considered sacred by some Samburu groups (Figure 21). At night, guests staying at the eco-lodge fall asleep to the sounds of elephants murmuring and splashing in nearby water holes, waking up in the morning – if they are fortunate – to the sound of leopard scoffing as myriad birds sound their morning alarms. What makes Wild Laikipia unique compared to other wildlife ranches and conservancies in Laikipia is that it is the only safari eco-lodge that is both owned and managed by a “community” rather than by an individual landowner or company. The eco-lodge has won numerous eco-tourism awards and was one of the British Royal Family’s preferred safari destinations in Kenya for a time. During the second day of my stay at the eco-lodge a resident safari guide who I call Francis offered to share with me a history of the Maasai group that owns Wild Laikipia, including a history of the land, the lodge, and the conservancy. I agreed, enthusiastically and gratefully, and we arranged to meet poolside mid-afternoon the following day.

³⁴ Escobar (2008)

Figure 21: Wild Laikipia at dawn, Ololokwe in background



The next day's routine went something as follows: around 06:00, a server brought a steaming thermos of *chai* ("tea") to my room. I consumed it slowly; while warming my hands with an aluminum cup filled with the steaming liquid and listening to the sounds of the bush come alive around me. The day's first activity was a hike through the bush to the sandy banks of the Ngare Ndare River, which began at 07:00. Francis and an armed guard from the conservancy accompanied me on the walk, describing key features of the terrain, flora, and fauna along the way. We passed by reticulated giraffe, Grevy's zebra, dik-dik, vulturine guinea fowl, and wait-a-bit acacias, and; I was taught the ecological and cultural significance of each. The branches of the toothbrush tree, for example, contain fluoride and can be used to brush one's teeth.

We arrived at the Ngare Ndare around 08:30, where a chef and servers from the eco-lodge had already arrived in a military-green Toyota Land Cruiser, and had started to prepare breakfast. As the only guest at the eco-lodge at the time, I seized opportunities such as this to strike up conversations with the staff about their perspectives on managing wildlife in the context of pastoralist communities, the safari tourism industry, as well as life in conservancies more generally. We discussed such topics at length, while leaning against yellow fever trees that towered above the elevated banks of the Ngare Ndare and eating our breakfast – sipping on warm *chai* between sentences.

About 100 m downstream, a young woman had brought a small herd of cattle to the river to water them. The Ngare Ndare marks the boundary between the conservancy and community land and, watching the cattle splashing in the shallow river, I found myself questioning why people in the conservancy would treat this river like an electrified fence, assuming, of course, that they did. Had our small party from the eco-lodge not been watching, perhaps the woman would have led her cattle across the river and into the green pastures of the conservancy – or perhaps not.

Breakfast along the Ngare Ndare was followed by a game drive, as we snaked our way through the conservancy and back to the eco-lodge. We arrived at the eco-lodge around 10:30. I returned to my room where I washed my face in preparation for lunch and cleaned red dust out of my ears, eyes, and fingernails. Lunch was from 12:00-13:00, by the pool,

where I would spend the following two hours scribbling field notes in my Moleskine notebook. As something of a lay ornithologist, I also took the time to document various features of the birds I had spotted or photographed around the lodge. Francis met me by the pool around 15:00, just as the heat of the day reached its peak.

As Francis prepared to share the history of Wild Laikipia with me, I set the sweating Tusker bottle that I had been sipping on to the side – wiping away a small pool of condensation that had formed underneath it – and sat up straight in my chair. Flipping to a blank page in my notebook, I asked Francis if he would permit me to audio-record our conversation. He agreed. I hit the record button and picked up my pen as he began to talk. Over the following year, I would hear numerous renditions of the story that Francis shared with me from other representatives of Wild Laikipia. Rarely, if ever, did the stories contradict each other. Most often, they simply added additional layers of nuance and insight to the well-known story of the conservancy and the people that own it. I have done my best to synthesize the many histories of Wild Laikipia that I received, while maintaining the original structure of Francis's narrative as much as possible. This is both for ease of reading and to help protect the anonymity of sources that requested it, including Francis. The oral history that follows serves as a prelude for *Chapter 6*, providing necessary background and contextual information for the analysis that follows.

I think I can give you, first of all, a brief history of this community. Later on we will come to the business side of it, which is this eco-lodge and the conservation area. To begin with, the name of the Maasai clan that owns this lodge, which I told you yesterday, has a meaning. It means “People of Wildlife”. And this is sort of a third name for this community. The first name was Laikipiak. They are named after Laikipia District. And as you know, in the old days, there used to be fighting between the Maasai communities, clans fighting against other clans, and the sources of conflict were things like grazing fields, salt licks, and watering points. That is what the clans would fight about and the clan with the strongest warriors would take the very best resources and the lesser clans would get the remains.

“How long ago was that?” I interrupted.

That was around the 19th century. And what happened is the Laikipiak were one of the strongest clans in the Maasai community. They dominated all the other Maasai clans for years and years until around that 19th century. Then the Laikipiak were conquered by the southern Maasais, and there was a big fight between the two. And it happened, in the days of the fighting, that the Laikipiak were having a big ceremony. The whole community had come together to celebrate the graduation of the senior warriors into junior elders. So most of the people were in there, and then the southern Maasai surrounded that village and they were able to kill most of the men who were in there. The ones who survived were the ones who were out of the village, I mean in the dawn of the massacre. The southern Maasai took all the livestock and the women as well, because it's a taboo in the Maasai community to kill a woman and a child. Those few who survived went into the forest as hunters and gatherers and at that time, that is when the other Maasai clans started referring to them as Dorobo.

I interrupted again: “I see, so the People of Wildlife used to be Dorobo”?

Yes, Dorobo means “hunters and gathers”. But now it's an insult to call anybody from here Dorobo. But in the old days, when they were hunters and gathers, that was their name and they survived in the forest purely on nature: digging out edible roots, fruit gathering, honey harvesting, and so on. So they depended on nature for so long until these guys, especially the Somalis from Somalia and Ethiopia, came in looking for animal trophies. And since Dorobo were in the forest, they could easily, I mean, they knew possibly where a dead elephant was; so they could get ivory. And, at that time, there was no money, so it was basically an exchange. You give me an elephant tusk, I give you a gold, five golds, three golds, or one cow. So slowly Dorobo engaged into that type of barter trade, until eventually they got back their livestock. And from there, they went back to their normal way

of life – that is pastoralism. So that is why the other clans now started calling them the People of Wildlife, meaning “people who got back their livelihood through wildlife”. From then, we lost the name Dorobo in Laikipia and up to now we are still called the People of Wildlife. All the other Maasais, they have no identifiers by that name. But we still have the Laikipia name because the district is named after us and we are still very fortunate. We are living in the same place.

[Wild Laikipia] itself is 16,500 acres, which is communally owned. It's registered as community land and it was acquired in the late 1960s by members of our community. And what generally happened was, there used to be sport-hunting safaris. I'm sure you may have heard of that, like in the 1960s and 1970s – I think even the 1940s. People from outside would come and then someone would pay money and say, “I would like to kill a lion” or buffalo or rhino. The Craig family, who still own Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, were actually involved in that kind of business and they were camping from Lewa, down to Wild Laikipia here, all the way north to Samburu. The first tourism money that we got around here was from that sport hunting, because this gentleman by the name of Ian knew some of the elders from here who he was working with and he knew that this community had this land and, actually, he floated the idea of “why don't you charge some people to come and stay in your land whenever they are doing their activities, so at least they get to pay you something?” And I remember our fathers telling us that the first money that they got from safaris – the cattle dips were still working at that time – they took to the chemist, bought pesticides against ticks, and all the community cows were treated with money generated from that business.

Slowly that sport hunting continued; and, as I told you, Lewa used to be a cattle ranch. But eventually, Ian decided to change it into a conservancy, a rhino sanctuary and all that. What happened with him is that one day they [the Craigs] said that they were camping somewhere further down in

Samburu, it's called Sera Landing, and from their camp site they could hear a lot of gun shots and they decided to go and see what was happening around there. When they got to the spot, they found a family of elephants all killed in one spot and the streams around there were actually flowing with blood. You can imagine how many litres of blood an elephant has. Imagine ten down in one spot. That became the turning point for Mr. Ian Craig, because he just looked at a whole family of elephants down and he definitely knew that if all of us continued this way, in the next few years, we would have nothing left for the coming generations. That became his turning point and he decided to become a conservationist. When he came back to Lewa, I think I told you yesterday, he started a rhino sanctuary called the Serengeti Rhino Sanctuary together with a lady – I think she was also of UK origin, but she stayed in South Africa – called Anna Merz. Anna, she died a few years ago, was also very passionate for rhinos and all the other wildlife and, together with her, they started that small rhino sanctuary and introduced rhinos. Because even rhinos used to roam here freely, but all of them were killed by the sport hunting and poaching as well. So they started that rhino sanctuary there and eventually a lot of people developed interest in conservation and Ian was able to turn the whole land into a conservancy and, as I told you yesterday, they have over 100 rhinos (both white and black) within Lewa and the conservancy is really doing well in terms of conservation of endangered species like Grevy's zebras, those black rhinos and white rhinos, and we have all the cats there and it's really doing very, very well.

But Ian realized that "I think I need a hand with my neighbours to be able to be successful in this idea of conservation". And since he knew a lot of elders from around here, he started approaching them with the idea of turning this group ranch [Wild Laikipia] into a conservation area and, of course, setting up this eco-lodge to generate some income for the community. He came down, met the elders, told them the idea, and the elders called a big meeting whereby all the members of the community came. They discussed about

the idea and it was basically treated with a lot of suspicion, especially with the history in Laikipia here. Laikipia has a very interesting history. I think in the entire republic, Laikipia is one of the places with the biggest percentage of land still under the colonial white settlers ownership. I can actually tell you that 72 per cent of the land is owned by white settlers. So it is only 28 per cent that is left to the local population. And that is where the suspicion came from because especially the young people were saying, “OK this is a very small piece of land that is left for us, so this is just another move to take it again and so we are not going to embrace this idea”. But Ian was very, very determined.

The oral history of Wild Laikipia, and of the People of Wildlife, reiterates that Laikipia’s wildlife sector is intimately intertwined with the county’s colonial past. Nature has long been an arena of political struggle in Kenya’s highlands, even before the colonizers arrived. Pastoralists in Laikipia, and in the arid/semi-arid rangelands to the north, are engaged in a prolonged struggle over the land, resources, and territories that were wrested from them during the colonial administration.

Many settlers have found themselves conversely wrestling to maintain their rights to, and control over, contested lands in Laikipia. Even though the Kenyan state has long maintained the legitimacy of settler rights to land in the highlands, societal pressure has forced settlers to make certain concessions to marginalized groups with claims to settled land, such as pastoralists. Community conservancies represent an effort to protect wildlife without compromising the interests and rights of pastoralist groups.

As an NRT conservancy, Wild Laikipia’s natural resources are managed to facilitate the production of livestock with the protection of wildlife and their habitats, as well as to generate revenues for community development through wildlife tourism and other “conservation enterprises”. The type of wildlife conservation and tourism that happens at Wild Laikipia tends to be regarded as alternative to the mainstream approaches associated with Laikipia’s big conservancies, where pastoralists are usually actively excluded from wildlife areas (*Chapter 5*). Accordingly, safaris at Wild Laikipia look very

different than they do elsewhere. Tourists at Wild Laikipia get to encounter both livestock and wildlife while on safari; they are exposed to both safari and “local” culture. In short, some efforts have been taken to decolonize the safari experience in Laikipia and to help tourists unlearn what they know about nature and people.

Although community conservancies have created some much needed space for pastoralists in Laikipia’s wildlife sector, however, they also involve a number of frictions that lead to serious questions about the extent to which this form of Community-Based Conservation (CBC) truly is a community-friendly alternative. *Chapter 6* responds to the question of whether community conservancies are alternative. Responding to this question in an informed manner – based on the experiences, perspectives, and reactions of people in community conservancies – reveals emergent frictions between CBC, and an expanding green economy, and existing notions of livelihood, territory, and wellbeing in Laikipia’s “territories of difference”. Considering alternative/oral histories of spaces such as Wild Laikipia is, therefore, a vital prerequisite for analyzing peoples’ experiences with and reactions to green grabbing in the present.

Chapter 6

Community conservancies as new green enclosures

1 Introduction

In December 2015, USAID announced that it was increasing its support for what it calls community-led conservation in northern Kenya. As part of its commitment to “ramp up conservation, anti-poaching and counter-wildlife trafficking” in the region, USAID (2015) offered a new US \$20 million grant over a five-year period to an organization called the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT). Since its establishment in 2004, the NRT has become one of the most influential conservation organizations in Kenya, to the extent that it has been likened to an “alternative government” in the northern rangelands where it operates.³⁵ Kenya’s northern rangelands, home to diverse groups of pastoralists, have long experienced economic, political, and social marginalization relative to the rest of Kenya (Catley et al. 2013; Lind and Barrero 2014; Letai 2015). The NRT emerged from conservationists’ efforts to use Community-Based Conservation (CBC) to bring peace, security, and social services to pastoralists through the creation of community conservancies – to incentivize groups that were historically indifferent or hostile towards conservation to embrace the wildlife sector. The NRT (2015b) claims, however, that it does not undermine the ownership or autonomy of pastoralists through the implementation of community conservancies. It even goes so far as to call itself an “indigenous organization” (NRT 2013, 8), an assertion that is clearly unfounded given some of the findings discussed in this chapter.

By supporting the NRT, USAID has opted to pursue an approach to wildlife conservation that is decidedly community-friendly in discourse. In justifying its decision to fund the NRT, USAID heaps enormous praise on the organization’s CBC model, which the US agency

³⁵ Interviews, 24–26 May 2016.

refers to as “grassroots” and “community-led”. USAID suggests that the NRT is improving the lives and livelihoods of more than 25,000 people living in 3,200,000 ha of land in northern Kenya. “Through NRT,” claims USAID, “communities learn and practice wildlife conservation, natural resources management, and non-violent conflict resolution. They also develop tourism and nature-based enterprises to preserve the northern rangelands and diversify their livelihoods” (USAID 2015, 1). Such endeavors are standard components of CBC throughout Africa. Although many international organizations still herald CBC as an innovative “alternative” to mainstream conservation, CBC has a long and tumultuous history in Africa.

As much as CBC has altered discourses of wildlife conservation in Africa, no longer explicitly emphasizing the exclusion of Local and/or Indigenous People (L/IP) and their livelihoods from wildlife areas, it has rarely been all that effective at *actually* granting such groups meaningful autonomy over land, resources, and the benefits accruing from wildlife. Some evidence from Africa suggests that CBC not only regularly fails to meet its own objectives, but that it can also exacerbate environmental inequalities and conflicts (Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Songorwa 1999; Alexander and McGregor 2000; Wolmer and Ashley 2003; Brockington 2004; Jones 2006; Igoe and Croucher 2007; Nelson and Agrawal 2008; Büscher 2009; Büscher and Dressler 2012; Greiner 2012). The case of Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) in Zimbabwe, also a USAID-funded programme, is one of the better-known examples of CBC “gone wrong”. Much like the NRT’s CBC model, CAMPFIRE aimed to enhance the autonomy local/Indigenous communities experienced over wildlife, and to re-distribute the benefits of wildlife more evenly throughout rural civil society. CAMPFIRE’s lofty ambitions were undermined by coercion in decision-making processes, new land use restrictions and forms of exclusion, and conflict between humans and wildlife.

