Topographies of Power and International Conservation in Laikipia, Kenya

By Walker DePuy

A thesis submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Science
Natural Resources and Environment
in the University of Michigan
August 2011

Thesis Committee:
Associate Professor Rebecca Hardin, Chair
Associate Professor Johannes Foufopoulos
Assistant Professor Lauren Persha

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

The creation of this thesis, from inception to production, could not have happened without immense institutional, social, material, and emotional support. I first would like to thank my thesis committee, chair Rebecca Hardin and Johannes Foufopoulos of Michigan, and Lauren Persha of UNC Chapel Hill, for their trust, kindness, and insight over these last two years. Whether over coffee in Ann Arbor or chai at the river camp of Mpala, they have helped guide me in innumerable visible and invisible ways.

For the material support which allowed me to travel to Laikipia in the first place, I want to thank the Rackham Graduate School, the School of Natural Resources and Environment, the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies, and the Graham Environmental Sustainability Institute. Without their commitment this thesis would not have been possible.

I also wish to express untold gratitude to the community of Mpala: Don Graham, Margaret Kinnaird, and all of the myriad people who made my stay safe, comfortable, educational, and unforgettable. Their openness to sit and talk and let me share a part of their world remains an inspiration.

My deepest gratitude as well extends to the generosity afforded me by the communities of Ilmotiok and Tiemamut, who were gracious enough to let an unknown researcher sit by their fires and inquire about their lives. Within this, I wish to especially

thank my three research assistants who were unfailingly helpful during this time and in the process became confidants and friends.

Finally, I want to thank my colleagues, Colin and Kayla, for the long hours and many days spent together over this oft times most circuitous of journeys and without whom my graduate school career would have been all the poorer.

All errors and omissions in this work are solely my own.

Preface

We had been driving for almost half an hour when Judy got the call over the radio: a leopard had been killed. In her three years of working within and among the communities of Laikipia North, she had never seen firsthand a predator killed by community members. She knew such an event was likely to cause ripples of aftereffect, politically, socially, and legally. She also knew that for any number of reasons she needed to be there. Our plans for the day had now markedly changed.

We started this bright July morning at the Mpala Research Centre of central Laikipia, Kenya, only crossing the Ewaso Nyiro river to the neighboring Maasai group ranches a few hours earlier that day. My colleague Kayla and I had been living and working at the Mpala Research Centre since the final days of May, and here six weeks later we were hoping to expand our Laikipia experience with a ten-day field stay in the communities of Ilmotiok and Tiemamut just adjacent to Mpala's eastern border. This border is defined by the Ewaso Nyiro, which importantly for all life currently found in this area was now flowing fast and strong.

Upon crossing the river, we soon found ourselves arriving at Ilmotiok's Ol Gaboli ecotourism lodge, recently opened a few years earlier and still under construction. After settling into our quarters and laying out our packs, we were back in our Land Rover and headed out on a circuitous and soon-to-be familiar road that meanders through Ilmotiok,

on to Tiemamut and Koija group ranches and beyond. The plan was to respectfully shadow Judy, an American socioecology Ph.D. student, on her daily research rounds in Ilmotiok that day. We hoped to slowly and cautiously gain a sense for our surroundings, both social and natural, and lay a foundation of rapport with our accompanying field assistants as well as the greater community in order to soon engage in social research of our own. The call from the radio suggested our research would be starting sooner than expected now.

Judy's ease with both the oversized vehicle and the web of red dirt roads was evident as she applied pressure to the gas and left us trailing behind an auburn veneer of grit and haze. After several vigorous minutes of speed and pursuit, she slowed and veered abruptly right, leaving the well-worn lane and navigating instead amidst gullies, euphorbia, and acacia underbrush. Within moments we had downshifted to a stop just aside an acacia-corralled homestead and were now walking towards the shade of an unexpectedly large tree, underneath of which was a chest-high, steel-barred cage and a large, dead dog inside, visibly in multiple, mangled pieces. Outside the cage lay the leopard, also dead, and yet to our gloved touch still soft and warm in the high afternoon sun. Its supple, notably muscular form and size were both evident and striking from such a close range, and in a flurry of Maa, the local tongue of both Maasai and Samburu in this area, Judy inquired as to what happened from the three young men in attendance. In their answers, we were told a grisly and troubling tale of loss, death, and fear.

The leopard had held the community at bay for almost a full week, killing twelve goats and five dogs in only six days. It was suspected to be rabid, or unstable in some way, and as the community became worried as the unusual pattern of killing emerged,

they informed the Kenyan Wildlife Service, colloquially shortened to KWS, of their situation. Such a call is mandated by legal protocol due to heavy restrictions on killing predators without authorization, and after an additional three to four days, and more subsequent livestock and canine deaths, a steel trap was provided to the Ilmotiok community. Using a decapitated dog as bait, the leopard was thus successfully enticed, captured, and detained.

Under normal circumstances, such an arrangement allows KWS to trap and relocate dangerous or troublesome animals far away from the afflicted communities, settling affairs theoretically for the benefit of both predator and people alike. We were told, however, that the intervention did not go as planned; that something unforeseen occurred. The trap door was said to have malfunctioned, and under its sprung weight, the leopard's neck snapped, killing it on impact. A large and visible gash across the neck seemed to confirm the young men's tale. Under the weight of what we had just heard, we walked slowly from the shade of that large tree back to our SUVs. Yet while we drove on to a series of *bomas*, the ubiquitous family-ringed and acacia-corralled homesteads of the Maasai, to sit and talk and learn from some of Judy's closest study families and friends, the image of the leopard lingered on, and left me unsettled as to how this story would end.

As we left the second *boma* of the day, Kayla and myself fairly overwhelmed and Judy having acquired her requisite household surveys and body measurements, Judy received an update on the radio; the leopard was about to be skinned. Upon hearing this news, we raced back from whence we came, minds still reeling from wood smoke and the beginnings of social and cultural intermingling. Pulling up, we noticed that what was a

small grouping of men had grown substantially larger, with well over a dozen and a half people now present, male and female alike, adults and children of varying ages, all standing and conversing, dress ranging from traditional chukas and kokois to a lone uniformed ranger from Naibunga Conservancy, the umbrella organization that oversees community conservation areas for nine surrounding group ranches. The leopard was now laid out in the open, away from the shade of the cage, where its full length and size could be appreciated uninhibitedly, free from any distractions. A lone dog with long eyes and gaunt sides circled just beyond the throng. The sun's warmth on our necks was welcome, and yet today its strength carried other consequences. Sharp, pungent scents emanated and subsided around us in fits and waves.

We learned that skinning the animal is also a standard requirement for KWS so as to prevent any possibility of black market animal product trafficking on the side. The trade in animal goods and wears is still thriving throughout East Africa and a leading cause of biodiversity loss around the world. We also learned that the story we heard earlier was a lie. As we stood, taking in the scene, eyeing the dog, and explaining our presence to those around us, Judy noticed three distinct puncture marks on the animal's side, one in the neck, one in its right shoulder, and one just below, clearly delineating the work, and subsequent wounds, of a spear. While she explained to her close confidant and research assistant, who is also a member of the Ilmotiok community, about the science of forensics, the community's chief arrived and along with several other community members took the man suspected of killing the leopard off to the side for a conversation only they were privy to hear. His anger, however, was palpable even from a far.

At this point, the skinning had begun. Two men started with the limbs, one on either end. As they commenced, it was observed by those in the crowd that the leopard looked relatively old and arguably "not in good health." After the men began running their arms over the animal's sinewy own, a five-inch-long gash was found along the creature's right forearm, still open and fresh. The wound was quickly pinned as the prime suspect for the leopard's aberrant behavior. With such an animal wounded, it would be far less fit to successfully hunt wild game, opting instead for those prey domesticated, penned, and more easily available. Talk was happening all around us now, in both Maa and Swahili, with men and women laughing and jesting; others solemnly and sternly discussing and remembering. During this, several observations in English floated our way as we engaged with those beside us. Almost all conversation was focused on the leopard and many saw the need to explicate the community's open fear of such animals and the sense of relief at there being one less around to worry about. Remarks were made about a leopard's propensity to be "clever," and their renowned "targeting" and stalking skills, all of those things, which make leopards, in the words of one man, "dangerous." Another member was less circumspect and offered a simple, dreaded fact. Nodding his head for emphasis he reflected that leopards can "kill many people very easily."

The skill of the skinners was obvious by this point as well, with a deftness of ability and ease of action that belied their years of experience and spoke volumes as to the number of times such tasks have been performed before. The Naibunga Conservancy ranger stepped in to help, using what appeared to be a butter knife to quickly and competently work the main torso, lifting away the hide as he went. Yet perhaps the most impressive work was performed by an elderly man, who squatting in his purple kokoi,

handled nimbly a well-worn blade, in and out, and out and in, between the big cat's claws, seamlessly and carefully removing pelt from paw. Through all of this, the rust-colored dog still circled, patient and unwavering.

The man who stabbed the leopard will probably go to jail, Judy informed us. One is not allowed to kill wildlife without KWS approval. The animal had been appropriately caught and set to be relocated elsewhere. A crime of passion or otherwise, its illegality was hard to dispute. And yet, in this case, the justice of that judgment is arguable, questionable, complicated. The fear and worry over such predations, whether of livestock or people, hung in the air, and rather than anomaly was shown today to be a lived reality. The next day, our research assistant Robert reflected that a leopard "is more dangerous than a lion" and "can kill ten men in seconds." He continued: "We don't even let our children go out after seven because of leopards."

Such concerns of human-wildlife conflict were voiced by Judy's research assistant as well, a man who would soon also become our friend. When she expressed sadness over the death of such an animal, Joseph is said to have replied, "You don't understand." The people whose livestock were attacked, whose goats and dogs were killed, were among the poorest of the community and such losses often devastating to their ability to provide food and security to their families. In speaking with Judy about the leopard, Joseph confessed to be happy the leopard was dead. He is a well-spoken and thoughtful leader, highly versed in the need for conservation and an active promoter of his community's involvement in those activities. The leopard's potential for harm, however, is a hard hurdle to overcome. As we finished that afternoon with the leopard,

leaving before we could see just where the pelt eventually went, he was said to have asked rhetorically and equally reasonably, “What do you expect them to do?”

We learned later from him that Mpala, the research institute and conservancy from where we were usually based, often acts as a mediator between the communities of Ilmotiok and Tiemamut and KWS during times of questionable conflict, legality, and messy, thorny events. This relationship, and additional responsibility undertaken by Mpala, coupled with the anecdote just recounted touches on the multi-faceted picture I hope to fill in more clearly in the chapters to come, from the stark and visceral challenges of human-wildlife conflict, to shifting conceptions of Maasai indigeneity and Laikipian identity through the medium of conservation, to unpacking the exact role this place called the Mpala Research Centre plays across this arid, dynamic land. At once an ecological research center, commercial cattle ranch, and highland conservancy for the greater Laikipia region, it is also neighbor, benefactor, mediator, and friend to a small number of Maasai community group ranches living just across the river. How such entities and identities interact, and the spaces of possibility, opportunity, contradiction, and contention that emerge, is the subject of this monograph and to where now I turn.

Introduction

I came to this liminal place as a Master's student from the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and Environment fascinated by the seeming untidiness of its story and curious to investigate the complex social networks both promoting and impeding "sustainable" development and the work of international conservation in the region. As a semi-arid area in the tropics, abutting the northwestern foot hills of Mount Kenya**,** the Laikipia plateau and greater Laikipia-Samburu region has been a space for international political, economic, and cultural intrigue for centuries, and yet it is arguably most widely known today for its considerable ecotouristic value and conservation import.

Home to some of the most spectacular megafaunal populations on Earth, Laikipia as a district is first in East African species diversity and second in density only to its southerly neighbor the Maasai Mara, making it a critical space for trans-African migrations and broader matrix connectivity (Gadd 2005; Georgiadis 2007a; Perfecto, et al. 2009). Importantly, this area boasts not only robust herbivore and predator populations of elephants and elands, hyenas and hartebeest, but populations of highly endangered species as well, including some of the last substantive numbers of Grevy's zebras, black rhinos, and African wild dogs in the world (Georgiadis 2007b; Low 2009; Woodroffe 2005). Perhaps most intriguing, however, is the fact that all of these species

are sustained in a district devoid of protected areas, with conservation occurring instead across a checkerboard mosaic of private conservancies, large-scale cattle ranches, and communally-owned, pastoral lands, which collectively make up a full 98% of Laikipia (Rubenstein 2010; Wambuguh 2007; Sundaresan and Riginos 2010).

Balancing the varying ecological needs of livestock and wildlife, as well as the sociocultural symbiosis between international conservationists, British expatriates, and myriad Kenyan ethnicities thus creates a distinctly complex conservation problem, in that while engaging with local landowners to create co-beneficial solutions is an oft lauded goal, the reality of implementing and sustaining such strategies is decidedly more murky (West 2005; Peterson 2008; McDaniel 2002; Colchester 2001). I came to live and work at the Mpala Research Centre of Laikipia in the summer of 2010 to explore how this center was helping shape that larger conservation narrative and how the Maasai communities living next door were both affected by and in turn affecting that same story. It is one involving multiple actors, where everyone from the Smithsonian and Princeton University to the president of *Puma* is grappling with ways to pursue an economically and ecologically sustainable conservation-development agenda. However, the cross-cultural and justice implications of such an agenda cannot and should not be ignored across a landscape that is both seductively alluring and famously heterogeneous. And given the aforementioned lack of protected areas, the need for landowner communication and cooperation only reinforces such a call, in the interest of both effective and equitable socioecological relations.

In the text that follows, I present evidence from three months of participant-observation and seventy semi-structured work and life history interviews conducted

within and around Mpala Research Centre from late May to August 2010. Broadly speaking, I will use the voices of rural white Kenyan ranchers, conservation professionals, community members and leaders, and national and international scientists to illustrate the conflicts, opportunities, and challenges involved in the collaborative conservation and management of mixed wildlife habitat and rangeland systems in an unprotected area of central Kenya. More specifically, I hope to illuminate and ultimately tease out the interplay between two social forces that ebb and flow with and against each other across this complex landscape.

The first of these concerns the varying "topographies of power," to use James Ferguson's phrase, that have been overlaid on and embedded in this small stretch of Kenya, from shifting dominant ethnicities to the emergence of specific governmentalities, which culminate in the rise of the international conservation regime and point to Mpala's particular role as investigator, co-creator, and conduit of it (2006: 89). The second such sociocultural facet to be explored is that of identity: its plasticity and adaptability across social groups, as well as the ways in which this polyethnic landscape and its organizing structures of governance have enabled space for intimacies and entanglements to take shape, whether potentially divisive or constructive among the myriad actors found in this place. Engaging conservation through the categories of identity and sociopolitical topography also enables a more refined look at both the friction created and blurriness discovered between the local and the global, the marginalized and the dominant, and ideas of dependency and empowerment (Tsing 2004).

Ultimately, through common and divergent narratives of individuals' lives and work, their personal and communal hopes and fears, I hope to explore the enactment of a

broader conservation economy in the region, and in doing so, investigate what Ferguson calls Mpala's particular "place-in-the-world," its "place in a system of dependencies and responsibilities, rights and obligations" to those social actors enveloped around it, and how in turn such a "place" shapes the larger issue of sustainable conservation in Laikipia (2006: 22).

Working both before and immediately after a referendum on a new constitution for Kenya, it is important to note that my data constitute a snapshot of negotiated resource use relations at a particular moment in time, after a massive transition from colonial to postcolonial sociality and just before a major legal and political transformation in Kenyan governmental frameworks. For many as well, 2009 was the worst drought in living memory and an overwhelming sense of ecological and economic loss still seemed to saturate the air. Interviews were conducted in varying circumstances of English, Swahili, and Maa, with those conducted in Maa and Swahili conveyed with the help of a primary field assistant and select others as needs arose. Fidelity to conversation content, and accuracy of translation or transcription, whether from memory, on paper, or on tape, was strived for throughout the research process. All voices captured here are used by the author graciously and identified by pseudonyms unless consented otherwise.

With all this in mind, my monograph will unfold over three chapters. The first will trace the history of two topographies of power experienced across Laikipia since the early twentieth century and before. I will begin with the introduction of British colonialism and the tenured creation of the White Highlands. This will be followed by a look at the social geography of the Maasai present before the British's arrival,

specifically tracing their ebb and flow over this landscape historically and their notably adaptive and fluid markers of identity. Such an investigation will show not only a cascade effect of ethnic dominance, but also a distinct shift in land tenure systems, political power, and socioecological geography. From here, we see these two topographies overlap, and in so doing, how local communities living there in the past were affected by this meeting, and, through a continuing, orally constructed narrative, what such transitions have meant those living there today. In following the two communities of Ilmotiok and Tiemamut from thirty-five years ago to the present, we see how the changes they voice regarding land tenure and climate point to narratives not only of shifting identity but emerging avenues of empowerment. The chapter ends ultimately with an eye to the topography of power most interesting and pertinent to our project here, and that is the rise of the international conservation regime, whose broader agenda is arguably most actively shaping Laikipia today.

My second chapter will focus most prominently on this third topography of power as found in Laikipia and most particularly at and around Mpala. Beginning with a brief history of the Mpala Research Centre, the paper will move to an exposition on conservation in Kenya, ending with the rise of community-based rationales and engagements and the arguably unique model employed across Laikipia's culturally varied properties. Using James Ferguson's construct of "transnational governmentality," I hope to show how such an international conservation regime as exemplified by Mpala has effectively taken over the State's role as provider and arbiter of social services, with the resulting responsibilities, dependencies, and challenges so incurred (2006: 40). This is true not only between Mpala and its staff, but also for the neighboring communities of

Ilmotiok and Tiemamut as well, whose lack of mobility and ability to withstand drought has made them ever more dependent on Mpala's good acts and good will. And while their recent introduction to the larger conservation economy has enabled attempts at economic diversification through ecotourism and education, it ultimately also ties them ever more closely into Mpala and its expertise's fold. The chapter will close with an attempt to disentangle some these relations, lend voice to narratives of uncertainty as well as empowerment, and investigate emergent intimacies and identities among the myriad actors at play.

Lastly, in my final chapter I argue that Mpala's topographical power and reach is captured not only in its role of informal governance but equally in its capacity as a node of scientific knowledge production. Through the actions of individual scientists and those of the larger institution, we see an Mpala able to influence the practice and discourse of conservation in Laikipia for years to come. And yet it is this grounding in the globally integrated conservation and development discourses that raises substantive and difficult questions of conservation justice and the silencing of local, indigenous discourse, knowledge, and policy alternatives. I will end this chapter proposing the possibility of knowledge sharing as a legitimate medium for scientific and social justice advancement, grounded in social intimacy and entanglement and broached in simple dialogue. In the end, we see a narrative of Laikipian relations and the power of Mpala that points to a hopeful, if uncertain, future of increasingly sustainable social rapport and more flexible and adaptive conservation and resource management.

But ultimately, before embarking on any such a quest, of issues of conservation, development, identity, and power, it is important to situate ourselves. And so I begin this

monograph with a small attempt at placing this ecosystem and ethnoscape in some historical context (Appadurai 1990). For the Maasai living there today, this land has undergone substantial changes and their way of life has likewise seen substantive cultural, economic, and social transformations. The British expatriate economic and cultural worlds of cattle ranching have seen formative turbulence as well, in the transition to postcolonialism as well as the ascent of international conservation and its goals for the region. In peeling back some of these invisible geographies and undulating topographies of power, we can perhaps better place both the Maasai and Mpala in their world today, the better to consider where they may be going in the future.