This chapter demonstrates that similar critiques of CBC have emerged from within the NRT’s community conservancies in Laikipia (Greiner 2012). Yet such critiques are rarely given their due in mainstream or allegedly alternative spaces of conservation, especially within the institutional and organization structures of the NRT itself. Moreover, shockingly few efforts have been taken outside the NRT to document peoples’ stories about,

experiences with, and perspectives on CBC. This chapter interrogates whether the NRT's CBC model really is a community-friendly alternative in Laikipia's wildlife sector, as proponents suggest. Although Wild Laikipia is used to elucidate certain findings, information from other community conservancies in Laikipia, as well as from neighbouring counties, contribute to the analysis and discussion.

In light of conflicting information on the extent to which CBC is living up to its claims in Laikipia, three main contradictions in NRT programming challenge notions of CBC as alternative, revealing the importance of understanding community conservancies as the most recent wave of green enclosure in Laikipia. The first contradiction is that, rather than actively maintaining the autonomy of community conservancies as the NRT suggests, a paternalistic institutional and organization structure – coupled with a lack of revenues generated by wildlife tourism and other economic activities – has created a colonial environment in which communities depend on support from external actors. Second, and relatedly, the NRT's efforts to create conservation enterprises in community conservancies have not improved peoples' livelihoods in ways they perceive to be meaningful or sustainable. Not only do many community members continue to experience socio-economic marginalization in conservancies, but the devastating consequences that can arise from living with wildlife are also seen as particularly unfair. The third major contradiction of CBC in Laikipia is that the NRT's efforts to secure land for people and wildlife have not reduced conflict, either between people or people and wildlife, and has created new forms of exclusion in community lands. These and other contradictions have led to critiques of the NRT's CBC model from within community conservancies and civil society more generally. Some outspoken representatives from community conservancies and rights organizations in Laikipia suggest that CBC is simply another way for whites to grab land from L/IP in the name of conservation. In short, for many, CBC is anything but a community-friendly alternative to wildlife conservation; it is a form of green grabbing that adversely incorporating territories of difference into the wildlife sector.

In proceeding with analysis, this chapter begins with a general discussion of the benefits and burdens that L/IP have experienced because of CBC in Africa. It then links broader trends in CBC to the context in Laikipia, and to the NRT in particular. I describe the

institutional and organizational structure of the NRT before drawing attention to the case of Wild Laikipia. Subsequent sections rely on research findings from Wild Laikipia to elucidate the benefits and burdens of CBC in Laikipia. The analysis is grouped under three headings, which correspond to NRT programming in conservancies: “social investments”, “conservation enterprises”, and “peace and security”. The chapter concludes with a summative discussion, suggesting that CBC is just a new social-ecological terrain of struggle over identity and belonging in Laikipia.

2 Community-Based Conservation: The new normal?

When Ian Craig began to venture into the rangelands north of his family’s ranch to convince pastoralists to be incorporated into the wildlife sector, CBC was already spreading rapidly throughout Africa. By the mid-1990s, “community” became a central area of concern for large conservation organizations, such as Conservation International, the International Development Research Centre, The Nature Conservancy, the World Wide Fund for Nature, and USAID, etc. Despite rising to prominence in the early 1990s, some scholars have pointed out that the roots of CBC can be traced back to the efforts of colonial administrations to govern land and other natural resources indirectly through local communities (Roe et al. 2009). This lineage helps contextualize some of the continuities that exist between the historical transnational project of colonialism and the current transnational project of conservation governance. CBC now involves building “arrangements for the decentralized sustainable utilization of wild resources” (Wolmer and Ashley 2003, 31), drawing communities into conservation, capital into conservation, and communities into capitalist conservation (Adams and Hulme 1998; Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Jones 2006). This reflects global ideologies of nature as a source of capitalist use/exchange values, promulgated by global conservation actors and organizations (MacDonald and Corson 2012) (*Chapter 2*).

The emphasis placed on community in conservation in the 1990s reflects increasing insistence in the previous decade on integrating popular participation into the design, implementation, and evaluation of conservation/development programmes (Chambers

1983; Agrawal and Gibson 1999). One of the main discursive justifications for CBC was that L/IP have intricate knowledges of local ecological relationships, better equipping them to manage natural resources through customary institutions than outsiders through top-down development models (Brosius et al. 1998). Thus, some scholars and policy-makers began to promote CBC as a remedial response to state efforts to coerce people into conservation – or out of conservation areas – that were usually unsuccessful and morally dubious. As should be evident, however, such coercion has since become the responsibility of private and other non-governmental actors.

This shift from a state- to community-centric focus in conservation was both an ethical, which sought to empower marginalized groups through participatory processes, and an adaptive one, which was driven by global capitalist interests. Arguably with the best of intentions, CBC aimed to improve the effectiveness of conservation interventions by tailoring them to the needs and interests of subsistence land users that had been marginalized, or discriminated against, in historical conservation interventions spearheaded by colonial authorities. The shift away from externally driven, top-down conservation programmes towards locally controlled, decentralized approaches to natural resource management also reflected a discursive shift about relationships between humans and the environment in developing contexts, as it positioned L/IP as stewards, rather than destroyers, of the environment (Martin et al. 2013). Some scholarly work helped in this regard by espousing the view that humans have always been integral to ecosystems – even the wild landscapes of eastern Africa that might, at first glance, appear devoid of human influence (Agrawal and Gibson 1999).

For decades, dominant accounts of human-environment relationships by mainstream conservation/development actors portrayed L/IP as obstacles to the efficient, rational use of natural resources. The interests of communities, who relied on regular access to natural resources for food, water, fuel, and animal feed, were believed to be at odds with the greater good of conservation (Agrawal and Gibson 1999). Moreover, customary land uses, tenure systems, and livelihood practices – often reflecting centuries of adaption in natural resource management (Robbins 2012) – were portrayed as backwards, over-exploitive, and unrestrained (Neumann 1998; 2004). Such beliefs were established

through colonial discourses and technologies of rule, and later maintained their policy traction with the help of Garret Hardin's (1968) theory on the "tragedy of the commons". In Hardin's scenario, centralized regulation and land privatization were espoused as a panacea for environmental degradation and the over-exploitation of resources in collective or common property systems, reflecting a bias towards western-centric and modernized approaches to governing land, resources, and people (Robbins 2012).

"Fortress conservation", and other misguided applications of Hardin's theory, is still being implemented throughout Africa to protect wildlife and their habitats, forests and pastures, water sources and marine ecosystems, and other natural resources (Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Brockington 2002; Büscher 2016b). In Laikipia, as in much of Africa, there appears to be a regressive trend towards fortress conservation – even contradictorily in the context of CBC, as this chapter discusses. Simply put, fortress conservation works by excluding subsistence land users from accessing land and by punishing them when they do (Brockington 2002). In Kenya, for example, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) started a "shoot-on-sight" initiative when Richard Leakey was Director in the 1980s. Such policies allowed people found in protected areas to be shot on sight if they were suspected of being poachers. The justice implications of these and other such measures are clearly problematic, as Neumann (2004) points out. But in addition to forcefully controlling and violently punishing people in the name of conservation, fortress models ignore exploitative political-economic conditions that contribute to environmental degradation and marginalization in the first place.

Ultimately, where fortress conservation assumes a trade-off between community development and conservation, seeing the two as incompatible, CBC assumes that the goals of communities and conservationists can complement one another (Jones 2006). Sometimes referred to as "conservation-for-development" (West 2006), the development side of CBC includes activities such as generating revenues through wildlife tourism, instituting sustainable land use regulations, creating new livelihood opportunities, and improving social services (Jones 2006). Because CBC is believed to be an effective way to redistribute the benefits of wildlife throughout rural society, it is also seen as a more socially conscious, equitable, and just approach to conservation. It is in this sense that

CBC is often claimed to be an alternative to mainstream conservation, such as centralized and/or fortress conservation models.

On the surface, the merits of CBC appear obvious when juxtaposed to top-down, even violent, approaches to protecting wildlife. For one, making community central to wildlife conservation “permits the easy contestation of dominant narratives that favor state control or privatization of resources and their management” (Li 1996, as cited in, Agrawal and Gibson 1999), such as those rooted in notions espoused by the tragedy of the commons. Moreover, in addition to including L/IP in decision-making processes, CBC attempts to redistribute the benefits and burdens conservation more fairly in rural society, considering persistent inequalities that tend to occur along the lines of class, gender, and race. This goal is mainly pursued through strategies that are meant to improve land tenure security for marginalized groups whose access to and control over natural resources was wrested from them through colonial land policies and/or exclusionary forms of conservation (Wolmer and Ashley 2003; Brockington 2004; Jones 2006). But even though CBC seems like an approach to conservation that is more equitable and fair, perhaps even more sustainable in the long run, CBC has proven to be far from problem free.

Consider the case of Zimbabwe’s Communal Area Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE). Following independence in the 1980s, Zimbabwe amended its Wildlife Act to make it easier for small-scale farmers on community-owned land to benefit from profit-generating approaches to wildlife conservation that had largely been reserved for white settlers (Gibson 1999; Adams 2004; Jones 2006; Taylor 2009). CAMPFIRE was started in the mid-1980s and was supported by a range of western donors, such as USAID, which is now a major donor of the NRT in Kenya. The programme was praised for devolving natural resource management (including the management of large mammals) to the local level and distributing the benefits of wildlife more evenly throughout rural society (Jones 2006; Frost and Bond 2008). Yet by “the mid-1990s, mention of the development programme known as CAMPFIRE was enough to provoke threats of violence from the residents of the Gwampa Valley in southern Nyaki and Lupane districts of Zimbabwe” (Alexander and McGregor 2000, 605).

In these and other parts of Zimbabwe, community experiences with CBC did not live up to its promises. Rather than having their voices heard, land rights secured, and being equipped to benefit from natural resources in sustainable ways, most people in their respective communities experienced the opposite (Alexander and McGregor 2000). People complained that they were not properly consulted, that their voices were ignored in decision-making processes, and coercive measures to comply with the programme were also documented. Threats of eviction and new restrictions on land – to create space for wildlife – did not bode well among residents that had recently participated in a liberation war centred on land. Moreover, the prospect of living alongside dangerous or destructive animals was unsettling to many community members (Alexander and McGregor 2000). Importantly, the problems experienced through CAMPFIRE in Nyaki and Lupane are not unique to the programme.

Similar critiques have been levied against CBC initiatives across the continent. It has been demonstrated that CBC often serves the interests of powerful conservation actors such as governments, international organizations, and private entities (Igoe and Brockington 2007; Igoe and Croucher 2007; Metcalfe and Kepe 2008; Nelson and Agrawal 2008). Similarly, mechanisms for devolving authority over wildlife to local people rarely ensure widespread and meaningful participation in decision-making processes, given that communities are riddled with their own competing interests and identities, forms of coercion, and unequal power relationships (Agrawal and Gibson 1999; Songorwa 1999; Alexander and McGregor 2000; Jones 2006; Nelson and Agrawal 2008). This has often translated into the unfair distribution of wildlife benefits and burdens, as well as a lack of recognition for different meanings and values attached to wildlife (Sommerville et al. 2010; Büscher and Dressler 2012; Martin et al. 2013). The actual contribution of wildlife tourism and other market-based incentives is also constrained to a limited number of people that actually get to participate in them, as well as by minimal or inconsistent revenues owing to the fickle nature of tourism (Wolmer and Ashley 2003; Kiss 2004; Nelson and Agrawal 2008; Büscher 2009). Moreover, many participants in CBC report limited changes to their livelihoods and complain of dependency on external support, often in ways resembling persistent or new forms of colonialism (Songorwa 1999; Kiss

2004; Jones 2006; Manyara and Jones 2007). As the remainder of this chapter demonstrates, most of these critiques apply to CBC in Laikipia.

Ultimately, although community-based approaches to conserving wildlife appear considerably more sensitive to the unique needs, interest, and realities of L/IP, the actual implications of CBC for local groups clearly require ongoing scrutiny (Martin et al. 2013). This is especially true given that, in both Laikipia and Kenya, CBC appears to have become the new norm in conservation – one that is attracting significant moral and financial support from donors around the world. Persistent conflicts and hardships encountered by communities and diverse groups within communities through CBC in Laikipia emphasize the importance of asking, to what extent are conservation alternatives actually alternative (Robbins 2007)? Some activists and civil society representatives in Laikipia would answer that there is nothing alternative about CBC. Some would even argue that CBC has made things worse for people, that it is “colonialism 2.0” or “colonialism part two”.³⁶ Others are subtler, balancing their critiques of CBC with consideration for the benefits it has brought to them and/or their communities. In evaluating CBC in Laikipia, specifically, I strive to account for nuanced perspectives of its benefits and burdens. Before analyzing the contradictions and frictions of CBC in Laikipia, this chapter considers its institutional and organizational context.

3 The Northern Rangelands Trust and “Wild Laikipia”

3.1 The structure of community conservation

Since being formed in 2004, the NRT has arguably become the most influential CBC organization in Kenya. After facilitating the establishment of Wild Laikipia Eco-Lodge in 1995, Ian Craig continued to advocate for the implementation of community conservancies in the pastoralist rangelands north of his family’s ranch, now Lewa Wildlife Conservancy. Much like members of Wild Laikipia, however, most of the communities

³⁶ Interview, 21 May 2016

that Craig approached were skeptical about his true intentions due to memories of the land injustices suffered by Maasai groups during the colonial era. Most members of Wild Laikipia, for example, thought, “This is just another *mzungu* [“a white person”] trying to steal our land”.³⁷ They feared, as Tom Letiwa, community coordinator for Namunyak Conservancy, says, “that their land would be turned into a national park or wildlife sanctuary, and cattle would be excluded ... However, Ian kept coming back” (NRT 2013, 7). In response to such fears, Craig would invest significant time and resources into communities, even taking village elders on excursions to Lewa or Maasai Mara to convince them that wildlife could bring money into their communities through safari tourism. “It took time, but eventually the community accepted that the idea of setting up a conservancy was noble and good” (NRT 2013, 7). As Francis noted in the prelude to this chapter, “Ian was very, very determined”.

Craig has reflected on the time and resources he invested in the initial conservancies, saying that, “in these pastoralist societies, trust is massively important ... It takes a long time to build up trust. If the communities didn’t trust us, we could achieve nothing” (NRT 2013, 9). Craig has certainly proven to be persuasive, but it helps that his family, conservancy, and the NRT are well connected to powerful patrons such as the British Royal Family. As the 1990s progressed, increasingly more communities agreed to let their land be used for wildlife conservation. There are now 27 NRT community conservancies in nine different counties in Kenya, all of which are located in the arid/semi-arid rangelands. This accounts for approximately 3,200,000 ha of land in Kenya.

When the NRT was formed in 2004, it was tasked with coordinating and supporting a growing number of community conservancies. According to the NRT (2015a, 8), the organization ...

... supports the development of conservancy institutions, by raising awareness, setting standards, overseeing board elections and training board members. It helps raise funds for the conservancies and provides

³⁷ Interview, 18 February 2016

advice on how to manage their affairs. It supports a wide range of training, conservancy programmes such as security and grassland management, and helps broker agreements with investors. It also monitors performance, providing donors, investors and government funders with a degree of oversight and quality assurance.

Such activities are meant to contribute to NRT's mission to "develop resilient community conservancies which transform people's lives, secure peace and conserve natural resources" (NRT 2015a, 8). This quote also demonstrates just how vital Market-Driven Conservation (MDC) is to NRT programming, and the role the organization plays in creating market-friendly conditions in group ranches. This is, according to many critics, a significant source of friction in the context of CBC among pastoralist communities.

According to the NRT, a community conservancy is a "community-owned and community-run institution that aims to improve biodiversity conservation, land management and the livelihoods of its constituents over a defined area of land traditionally owned, or used, by that constituent community" (2015b, 10). In a document entitled *A Guide to Establishing Community Conservancies – the NRT Model*, the organization explains how and why its definition of community conservancies differs from the new Wildlife Conservation and Management Act of 2013 (WCMA). Whereas the WCMA refers to land set aside for wildlife conservation, the NRT emphasizes integrating existing land uses and livelihoods into the wildlife sector. According to the NRT, it does not actively exclude pastoralists or their livelihoods from conservation areas once they are established – as is the case in most of the wildlife ranches and conservancies in Laikipia owned by settlers, foreign nationals, or international organizations, and in most national protected areas. Rather than create conservancies to exclude pastoralists from accessing and using land for their livestock, the NRT uses conservancies to incorporate pastoralists into wildlife conservation efforts. On the surface, this rationale appears alternative to the dominant strategy of conservation in Laikipia, which is to cordon off land for wildlife, rigorously defend it, and develop corporate social responsibility projects in communities surrounding wildlife areas. However, critics within and outside conservancies question this claim.

Although the NRT aims to incorporate pastoralist groups and wildlife in their territories into regional conservation activities, the organization alleges that it does not compromise the independence of communities in the process. Rather, according to the NRT, communities are granted “all” the decision-making rights on their land. As this chapter demonstrates, however, this is a contradiction and source of friction. In reality, each community has to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the NRT by which conservancy Boards of Directors are held to account. As much as the NRT claims that its organizational structure allows communities to retain autonomy over their territories, the colonial context of Laikipia makes CBC seem overly paternalistic and places constraints on the capacity of community members to meaningfully shape the conditions in which they live. Accordingly, before analyzing how CBC works for or against communities, it is important to grasp the institutional and organizational structures that link communities (and their local ecologies) to the NRT and vice versa. The following information hints at the institutional clout that powerful, elite conservation actors in Laikipia have over community conservancies. This will later be critiqued by drawing from the perspectives of community representatives.

3.2 CBC as a movement structured in dominance

As the oral history of Wild Laikipia suggests, settlers that decided to get into the conservation business in the late 1980s and early 1990s quickly decided that creating space for wildlife behind the fences of large-scale ranches and conservancies was not enough to ensure the safety of wildlife on their property. This is because large mammals – primarily elephants – regularly migrate to-and-from the relative safety of the ranches and conservancies through vast networks of different land uses. Accordingly, wild animals also needed to be protected on their voyage through community lands.

The NRT (2013, 6) articulates its rationale for CBC in a document, entitled *The Story of the Northern Rangelands Trust*, which reads:

But there was a problem [after Craig decided to turn his family's ranch into a conservancy]: while the rhino were restrained from leaving Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, other species, such as elephant, giraffe, zebra and lion, could move freely across the landscape. Frequently, animals that had spent time at Lewa were butchered for meat, or in the case of elephants killed for their ivory. It became clear that Lewa's wildlife would only flourish with the help of surrounding communities.

"Help", in this context, is a superficial word choice. In reality, conservationists needed to find ways to control what happened to wildlife outside the property boundaries of white-owned conservancies – including measures for controlling the attitudes, behaviours, and decisions being made in community-owned lands.

The implementation of CBC in community lands became a prime avenue for conservationists to influence how pastoralists access, manage, and make decisions about land and other natural resources in their territories. The governance structures of CBC have not only altered decision-making in communities, they have also placed limits on how land can be used, by whom, and to what ends. Even though the NRT suggests, in its promotional materials, that communities retain their autonomy and freedom, they have been critiqued for just the opposite – for controlling how land is used in conservancies, excluding people within communities from accessing land, and fostering an environment of fear and mistrust. Although people do not deny the benefits that communities have accrued through CBC, it was also described to me during interviews as "indirect colonialism", "colonialism", and a "bad model".³⁸ Representatives from one civil society organization engaged in activism around conservation described the NRT as "lords of impunity".³⁹ Such claims surely demand a close examination of the NRT's institutional and organizational structure, as well as its actual benefits and burdens.

³⁸ Interviews, 18 May 2016; 21 May 2016; 26 May 2016

³⁹ Interview, 21 May 2016

To begin with, the NRT is governed by an elected Council of Elders (CoE) that consists of 30 members. These members are usually Chairs of community conservancies and representatives from local governments, KWS, civil society organizations, and relevant private sector actors. The CoE designs NRT policies, including bylaws for administration and operations. It also “polices” – to use the NRT’s own language – member conservancies, enforcing NRT standards among poorly- or under-performing conservancies. Additionally, the Council is responsible for appointing the NRT’s Board of Directors, which holds the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to account. As the powerhouse of the NRT, the CoE not only governs the organization’s performance but each community that signs a MoU with the NRT.

The NRT Board, under the CoE, consists of five institutional members: KWS, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Ol Pejeta Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, and Fauna and Flora International. The latter two organizations are not only major NRT donors; they also recently secured the land that both Lewa and Ol Pejeta are located on. Both Lewa and Ol Pejeta now function as not-for-profits that manage the conservancies on behalf of their respective owners/partners. Both organizations, particularly Fauna and Flora International, also happen to have long histories of promoting the private enclosure of land and other natural resources for conservation. This is particularly true of Fauna and Flora International, which was formerly known as the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire (Prendergast and Adams 2003).

The ties between the NRT and Lewa are especially strong. After the NRT was formed in 2004, Craig remained the CEO for Lewa and the NRT. Although this has since changed, Lewa plays a direct role in supporting security logistics and livelihoods in NRT-member conservancies, and Craig remains a key player in the organization. As Director of Conservation for the NRT, Craig was ironically awarded the Order of the British Empire in June 2016. Craig also remains a Strategic Advisor for Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (NRT 2016). In short, elite members of Laikipia’s conservation bloc occupy powerful positions in the NRT’s governance structure and, crucially, set the terms by which communities are incorporated into green grabs through the NRT.

Importantly, this structure is a paternalistic one that constrains the autonomy of NRT conservancies. When conservancies perform poorly against NRT standards, for example, they face punitive measures from the organization. These measures, such as reduced access to NRT finances or programmes, are intended to coerce improved behaviour and performance out of conservancies. As a membership organization, it is quite reasonable for the NRT to maintain, even enforce, its standards. But its accountability and governance structures become problematic in the context of the local/Indigenous communities in which the NRT operates, which have experienced prolonged socio-economic and political marginalization. Many civil society and community representatives state that resisting the NRT is simply not an option.

NRT conservancies, themselves, are governed by local Boards of Directors (BoDs), which are held accountable to NRT MoUs. The BoDs consists of 12 elected representatives from the NRT, KWS, tourism investors, community members, and local government officials. Each board member is elected by a community for a three-year term and is eligible to run for two consecutive terms for a total of six years. Boards are the executive bodies of community conservancies, charged with managing the conservancy's land and resources. More specifically, they are responsible for hiring conservancy employees and monitoring the performance of conservancy activities, staff, and programmes. The BoDs also communicate decisions, finances, and the conservancy's overall performance to community members during Annual General Meetings (AGMs). These are the spaces in which conservancy decisions, practices, and performance are made transparent to conservancy members. Once per year, each Board holds an AGM with community members. During AGMs, board elections take place and votes are cast on decisions about conservancy policies and programmes. Importantly, however, most community members have little to no understanding about relevant economic and/or financial principles; so, it is extremely difficult for them to participate in accountability and decision-making processes in meaningful ways. "We tried to explain the idea of 'value depreciation' to the community during a recent AGM", a Wild Laikipia staff member told me. "They simply could not understand it. They asked, 'Does the Land Cruiser still work?"

Do the wheels spin? Then how can it depreciate?”⁴⁰ The staff member used this anecdote to illustrate just how difficult it is for community members to participate in key decision-making processes in meaningful ways, despite institutional arrangements.

Similarly, the BoDs are also responsible for ensuring that the benefits of conservation are distributed throughout communities in line with Benefit Distribution Plans (BDPs). BDPs outline how revenues and other benefits – such as infrastructure, education, and health programmes – are spread throughout different settlements, zones, and groups in conservancies. Typically, 40 per cent of revenues generated by community conservancies are re-invested in conservancy operations, with the remaining 60 per cent allocated to community development initiatives. Importantly, however, revenues generated by commercial activities in conservancies only account for a small percentage of conservancy income. Commercial revenues account for 12 per cent of total conservancy income, with 10 per cent coming from local government sources and 78 per cent from donors such as USAID, Danish International Development Cooperation, the Royal Netherlands Embassy, The Nature Conservancy, and Tusk Trust. As the next section demonstrates, the NRT has facilitated numerous interventions in pastoralist communities that community members perceive as much needed and overly beneficial. Yet a paternalistic institutional and organization structure, coupled with dependence on a fickle tourism industry and external funding, have deeply constrained the extent to which people benefit from wildlife on their land.

3.3 The case of Wild Laikipia: A brief overview

Wild Laikipia conservancy is located in the northeast corner of Laikipia, where the county borders a strip of Isiolo that acts like a small buffer zone between Laikipia and Samburu County. The conservancy encompasses about 9,433 ha and has a population of 1,448 people. Most people in Wild Laikipia identify as Maasai. However, many community members do not inhabit land in, or even directly bordering, the conservancy. Many live in

⁴⁰ Interview, 4 May 2015

surrounding areas such as Chumvi, Ethi, and Ngare Ndare, but continue to participate in community life through the fee-paying membership structure of the group ranch.

Two main geographical features bound the conservancy itself, which are the Ngare Ndare River to the east and the Mukogodo Hills to the west and southwest (Figure 22). The conservancy is located at the base of a steep escarpment at the edge of settler-owned Borana and Lewa conservancies, where the Laikipia Plateau drops into low-lying plains that mark the beginning of Kenya's northern rangelands. This drop in altitude – from about 2,000 m to a depth of 800 m – corresponds to marked ecological changes and signifies the imagined and real geographical limits of the white highlands. Wild Laikipia's territory is characterized by arid and semi-arid savanna and dry bushlands that extend far north to Ethiopia and Somalia disrupted only by small ranges of isolated hills (LWF 2012). The semi-arid ecosystem provides habitat for a number mammals that are prioritized by the wildlife sector for their endangered status, including Cape hunting dogs, elephants, Grevy's zebra, and two white rhinos.

Wildlife conservation and management activities at Wild Laikipia mainly involve monitoring wildlife populations, securing their habitats, and combatting/deterring threats to wildlife and their habitats. Such threats include land invasions, illegal grazing, and hunting, which are closely monitored and regulated by conservancy personnel and a team of armed wildlife rangers. Most of the conservancy is demarcated for tourists and for safari activities, with 20 per cent remaining for use by community members. Within the tourism area, pastoralists are inhibited from grazing and watering their livestock and water points have been developed to attract wildlife. Such measures are meant to maintain the wilderness appeal of the conservancy for tourists and to secure stable, breeding populations of endangered wildlife species (Figure 23).

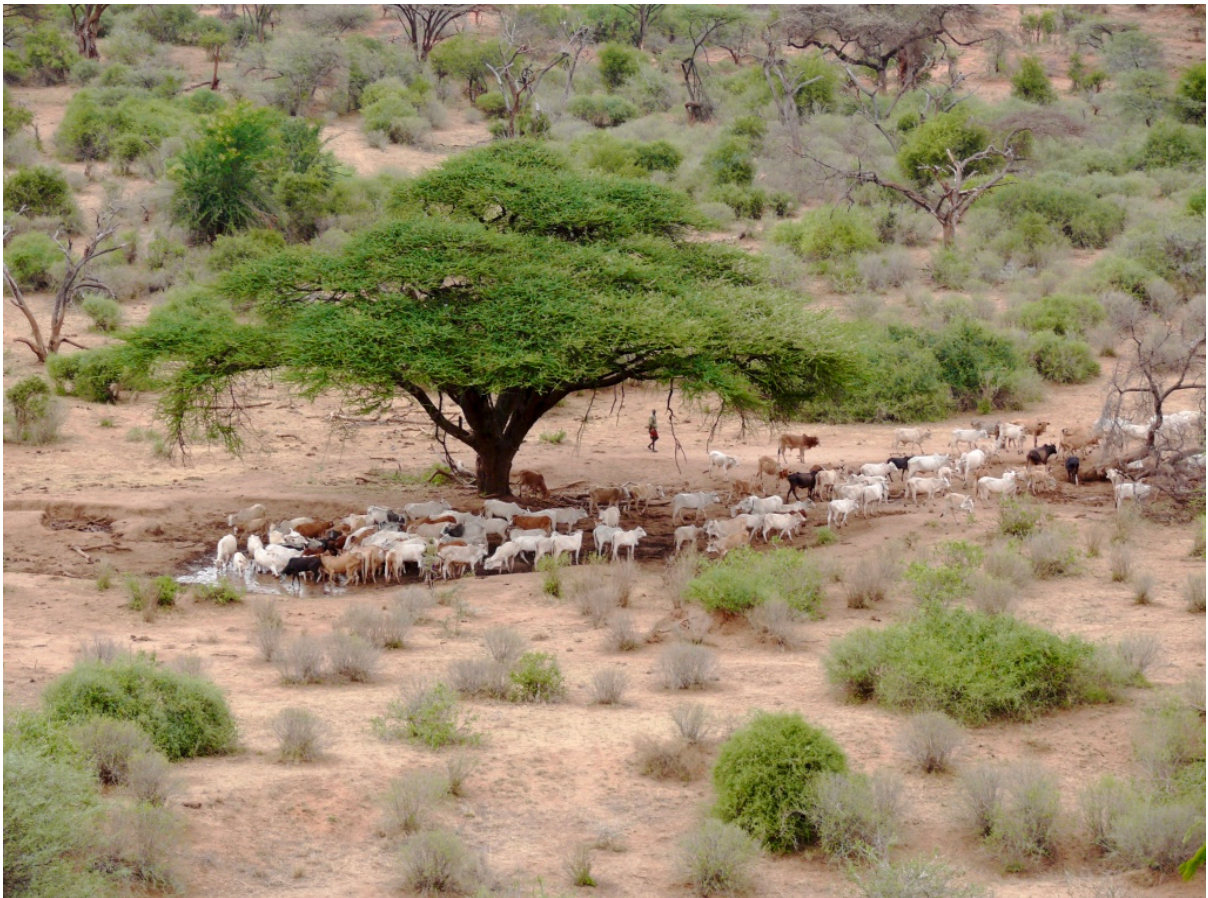
Figure 22: View of Wild Laikipia from the south, facing north



Figure 23: Cattle *boma* at dusk, Wild Laikipia



Figure 24: Cattle visit a watering hole inside Wild Laikipia's conservancy area



The NRT considers degraded grazing lands a primary threat to wildlife, livestock, and human wellbeing throughout the rangelands. As such, the grazing management programme at Wild Laikipia involves strengthening a preexisting Grazing Committee, hiring a Grazing Coordinator, and implementing “holistic management” strategies. About 80 per cent of Wild Laikipia’s total land area is conserved using holistic management, an approach to land management that combines customary practices with modern techniques. Quite simply, holistic management involves grazing livestock in tightly clustered herds in planned, designated grazing blocks (Figure 24). These blocks are rotated to distribute nutrients from livestock dung, and other beneficial aspects of their behaviour, throughout the conservancy.