Chapter One

Embedded Histories and Shifting Identities in Laikipia, Kenya

Introduction

Exuding quiet confidence and cheery aplomb, Kayla navigated our rented, well-worn Land Rover along the pit-scarred, red dirt road. Flanked on either side by verdant pasture and cirrus-filled sky, she maneuvered our craft deftly over potholes and in between lengthy gullies, we passengers bracing ourselves strategically against the vehicle's sides. After several weeks working in the wildlife conservancies and rural group ranches of the Laikipia valley, we were headed to the city center of Nanyuki that early morning in July for a round of groceries and the potentially protracted errand of registering our cell phones.

All at once, we felt a palpable change in our ride. As the ground under our wheels softened and shifted to pavement, our field assistant, Robert, leaned forward and grinned. "Now we are in Kenya," he said. When inquisitively prompted to explain what he meant, he noted that many people do not consider the mosaic of private lands we came from to be a part of their country, placing it instead somewhere outside the national imaginary, somewhere separate, somehow distinct. As we transitioned from that rough ride of dust, jostle, and grit to one that seemed almost preternaturally smooth, the tactile symbolism of his distinction struck home. It demonstrated viscerally a sense of difference not merely technologically or infrastructurally, but socially and interpersonally. People walking their bikes on the edge of the road, laden with textiles,

tarps, and bundles of firewood, vanished quickly now as we drove ever faster, drawing ever closer, to town.

As I reflected on Robert's interjection, I saw in it a small, yet nuanced, encapsulation of particular Kenyan histories of social and territorial marginalization. Whether rural residents relative to urban, black relative to white, or nomadic hunters and pastoralists relative to settled ranchers and farmers, the histories show themselves not to be isolated and separate, nor simply layered, but rather interwoven and cross-penetrated from precolonial times through to the present.

And yet Robert's comment also seemed a subtle, yet sharp, expression of the adaptive plasticity of identities negotiated in this part of the world, identities socially complex and spatially rooted. To be at once Kenyan and yet not, and when being or becoming Maasai, perhaps then not Kenyan, seemed to communicate not only the potential for multiple, overlapping identities, but the very real ability to envision and navigate overlapping, and at times disconnected, cultural geographies as well. This tension between internalized marginalization and its expression through the empowering medium of humor stuck with me, and it made me wonder as we continued on this state-approved, mechanically-leveled road: if not Kenya, just where had we come from?

Through literature review as well as collected oral narratives and observation, I will make the argument that Laikipia is an especially rich and poignant example of such layered social geographies and interconnected, embedded histories still playing out today. And while beginning this chapter in the past, I will work to end it firmly in the present. Ultimately such an exercise will highlight the panoply of forces, historical and contemporary, that in concert are arguably causing an unsustainable agroecological

situation, not simply for the longevity of certain wildlife but also for those many pastoralists and commercial ranchers still dependent on the land today. It will also lend form to the ways such historical layers find agency in the present, defining power relations and dominant narratives across the many communities involved. A closing anecdote at the end will hopefully allow us to come full circle thematically; leave us ready to confront the third and final social geography examined in this work; and find us eager to investigate how its engagement and enactment holds both transformative and fraught place- and identity-shaping potential for Mpala and the wider Laikipia community in the future and today.

Overlapping Geographies

Narratives of place and the values associated with land and its uses while socially constructed paradoxically can often be used as tools for essentializing and lending form to feelings of self. A socioculturally embedded connection to land, coupled with distinct feelings about property, identity, and worth, runs through both European-based cattle ranching and more flexible, nomadic pastoralism practiced in Laikipia today. These values and narratives can be traced through readings of history, and as we do this we see an image emerge not only of shifting identities, but an overall imposition of socioeconomic and political forces that fundamentally reshaped both natural and social landscapes in the region. This reshaping finds form in the present and has also required the birthing of particular governance structures and social geographies to fill newly created voids, socially, culturally, politically, and economically, in order for all parties to

better adapt to this changing world. These voids will be explored more fully in the chapters to come.

I will begin now with the creation of what colonial British administrators' deemed the "White Highlands," later flowing back and forth through conceptions of a mental and physical territory known as Maasailand, found both in readings of the literature and words spoken today. I will end with the overlap of these two geographies; how such a meeting has caused substantial changes throughout local communities, and coupled with other forces, placed severe strain on previously sustainable agroecological systems; and lastly, how these same communities and the particularly central neighbor of Mpala are jointly reacting and adapting to this.

The Birth of the White Highlands

The private cattle operations and conservancies currently nestled against Mount Kenya and throughout the larger Laikipia region are for the most part direct recipients and descendants of a colonial Kenyan economic policy from the early 20th century, which stipulated, as W.T.W. Morgan put it, "that certain agricultural lands in Kenya should be reserved for settlers of European origin" (1963: 140). With the swipe of a pen, and the subsequent emigration of thousands of British citizens throughout the early decades of the 1900s, a new narrative was born throughout central Kenya. The primary purpose of such settlement, Morgan argues, laid "in the need to establish an economy which would be able to pay for the necessary expenses involved in developing and governing the new country," (153) generally seen as necessary "because of the lack of knowledge, capital and the desire for money on the part of Africans" already living there (154).

The central actor in all of this was, as one ranch manager put it, "the soldier-settler," who upon returning from the First World War, found himself often socially and economically isolated back home in Britain. Relocating to the Kenyan steppe was seen as a chance to forge a new life, pursue the risky business of agriculture in a new land, and in time reinvent oneself as not merely "ex-soldiers" but trailblazers, civilizers, and settlers (151).

In "determining which areas became part of the White Highlands two factors were paramount: the construction of the Uganda Railway and the extent of unused land" available (144). The presence of a railway acted as a commercial super-corridor that was soon deemed "so essential to early settlers that only land within reach of it was regarded as being of any commercial use, and the boundaries of the Highlands were for many years described only by reference to two points on the railway" (144). Settlement quickly outpaced the railroad, however, bringing expatriates out to the once remote Uasin Gishu and Laikipia plateaus.

The previously mentioned presence of "unused land" brought a second benefit as well: it enabled the gazetting of vast plots of farmland and commercial ranches for the newly arrived settlers, replacing "[natural] grassland and bush savanna" with "fields of maize, wheat or sisal, and the near-useless disease-ridden Masai herds by pedigree or grade beef and dairy cattle" (153), letting this area soon account for the majority of Kenya's exports. This, coupled with the cosmopolitan and industrial expansion enabled by the railroad, meant that the Highlands as of 1963 comprised "most of the economic activity" of all of Kenya (153-154). Labor for the construction of the railroad, the resulting industry, and the outcrop of new ranches was culled from the surrounding

communities, including those peoples known as Dorobo, Maasai, Turkana, Kikuyu, and others, with families and larger social structures having to adapt to long, and oftentimes dangerous, labor seasons away from home (Mackenzie 2000).

Indeed, the influx of settlers, parceling of land, and creation of farmland and ranches necessarily brought enormous sociocultural and geographic change to the people already living there, whether agriculturalist, pastoralist, or nomadic hunters. Groups were disenfranchised, dislocated, and even at times forcibly relocated to reserves as a kind of gross compensation and attempt at cultural preservation. This began with the treaties of 1904 and 1911 in which the British worked to evict large populations of Maasai from Laikipia and the larger Rift valley, reducing their commonly held land by 60%, and relocating them farther south to present day Narok and Kaijado districts (Fratkin and Mearns 2003; Sortland 2009).

Outbreaks of disease and military action were other regularly cited reasons for large-scale forced migrations during the colonial period as well, the most commonly referenced instance in Kenya being for tsetse fly eradication and management (Lamprey and Reid 2004; Barrow and Mlenge 2003). Jones (2006) notes that "large-scale tsetse fly control and military action…altered the ecology, vegetation patterns and wildlife numbers, sometimes significantly" in conjunction with the movement of people (489).

Such actions of dislocation and relocation created in many places a cascade of migration and mixing of peoples, the ethnic composition of Laikipia being a prime example (Waller 1976). And yet while the settling of the White Highlands and the forced migration of peoples introduced new groups to each other, it also promoted a process of "ethnicization," in which for ease of colonial administration, the livelihoods and

languages of people came to be seen as rigid, immutable markers of identity, and as such a conscious and unconscious method to divide people and exert control over them (McGovern 2005; Sortland 2009).

Of equal importance, the settling and subdividing of this land dramatically altered the socioecological constraints on peoples' livelihoods as the available size and quality of land for use decreased accordingly with the introduction of fences and deeding of resource-rich lands in the names of newly arrived British. All in all, through the early twentieth century colonial administrators and the ranchers that followed worked to reshape the sociocultural and ecological landscape (Waller 1976). And this legacy can be seen in the political and economic marginalization still on view today, captured in simple moments and long-held narratives of anger, deception, bewilderment, and loss (Cronk 2004: 58-70).

The settlers' sense of superiority and the centrality of cultivation to their conceptions of value stem from a long-rooted history of colonial European thought. Indeed the feeling that "settlement and cultivation" (Hingston 1931: 403) is nothing less than the "advance of civilization" (405) can be seen in the language used to describe what was present in the Highlands previous. In describing both animals as "near-useless disease-ridden Masai herds" (Morgan 1963: 153) and land as mere "desert and bush" (Hingston 1931: 403), these categories are placed in stark opposition to ideas of cultivation and accompanying values of productivity and usefulness, and as such the larger enterprise of civilization.

Lastly, this dualism can be seen in the policies implemented in 1960 and continued through the transition of power from colony to Kenyan independence.

Through an amendment revoking those "laws that had excluded African landownership from the [Highlands] area," Kenya experienced what was described as an "opening of the 'White Highlands' to Africans" (Jones 1965: 186). The "Swynnerton Plan," was to privatize land holdings and help Africans "to make the jump from subsistence agriculture to modern planning farming for money and to bring together in viable farming units the scattered fragments that often went unused and could not be farmed economically" (186). This was done specifically with the introduction of "exotic, high-yielding livestock and of high-priced cash crops" in mind (186).

The rangelands of Laikipia, however, and the pastoralists that could have potentially benefited were not included in these arrangements, due to the judgment that those plateaus "were unsuitable for settlement and unlikely to produce more" if formally settled (191). Thus the previously mentioned ethno-bias left these local pastoralist peoples displaced and disenfranchised alongside the British-run ranching lands and plantations. Indeed, Morgan notes, "The effect of the European settlement will have been to settle these areas with cultivating peoples who formerly would not have entered the area for fear of the Masai or other pastoral tribes" (Morgan 1963: 154).

So, while the dictate appeared to be "an orderly transition of land ownership over large areas from Europeans to Africans," the reality of the situation simply created "a completely new and large addition to the Kikuyu homeland" (Jones 1965: 196), with the President of the region taking "the view that all Kikuyu, wherever they were and wherever they came from, should have a fair chance of getting one of the new holdings" (198). Thus, with this policy biased fully toward modernization, exotic crops and livestock, and the privatization of land, the Crown engaged in an "exercise of state

'paternalistic authoritarianism'" that sought to reshape Kikuyu agriculture in their image and in turn introduce new conceptions of themselves (Mackenzie 2000: 699). However, in this land transition, perhaps in response to recent Kikuyu uprisings or simply due to feelings of shared "legibility" of livelihood (699), what we see is a shift in economic and political power throughout rural Kenya from the previous dominant, cultivating class to the appointed future, making Jones' final forecast hold perhaps little surprise: "It is likely, therefore, that the pressure for settlement, in whatever form, will grow" (1965: 200).

In short, the story of the White Highlands is one central to explaining the British colonizing of Kenya. Yet while these lands came to dominate economically and politically much of the colony in its time, their expansion and success was only possible through the inelegant act of overlaying a sociopolitical, economic, and agroecological system atop myriad groups of people, disregarding the cultural geographies and topographies beneath, and using an active strategy of marginalization, disenfranchisement, and displacement to achieve it. Through the application of a very particular and ethnocentric valuation system, the British in a very short time were able to fundamentally reshape this socioecological system with reverberations still being felt today.

Later in the chapter I will explore how Maasai themselves voice this narrative, but first I should lend a bit of background and context on what existed before the White Highlands were designed and in so doing shed some light on those communities living there now.

Being Maasai, Becoming Maasai, and the Creation of Maasailand

Maasailand is a name still in use today and describes an expansive, amorphous area of land. Linguistically connected through the Maa language, it extends from the southern reaches of Sudan through the western and central highlands of Kenya, before finally coming to rest in northern Tanzania past the high and rolling plains of the Masai Mara (Spear 1993). Indeed, the name itself helps illustrate and imagine the Maasai's seeming dominance over this landscape in terms of sheer physical and cultural reach, beginning in the first millennium CE with their southern expansion from Sudan. They "eventually supplanted or absorbed most previous inhabitants of this semi-arid savannah" bisecting "the fertile highlands on either side" (1) on their way through Kenya, occupying "the lands directly adjacent to those most favourable for European settlement: what would later become known as the White Highlands" (Kantai 2007: 108).

The story of Maasai expansion is often told through the lens of multiple "spiral" advances over a series of centuries, with the most recent culminating in a fractured and diffuse yet linguistically and culturally connected group of Maa speakers. Despite common linguistic and ritual connections, they often practiced varied forms of "pure" and "mixed" pastoralism that allowed for organized and coordinated control over their particular ranges and military dominance over other ethnic and cultural groups (Galaty 1993: 73).

This narrative of conquest and militarism can be seen throughout the literature of the White Highlands' time, with their homeland being described by Morgan as areas of "extensive plains (over 5000 feet) where a smaller and uncertain rainfall made extensive grazing the main support of life" (1963: 145). This fact was seen to make the area

unattractive to cultivating groups for their lack of agricultural potential, and Morgan notes, was "made more so by the presence of the warlike pastoral people. The most important of these" being "the Masai" (145). Indeed, he goes on to say that the very creation of the White Highlands and the "effect of European settlement will have been to settle these areas with cultivating peoples who formerly would not have entered the area for fear of the Masai or other pastoral tribes" (153).

However, the reality of their cultural dominance, as reflected seemingly in this reputation, as in the very name "Maasailand," does not tell the whole tale. Many historians and anthropologists argue instead that what you find is a history not of clear territorial boundaries and fearsome identities, but rather cultural fluidity and interconnection, a state of perpetual ethnic "fission and fusion" (Galaty 1993: 72) that complicates the very task of defining what it means to "be Maasai" (Waller 1993: 291). As Galaty puts it:

> On one level, Maasai history, as conveyed by tradition, is a chronicle of conflict and violence, of groups victorious and groups annihilated, dispersed and assimilated. However, most migration processes are far less dramatic. Although the widespread distribution of closely related Maa dialects suggests that relatively rapid and decisive movements occurred, most instances of actual expansion were preceded by movements within or through territory used by other communities and periods of coexistence often preceded and succeeded periods of open conflict. (1993: 68)

Most important perhaps to recognize is the multiethnic composition of much of Maasailand and indeed much of the Maasai as a people. Fluidity of movement was not merely geographic but in identity as well. The agroecological system of nomadic animal keeping is such that fluctuations in climate, ecosystem, technology, and social structure can mean catastrophe as easily as surplus and accordingly required an open, adjustable,

and adaptive social identity, one that necessarily lacked sharp edges. "What is needed," instead, Spear argues, "is a processual view" (1993: 9).

"Maasai adaptation to the high grasslands was perfected in Laikipia, to the north of Mount Kenya and Syandarua, some four hundred years ago" (Sutton 1993: 41), resulting in their ascendancy and dominance over their cohabitating ethnic groups who practiced mixtures of agriculture, beekeeping, hunting, and gathering (Galaty 1993: 75). One such group was known as the Laikipiak whose descendants compose parts of the communities to be later described (75). This cultural and military dominance meant that livestock and cattle were the primary economic mode of interaction as well as determinant of ethnicity, marriage, and power. And yet even at this nadir of influence and seeming purity of livelihood, the Maasai were necessarily and importantly part of a "fluid, interdependent regional economy," with agriculturalists and hunter-gatherers playing critical roles (Spear 1993: 4).

As Spears explains it, "Maasai pastoralists on the plains were at the centre of the regional economy, both because of their central location and because cattle served as a universal store of value facilitating trade and social exchange throughout the area;" however, "the vagaries of the pastoral economy" resulting from drought, disease, serial raiding, and other social, ecological, and climatic factors, meant that "pastoralists ultimately depended on hunter-gatherers and farmers to supplement their diet, to provide needed crafts and ritual services, to maintain a balanced ratio of people and stock on the plains, and to provide refuge in times of natural disasters" (1993: 4). This interdependence leads to an understanding of the Maasai people not as a monolithic and singular entity, but rather "[different] societies possessing different means and relations

of production…incorporated complementarily within a single larger mode of production" (5).

These societal boundaries were strategically culturally monitored and mediated as well, with each self-organized group viewing "itself and others in systematically opposed ways that usually deflate the values of others while simultaneously reinforcing its own" (5). Indeed, an example of a commonly disparaged ethnic group by Maasai would be the forest-dwelling hunter-gatherers known as the Okiek and Mukogodo. They, and separate such clans, are often ethnically lumped together under the term "Dorobo," or "Torrobo," meaning "literally poor people without cattle," and known to generally be avid beekeepers (7). Spears continues that the Maasai and other pastoralists "viewed Okiek as culturally and economically deprived peoples living in the forest who provided Maasai with honey, labour for herding, ritual services viewed as polluting by Maasai, and refuge" (7). However despite their regional status as a "depressed caste or underclass within pastoral society," they were not excluded from becoming Maasai, and in fact oftentimes did (7). And while "mutually exclusive symbolic identities" (5) were culturally reproduced and maintained, the reality that "survival was hardly possible within pastoral society without access to resources and to the people who controlled them outside the pastoral sphere" meant that ethnic flexibility and social mobility was, and arguably still is, a critical part of Maasai identity (13).

Indeed, access into the pastoral sphere was freely allowed, "dependent not on descent or background, but on control of resources and on participation in pastoral social relations," and it should be noted that the reverse was true as well. And therein lie the

parsimony and power of Maasai identity: "Cultural exclusion and social inclusion—hegemony and homogeneity" (12, 13). As Spears notes:

> [Others] could and did become pastoral Maasai by becoming 'people of cattle', while pastoral Maasai frequently became others by losing their cattle and becoming farmers or hunters. In between these two extremes, people commonly trod the cultural pathways that wove together societies with different economies and ethnic identities into a single complementary regional economy and culture. (13)

All of this illustrates a history of complex multiethnic interaction spanning centuries of waxing and waning Maasai dominance, spiral expansion, fission and fusion, symbolic opposition, and yet importantly social inclusion as well.

This multiethnic and cross-livelihood interaction was seen to extend to "the fringes of Kikuyuland" with "considerable fusion between Maasai and Kikuyu" for military purposes commonly occurred at the turn of the 20th century (Waller 1976: 533). Importantly, alliances between Maasai and the colonizing British happened around this time as well, as the Maasai needed protection during especially bad times of disease and drought against outside ethnic raiders and the British found themselves needing security and safe passage during the construction of their railroad (Waller 1976; Kantai 2007; McCabe 2003). Once the railroad was completed, however, and the Maasai's livestock again rose to sustainable levels, both the British and the Maasai lost interest in sustained peaceful relations. Waller notes that it was soon after that the "Maasai Moves of 1904/5 and 1911/12" occurred, indicating the colonialists' territorial intentions and for many Maasai "relegated them to the periphery politically as well as geographically" (529).

J.E.G. Sutton summarizes this sociocultural fluidity succinctly:

> The history of Maasailand therefore, both during the recent Maasai era and before it, may be seen as one of versatility and adaptation, as a constant balance between opportunity and identity, with periodically the need for communities to redefine themselves or to revive the pastoral ideal. (1993: 59)

The following section will explore these concepts of assimilation, adaptation, and identity expressed within the community group ranches of Ilmotiok and Tiemamut adjacent to Mpala today.