Holistic management has been widely adopted among Laikipia’s conservation community, particularly in settler ranches and conservancies, and is based on the principle that livestock can play an integral role in re-generating plants and healthy rangelands. According to the Laikipia Wildlife Form (2016), “when huddled close to one another the animals act as a ‘bulldozer’ breaking the ground and allowing for water and nutrient flow, whilst at the same time they implant seeds and add fertilizer”. This is believed to benefit livestock and wildlife, improving the health of rangelands and their larger ecosystems, and clearly reflects customary pastoralist practices. In fact, some local/Indigenous pastoralists are quick to point out that this is how they have always managed land and other natural resources. On multiple occasions, in response to my questions about holistic management, pastoralists from community conservancies replied by scoffing: “Ha! Holistic *what?* We have been doing that for centuries.”⁴¹

Becoming an NRT conservancy, and adopting a holistic management strategy, however, has required Wild Laikipia to reduce and regulate its group members’ access to natural resources. In line with NRT programming, the conservancy has also developed and promoted alternative income-generating activities centred on wildlife among the community, mainly the eco-lodge. The entrepreneurial focus of CBC in Laikipia represents the NRT’s efforts to “teach” communities to see economic value in wildlife. As

⁴¹ Interview, 9 May 2015

discussed in *Chapter 5*, the notion that wildlife should pay for its own conservation is at the ideological core of Laikipia's wildlife sector and is also the crux of CBC. In simple terms, the idea is that if pastoralists are able to benefit from wildlife economically, they will be inclined to behave in ways that protect wildlife and contribute to conservation efforts. In reality, the value of wildlife remains deeply contested among community conservancies, especially among individuals and groups that have not benefited all that much from CBC. The following section elucidates some of the benefits that representatives from Wild Laikipia and other communities attribute to CBC. At the same time, it discusses the contradictions and frictions that have been produced as an expanding green economy encounters disparate notions of land, livelihood, and wellbeing, and vice versa.

4 The benefits and burdens of CBC

Insights from Wild Laikipia – and representatives from other communities in Laikipia – reveal significant variations in how different individuals and groups experience, understand, and react to CBC. Moreover, analyzing different encounters with CBC, and scrutinizing the benefits and burdens most commonly associated with related interventions, reveals contradictory insights about whether CBC is an alternative approach to wildlife conservation in Laikipia. On the one hand, CBC is perceived to have contributed to improved social services, new opportunities for political action, and improved wellbeing for some members of the Wild Laikipia community. When articulating the benefits that come with community conservation at Wild Laikipia, improved educational, healthcare, and security services are the most commonly cited – all of which I discuss below. Direct beneficiaries of CBC (i.e. those employed by the conservancy or eco-lodge) usually talk about their salaries, participation in decision-making processes, and improved natural resource management practices in the community, however; indirect beneficiaries exhibit greater ambivalence about the extent to which their influence, livelihoods, and wellbeing in the community has improved.

Findings from Wild Laikipia reveal contradictions and frictions in the NRT's CBC model. Representatives from Wild Laikipia, among other groups, point out that, in reality, revenues generated by the conservancy for social services fluctuate from year to year and can be insignificant, leaving communities dependent on external actors for financial support. This corresponds to few job opportunities and limited, positive livelihood impacts for community members. Additionally, the NRT's response to protecting wildlife and their habitats using paramilitary forces of wildlife rangers has not only failed to reduce land conflicts, it has perpetuated the violent outcomes of such conflicts, as well as animosity between pastoralist groups. From the perspective of many civil society and community representatives, such conflicts are intensifying with the expansion of community conservancies. Human-wildlife conflict, too, is an increasing source of anxiety for community members and a real threat to their livelihoods. It is also a hazard of CBC that rarely leads to fair compensation for damages caused by wildlife.

The following sections use the word “burden” or “hardship” in discussing negative or undesired outcomes of CBC. This is because these two words align with the literal translation of the Kiswahili word *shida* – which was most commonly used during interviews and conversations – and because they capture sentiments of struggle that seem to evade the English word “challenge”, which implies a technical or a-political obstacle. The remainder of this chapter groups the benefits and burdens of CBC under three broad headings: “social investments”, “conservation enterprises”, and “peace and security”. Discussing the outcomes of CBC under these three headings reveals at least three main contradictions and sources of friction in the NRT's CBC model, as identified by participants in the research. These frictions make it difficult to claim that CBC is truly a community-friendly alternative within Laikipia's wildlife sector.

4.1 Social investments

The term “social investments” describes NRT programmes in community conservancies that focus on improving basic social services, mainly access to education, healthcare, and water. Funding for community development in NRT conservancies, such as Wild

Laikipia, comes from the 60 per cent of conservancy revenues discussed above. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the NRT and its donors provide the bulk of this income to community conservancies. On average, the NRT provides 80 per cent of the total income generated by conservancies annually. Most of these funds go to education bursaries for secondary students living in and around the conservancies, medical bills for community members, and education and water infrastructure (e.g. classrooms, school equipment, teacher salaries, boreholes, and water tanks). However, funding for education, health, and water services also comes from partnerships that have been developed between community conservancies and other development organizations, as well as from donations made by tourists.

Prior to CBC, access to basic social services at Wild Laikipia was limited. According to community representatives, very few people received any form of education. People had to travel long distances by foot to receive basic medical attention. The medical services that could be accessed were limited and of poor quality. Such factors were compounded by a severe lack of infrastructure, which made accessing regular and safe drinking water difficult. Moreover, the lack of roads made the outcomes of medical emergencies dire and complicated simple feats, such as getting cattle to market or visiting friends and relatives. CBC has proven to be one way for communities in remote parts of the county to have some of their basic rights met, given the lack of government attention and funding that plagues pastoralist communities. As such, access to social services and improved infrastructure is usually the first and most common benefit that people attribute to CBC. As the oral history of Wild Laikipia suggests, Ian Craig – and later the NRT – was well-aware of the plight faced by pastoralists in the rangelands to the north of his family's ranch. This was the initial motivating factor that Craig used to convince pastoralists that wildlife could be used to meet their needs and, ultimately, work to their advantage.

As much as members of communities such as Wild Laikipia appear to recognize that CBC has helped meet some of their basic rights and provided them with access to key social services, there is also discontent for the fact that CBC has not emancipated the community from its dependency on external actors. Rather, the relative absence of local and national governments from pastoralist communities has left Wild Laikipia dependent

on social investments by tourists, donors, and conservation organizations. Conservancy staff members, management, and community leaders in particular expressed this discontent, which was either implied or not discussed at all by other groups, such as pastoralists living in or around the conservancy. Direct beneficiaries of the conservancy, comprised mainly of individuals with (post)secondary educations, relatively well-paying jobs, and influential positions, critiqued CBC for perpetuating Wild Laikipia's subaltern position in relation to external actors.

This dependency was framed as "colonial", as it is perceived as giving settlers paternalistic authority over community life. This dependency also reflects age-old racial inequalities in Laikipia, making its colonial nature more explicit and vulnerable to criticism. Although many aspects of community life in Laikipia have improved with CBC, these improvements have required the Wild Laikipia community to concede much of their autonomy. Some activists engaged with issues related to the rights of pastoralists and other marginalized groups in Laikipia appeared physically agitated when discussing this issue. From their perspective, CBC is just another way for whites to draw additional land, people, and resources into their zones of influence and control.

The relative failure of safari tourism, in particular, to live up to original expectations in community conservancies is often used to elucidate why, after 20-plus years of CBC, the Wild Laikipia community is still so reliant on external support for the provision of social services. Tourism, for one, is known to be a fickle industry – something that may or may not have been drawn to community leaders' attention before they consented to the eco-lodge. This is especially true of international tourism, which Wild Laikipia is primarily marketed towards. As discussed in *Chapter 5*, the flow of international tourists to Kenya has proven to be highly inconsistent over the years. An outbreak of Ebola as far away as Guinea can have ripple effects that cause tourism ventures in Kenya to close their doors for good. At Wild Laikipia, limited and inconsistent revenues from the eco-lodge have ultimately undermined the ability of the conservancy to generate adequate revenues from safari tourism and redistribute them throughout the community in widespread, meaningful ways. This has primarily become the role of the NRT, its donors, and partners.

In addition to the various factors that make international tourism an unreliable source of income, tourists themselves have peculiar ideas about what their safaris *should* look like. The attitudes, desires, and behaviours of safari tourists have serious implications for alternative safari destinations, such as Wild Laikipia. For example, safari guides at Wild Laikipia explained to me that, on multiple occasions, clients have lost their tempers at the sight of domestic livestock in the conservancy. “I didn’t come all this way to look at cows!”, a safari guide recalls one angry tourist shouting at him during a game drive. This is a phenomenon that Butt (2012; 2014) has documented among tourists in Maasai Mara, as well as one that I encountered multiple times during my conversations with tourists in Laikipia. “You went to [Wild Laikipia]?” one white Kenyan asked me with surprise as we shared a meal at a settler-owned ranch near Nanyuki, “there’s nothing but a lot of dik-dik up there ... and cattle”.⁴² Interestingly, tourists’ bias against livestock in wildlife areas does not appear to apply as much among tourists on safari in the mixed-use settler ranches elsewhere in Laikipia. There, tourists’ attitudes seem more tolerant of the presence of healthy looking cows rather than skinny, spotted cows in community conservancies. The density of livestock in mixed-use ranches is also much less; which may compromise the wilderness appeal of ranches much less than higher densities of livestock in community conservancies. In short, what makes Wild Laikipia unique as a space shared by livestock and wildlife does not bode well with most safari tourists who are usually looking to live out all too familiar imaginaries of Africa as an unspoiled wilderness untouched by humans. Individuals working in the wildlife tourism ventures established in community conservancies are well-aware of how biases among safari tourists impact their jobs and salaries, as well as the wellbeing of wider communities.

The lack of revenues generated by wildlife tourism points to the first contradiction of CBC in Laikipia. This is that, rather than maintaining the autonomy and freedom of community conservancies, CBC has contributed to a colonial-like environment in which communities are dependent on external actors and donors to ensure the provision of even the most basic rights. The provision of social services in community conservancies by the NRT and

⁴² Interview, 8 March 2015

its donors – rather than through the government or even revenues generated by wildlife tourism – simply enhances the NRT’s “leverage for conservation”. According to the NRT:

Leverage and support from communities for wildlife conservation comes from improved community attitudes towards conservation as a result of benefits people gain from conservancies, some of which are revenue and employment from conservancy enterprises. *Conservancy enterprises must therefore have explicit links to the conservancy itself in order to create support for its conservation goals* (2015b, 27, emphasis added).

The NRT’s use of the term “leverage” demonstrates its logic of using benefit streams accrued from CBC to convince communities to buy into community conservancies. By definition, this logic aims to erode autonomy.

Most representatives from Wild Laikipia’s conservancy, as well as those from the NRT and other conservation organizations in Laikipia, stated that the NRT’s livelihood programmes are meant to “teach communities to see the value of wildlife, rather than to look at wildlife as a liability”.⁴³ The idea is a simple one: if community members are able to benefit from wildlife on their land, even in small ways, they are more likely to behave in ways that support, rather than undermine, conservation efforts. The enterprise activities that the NRT focuses on to do so are wildlife tourism, livestock marketing, and small businesses for women.

4.2 Conservation enterprises

4.2.1 Wildlife tourism, livestock marketing, and small businesses

The NRT’s approach to wildlife tourism mainly involves the development of safari lodges on community land through a range of ownership, management, and benefit distribution arrangements. Wild Laikipia Eco-lodge, for example, is both owned and operated by the

⁴³ Interview, 16 February 2016

Wild Laikipia community. In principle, this model is believed to allow communities to retain the greatest autonomy over their land and resources. However, lodges in community conservancies may also be community-owned but privately managed, such as Tassia eco-lodge in Lekurruki – Wild Laikipia’s neighbor to the north. In some cases, lodges are also owned and operated by private companies on community land. The NRT sees itself as playing the role of “honest broker” in relation to tourism, attempting to foster community-private sector partnerships in its conservancies – ensuring transparency and consensus in negotiations. In other words, the NRT facilitates the entrance of foreign capital into pastoralist territories in a manner it deems to be socially responsible while still serving to transform community land.

The NRT’s different tourism models ultimately yield different results for conservancies. Wild Laikipia, as mentioned, is both owned and managed by the community. As a result, its financial returns are relatively low compared to conservancies where community-owned lodges are privately managed. But, unlike other community conservancies, Wild Laikipia is said to have greater “pride of ownership”. This means that the community is, in principle, empowered to make decisions about eco-lodge management and operations. Other models may yield higher revenues; but communities lack autonomy and decision-making power over tourism ventures and how their benefits are distributed. As discussed, however, the autonomy of communities is deeply constrained by a paternalistic institutional and organizational context anyways. Moreover, community conservancies present unique challenges to the success of wildlife tourism given the fickle nature of the industry and biases in mainstream safari culture.

Beyond facilitating investments in wildlife tourism and job creation through conservation, the NRT provides individual pastoralists in conservancies with access to markets for their cattle through a for-profit division of the organization called NRT-Trading (NRT-T). As many conservancies have yet to develop wildlife tourism ventures, and because wildlife tourism has not proven to be all that profitable or beneficial to communities, the NRT’s livestock marketing initiative has become one of the more beneficial aspects of CBC for community members. Through this programme, NRT-T purchases the cattle from people in community conservancies, fattens them up on land behind the fences of settler ranches

and conservancies, and then sells them for slaughter about 18 months after purchase. Currently, Borana, El Karama, Lewa, and Ol Pejeta participate in the programme, as purchased cattle go to these ranches and conservancies to be fattened up and quarantined before going to market. In addition to facilitating market access for pastoralists, this has helped endear settler ranches and conservancies to pastoralists.

The NRT's livestock marketing initiative is also praised for offering pastoralists "more than fair" prices for their cattle. For example, a cow that might typically be sold for KSh 23,000/ at the local market might be bought by NRT-T for KSh 30,000. (These numbers were given as an illustration during an interview.) Importantly, out of this income, the seller is required to pay a small levy to their respective conservancy, as is NRT-T. This levy provides conservancies with an additional source of income, and the income generated by NRT-T through its livestock sales are reinvested back into the organization.