The Ethnographic Present

The Maasai living near the Mpala Research Centre are commonly thought to be descendants of the Laikipiak Maasai (Sundaresan and Riginos 2010; Sortland 2009), who previously had "gained ascendancy over the entire Laikipia area" in the mid-1800s (Galaty 1993: 75). By "the mid-1870s, however, the Laikipiak were utterly defeated and dispersed" by a varied coalition of other Maasai forces, splintering and scattering, and eventually withdrawing to assimilate back into the Maasai ethnic milieu (75). Lee Cronk, an anthropologist who primarily works among Mukogodo hunter-gatherers in this area, focuses particularly on their recent transition from the identity of Mukogogo to instead that of Maasai. His work can help especially in elucidating the ethnically mixed picture of these peoples.

He notes that there are several historically distinct groups living in the area, who though possessing diverse origins share in common several key cultural traits: namely "a pastoralist subsistence base, the Maa language and other aspects of Maasai culture, and recent residence elsewhere," having been displaced time and again by the British since the early days of their arrival (Cronk 2004: 61). The groups he identifies are the

Mukogodo, the Ilng'wesi, the Mumonyot, the Digirri, the LeUaso, and the Samburu; all with varying pasts of hunting, gathering, beekeeping, and livestock herding, and through a series of twenty-one forced migrations and subsequent returns between 1912 and 1959 have found themselves living in this particular part of the Laikipia steppe (69). The Samburu lineages have perhaps the longest and certainly the largest pastoralist claims and recently took up bee-keeping only after marrying into local families, whereas the Mukogodo, the Ilng'wesi, the Mumonyot, the Digirri, and the LeUaso are all generally considered "Dorobo" by many "proper" Maasai. Of them all, LeUaso have perhaps the most tenuous history of livestock keeping, known to be "the poorest people in the region in terms of livestock" and conversely "the most dedicated beekeepers" (62).

This heterogeneous ethnic composition has been found across Laikipia and Samburu (Sortland 2009) and is supported as well by the socioecologist, Judy, presented in the Preface, who has spent the past three years working in the communities I am discussing here. She notes that "these two communities historically…are kind of a mix of peoples that would likely in the root identify themselves as Laikipiak Maasai. They are comprised of five different ethnic groups: LeUaso, Digirri, Mumonyot, Mukogodo, [and] Samburu." She goes on to say that "most of the people I work with are either LeUaso or Digirri. I have a few Mumonyot; I have no Mukogodo." In her estimation, this group of people did not "become really big into pastoralism," and as such did not really "become" Maasai, until the 1940s and 1950s when "they started trading ivory for cattle with the Somalis."

This ethnically liminal history was apparent in my own work as well, as informants' histories showed diverse backgrounds and an overall acceptance of that

livelihood oscillation of which Spears speaks, that very ability to "commonly trod the cultural pathways" and in turn "[weave] together societies" (Spear 1993: 13). As examples, I met people who described their parents as strict pastoralists, such as one elderly man who reflected:

> So their life was just, they are livestock keepers; they didn't have any other kind of business. They used to have livestock, cattles and goats. So this is what they have been doing during their stay there. But all of their life they are just livestock keeping.

Others note that "everybody around is a bee-keeper." While some describe a multi-generational past of hunting wild animals in times of need:

> So she said that during their time, in times of droughts, their husbands, their fathers, and grandfathers used to kill the animals as food, elephants, rhinos, and all others.

Still others proudly upheld the formal Maasai prohibition of eating such things: "In our culture, eating wild animals is a sign that you will have few animals. Maasai are the only people that don't eat wild animals, and that's why we have so many more animals than anywhere else."

Indeed, the interwoven nature of these family histories found form in metaphor as well, when the ex-chairman of one of the villages equated beekeeping as a complementary form of husbandry to livestock; such equivalence has been noted also by Cronk (2004). "His parents' activity, his grandparents' activity, they used to have beehives, of which they are just doing the same; as they are also looking and taking care of the animals, they used to also take care of their beehives and to keep the bees." The open historical difference and yet connectivity in peoples' social, subsistence, and

linguistic identities was voiced most casually by Robert who simply said, "We are Dorobo and Maasai. They are just the same."

And yet, while these familial and ethnic differences become plain as conversations progress, what is perhaps most striking is their assumption of a shared Maasai identity and powerful historical narrative of place when asked about the past before the Europeans and the private ranches. It is a narrative equally dominant and yet diametrically opposed to that of the White Highlands. It is a narrative expounding the bounty and freedom of life before the British arrival and is contrasted sharply with life today. Loss of land and the larger loss of personal and cultural movement and autonomy still openly agitate and can be directly connected to many of the hardships experienced by the communities presently.

This narrative was voiced primarily by elders and community leaders, and exposes both common themes and common threads. The first such thread to emerge is a sense of the sheer vastness of land the Maasai identify with and the common right of all Maasai to it:

> "The place was just temporary; everywhere belongs to the Maasai. And they used to move from one place to another one in the area. They were just free before these private ranches come up." – Male elder

This attendant sense of freedom of movement and autonomy was a common theme as well:

> So he said that there before, before the private ranches, the area was just, all the lands belong to Maasais. They don't bother where you came from. Either you came from [a] nearby community, or you came from far. No, the area belongs to all Maasais. From Narok they used to come here and nobody chased them or moved them out. But what they used to do is, the area of the land is just

> temporary, you can move from here up to where you want, and nobody control you. – Ex-chairman of community

Along with ample land and social autonomy feelings of abundance and bounty, of a good life, and few worries were also voiced:

> She [says] that the life was okay and it was also good. That nobody was disturbing them because they have enough lands for their animals' grazing, so they were just going or moving where they wish to move and nobody was refusing them to go. So they were just temporary. They were just free and roaming everywhere, so the life was just simple and it was good. – Female elder

All of these traits, feelings of autonomy, mobility, freedom, happiness, and abundance were perhaps best expressed by an elderly woman:

> She said that it was good at that time, because all the area was just temporary; we used to move from a certain place to another one without being asked by anybody. So they were just free. Whenever they want to migrate to, they just migrate. And also their livestock were having enough places for pasture. You see now because there was nobody who was ruling them, nobody who was telling them, "Don't move from here," or "You are supposed to be there." No. So as she said, the place is just temporary *for all*. And they have that authority of migrating from one place to another one.
>
> She said that because they are just having livestock, so once it rains here, we came from far place to here, once it rains there. So they used to move to get to green pastures. So she said that most of the time they are living at that side of Mpala, Ol Jogi, all, because they are not having these private ranches at that time. So they just move; they have that movement. Where it rains, they go there. Once it stops raining, they stay for just a few months, [then] they start again going to where it is raining. Because everywhere was just for them.

The narrative sharply changes with the arrival of white settlers and demarcation of private lands. It is a narrative of conquest, plunder, and their active removal from lands to others now constricted and perceived as less fertile. As one elder put it:

> He say that all the place now you can see, all where you can meet the private ranches, it belongs to the Maasai. So once the white people came, they came and ruled them, and they overtake all the lands. They give themselves lands. And they remove Maasais from where now they are living up to this area. Yeah, this is how it happened. He said they remove us from the fertile lands to this land, to this place, where it's unfertile.

This narrative of dominance and dislocation was also cast as one of trickery and exploitation in which the settlers made promises they did not keep and took advantage of the Maasai's lack of ability to write and read:

> He said the private ranches were given out when they were young; they were just small children. And it was given out by the elders, or by leaders, not the government, the Maasai's leaders, whereby they have [at] that time. So they are being lied [to] by the white settler people, and made certain agreements, because they did not knew how to read and write…Maybe the white people wrote themselves an agreement of a certain period of time, years, so they were just told to sign before they knew, then they sign. So they made themselves being removed from their places up to here. – Male elder

The exact timing of the white settlers' arrival is debated, with an elderly woman offering that "the colonial period" began "maybe sixty years ago" ending with the "white people [taking] land." However, the story was given more detail when I spoke with the chief's father's brother. It lays out a different timeline from that of this elder woman, but reinforces a narrative more widely known: that the settlers made an agreement to use some land for 99 years. Like previous testimonies it suggests trickery and deceit, with the colonialists taking advantage of the Maasai's illiteracy, choosing for themselves all

the good lands, and making the Maasai to be "removed up to here." The final point is one voiced more than once in these narratives and supported in literature as well, namely that the British added a 9- to the agreement (Sundaresan and Riginos 2010; Kantai 2007). The elder does not know if this is true, but the resentment is palpable:

> The white people came more than 100 years ago. They came to Narok and they asked the Maasai leader through a man named Lekilisho in the Mao Narok to give them a place to stay and do their businesses: animals, cattles, maybe sheep. So they made up an agreement of 99 years. So up to that time. These people are very bright people, and our Maasai don't know how to read or write, so they sign up an agreement without knowing how long they will stay.
>
> By that time the white people grabbed the lands; they chose themselves land. The good…places where they can live and do their animal grazing near the water. They bullshit the people. There is some kind of lying that they did, and our people were just kind of out of their land.
>
> For example, Mpala, Ol Jogi, Segera, Soit Nyiro, all of the private ranches around in Laikipia from here to Narok, those are Maasai lands. Now because of these people, white people, because of misunderstanding, because Maasai don't know how to read and write they are being removed up to here now. And up to now, the 99-year agreement was now finished. And we don't understand if they added another 9 to make it 999, but the agreement was for 99.

These narratives speak of a time when "everywhere was just for them," a time when "they were just free." They had "that authority of migrating from one place to another one" and nobody "was ruling them," "nobody was refusing them." The story, however, changes when the British settlers arrive. Unfair agreements are made, land is taken away, and people are moved to "unfertile" land. As the chief's father's brother memorably put it: "They bullshit the people."

And yet, importantly, their sense of injustice does not stop with the British, but instead continues after Independence, and here the stories from the White Highlands literature and these oral histories line up. As stated in the previous section, as Kenya was transitioning to independence, the British worked to transfer their holdings over to the agriculturalist Kikuyu, who were to be the ethnic group in power. As the chief's father's brother relates, this has caused the Maasai dislocation and territorial loss to continue unresolved:

> There are some *wazungu*, white people, for example Lord Delamere, Mosino, Nasore, when they move from those big lands that they had, the leaders from Kikuyu tribe gives the Kikuyu to take over those lands. Now Maasai [are out] even a single land because there weren't any leaders there. By Maasai ideas, through their elders, they just know the lands are theirs. But now they don't have any power to get them back.

He goes on to explain how an act of civil disobedience was quelled violently by the Kikuyu government, intensifying the uncertainty about if they will get their land back and fully transferring the injustice to the new holders of power:

> Right now we have come to fear and we have come to realize that even if we are going to use the right way or the wrong way, God knows if our lands will be brought back…Because now it is not the white people who refuse to give lands back, it is the government.

And so ends a constructed narrative from a small selection of oral histories elucidating a still living sense of anger, resentment, and loss, as well as an overwhelming display of Maasai self-identification, lending support to the idea that while ethnically and historically diverse, these communities have come together under the mantle of "being Maasai" and are finding communal solace and historical solidarity within that identity framework. It is a narrative of lands being taken, forbearers tricked, and their

communities relocated. Importantly, this anger and resentment is ultimately directed not merely at the creators of the British White Highlands and in turn close to a century of economic oppression, but also the newly elected Kenyan government post-Independence as well, which is seen as continuing that oppression today. The final section will explore how the last thirty-five years have been especially tumultuous for these groups of Maa-speaking peoples and end with where the Mpala Research Centre fits into this layered socioecological geography and their collective hopes for the future.

Agroecological Crisis and Finding "A Way of Changing Life"

This final section works to address several key transitions experienced by those Maasai communities discussed so far in the shift from pre-colonial to postcolonial social relations and governance. Through an investigation of the narratives presented here, we see not only shifts in livestock-keeping and land tenure, including the creation of legally-sanctioned group ranches, but contrasting statements of values that point us towards intriguing narratives of empowerment. Importantly, we also are privy to a series of concerns regarding a changing climate, voiced by men and women, youth and elders, those with and without specialized Western training and education. Such concerns when coupled with noticed changes in the past thirty-five years suggest an agroecological system in decline, as related in much coupled systems and pastoralist studies literature. These recollected transitions and contemporary worries further reinforce the reality not simply of interconnected histories in the past, but living, indeed, embedded histories acting still in the present, on both a national and international scale. And finally, this

chapter will end with a glimpse of the theoretical framework, and organizing governmentality, to be explored in the chapters to come.

Group Ranches: Harbingers of Collapse, Vessels of Empowerment

1963 brought what Lynn Thomas has called "the birth of the Kenyan nation" (2003: 136), and for these rural pastoralist communities of Laikipia North several formative transformations are seen to have occurred soon after, some local, others distinctly regional and even national. The first, happening sometime between 1970-1977, was said to be a purposeful move away from keeping primarily cattle and instead keep a larger mix of large and small livestock. This shift to a heavier reliance on sheep and goats continues throughout Kenya today (Galvin 2009; Lamprey and Reid 2004). As one community ex-chairman recounts, "In the year 1975 people used not to have goats. Few, few bomas, few homes had some few goats and sheep. So in the year 1977, that was the time now people changed up their minds and start buying some goats and sheep." This was done for numerous reasons, as explained by both an elderly woman and this community ex-chairman, including the small animals' faster birth rates and the fact that their size makes them easier to handle, manage, slaughter, and take to market. As the ex-chairman explains:

> It is easier to manage. Even the children can look and take care after of them. And it is very easy for you to remove a goat and also slaughter when the people does not have food to eat. So it is very easy for you to get and slaughter. You get and maybe take it to the market. So that is why they changed. You see it is very difficult for one or two people to catch the cow and to slaughter. You need many people to do that. So they decided to have the small animals, like sheep or goat, because…they can be managed and...they give birth [more] early and quick than the cattles.

This is reinforced by the aforementioned elderly woman who states:

> During this young generation now, during their time, it is where they start getting their goats and sheep...Yes, I think it's 40 years [ago]...So she say that they decided to buy them because first, they give birth quick[er] than the cattles, and [it is] easy for them to become many, not like cattles. And it is easy for them to slaughter or to sell. So that is why they decided to have those small animals.

Indeed the first reason offered by the ex-chairman for the transition to sheep and goats was in fact none of the ones offered above, but instead seemed to suggest that they were also an attempt at cultural adaptation to combat the degradation caused by too many cattle on what was now too little land. As the ex-chairman notes, "Cattle were very many by that time, and they used to graze all the grasses around, and they [finished it] within a very short time. So people decided now to buy goats and sheep because they can even use the acacias and all other, whatever they can get." This suggests this shift was also a conscious attempt to relieve grazing pressure by introducing the more generalist, browser-grazer community of goats and sheep. This history is reaffirmed by our friend and confidante, Joseph who reflects on growing up around the time this shift is supposedly occurring:

> When I was a child, they were mostly goats, but sheep they are not so many and also cows are not so many. So goats are *so* many more than sheep and cows. And there were no camels in this area at that time. We had only goat, sheep, cows, and donkeys. There were not even chickens.

Such a transition is seen to be occurring other places in Kenya as well, including the Kaijado District where Galvin notes "sheep or goat numbers are increasing relative to cattle," and among pastoralists such as the Il Chamus many of the same rationales are proffered, including small stock's reliance on less food as well as their specific potential

to "rebuild the herd and to recover from drought" (2009: 190). Galvin cites Seo and Mendelsohn (2006) as suggesting pastoralists and policymakers alike "to expect small stock numbers to increase under a warming African climate" (Galvin 2009: 190).

It was at this same time in the late 1970s that the Kenyan government instituted a major piece of land reform that in fact created the very communities we have been discussing, transforming this group of people as much as anything in the recent past. In 1977, the government created the new tenure category of "group ranches" with the requirement that pastoralist communities organize themselves into groups of registered members and registered ranches (Lamprey and Reid 2004; Lesogorol 2003). As Lee Cronk reflects, "The idea was to give specific groups of herders exclusive rights to specific tracts of land and the power to make decisions as a group about how to manage their land and their livestock" (2004: 134). In the case of the communities neighboring Mpala, it resulted in the titling and creation of numerous contiguous group ranches, and specifically the two group ranch communities of Ilmotiok and Tiemamut whose voices we have been reading here. Many, however, are quick to reinforce their kin relations and social bonds by noting, as one Tiemamut group member did, that "it is just one community, but it is divided in sections, so there is Tiemamut and Ilmotiok, but there's not any difference; it's just the name."[1]

[1] Ilmotiok and Tiemamut, while legally tenured as two distinct group ranches, are united culturally and governed by a common chief, who resides in Tiemamut and whose jurisdiction extends across the communities of Ilmotiok, Tiemamut, Soit Nyiro, Lekigi, and Mpala. This cultural unity is additionally captured in the shared village name of Loshaiki between Ilmotiok's four villages (Lorubai, Naserian, Ilmotio, Loshaiki) and Tiemamut's (Barsaboi, Endonyonapi, Tiemamut, Loshaiki). Yurco (n.d.) relates that while these are technically two villages, they are "divided at the border of the two communities by a seasonal river of the same name. This instance is a good example of the ways in which these communities are at once independent and a single unit."

This feeling of solidarity, however, masks the very real repercussions of such land tenure shifts and political separation. Perhaps the largest effect of the creation of the White Highlands, agroecologically, was the fragmenting of a previously uninterrupted landscape and the resulting exclusion of Maasai and others from critical migratory space and necessary pastoral resources such as new vegetation and fresh, clean water. The creation of the "group ranch" tenure system only exacerbated this fragmentation, and indeed has been characterized, as reported by the ICLA, as "a first attempt to radically transform a nomadic subsistence production system into a sedentary, commercially oriented" one (Bekure, et al. 1991). This effect of sedentarization is supported by the statement of Ilmotiok's ex-chairman, who notes that "the migration of the people being temporary" has ceased. "They [stopped] that movement of going from here to another place."

Such institutionalized restrictions on migration and mobility indeed work against the agroecological social conditions that have made pastoralism an effective livelihood strategy for thousands of years in arid and semi-arid lands. The "fluctuating and patchy" nature of environmental conditions and resources able to sustain life in such areas has necessitated pastoral social structures predicated on "flexibility, mobility, and diversity of species" (Fratkin 1997: 238). Such attributes are what enable pastoralism in turn to thrive as a livelihood in an otherwise intolerable land. Indeed, it is the current ecological understanding of semi-arid lands that shows such areas as organized not around equilibria or stability, but rather a system of "permanent disequilibrium," "lurching from state to state, buffeted by fire, drought, insect attack and (least of all) management" (Warren 1995: 193; 196). "The challenge to resource management, then," Gunnar Serbe notes, "is

not to maintain stability but to maintain diversity and flexibility" (2003: 113). In the end, pastoralism more than anything "demands mobility" (Fratkin 1997: 251).

This development of group ranches then is critical to unravel the present situation for East African pastoralists, and those in Laikipia particularly, for while the past British and Kenyan tenure system restricted mobility and migration, the new group ranch model restricts it even more, through the active encouragement of sedentarization and absorption into a commercial economy (Lesogorol 2003; McCabe 2003; Lamprey and Reid 2004). And indeed, the ex-chairman notes that "Since 1980…everything changed." Primary changes articulated and recollected centered overwhelming on this new market economy and particularly the changing diet and introduction of wage labor. He said now "you have to struggle…to get money so that you can get food. Because without money you cannot get anything." An elderly woman remarks that while "they used not to think of what they can eat today or tomorrow," now it is different. This difference was perhaps best encapsulated by another elderly man who remarks that his youth was filled with "dancing, [and] enjoying life…[and] going around with girls to various places," but "things have been changing." "It was easier at that time to keep your livestock, to keep your style of living, to keep your culture," he says. "Life was easier…We used to hunt and only eat meat, milk, honey." "Life revolved around animals." Privatization, sedentarism, and commercialization, the argument goes, changed all that.