The last, most notable, way that the NRT is investing in conservation enterprises is by facilitating "financial literacy" training, micro-credit, and access to markets for beadwork and other handicrafts. These interrelated initiatives all primarily target women and thus bring a gender component to CBC in Laikipia, which would otherwise clearly be dominated by men. Initially, the NRT provided financial and business training to women in community conservancies. Upon completing the training, participants became eligible to apply for small loans. In 2014, NRT reports that throughout its conservancies, 737 women received training in financial literacy; 253 women received training in business development; and 98 women were ultimately able to access KSh 1.8 million in micro-credit. On average, each woman received KSh 18,367 in micro-credit; but loans were only granted to women in 3 NRT conservancies. Since 2011, however, funding for micro-credit has been on the decline, as the NRT transitions towards providing access to markets for beads and handicraft through NRT-T.

Though small loans were initially meant to help women kick-start bead and handicraft businesses that could be sold to tourists visiting conservancies the NRT's recent approach is to provide women with access to markets for beads and handicrafts through NRT-T and its affiliated organization, Beadworks. This is done in a manner similar to the

NRT's livestock marketing initiative. Women purchase raw materials at cost from NRT-T, which they use to make beaded decorations and jewelry. Women participating in the programme sell their goods back to NRT-T via monthly markets, where they get paid, provided with feedback on the quality of their goods, and also purchase materials for future orders. The NRT carries out quality control, packaging, and markets the goods to clients in Kenya and around the world.

For the most part, women identified the services that have been made available to them through these types of NRT initiatives as a new benefit of CBC. Women at Wild Laikipia, for example, spoke favourably about the financial and business training that they received through the NRT, which in turn made them eligible for small loans on offer by the organization. Due to inconsistent flows of tourists, representatives from women's groups also said that having consistent access to markets for their goods was a very tangible benefit of CBC. Just like the NRT's other conservation enterprise initiatives, however, the actual benefits of bead and handicraft enterprises for women's livelihoods and wellbeing remain both limited and unevenly distributed. Some community representatives that I spoke with also added that it is problematic to confine women's contributions to CBC to beading – “as if that's all they can do”.⁴⁴ Women also explained that such initiatives often simply add to their myriad other household duties without improving their ability to benefit or participate in conservancy life in meaningful ways. Moreover, community members do not appear convinced that such initiatives offset the costs that come with living with wildlife and trying to earn a living in conservancies.

One of the biggest critiques of CBC in Laikipia is that, in reality, its livelihood impacts are minimal. Perhaps more accurately, many people within and outside community conservancies believe that CBC is failing on its own terms. To begin with, jobs created through wildlife tourism and conservation in the conservancies tend to be limited, relatively insecure, and primarily occupied by men. According to the NRT (2015a), 765 people are permanently employed in its 27 conservancies. In Laikipia's three community conservancies, which have a population of 18,461 people, only 82 people are employed

⁴⁴ Interview, 21 May 2016

in tourism or conservation on a casual and permanent basis. This is 0.4% of the population in spaces where wildlife conservation and tourism, in principle, are meant to be a primary source of employment, income, and other benefits.

Those who have been offered employment as a result of CBC are grateful for their jobs and, for the most part, genuinely seem to enjoy them. Yet, as studies show, tourism is a fickle industry at the best of times and mainstream safari culture is riddled with biases and prejudices that direct tourists away from different forms of safari (Singh and Houtum 2002; Cousins and Kepe 2004; Igoe and Brockington 2007; Igoe and Croucher 2007; Manyara and Jones 2007; Brockington et al. 2008; Büscher 2009; Garland 2009; Kepe 2009; Ackama et al. 2011; Barret et al. 2013; Duffy 2014a; Gardner 2016). As a result, Wild Laikipia Eco-Lodge usually closes its doors when tourism numbers are down – not simply during low season – to save costs. People such as Francis are sent home on a reduced salary for up to months on end, sometimes even without pay. I spent a few days with Francis in late-May 2016, during a trip I made to carry out additional research activities and to verify findings. He explained to me then that the eco-lodge had closed its doors at the beginning of April and that he had been out of work since. Private investors in places like Lekurruki are much less likely to keep staff on in any capacity, even at reduced rates, when times are hard. In short, wildlife tourism is not the gold mine that some conservationists, policy-makers, and researchers suggest.

Wildlife tourism is proving to be much less economically profitable than communities initially seemed to think it would be. In 2014, safari tourism injected US \$468,000 into all 27 NRT conservancies. This is notably less than the US \$789,295 that was brought into the conservancies via beef and bead sales combined, US \$684,188 and \$105,107 respectively (NRT 2015b). It is clear that community representatives see potential in NRT initiatives that focus on providing pastoralist households and women's groups with access to markets for their cattle and beads. Such initiatives not only provide cash directly to individuals and households who do not have jobs in wildlife tourism or conservation, they do not compromise the ability of community members to "practice their identity".⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Interview, 18 May 2016

Unfortunately, at this stage, the income that individuals and households generate through the NRT's livestock and bead marketing programme is perceived as both minimal and inconsistent. To begin with, access to beef markets is mediated by NRT-T and is determined by conservancy performance. This means that the extent to which the intended beneficiaries of the programme, namely individuals and households living in and around conservancies, benefit is if their respective conservancies demonstrate "good" governance and performance. Moreover, each conservancy is allocated a limited number of cattle that they can sell to NRT-T and the organization does not purchase cattle on a regular basis. A member of Wild Laikipia said that, "if the NRT buys a cow from you today, you might not see them again for one, one and a half, years".⁴⁶ Moreover, NRT-T will only purchase cattle, even though sheep and goats are prolific in community conservancies.

Similar critiques were levied against the NRT's conservation enterprise programme by representatives of women's groups who produce beads and handicrafts for the NRT, as well as for direct sale to tourists who visit conservancies. Because the flow of tourists to community conservancies can be inconsistent and/or unpredictable, selling directly to tourists has not proven to be profitable. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, in the eyes of women who produce beads and handicrafts, demand for goods is simply far too small for the number of women participating in the programme. To illustrate this point, a member of a women's group at Wild Laikipia said, "[Wild Laikipia] may get an order for 150 belts, but by the time that order gets broken down and allocated to smaller groups throughout the community that actually make the goods, each group may only end up making 20 belts". A typical group may have 25-30 members, all of whom share in the profit of the goods they produce and sell. "We can make them, we just can't succeed. We don't have the market", she said.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Interview, 20 May 2016

⁴⁷ Interview, 4 May 2015

4.2.2 Human-wildlife conflict

In light of such challenges, many women feel that they are unable to benefit from wildlife in meaningful ways, despite some effort by the NRT to incorporate them into the organization's programme, and that they remain marginalized in the structures of CBC. One woman, who I call Deborah, expressed common anxieties and frustrations that women experience living alongside wildlife without really experiencing its benefits.

So about the wildlife, I myself don't know the benefit. And I can say that it's a big challenge to us [women]. Why do I say that? Because you can see we have the small gardens. Elephants, they just come and they withdraw *everything* [she stressed "everything" greatly]. So on our side, we usually say "Ah! This wildlife is not a benefit". While we benefit from tourists coming, living with wildlife creates a lot of problems. Like the hyenas they take goats in the night; you don't sleep.⁴⁸

Deborah's insights into the challenges of living with wildlife, especially when the benefits of doing so are not living up to expectations, point to another hardship of CBC that is experienced by both women and men, human-wildlife conflict.

The term human-wildlife conflict mainly applies to scenarios in which human beings or their livelihoods fall victim to undesirable wildlife behaviour. Elephants destroying a small-scale farmer's crops, hunting dogs killing domestic goats, a person being trampled by an elephant while walking on the road, these are all common examples of human-wildlife conflict in Laikipia. Throughout the wildlife sector, conservationists actively seek to mitigate the challenges human-wildlife conflict presents to the protection of wildlife in an integrated landscape (Frank et al. 2006; Metcalfe and Kepe 2008; Graham et al. 2012; Nyaligu and Weeks 2013). Conservationists recognize the importance of mitigating human-wildlife conflict, in part because it is common for humans to seek retribution for damages caused by wildlife. In 2015, an entire village held a herd of elephants "captive" in a dam until wildlife authorities arrived to safely drive them away (Morley 2015). More

⁴⁸ Interview, 4 May 2015

recently, crop destruction by elephants led farmers to protest over the millions of shillings they have lost due to wildlife (Wahu 2016).

The importance of anticipating, reducing, and mitigating the effects of human-wildlife conflict for humans is of utmost importance for conservationists trying to get local communities to see conservation as legitimate land use. Despite being a widespread problem in Laikipia, the stakes of human-wildlife conflict are arguably greater for both communities and conservationists in the context of community conservancies. After all, wildlife is the crux of CBC. The NRT is working extremely hard to convince communities to perceive wildlife as a benefit rather than a liability. When wild animals do not cooperate, they make the NRT's job even more difficult. Moreover, failure to reduce and mitigate the effects of human-wildlife conflict for people in community conservancies can have devastating consequences for human wellbeing.

Many people that I interacted with at Wild Laikipia spoke at length about the personal hardships that they, or their friends and relatives, have experienced through human-wildlife conflict. "Before community conservancies, we never had this 'human-wildlife conflict'", a representative from a women's organization said with disgust during a meeting we held in her organization's office in Nanyuki, "we just ignored each other".⁴⁹ For this women's rights activist, and many other activists and community representatives, confining humans, their livestock, and wild animals in close quarters has exacerbated both the frequency and consequences of human-wildlife conflict – for women in particular.

The wild animals considered the most destructive to pastoralists are Cape hunting dogs, lions, hyena, leopard, and cheetah. Francis once told me that, "if hunting dogs get inside a boma, they can easily kill 20 lambs in a matter of minutes". He then made a whispering noise and said, "that's it, you're finished". In other parts of Laikipia, such as the western plateau, which is dominated by small-scale farmers, communities fear elephants the most. I heard numerous stories of elephants destroying entire crops, even fishponds, in a single night. Baboons, bush pigs, monkeys, and warthogs are also serious pests in the

⁴⁹ Interview, 18 May 2016

eyes of farmers. But what pastoralists in community conservancies and small-scale farmers on freehold land have in common, at least when it comes to human-wildlife conflict, is a lack of compensation for damages caused by wildlife, including damaged livelihoods, personal injury, and even loss of human life.

Just two days before I arrived at Wild Laikipia for a stay in February 2015, a small pride of lions killed two cows belonging to pastoralists in the community. Francis offered to take me to a *boma* close to where the cows were killed, so that I could witness one of the settings in which human-wildlife conflict occurs in community conservancies. We arrived at the *boma* just as *moran* (“warriors”) were returning with their cattle from the community. The air was heavy with the earthy smell of cattle. Thick red soil, mixed with cow dung, stuck to my boots as we walked through the *boma* inspecting cows and talking to *moran*. The sun had nearly set as some of the younger *moran*, around the age of thirteen, began to harvest milk from their cows for evening tea. Each *moran* had a small area within the larger *boma*, surrounded by thorn branches and plastic bags, with flattened cardboard boxes for mattresses. From these small enclosures, they slept or kept watch over their livestock next to a small fire. When the lions attacked two days earlier, they targeted straggling cows that young *moran* were unable to get back to the *boma* before darkness. No humans were harmed by the lions in this case, but this is not always so. In 2005, one man at Wild Laikipia lost his life and another, who I interviewed, was nearly killed by a rogue male lion that had begun to prey on domestic livestock in its old age.

“I understand that the new Wildlife Act is supposed to make it easier for people to be compensated for human-wildlife conflict”, I said to Francis as we left the *boma*. “Will the person who lost cattle to lions be compensated by NRT, KWS, or anybody?” I posed this question to most people that I talked to about human-wildlife conflict and the answer was almost always the same: “no”. Even though there are mechanisms in place for compensating people for damages, injuries, or death attributed to wildlife, investigations into human-wildlife conflict rarely lead to compensation for claimants. Of the all interviews conducted for this study, I never spoke with anybody who had been compensated – or even knew of someone that had been compensated – for damages caused by wildlife. Ultimately, investigations by KWS (the organization with the authority to compensate

people financially for their losses) are said to take far too long, require too much money on the part of claimants, and yield far too little financial return to make pursuing compensation for human-wildlife conflict worthwhile. In fact, the very terms of compensation reflect a poignant source of friction in CBC. Deborah impassionedly revealed this friction to me during an interview in May 2015, summarizing the perspectives of countless others in the process:

They say that when you have been killed by an elephant, they pay your family KSh 30,000 [about US \$300]. But when you kill a lion, you will be in prison forever. So you can see, they don't care about people. They only care about wildlife. We don't know who has value. Does a human being have value or a wild animal? KSh 30,000. And if it is your child, that child will never come back. If he is your husband, he will never come back – whoever! And you have been paid KSH 30,000? And when you kill a lion or an elephant you go in prison forever.

Deborah's insights reveal a second contradiction of CBC in Laikipia. The NRT's efforts to create conservation enterprises in community conservancies have not improved peoples' livelihoods or wellbeing in ways they perceive to be meaningful or radically transformative – certainly not for women participating in CBC. Many continue to labour under highly unequal conditions and perceive wildlife as more of a viability to their livelihoods and wellbeing than a source of economic value (to use the NRT's language).

4.3 Peace and security

The last NRT programme area that is commonly acknowledged to be beneficial to Wild Laikipia and other community conservancies is peace and security. Beyond investing in limited and/or dilapidated social services in remote areas, the NRT's security focus has become one of the most vital aspects of its programming in the rangelands, both in terms of creating leverage for conservation and securing communal rights to land. Yet there are key differences between the NRT's "peace" and "security" efforts. Peace work is mainly

about establishing conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms to manage inter- and intra-conservancy conflict. The NRT's security work, however, involves concerted efforts to secure community land and protect resources for people and wildlife by training and arming wildlife rangers. Representatives from community conservancies seem to associate far greater benefits with increased and intensified efforts to secure their land, including access to military grade weapons, than they do with peace building or most other NRT initiatives for that matter.

In its efforts to secure land and other natural resources in community conservancies, the NRT provides training and logistical support for wildlife rangers. Specifically, the NRT works with KWS and Kenya Police Reserve to train rangers in combatting wildlife crime, collecting intelligence, and enforcing conservancy and government regulations. These paramilitary forces include both local wildlife rangers and mobile units that are specialized in preventing and combating wildlife crime, such as poaching, throughout NRT conservancies. Ultimately, through the NRT, wildlife rangers are granted access to high levels of training, military grade weapons, communication technology, and enhanced intelligence. The new WCMA has also increased the scope and punishment of wildlife offences, which wildlife rangers have been granted authority to enforce in collaboration with Kenya's government.

The peace and security components of the NRT are seen as one of the most significant improvements that CBC has brought to pastoralist communities in Laikipia. More specifically, however, new mechanisms for securing land have been welcomed by communities to secure their sources of livelihood. As mentioned, external pressures and threats to land and other natural resources are of utmost concern for pastoralist communities. The NRT has been very effective at identifying this need and putting forward an aggressive, concerted plan to address it. Despite the benefits that community conservancies have experienced because of the NRT's peace and security programme, however, this aspect of CBC is highly contentious. For one, community conservancies are increasingly taking on the appearance of territories occupied by small armies. Moreover, many critical voices suggest that, by pumping weapons into conservancies, the NRT is inciting violent conflict that can have deadly outcomes.