Additional changes were noticed as well, including an increase in population as well as an increase in environmental degradation. As the Laikipia North ward councilman notes, nowadays the population "has become high," "very high." The corollary between the limited land available on the group ranches and this increase in

population was posited by an elderly community member, who noted that while the private "ranches used to be theirs at that time," they "have now come together in a small place, and the population has become high, so he thinks that maybe that one is the cause of it." Environmental degradation as a chief concern was alternatively described only by those individuals with a degree of conservation labor experience, a specific part of the economy I will describe in more detail in chapters to come. Specifically, they used language commonly associated with Western rangeland management, with one scout employed by Princeton suggesting "overgrazing" as a stark and overt problem. Another individual working currently for a national environmental NGO laments noticeable "soil erosion" and "bare land," commenting that with the amount of animals kept on the land, the ecological "carrying capacity" is over its limit. His recommendation is a simple plea for destocking: "We have to completely decrease the number of livestock...because now the area is smaller than the livestock that are living in that particular place."

All in all, these quotes speak to social and ecological conditions characteristic of sedentarism and environmental degradation. The ILCA report concluded that "the group ranch structure has reduced the flexibility and mobility of the traditional Maasai system," and as we have seen in the work of Serbe and Fratkin, such a loss can have substantial effects on the agroecological sustainability of pastoralism and its ability to buffer against undulating climatic and ecological conditions (Bekure, et al. 1991; Fratkin 2001). These effects seem to have been born out through the changes reported above in declarations of hardship, less accessible sources of food, increased human population, and noticeable environmental degradation. Ultimately, the introduction of group ranches has proven to be an impediment to retaining pastoralism as a sustainable economic and ecological mode

of production. And yet, perhaps ironically, it is also often cast in positive words, as an example of community foresight and a show of good judgment.

Importantly for some, the group ranch concept was seized as a powerful counter-narrative to a history of marginalization and displacement, embodying instead one of permanence, responsibility, and empowerment. The desire for a permanent home is voiced by a young Maasai herdsman. He is "a farmer who is farming nothing," due to the most recent drought and death of all of his animals. He dreams of becoming a researcher and studying environmental science and its relationship to the changing seasons. His words mirror not only those previously about the importance of the group ranches in curbing mobility but also introduce an element of pride for both these ranches and the permanence they afford:

> Way before we were not having, we were not using group ranches' boundaries. But some years ago, we come and make some boundaries, of which if now I am a member of Tiemamut, I should be living there. Then that is good because it has assisted us to change our minds of stopping migrating everyone each time, because there before we were just moving, maybe now you can live here for one month, or two, even a year, then you migrate, you go to another place. So you will never get…you will never have a permanent home, because of that migration.

This juxtaposition of permanence and transience can be seen throughout the previous excerpts of these communities' oral histories, specifically in their choice of words describing how the land was before extended British settlement; the word they use is "temporary."

This sentiment as well as the sense of empowerment that comes from the alternative was explained by one elderly woman. As she put it, the land "used to be temporary, [they moved] where they want." Now, she said, is different. "Each and every

member has to take care of [the] group ranch," and as such now they know "know how to manage [it] well." She gives as an example the choice of alternately grazing different parts of their ranch rather than allowing the animals to simply graze everywhere. She speaks with a sense of pride while relaying this change, interestingly highlighting the importance of the individual and personal responsibility as well as the lessons of good management. This sentiment is echoed by the ex-chairman as well and perhaps most succinctly defines the transition between the narrative presented earlier and this one now:

> So he said that there before, before the private ranches…all the lands belong to Maasais. They don't bother where you came from, either you came from nearby community, or you came from far, no, the area belongs to all Maasais. From Narok they used to come here and nobody chased them or moved them out. But what they used to do is, the area of the land is just temporary, you can move from here up to where you want, and nobody control you. So what happened is that they have come to see that that one is not good, because nobody takes care of the land, and they don't even conserve the places, and once anything happens, no one has power to ask somebody, "Why did you decide to do this? And why did you not?" So that is why they had decided and agreed to divide in this land and have the group ranches. So that people will take care of their group ranch and take care of all of their resources in their community or in their group ranch. So that they can have control of their own land.

Like many of the narratives presented earlier, this speaks to an open and accessible time where all Maasai enjoyed the bounty, freedom, and range of the highlands, a time when "nobody [controlled] you." However, this story of autonomy, movement, and land is given a negative twist, and its operating adjective of "temporary," apparently placed in a more pejorative light. Indeed, as the ex-chairman notes, "they have come to see that that one is not good," that autonomy, that movement, "because nobody takes care of the land," with no one possessing the distinct decision-making

powers to do so. Indeed, the move to incorporate themselves into a group ranch is seen as an act of empowerment, of finally gaining "control of their own land." It is seen as a movement towards not only permanence, but stewardship, governance, and ownership. Lesogorol (2003) recognizes a growing antagonism to the previous system of common property with the Samburu as well: "The implication is that you cannot develop if you do not have control over your affairs" (539).

When speaking with founding members of the group ranches, or their sons, as was the case with our field assistant, Robert, there is immense pride in their creation's legacy. As he notes:

> My father was among the people who registered themselves. He is among the 59 people who registered themselves in this particular Ilmotiok Group Ranch. They were the ones who decide to divide this area so that every people will be living on their own group ranch and taking care of everything, which is there.

That pride can perhaps be most openly seen in these descriptions' notable absence of the government and its role in encouraging the group ranches' creation. The young herdsman explains that while before they were living an unbounded life, "some years ago, we come and make some boundaries," purposefully delineating their ranches and changing the course of their lives. The ex-chairman reinforces this view, giving credit to themselves the communities for having "decided and agreed" to demarcate and divide their land as they did. This sense of action and self-propelled decision has created a sense of empowerment and pride that stands in direct opposition to those feelings of marginalization, anger, and displacement so vividly expressed in the previous pages. This notion of good governance, group ownership, and responsible management seems to be tied to a sense of control and placed in direct contrast to that time prior when all was

"temporary." Importantly, these adaptations now appear to be tied to hopes of good stewardship as well and meant to be a direct method to "conserve" and "take care" of the land and resources they have claim a title to. Indeed, the group ranch's governing committee is held up as a model, a medium and a platform for decision-making and collective accountability, and perhaps most importantly has been the primary enabler for community-level planning and strategizing for the future.

This connection to empowerment as well as the agroecologically deleterious effects of sedentarization for group ranches has again been seen around other parts of Africa, with Kaijado District "undergoing rapid changes in land tenure" as well, "as communal land is converted into group ranches, some of which are now privatizing" (Galvin 2009: 188). Critically such moves also "were supported by Maasai pastoralists to secure the land against non-Maasai who were moving in and expropriating the better-watered land" (188). "From the standpoint of the individual," Galvin continues, "the positive aspect of subdivision is security of land tenure;" the negative, from an agroecological standpoint, is the effect of "sedentarization," where "the loss of the ability to move livestock must be compensated by economic inputs such as intensification of livestock raising or diversification of livelihoods" (188).

Ironically, the group ranch model and its adoption created both the need and the opportunity for community-based economic diversification, and in particular helped spark the interest and drive to pursue the particular strategy most dominant and sought after today. But before examining how this new strategy is helping these groups navigate, react to, and co-create a third cultural geography atop this land, we should first examine the last major stressor that has afflicted these communities of Laikipia and

ultimately has pushed them to pursue alternative livelihood pathways. In the eyes of these communities this last stressor of climate change is perhaps the most vivid and apparent and is causing many to question the very future of pastoralism. The following section explores how these communities' express this changing climate and its unpredictable and often devastating effects.

Climate Change: Two Communities' Perspectives

Indeed, when the communities of Ilmotiok and Tiemamut were asked what they have noticed change the most during their time in the area, far and away the biggest answer was climate. They spoke of multiple perceived differences from years and decades past, many aligning with forecasted indicators of advancing changes in climate for arid regions and all of them creating distress and worry regarding the future of pastoralism, what the future holds for their children and for that of the larger community.

The first thing people have noticed is that droughts are getting longer. One elder remarked, "The climate and everything has changed." "Long droughts" are seen to affect "all the animals." An elderly woman concurs that "droughts are longer" and "kill more animals" as compared to before.

People similarly remarked that droughts were increasing in frequency. As the chief of both Ilmotiok and Tiemamut said, "We used to have droughts every…ten years, now it's becoming [every] five years." This is seconded by a village elder who said "that the area has changed especially because of the climate, because nowadays mostly within a very short time a drought comes after another one."

The third effect community members commented on was the changing rain patterns. As the county counselor emphatically stated:

> We are facing the climate change here. During the 1970s through '80s, there was relatively more rain during the year, but now the rain pattern has changed. Nowadays we receive once a year. And in 1978 to early 90s, we normally receive rain three times a year… now during 1995 the rain pattern started changing, so we are facing a lot of rain shortages, and there are two seasons, which have completely lost it.

This was corroborated by two other people, one who worked for a national environmental NGO, stating: "A long time ago we used to receive rains three times a year. But mostly it has come to be even none promising. We just have to receive one rain per season per year. So the drought is just increasing." An elder equally remarked, "when they were young, the climate used to be different from now, because the rain used to be... twice, or three times, per year. But nowadays it rains once and it is [a] very little one."

Along with a decrease in rain frequency, its overall pattern was also noted to have changed. To wit: "Normally we want to rain in July but now July…no signs of rain are there. So it might not rain until August or October. Nowadays we don't expect that rain in where we normally expect rain." Indeed, the elder noted, "Things are totally changed," and that in the 1980s "that was the time that we have realized that the climate has changed."