During interviews, the NRT was frequently accused of intensifying environmental conflict through its security initiatives. To begin with, the implementation of CBC has required conservancy managers to reduce community members' access to land in protected conservancy areas in line with NRT regulations. Though accountability mechanisms embedded in the NRT's institutional and organizational structure, enforcing the rules and regulations of conservancies has become the purview of wildlife rangers. Although rangers patrol conservancy grounds to deter and combat land invasions and wildlife crimes by outsiders, they also police the behaviours of community members. They ensure, for example, that any grazing taking place within the conservancy is occurring in planned, designated areas. Rangers also monitor the number of livestock within the conservancy and respond to environmentally destructive behaviour.

In this sense, wildlife rangers are a symbolic buffer between conservancies and communities. They enforce acceptable forms of conduct to ensure that conservation efforts are not compromised and that land is protected from pastoralists *within* community conservancies. Ultimately, few people in communities look kindly on new regulations and stricter enforcement mechanisms. As mentioned, some say that this is a new form of colonialism – that community conservancies can be likened to territories under the control of a foreign power. Placing new restrictions on land use and access within pastoralist areas, by definition, involves instituting new forms of exclusion within pastoralist territories. Although violent conflict rarely breaks out between wildlife rangers and community members, it is common for the two groups to find themselves in tension when community members try to shirk conservancy rules.

Despite efforts to restrict access to wildlife areas in community conservancies, some pastoralists still try to break into wildlife areas to graze and water their livestock. This often happens during the night, under cover of darkness, when pastoralists hope to avoid detection by wildlife rangers. Such forms of “everyday resistance” within community conservancies reflect the new power dynamics that are emerging in pastoralist spaces. Much like settler ranches and conservancies, however, community conservancies have also been forced to make concessions to community members to remain relevant, legitimate, and maintain authority. Wild Laikipia now allows pastoralists from its

community to access pastures and water within the conservancy during droughts, albeit in a controlled and well-regulated manner. To some extent, therefore, everyday forms of resistance have helped to keep CBC malleable to the interests and needs of pastoralists.

This points to another hardship associated with CBC: The establishment of CBC in some pastoralist spaces has not only manifested in new forms of exclusion and power relationships within communities, it appears to have consolidated and perhaps even exacerbated existing inequalities and conflicts *between* pastoralist communities – in discourse and practice. Members of the Wild Laikipia community routinely blame outsiders, such as Samburus, for invading their territory to steal cattle or to graze and water livestock in the protected areas of the conservancy. The discourses of community members commonly paint Samburus as poor, desperate, and violent in juxtaposition to Maasai in Wild Laikipia or other parts of Laikipia. This, of course, goes hand in hand with organized, violent responses to land invasions.

In June 2015 wildlife rangers at Wild Laikipia exchanged fire with Samburu pastoralists that had entered the conservancy to graze and water their livestock. The conflict left six people dead, including two members of the Wild Laikipia community. Accordingly, despite new mechanisms for promoting peace in, and securing land for, communities through CBC, territorial conflicts between conservancy members and pastoralists from other regions do not appear to be easing. The outcomes of these conflicts also appear to be increasingly violent. In addition to other stories like the one from Wild Laikipia, an NRT (2015) document reports that there were 71 incidents of cattle rustling in its conservancies, as well as 17 human deaths due to “insecurity” in 2014. Both statistics have increased from 2013 and, interestingly, correlate to a significant decrease in the number of elephants killed illegally in community conservancies.

Whether climate change, resource distribution, or other factors might explain the violent conflict that pervades community conservancies, CBC has altered the socio-ecological terrain of struggle by legitimizing the use of force to violently defend territorial rights in the name of conservation. This has pitted community members against each other, as well as pastoralists from other parts of the region against those in community conservancies.

It has also contributed to perceptions of broader socio-economic inequalities between such groups (*Chapter 7*). A third contradiction of CBC, then, is that the NRT's efforts to secure land for people and wildlife have done little to reduce instances of violent conflict and has created new mechanisms for controlling pastoralists and their livelihoods and excluding them from wildlife areas within their own territories.

5 Conclusion

The search for community-friendly alternatives to wildlife conservation, including tourism alternatives, has indeed brought *some* benefits to *some* people that have long been marginalized in Laikipia's wildlife sector. Individuals such as Francis, for example, have made CBC work to their advantage to some degree. Yet Francis represents a small minority of the population. Moreover, he too struggles to accumulate benefits from wildlife in meaningful ways, without compromising his identity or that of his broader community. At both an individual and collective level, CBC remains a terrain of struggle for subsistence land users that have long been marginalized in the wildlife sector. Even though many of the NRT's claims do not hold up once they are broken down to the individual, household, or conservancy level, any claims that the NRT is an "indigenous" or "community-led" organization are grossly misleading. Upon being informed of such claims through dialogue with myself or others, many rights activists and community representatives respond with anger, criticism, and frustration.

As the previous discussion demonstrates, CBC presents communities with a wide range of hardships. In practice, the NRT's approach to CBC has produced frictions as it encounters divergent notions about what land regulations, forms of livelihood, and costs are acceptable/desirable. These frictions point to inconsistencies between the discourses, practices, and outcomes of the green economy. Recognizing that different groups within communities experience the benefits and burdens of CBC differently, some general claims can be made about the implications of CBC for pastoralists. To begin with, the NRT's claims that it does not undermine "community ownership and autonomy" (NRT 2015b, 8) are countered by narratives from community representatives and rights activists

that, in fact, CBC has locked communities in a colonial-like dependency on external actors. Similarly, in the context of marginalized local/Indigenous communities, the organization's mechanisms for ensuring accountability and transparency are challenged as paternalistic control mechanisms that enable the organization to take punitive actions against conservancies that do not meet NRT performance standards. As such, CBC does not appear to have enhanced the capacity of pastoralist communities to shape the conditions in which they live in meaningful, transformative ways.

Next, the NRT's efforts to teach people to see the value in wildlife through conservation enterprises appears to have failed on a few key fronts. First, wildlife tourism has proven to be an inadequate source of revenue for social services and infrastructure in community conservancies. Second, the employment opportunities that have been created in wildlife conservation and management are both limited and insecure. Very few people have benefited directly from wildlife tourism in reality. Recognizing this, the NRT has tried to focus on providing support to pastoralists by linking them to markets for their livestock. Although such initiatives are indeed beneficial to community members, their positive impacts remain limited and unevenly distributed throughout NRT conservancies. The same can be said of the NRT-T's efforts to market beads and handicrafts produced by women in community conservancies. Third, the NRT has also failed to mitigate the negative effects of human-wildlife conflict for people in conservancies, leaving community members in the precarious position of trying to make CBC work for them while still trying to earn a living in a unpredictable environment.

Lastly, the NRT's approach to securing land for pastoralists and wildlife using armed wildlife rangers has also had problematic outcomes. On the one hand, wildlife rangers are welcomed by community members in the sense that they are perceived as a deterring force against land invasions from other groups. In the eyes of community members at Wild Laikipia, this is an effective approach to defending their territory against other pastoralists. Land is, after all, perceived as being in short supply, especially for pastoralists that require reliable, seasonal access to pasture and water. On the other hand, the same wildlife rangers are enforcing the exclusion of local community members from land that belongs to them in principle. This has not only led to new forms of power

relationships and intra-community conflict, it has helped solidify the NRT's control over pastoralist territories in the name of wildlife conservation. Human and Indigenous rights activists are, rightfully, becoming increasingly vocal about the colonial-like nature of CBC in Laikipia – and throughout the northern rangelands for that matter. From their perspective, as in the eyes of many community members, CBC is proving to be another way for conservationists to grab in the name of conservation.

These sources of friction make it extremely difficult to accept that CBC is an alternative, community-friendly, approach to conserving and managing wildlife in Laikipia. Rather, CBC has proven to be an effective measure for an elite, conservationist class to incorporate increasingly more land and people into its zones of influence and control through MDC. In this sense, CBC is not alternative to mainstream safari culture. Rather, it is another crucial terrain of struggle for control over livelihood, territory, and wellbeing.

In closing, the case of CBC in Laikipia is remarkably consistent with other cases in Africa and around the world (West 2006; Büscher and Dressler 2012). Although social service provision has generally improved and some land areas appear more ecologically vibrant in community conservancies, many of the same old anxieties, contradictions, and inequalities associated with CBC persist in and through NRT programming. Recognizing that peoples' experiences with CBC are highly differentiated, and that their expectations and actions often appear contradictory as a result, demands a nuanced account of how and why people react to green grabbing and the green economy. This involves consideration for how people philosophize about the conditions in which they live, as well as the actual strategies they pursue to defend their notions of collective and personal wellbeing, when possibilities for political re-action are deeply constrained by historical patterns of dominance and subordination, of access and accumulation.

Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation by summarizing, synthesizing, and reflecting on key research findings. It includes consideration for additional research opportunities.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

1 Green grabbing and the contested nature of belonging

This dissertation began with a brief account of Caleb's experience working under the employ of a white safari guide. Caleb, who self-identifies as Indigenous Maasai and is a certified safari guide with years of experience in the industry, described the terms of his employment under this *mzungu* as "worse than colonialism". I used Caleb's experience to point out one of the problems at the core of this dissertation. This is: why would anybody consent to terms of employment perceived as *worse than* colonialism? Caleb's experience, after all, is not unique to him. Many of his colleagues describe similar relationships with this *mzungu*, and with other industry bosses like him. Yet Caleb and his colleagues continue to pursue and devote themselves to work in the wildlife sector. Moreover, members of Maasai group ranches in Laikipia have collectively pursued incorporation into the wildlife sector by permitting the implementation of community conservancies on their land. Yet these Community-Based Conservation (CBC) arrangements do relatively little to redress the structural violence rooted in colonial land use and tenure arrangements. In some areas, CBC reinforces existing forms of structural violence that have disadvantaged Maasais in Laikipia for over a century. Green grabs, in these contexts, represent the ethno-spatial configurations of uneasy political allegiances that have formed between Maasai pastoralists, settler-conservationists, and conservation organizations. The problem of why people would consent to conditions akin to or worse than colonialism, therefore, can be observed at the individual and collective level in Laikipia. But it is just one piece in the larger puzzle of why different rural groups have diverse experiences with and reactions to the wildlife sector.

The larger puzzle motivating this dissertation – that of why different rural groups have diverse experiences with and reactions to the wildlife sector in Laikipia – has been animated by recent debates in the land and green grabbing literature. Hall et al. ask, "in

the midst of the ‘global land grab’, what are the political reactions ‘from below’” (2015, 467)? Responses to this question have been documented in a special issue published by *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, which clarifies the diverse impacts of and variegated political reactions to LSLAs globally. Empirical studies in the special issue offer accounts of peasants pursuing resistance, acquiescence, or incorporation in response to land and green grabs. Such accounts emphasize the need to depart from generic notions of peasants as either hapless victims or unified resisters, complicating existing ideas about how, when, and why peasants react to something like green grabbing:

When land deals hit the ground, they interact with social groups within the state and in society that are differentiated along lines of class, gender, generation, ethnicity and nationality, and that have historically specific expectations, aspirations and traditions of struggle. These reshape, limit or make possible different kinds of land deals (Hall et al. 2015, 468).

Piecing together the puzzle of why different rural groups have diverse experiences with and reactions to green grabs requires an intricate knowledge of the web of socio-cultural, political-economic, and ecological relationships entangled with the spaces where green grabs happen, as well as how different forms of class, identity, and subjectivity have taken root over time in certain places. Hall et al.’s (2015) special issue is a milestone in the literature on land and green grabbing in this regard. As a milestone, it has also made further stands of inquiry necessary.

For example, what, specifically, motivates peasants to react so differently to green grabbing? What politics are at play in their reactions? Why is it that the interests of some groups seem to prevail at the expense of others in and through green grabbing? Increasingly more scholars are considering such questions, recognizing that answering them requires careful engagement with history (Hall et al. 2015; Campbell 2016; Gardner 2016; Millar 2016). Their work serves as a foundation for additional grounded, nuanced engagements with green grabbing specifically – which has received less scrutinized than land grabbing in general.

As this dissertation contends, the need for ethnographic and/or historically situated analyses of green grabbing remains paramount. Such approaches can help produce in-depth knowledge of how and why green grabs work in certain places and spaces, and of the types of relationships they may introduce or perpetuate in rural society (Edelman 2013). Additionally, failing to contextualize reactions to green grabbing in the diverse historical realities of different groups may lead to misinterpretations, misrepresentations, and misunderstandings of the politics motivating their reactions (Edelman et al. 2013). The pursuit of reflexive, situated knowledges of green grabs is equally paramount, lest the unchecked politics of researchers be conflated with or imposed on those of researchees (Oya 2013). Responding to the need for such research, this dissertation brings an additional case study into the literature on land and green grabbing.

The remaining sections of this chapter synthesize the main argument, findings, and contributions of the dissertation in greater detail. Further reflection is also provided on the limitations of this research, as well as the avenues these leave open for future research. The concluding section briefly summarizes this chapter, and re-states the merits of approaching research on green grabbing from an ethnographic and/or historical perspective.

2 White belonging, green grabbing, and white green grabbing

In response to calls for contextual, nuanced scholarly engagement with green grabbing, this dissertation brings existing ethnographic literature on ethnicity and belonging in Africa's prominent settler societies into conversation with that on green grabbing. Through this approach, a detailed picture emerges of how central nature was to the colonial project in Kenya and to successive waves of green grabbing that followed the original alienation, enclosure, and settlement of land in the colony (*Chapter 4*). In constructing this picture, this dissertation demonstrates how colonial administrators, explorers, and settlers seized control of nature in both discourse and practice, legitimating the dispossession of, and their domination over, other ethnic groups with legitimate claims to land and resources. It

also demonstrates how crude ethnic divisions constructed through such processes became spatialized in the “white highlands”, corresponding to diverse experiences with and reactions to green grabbing in different parts of Laikipia. The findings that derive from such efforts suggest that ethnicity and belonging are important, although to-date under-explored, pieces in the green grab puzzle. In settler societies, such as Kenya, it is especially important to consider the ways that white belonging does or does not fit into this puzzle (Steinhart 2006; Hughes 2010; McIntosh 2016).

In the context of Zimbabwe, Hughes (2010) argues that colonial whites negotiated their status of belonging in the colony vis-à-vis the environment. Rather than reconciling with their minority status and seceding their privilege in the colony as time progressed, settlers avoided coming to terms with their status by locating their “staying power” outside common spheres of socio-economic and political life. Instead, they situated their notions of belonging, and re-enacted their right to belong, in the landscape. As in other prominent settler societies in Africa, white identity and environmental conservation in Zimbabwe shaped and re-produced each other. Hughes explains that this approach to belonging awkwardly (i.e. somewhat within, but mostly outside society at large) was especially important for whites after formal independence was achieved:

Imperial colonizers do not seize land with guns and plows alone. In order to keep it, especially after imperial dissolution, settlers must establish a credible sense of entitlement. They must propagate the conviction that they belong on the land they have just settled. At the very least – and this may be difficult enough – settlers must convince themselves of their fit with the landscape of settlement. In other words, while *excluding* natives from power, from wealth, and from territory, overseas pioneers must find a way to *include* themselves in new lands (2010, 1).

This dissertation helps render such acts visible by examining green grabbing in Kenya’s “white highlands”.⁵⁰ By discussing the ways that settlers inserted themselves into the

⁵⁰ McIntosh (2016)

landscape in discourse and practice, this dissertation reveals just how intricately intertwined the roots of white belonging are with the those of green grabbing in Laikipia.

The findings of this study show that, throughout various points in history, settlers in Laikipia have pursued white green grabbing. By “white green grabbing” I mean the appropriation of land and resources for conservation, which also shapes and co-produces white identity in Africa (Hughes 2010). Despite its analytical and explanatory merit, this definition problematically lumps extra-European whites in Africa into a general category. I recognize that the term white green grabbing comes with a degree of “airiness” that, upon a quick glance, risks reducing whites to mere caricatures by diminishing the complexity of their attitudes, beliefs, and values (McIntosh 2016). By tying white green grabbing to white notions of belonging, while interrogating my own sense of belonging as a settler-researcher, I hope to bring more concrete notions of whiteness into dialogue with *different* notions of belonging in the context of green grabbing. Although green grabs are fraught with power asymmetries, they are also contact zones in which disparate notions of identity and belonging “meet, clash, and grapple with each other” (Pratt 2008, 7). In this sense, I use the term white green grabbing to capture just one – albeit an important one – dimension of the cultural forms of struggle at play in Laikipia’s wildlife sector.

As *Chapter 4* demonstrates, colonial administrators, explorers, and settlers quite literally “wrote themselves into” the landscape of Kenya’s highlands (Hughes 2010). In 1887, for example, Scottish explorer Joseph Thomson published an account of his trek across Laikipia in which he ironically described “Masai land” as being “quite uninhabited”. Thomson went on to compare Laikipia to a “park-like country” lying idle in the country’s fertile highlands – “a more charming region is probably not to be found in all of Africa”, he wrote (Thomson 1887, 273). Soon after, Thomson’s account of Laikipia was picked up by colonial administrators looking to resolve the protectorate’s poor economic performance by making Kenya a settler colony. Sir Charles Eliot, and others, promoted highland areas such as Laikipia as “a white man’s country” naturally suited to the happiness, health, and wellbeing of Europeans (Huxley 1948; Morgan 1963; Izuakor 1988; Matheka 2008). Such notions proliferated the promotional materials designed to attract settlers to the colony until independence was achieved in 1963, and became embedded in the identity and

folklore of Kenya's white community. Consider Karen Blixen's assertion that, "in the highlands you woke up in the morning and thought: *Here I am, where I ought to be*" (Dinesen 1993, 3). In writing whiteness into the highland landscape, settlers simultaneously dispossessed L/IP from their land and resources figuratively. This is encapsulated by Huxley's trope that Laikipia was more "congenial to the alien trout rather than to the indigenous crocodile" (1953, 54).

Such discourses did not emerge or circulate in a vacuum. Rather, they reflect much broader colonial imaginaries of nature and people in Africa (Neumann 1999; Singh and Houtum 2002; Büscher 2011). They also shaped and were shaped by the institutions, laws, and policies that added further – more official – layers of legitimacy to the acts of alienation, enclosure, and settlement required to make Kenya a settler colony. For example, Kenya's Land Regulations were regularly amended to expand the scale and tenure of freehold land available to whites in the highlands. Additionally, the Maasai Agreements of 1904 and 1911 literally forced Maasais out of Laikipia to facilitate white settlement. There is a tragic sense of irony in these acts, given that Laikipia was purported to be already uninhabited by Maasai as early as 1887. Following the report of the Kenya Land Commission in 1933, the highlands were eventually formalized as a white reserve. These and other colonial laws, coupled with representations of Laikipia's landscape as naturally white, serve as the discursive-institutional context in which the white highlands were brought into reality – in which nature was racialized, and this was made to reflect in the spatial configuration of the landscape.

Yet settlers did not simply describe the highlands as white or impose institutions that legalized racialized dispossession and the institution of a racialized property regime; they also made the highlands white in their everyday practices. As a favoured pastime of white cisgender men in the colony, safari was imbued with performances of aristocracy, masculinity, and racial superiority (*Chapter 4*). Safari also became an important livelihood diversification strategy for many settlers, out of economic necessity, passion for hunting, or both. In short, the practices and representations of safari fueled settler notions of belonging, and of their right to belong, in Laikipia. Although little if any land was grabbed explicitly for conservation in Laikipia, I suggest that the settlement-era represents the first

wave of green grabbing in the county. This is because racialized representations of nature were used to appropriate land and resources for white settlement. The culture and economy of safari that emerged on settler farms and ranches primed the conditions for subsequent waves of green grabbing in the post-independence era.

Hughes writes: through cultural representations and practices of safari, “extra-European whites have forged senses of belonging more enduring and resilient than empire” into material landscapes and relationships in places such as Laikipia (2010, 2). *Chapters 4 and 5* of this dissertation demonstrate that, just as white identity and environmental conservation have shaped and co-produced each other in Laikipia, safari has shaped how settlers interpret and implement conservation itself. *Chapter 5*, specifically, demonstrates that the legacies of this imaginative project have proven to be particularly enduring and resilient. They have, as Hughes writes, unfolded alongside and in tension with various political endeavors of the colonies and their successors” (2010, 2). During one historical conjuncture in the 1980s and 90s, for example, settler notions of belonging came into direct alignment with efforts on the part of international organizations to test out and expand Market-Driven Conservation (MDC). This alignment provided settlers an opportunity to get back into the business of conservation, to transform their properties into spaces for MDC, enabling them to capitalize on an important aspect of their identity and belonging in Kenya vis-à-vis safari. This marked the beginning of the second wave of green grabbing in Laikipia, as settlers, settler-conservationists, and conservation organizations intensified their grip on land and resources through MDC.

Chapter 5 describes how private white enclosures in Laikipia have been re-interpreted and re-institutionalized by transnational actors and entities associated with the green economy of conservation. Since the early 1990s onward, settlers, settler-conservationists, and conservation organizations have allied to consolidate settler properties in Laikipia as a vast space for MDC. Like white green grabbing in the colonial era, this imaginative project involves representations of the landscape that both racialize and legitimize the racialization of space: Laikipia is now frequently represented as a wild landscape in need of conservation, rather than as a rural society that remains structured around the material needs of settler agriculture and cattle ranching. Moreover, extra-

European whites have used discourses of poaching to necessitate the militarization of private conservancies and ranches. This imaginative project has also involved the amendment of existing legislation and the creation of new conservation boundaries, policies, and regulations (*Chapter 5* and *6*). Consequently, some 40 per cent of Laikipia is now owned by less than 50 private individuals/entities and managed as paramilitarized enclaves for MDC.

Yet white green grabbing today differs from that of the colonial era in some key areas. One is the type of violence involved in re-enclosure: colonial dispossession relied on *actual* violence, a violence that resides at the core of structural forms of violence that have disenfranchised L/IP in Laikipia for over a century; whereas white green grabbing now mainly involves slow violence. Slow violence, as conceived by Nixon, refers to “violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all” (2011, 2). The slow violence of white green grabbing hinges on the legacies of racialized dispossession. This occurs through the strategic deployment of technologies and programmes purported as being in the best interest of disenfranchised groups, endangered species of wildlife, and the landscape at large. *Chapter 5* examines these strategies, focusing on two prominent trends associated with white green grabbing. These are: the paramilitarization of settler properties (be they strictly wildlife conservancies or mixed-use ranches) and the investment of conservation revenues in social services within human settlements bordering such properties. Pursued in tandem, these strategies have intensified the control that extra-European whites have over land, resources, and capital in Laikipia through MDC.

As a type of slow violence, white green grabbing in this context brings relative few new things (i.e. land, resources, or livelihoods) into the wildlife sector. Rather, under green pretexts (Ojeda 2012), it serves to reinforce existing ethno-spatial relationships in the county. Whereas colonial dispossession spatialized race by creating white and native reserves (Moore 2005; Li 2010; 2011), the greening of settler properties re-spatializes race by overlaying MDC on a racialized land use and tenure system. Accordingly, this

dissertation underscores just how central the history of colonial land alienation, enclosure, and settlement is in the genealogy of green grabbing in Laikipia.

Throughout this history, early forms of green grabbing can be identified in the collective efforts of settlers to naturalize racialized dispossession in the landscape. This dissertation provides evidence of how these inter-related processes eventually culminated in vast amounts of Laikipia residing under the private control of a minority white population that was (pre-)disposed to using, managing, and profiting off land in ways akin to, what is now understood as, MDC. Through the slow violence of the green economy, in other words, extra-European whites have re-inserted themselves into the landscape vis-à-vis MDC (i.e. white green grabbing) – often with innocuous intentions. The next section of this chapter discusses a third wave of green grabbing, which seeks to expand the amount of land and resources being used for MDC in Laikipia. Targeting community land belonging to groups of Maasai pastoralists, this third wave re-spatializes ethnic relationships by incorporating new land, resources, and livelihoods into the green economy.

3 The politics of difference, belonging, and belonging differently

This chapter has thus far offered consideration for, what may be described as, the first and second waves of green grabbing in Laikipia. Respectively, these waves include racialized dispossession and the original enclosure of land and resources in Kenya's highlands (c. 1883–1963) and the greening of settler properties in Laikipia through the green economy (c. 1980–present). As reflected in *Chapter 6*, however, a third wave of green grabbing began in c. 1995 and continues into the present. As discussed, this wave continues to increase in momentum and size as it washes over Kenya's northern frontier. This third wave of green grabbing involves the implementation of CBC in Maasai group ranches located in the northern and north-eastern regions of Laikipia.

For McIntosh (2016), CBC in Laikipia can be understood as – what I call – white green grabbing. Relaying insights from ethnographic fieldwork carried out among white

Kenyans, McIntosh describes CBC as “a means, not only of incorporating African neighbours to augment conservation, but also of demonstrating to black Kenyans that privileged whites might plausibly belong in the mix” (2016, 77). The research findings informing this dissertation confirm this, to some extent. *Chapter 6* discusses, in quite some detail, that extra-European whites are not only trying to intensify their control over land, resources, and capital in Laikipia by consolidating settler properties for MDC, they are also trying to expand the reaches of their authority and influence into group ranches belonging to Maasais through CBC. Whereas investing conservation revenues in social services within human settlements bordering private ranches and conservancies is a strategic maneuver in defence of white property rights; implementing community conservancies in group ranches is an offensive maneuver to insert conservation into group ranches – into territories of difference (Escobar 2008). From this perspective, certain aspects of CBC can be understood as white green grabbing. But pegging CBC as white green grabbing evades a more complete rendering of how and why green grabbing works in Laikipia. It fails to consider how CBC factors into the different impacts and variegated political reactions to green grabbing from below.

This dissertation demonstrates that the implementation of community conservancies in Maasai group ranches can be understood, in part, as a type of political reaction to green grabbing in Laikipia, as well as an adaptive strategy in response to: growing threats to land security and pastoralist livelihoods, persistent if not rising forms of inequality, and generally poor socio-economic prospects that continue to wreak havoc on both individual and collective notions of wellbeing in group ranches. Although this dissertation seeks to privilege the political agency of Maasai individuals and communities, it recognizes as well that options for reacting politically to green grabbing are limited by this groups unique historical-material reality.

This dissertation demonstrates the effects that racialized dispossession continues to have on Maasai communities in Laikipia (*Chapters 5 and 6*). While Laikipiak Maasai were dispersed from the plateau following the Iloikop Wars and the Maasai Moves (c. 1850–1912), some remaining members of the Laikipiak Maasai pursued their notions of belonging on the plateau through the formation of new ethno-political allegiances or

altogether new ethnic identities (*Chapter 4*). For members of what is now Wild Laikipia, such strategies enabled them to retain their ancestral land by adopting fluid and shifting notions of ethnicity and belonging. This witnessed them transition from Laikipiak Maasai to Dorobo, from pastoralists to hunter-gatherers and back again, and from members of group ranches to members of community conservancies. For members of group ranches such as Wild Laikipia, pursuing incorporation into green grabs can be understood as a political reaction in line with historical traditions of struggle, but it does not necessarily indicate compliance with the ideology of green grabs. As discussed further below, this dissertation demonstrates a good deal of discord for the impacts, meanings, and values of green grabbing in spaces such as Wild Laikipia. In this regard, pursuing incorporation into CBC is only the most recent turn in the shifting trajectories of Maasai identity and belonging in Laikipia.

These findings complement those documented by Gardner (2016) in Loliondo, Tanzania, who argues that Maasais have relatively little choice but to align their political strategies for defending their livelihood, territory, and wellbeing with the opportunities available in the discursive-institutional context of MDC. Gardner argues that “neoliberalism has reshaped the meanings and values of Maasai landscapes and communities ... [altering] the political tactics available to marginalized social groups like Maasai” (Gardner 2016, 7). This is also true for Maasais reacting to green grabbing in Laikipia from pastoralist group ranches. Yet the interaction between Maasai identity and belonging, historical traditions of struggle for territory, and green grabbing in Laikipia does little to explain why other rural groups have different experiences with and reactions to green grabbing, nor does it account for variegated experiences with and reactions to green grabbing within community conservancies themselves. *Chapter 6* demonstrates that reactions to CBC within Maasai group ranches are neither homogeneous nor universal. Instead, expectations for, experiences with, and reactions to CBC differ further along the lines of class, gender, etc.

Most individuals in community conservancies interviewed for this study recognize that their collective strategy of pursuing incorporation into the wildlife sector has helped group ranch members achieve certain goals. For example, it has led to improved social services,

the development of basic infrastructure such as roads and water wells, and the deployment of paramilitary wildlife rangers to defend community land. Yet, most interviewees are also quick to point out that these benefits have come with a high social cost. Although entire group ranches may pursue incorporation into the wildlife sector, only a small portion of the population benefits directly from tourism ventures and other “conservation enterprises”. Additionally, revenues generated from conservation enterprises for social services and infrastructure development are quite minimal, and NRT efforts to supplement local pastoralist economies have relatively low net positive gains. The livelihood opportunities that have been made available to women especially tend to be menial and low-paying, yet women also remain under-represented in the institutional and organization structure of CBC and the NRT. Moreover, the mixing of conservation and pastoralism has led to new forms of human-wildlife conflict. This unique form of slow violence, as mentioned by Cavannagh and Benjaminsen (2015), can have devastating consequences on peoples’ livelihoods, safety, and wellbeing over time. As discussed in *Chapter 6*, it also confronts individuals in community conservancies with ideological concerns about how their lands, livelihood, and lives are being valued relative to wildlife.

Accordingly, this dissertation demonstrates that in the context of collective incorporation, community conservancies are rife with acquiescence and everyday forms of resistance. Such reactions are documented in *Chapter 6*, and commonly involve the weapons of the weak: dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering (of protected resources), and slander (Scott 1985). As a political reaction to green grabbing, incorporation has introduced new relationships, politics, and values into pastoralist communities that, while enabling them to achieve certain goals, has undermined others. As this dissertation demonstrates, the outcomes of incorporation itself is negotiated through micro-political reactions to green grabbing in different spaces and strata of social life within community conservancies.

But how do other rural groups in Laikipia experience and react to green grabbing, and why? *Chapters 4 and 5* of this dissertation discuss findings on how both pastoralists outside group ranches and small-scale farmers are impacted by green grabbing, as well as why they react in the ways that they do. Unlike Maasais in group ranches/community conservancies, political reactions on the part of such groups seek to avoid incorporation

into the wildlife sector for different reasons. Yet reactions from other pastoralists and small-scale farmers share at least one important similarity with those of Maasai pastoralists – even with extra-European whites: they are fuelled by cultural notions of what it means to belong, and of their right to belong *differently*, in Laikipia's landscape. Before proceeding to discuss the research limitations that impacted this dissertation, this chapter first briefly recounts these other experiences with and reactions to green grabbing.

Although many Maasai group ranches have collectively pursued incorporation into green grabs, often acquiescing to the colonial nature of the wildlife sector, such reactions are not universal among pastoralists in Laikipia. Pastoralists that do not belong to group ranches, or associate with other pastoralist groups outside Laikipia – such as Kalenjin, Pokot, Samburu, or Turkana – have demonstrated a willingness to openly defy green grabs by disregarding the boundaries, forces, and regulations that have been assembled to protect private ranches and conservancies. Individuals associated with such groups have pursued pastoralist incursions into green enclosures (*Chapter 4*), breaking down electric fences that surround private wildlife conservancies to graze and water their livestock. These are not so much reactions pursued in defense of territory, as Alonso-Fradejas (2015) describes, but politically-infused assertions that pastoralists and their livelihoods have a right to belong in Laikipia without incorporation into the wildlife sector.

Many small-scale farmers in Laikipia identify as either Kikuyu or Meru, among other agrarian groups. Small-scale farmers primarily occupy a belt of freehold land that spans the length of Laikipia's south-eastern and south-western border (Images 14 and 15, *Chapter 5*). Much of this land was acquired for Kikuyu farmers following the Mau Mau Uprising during the 1950s and 60s. Due in part to an historical tradition of engaging in open revolt in response to colonial dispossession – unlike Maasais who largely avoided open revolt by pursuing uneasy political allegiances with the British, Kikuyu, and other ethnic groups – many small-scale farmers have very different experiences with and reactions to green grabbing in the present. This is also due to the sedentary nature of their livelihoods, which stand to benefit less from the sources of pasture and water behind the electric fences of private ranches and conservancies. Yet when wild animals destroy farmers' crops or cause harm to people, or when conservancies fail to act as good

corporate citizens by investing in social services or water infrastructure, for example, small-scale farmers are relatively quick to mobilize in protest. Such political reactions can be understood as maneuvers in defence of farmers' properties and livelihoods; but they also contain within them demands that settlers, settler-conservationists, and conservation organizations demonstrate to farmers why they should be allowed to "belong in the mix" (McIntosh 2016). As one elderly farmer living directly opposite the electric fence surrounding Ol Ari Nyiro Conservancy in West Laikipia explained to me: "You know we Kikuyu, we can never have enough land. But so long as she [referring to the white owner of Ol Ari Nyiro] is a good neighbour, there is no problem".⁵¹

4 Current limitations and avenues for further research

Recognizing research itself as a contact zone has practical and ethical advantages, which are discussed in much greater detail in *Chapter 3*. At one level, this approach instilled in me a reasonable dose of dissatisfaction for surface-level interactions. Thus, I was highly motivated to pursue research opportunities that would take me deeper into the individual and collective processes through which people come to understand themselves in relation to the Other in the context of green grabbing – deeper into the nitty-gritty of transculturation. This proved to be beneficial from a research perspective, pushing me deeper into history and further behind the curtain of representation shrouding Laikipia's wildlife sector. It also led to the formation of amicable arrangements, partnerships, and relationships that made the research possible, logistically, and continually sharpened my analytical perspective.

On such a journey, however, one must be wary of "white rabbits" – leads that take one down intriguing but otherwise irrelevant tunnels of inquiry. Deciding what tunnels to pursue, what evidence to privilege in doing so, and what story to write at the end of it all involves political calculations on the part of the researcher. It is not be enough, therefore, to simply consider oneself adept at adjudicating between "false leads" and "true leads"; it is necessary to lay bare personal biases, convictions, and experiences that shape the

⁵¹ Interview, 8 May 2015

findings of research. For such reasons, this dissertation situates my claims through ethnographic research. It also situates my ethnographic claims in the context of my positionality. For example, *Chapter 3* describes my penchant for safari and how this influenced my research approach and topic. Yet, in striving for a critical, dialogical, and reflexive approach to research and writing, this dissertation has created just as many gaps and fissures as it has points of connection. I reflect on these further in concluding the dissertation.

To begin with, although this dissertation provides consideration for the gendered nature of socio-economic and political relationships at play in green grabs; it does not offer a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between gender identity and green grabbing. The gender gap is most glaring in the historical analysis of green grab, and of safari in colonial-era Kenya, offered in *Chapter 4*. Further research, therefore, may attempt to write a gendered genealogy of green grabbing in Laikipia or elsewhere. Likewise, although Steinhart (2006) analyzes the hunting practices of L/IP alongside those of settlers in Kenya, more research could be done into political reactions that occurred in response green grabbing and white green grabbing in colonial Kenya.

In a similar vein, this dissertation offers only implicit consideration for how age differentiation influences reactions to green grabbing (*Chapter 5*). Are elders more or less willing to pursue incorporation into green grabs than youths? Perhaps youths are more willing to engage in riskier forms of political action, if their livelihoods have already diversified away from the subsistence sector? Or, conversely, perhaps the investment of conservation revenues into education and other social services have begun to predispose future generations to comply with the wildlife sector. Such lines of questioning deserve the attention of rigorous, systematic research.

Lastly, since early 2017, some six months after fieldwork for this dissertation was completed, incidences of pastoralist incursions in Laikipia have increased in number and intensity. Some herders have burned safari lodges, harassed tourists, and killed wildlife in private ranches and conservancies. On 6 March 2017, the body of Tristan Voorspuy was found dead on Sosian Game Ranch – allegedly shot and killed by land invaders.

Kenya's white community, including the British High Commission in Kenya, have demanded government action in response to such incidences, citing fears of another Zimbabwe. Do such acts count as resistance? Are other interests or stakes at play? Speculation is high that those who shot and killed Voorspuy are connected to politicians in Laikipia, and to other elite "land invaders" (Mwangi 2017). This speculation has yet to be met with clear answers. But the trend to-date suggests that the Government of Kenya is going to help ensure that Laikipia's conservation-tourism industry survives (Agutu 2017). As such, future research may consider the role that various political elites occupying different spaces and strata within the state play in green grabbing and why. Additionally, what will the ongoing militarization of the landscape in Laikipia mean for pastoralists and small-scale farmers already struggling to belong and survive amid various forms of green violence. Moreover, future research might consider why a Zimbabwe-like land reform programme does or does not occur in Laikipia. What historical differences or similarities might help explain either outcome? And what might the prospects be for identity, belonging, and ethnic relationships moving forward?

5 Closing words

By making green grabbing a subject of ethnographic and historical inquiry, this dissertation examines the *longue durée* of green grab in Laikipia. It brings existing literature on the historical contours of ethnicity and belonging in the countryside adjacent to Mt. Kenya's western foothills into conversation with recent literature concerned with the diverse impacts of and variegated political reactions to green grabbing. As discussed, I understand the question of how and why different rural groups react politically to green grabbing to be closely linked to the question of how and why green grabbing persists in certain places and spaces. In response to these questions, this dissertation argues that green grabbing is central to longstanding contestations over what it means to belong, and over the right to belong, in Laikipia.

This dissertation demonstrates some of the ways that different rural groups – differentiated along the lines of class, gender, identity, and race, and including elite and

non-elite groups alike – have come to understand their relationships with land, nature, and each other amid successive waves of green grabbing since the dawn of colonialism. As discussed, certain aspects of green grabbing remain fundamental to how whites re-enact their notions of belonging in Laikipia. Importantly, however, green grabbing presents other groups with opportunities, however undesirable or unsolicited they may be, to re-assert their right to belong differently into the landscape – opportunities that may be pursued through resistance, acquiescence, and/or incorporation.

In this regard, green grabbing is never *just* white green grabbing. As Hall et al. (2015, 468) explain, green grabs are shaped, re-shaped, and made possible by interactions with different groups in rural society, each with their own aspirations, expectations, and historical traditions of struggle. Green grabbing is intricately intertwined with the contested nature of belonging in Laikipia because it has been made possible by, but has also reproduced, historically constructed ethno-spatial divisions that can be traced back to processes of land alienation, enclosure, and settlement associated with colonial rule, as well as to more recent processes of neoliberalization, paramilitarization, and re-territorialization associated with MDC. By tracing the contours of these divisions, and the relationships they entail, throughout history, this dissertation further contextualizes how and why different rural groups have diverse experiences with and reactions to green grabbing in the present. In doing so, it builds a case for additional ethnographic and historical engagements with green grabbing in other places and spaces.

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Appendix A

Research participants	Affiliation	Interviews	Interview dates
Safari personnel			
Safari guide	Settler ranch, Nyeri	2	6-8 February 2015
Safari guide	Settler ranch, Laikipia	3	7-9 March 2015; 18-20 April 2015; 11-13 May 2016
Driver	Nairobi	1	
Safari guide	Settler ranch, Laikipia	3	7-9 March 2015
Safari guide	Freelance, Laikipia	1	18 April 2015
Driver	Laikipia	2	May 2015
Guide/ranger	Community conservancy, Laikipia	1	4-5 May 2015
Safari guide	Community conservancy, Laikipia	15	16-20 February 2015; 4-22 May 2015; 19-21 May 2016
Lodge staff	Big conservancy, Laikipia	1	30 January – 1 February 2015
Ranger	Big conservancy/NGO, Laikipia	1	20 May 2016

Lodge staff	Big conservancy, Laikipia	2	30 January – 1 February 2015
Driver	Nairobi	4	
Lodge manager	Settler ranch, Laikipia	1	11-12 May 2015
Lodge staff	Settler ranch, Laikipia	2	7-9 March 2015
Safari guide	Big conservancy, Laikipia	2	30 January – 1 February; 9-11 May 2016
Driver	Nairobi	1	
Safari guide	Settler ranch, Laikipia	4	7-9 March 2015; 18-20 April 2015; 11-13 May 2016
Safari guide	Big conservancy, Laikipia	5	30 January – 1 February 2015; 9-11 February 2015
Lodge manager	Settler ranch, Laikipia	3	7-9 March 2015; 18-20 April 2015; 11-13 May 2015
Lodge manager	Small hotel, Laikipia	1	11 February 2015
Lodge manager	Settler ranch, Laikipia	4	7-9 March 2015; 18-20 April 2015; 11-12 May 2015
Driver	Laikipia	1	
Lodge staff	Big conservancy	2	30 January – 1 February 2015

Safari guide	Settler ranch, Nyeri	1	6-8 February 2015
Lodge staff	Big conservancy, Laikipia	1	30 January – 1 February 2015
Driver	Laikipia	1	
Lodge staff	Big conservancy	1	30 January – 1 February 2015
Lodge staff	Community conservancy	1	16-20 February 2015
Driver	Laikipia	1	
Community representatives			
Leader	Community conservancy, Laikipia	1	4 May 2015
Leader	Community conservancy, Laikipia	1	4 May 2015
Small-scale farmer	Wangwashi	1	8 May 2015
Pastoralist	Community conservancy, Laikipia	2	4 May 2015
Small-scale farmer	Wangwashi	1	8 May 2015
Safari guide	Community conservancy, Laikipia	1	7 May 2015
NGO staff	Community conservancy, Laikipia	1	7 May 2015

NGO staff	Community conservancy, Laikipia	1	18 May 2016
Safari guide	Community conservancy	1	9 May 2016
Small-scale farmer	Wangwashi	1	8 May 2016
Ranger	Community conservancy, Laikipia	1	5 May 2016
Leader	Community conservancy, Laikipia	1	5 May 2016
NGO staff	Community conservancy, Laikipia	2	9 May 2015; 26 May 2015
Ranger	Community conservancy, Laikipia	1	5 May 2015
Pastoralist	Community conservancy, Laikipia	1	4 May 2015
NGO staff	Community conservancy, Laikipia	1	9 May 2015
Pastoralist	Community conservancy, Laikipia	1	26 May 2015
Safari tourists			
Canada	Livingstone, Zambia	1	6 April 2015
Netherlands (X2)	Big conservancy, Laikipia	1	9-11 March 2015
Settler (X3)	Settler ranch, Laikipia	2	18-20 April 2015

Kenya (X2)	Big conservancy, Laikipia	2	30 January – 1 February 2015
Canada	Settler ranch/big conservancy, Laikipia	5	7-11 March 2015
Germany (X4)	Settler ranch	1	6-8 February 2015
Germany	Settler ranch	1	6-8 February 2015
Germany (X3)	Settler ranch	1	6-8 February 2015
America	Big conservancy	2	9-11 March 2015
Canada	Nairobi	1	
Canada	Settler ranch/big conservancy, Laikipia	2	9-13 May 2016
Canada	Settler ranch/big conservancy, Laikipia	2	9-13 May 2016
Civil society organizations			
NGO staff	Rights/advocacy	1	8 May 2015
Consultant	Environmental	1	19 May 2015
NGO staff	Environmental conflict	1	2 May 2015
NGO staff	Conservation	1	
NGO staff	Conservation	1	20 May 2015
NGO staff	Conservation	1	18 May 2015

NGO representative	Safari guide association	1	5 May 2015
NGO staff	Women's rights	1	18 May 2016
NGO staff	Conservation	1	18 May 2015
NGO staff	Rights/advocacy	1	21 May 2016
NGO staff	Women's rights	1	18 May 2016
NGO representative	Women in tourism	1	24 April 2015
NGO staff	Women's rights		18 May 2016
NGO staff	Rights/advocacy	1	21 May 2016
NGO staff	Conservation	1	1 December 2014
NGO staff	Conservation	1	17 May 2015
NGO staff	Conservation	1	23 May 2015
NGO staff	Rights/advocacy	2	21 May 2016
NGO staff	Conservation	1	27 May 2016
Land owners/managers		13	
Manager	Settler ranch, Laikipia	2	20 December 2014; 26 May 2016
Owner	Small-scale landowner, Laikipia	1	1 May 2015
Owner	Settler ranch, Nyeri	2	6-8 February 2015

Owner	Settler ranch, Laikipia	3	19 April 2015; 11-13 May 2016
Owner	Settler ranch, Laikipia	5	8 March 2015; 19 April 2015; 11-13 May 2016
Government officials		3	
Local government	Laikipia	2	9 May 2015; 26 May 2016
Local government	Laikipia	1	9 May 2015
Other researchers		7	
Academic	University, Nairobi	1	19 November 2014
Academic	Freelance, Nairobi	1	13-22 April 2015
Teacher	Freelance, Nairobi	1	19 January – 30 April 2015
Journalist	Freelance, Nairobi	1	6 May 2015
Academic	University, America	2	
NGO worker	Kajiado	1	24 April 2015