These notes on a changing rain pattern dovetail with an understanding that the droughts have also been getting stronger, that in the words of the chief, "they are continually coming worse." These statements come out most passionately when people discuss the third primary area of change noticed: both an increase in kind and number of animals affected. In years previous, the droughts were known to kill only cattle, but now

they are killing everything: cattle, sheep, goats, even the previously untouchable animals like donkeys, camels, and elephants. The chief remarked, ""Let's say the first ones, they used to kill only cattle, and goats [were]…not so much affected. But now they have affected all of them, goats, cattle, sheeps, all, even donkeys." This echoed a local Maasai teaching that says, "If you see a drought killing donkeys, know that it is the worst one."

Indeed, the drought of 2009 was regularly decried as "the worst one" and easily "the most dangerous," because unlike the others it "kills all: sheeps, goats, and cattles, all together, and donkeys." A local conservation scout for Tiemamut simply remarked that he'd "never seen a drought like that" before. "Even elephants were being destroyed."

After living through this latest drought, people are noticeably shaken, with one elderly woman reflecting that "still we are so much afraid." People expressed worry over the regrowth of grasses and concern, as did our field assistant, Robert, who remarked, "all the droughts affect some, but the last drought affected all, which is terrible. We don't know about the next drought that's coming. Maybe it will be more…I don't know." And lastly, the Tiemamut counselor noted, "I am not a scientist, but I can say maybe it will continue changing. Maybe some part of this country can grow to be a desert because of the change of climate." In this he highlighted an often-feared result of climatic disturbance in semi-arid lands, ending with a simple and disconcerting question, one undoubtedly on many people's mind: "What next?"

Importantly, recent climate science backs many of the observations voiced above. While particular "impacts on these systems should be considered…highly specific to location and livelihood," there are several overarching trends scientists agree upon for arid and semi-arid lands (Morton 2007: 19682). From more highly variable rainfall

patterns (Ovuka and Lindqvist 2000; Galvin 2009) to an "increasing frequency and severity of droughts" (Morton 2007: 19683) and high loss of livestock (McCabe 1990), the pastoralists of Ilmotiok and Tiemamut's perceptions fall right within the trend lines.

Trusting qualitative and anecdotal evidence for the complex and localized phenomena of climate change, however, is notoriously difficult and for many an inherently untrustworthy trade. Ovuka and Lindqvist (2000) remark that much of this contention can be placed in context by recognizing that "Farmers and scientists observe, measure and analyse rainfall in different ways," and that "It is necessery [sic] to analyse the time when rainfall is important for the farmers to be able to understand their observations of rainfall (116). It is in this context that many farmers' observations converge rather than diverge with present climate science findings. In particular, farmers whether pastoral or agriculturalist, focus their attention regarding rainfall during the growing seasons, as seen in numerous remarks above on the decrease or erasure of entire growing times. Indeed, Ovuka and Lindquist note that "the strongest support for farmers' perception of decreasing rainfall are the decreasing trends during the two growing seasons," and that these climatic changes along with population increase "supports farmers' perceptions of change in rainfall during the short rain periods" (117). They conclude by noting that "The right amounts of rain in the tropics may not be as critical as the timing of the rain" (117).

The effects of this most recent drought of 2009 still lingered in the thoughts and words of many actors I spoke with, whether pastoralist or professor. However, while members of Tiemamut group ranch rely for water on a series of small dams as well as the Ewaso Nyiro, for those pastoralists in the community of Ilmotiok, the Ewaso is their only

source of fresh water, and in 2009 for the first time in recorded memory, it dried up. My field assistant and friend, Joseph, remarked that, "We'd never seen the river dry up" before, and that for those people within his community it was like "the end of the world."

Susan Crate and Mark Nuttall in their book, *Anthropology and Climate Change*, argue that "On a temporal scale, the effects of climate change are the indirect costs of imperialism and colonization—the 'non-point' fall-out for peoples who have been largely ignored" (Crate & Nuttall 2009: 11). Such a claim, combined with those voices just heard regarding habitat degradation, livestock changes, and climate fears, reminds us of the multiplicity of geographies interacting throughout this investigation, and that "the differential impacts of climate change" occur both within and between cultures and communities (Adger 2001: 922). Indeed for people in developing countries, whether they are labeled as indigenous or expatriate, black or white, ecologist or pastoralist, as the world warms and "the earth literally changes beneath their feet," managing and adapting to such alterations will be critical (Crate & Nuttall 2009: 13). Recognizing this landscape as a place of shifting natural as well as social geographies is critical when parsing and discussing the ways in which they intersect and the ways in which both equity and sustainability can and should unfold (Adger 2001).

Confronting this question of "what next" is an endeavor many community leaders and members are engaged in. However, this uncertainty for the future comes with many and at times conflicting emotions. For some, planning for the future and adapting to the climate is cast as a fool's errand, such enormity and unpredictability things only God can fathom and know, such a thing in the end, which "depends only on God." For others, they see this present incarnation of life as an aberration deviating from a course many

understand and enjoy, of animal getting and animal keeping, and they wish for a return to such a time. In the words of one elderly woman, "I wish too, if it would rain, for us to look and take care of the small animals we have so that they can increase in number so that the life would become normal."

For others, however, returning to normal is not seen as a viable option or opportunity. Solely being a pastoralist after this last drought is seen by some as a now imprudent choice, and the palpable fear of climate change as a looming and unpredictable entity has become coupled with those concerns over space, disease, over-population, and degradation, discussed earlier. These stresses and worries have brought out for many a now recognized need for education and economic diversification as cultural corollaries to current pastoral practices, whose influence and adoption have been spreading throughout African pastoral communities for the past forty years (McCabe 2003; Fratkin and Mearns 2003; Lamprey and Reid 2004; Galvin 2009). As with the adoption of sheep and goats instead of cattle, or the enactment and settlement of group ranches, another "change of the way of life" is seen by many as fundamentally needed.

This drive to diversify has led to a slow but steady introduction of camels from the north, seen by many as a new kind of livestock more able to withstand the coming droughts. Such an adaptation is explained succinctly by the chief: "We say that it's one animal that can survive at the drought season… And milk, yes, and milk. You get to have milk, always, even in time of droughts." Others are dreaming of opening businesses and working to save money, whether in labor positions in Nairobi or temporary positions on private ranches. Still others, including many community leaders, are openly preaching the need for agriculture, though its feasibility and sustainability in this part of Laikipia is

notably in question. Sundaresan and Riginos suggest that "With low productivity and little mineral wealth, there are few forms of land use competing with wildlife for habitat. Mining, crop farming, and logging are not viable through most of this region" (2010: 24).

Our field assistant, Robert, hits upon the difficulty in changing one's way of life and reorganizing cultural and social spheres:

> Now what happens is after every dry season, our people never think of any other way of living. You see once it rain you can meet them or you can see them steal back their livestock. They try one way or another way to buy again the livestock that are being still affected. So you can see that one is a very big challenge because if they could think of another thing to do, [it] may be a bit better.

Such a sentiment is echoed by the chief as well, who notes:

> I say to give people education, they will know and they will understand: 'This land is not enough for us, let us find…another alternative.' Therefore I like them to be, all of them, to be learned...that is the only way that they can get their skills and people can know another alternative.

That call to find an alternative has been noticed, and along with an embrace of education as a primary tool for economic empowerment, through the decision-making mechanism of the group ranch committee a particular economic strategy has been born, one that reflects the landscape in which they live and exposes the third cultural geography in which they inhabit. That third geography is the international conservation regime alluded to in the beginning paragraphs of this chapter. The adoption of a conservation-oriented economic strategy has come with many repercussions, including the impetus for group ranches to create conservancies; the promotion of local environmental education at the elementary level; the reinforcement of education as a skill- and capacity-building tool; and the expansion of environmental labor as a dominant industry of the future.

This present understanding of the landscape, rather than merely being shaped by ethnic fission and fusion, livelihood fluidity, or colonial partition, adds an additional layer of internationality, one in which global interest, priority, definition, and connectivity is now helping shape Laikipia and the diverse communities within it. Ilmotiok and Tiemamut are two prime examples of affected Maasai communities, and with neighboring private ranches housing conservancies, ecotourism lodges, and in Mpala's case a premier, ecological research institute all around them, the influence of international conservation on this landscape is both unavoidable and expanding. The remainder of this thesis attempts to more fully elucidate this influence through an investigation of the multi-purposed Mpala and its relationship with these two noticeably adaptive communities.

Conclusion

And so, in conclusion, what we have seen throughout this area of Laikipia are diverse, layered, indeed embedded, histories and social geographies within a particular landscape. In viewing this transition from precolonial times to today through a collection of sources and histories, in literature as well as across multiple actors, we see narratives that speak to issues of autonomy and control, power and marginalization, livelihood change, resource use, uncertainty, hope, and fear. Importantly, in such overlapping histories, we see the seeds of a destabilized agroecological system and two local communities coming to terms with that. However, we also see a juxtaposition of narratives that are arguably in tension, including issues of transience, freedom, and permanence, as well as competing desires and concerns over livelihood change. It is

necessary to remember that the voices explored here were not random nor representative of this population, if such a thing could be even possible, and as such we must always self-reflect on the motives, social dynamics, and resulting power distribution among informants, whether the high degree of discussions with leaders young and old, men compared to women, or the differing resource needs of Ilmotiok versus Tiemamut.

Ultimately, it appears the question raised at the chapter's start, of where exactly such a place as Laikipia is, is not as simple to answer as it first appears. Across Laikipia, we see not only these layered geographies and embedded histories of British colonial administration and a complex of Maasai identities woven through these pastoral and ranching lands, but a third geography of blossoming conservancies, ecotourism, and socio-environmental research as well. Such things, coupled with politically contentious yet strikingly independent forces such as climate change, have worked to reshape Laikipia's natural and social landscapes across space and time. And yet critical to note, these social geographies, expansive and interconnected, articulate distinct "topographies of power" as well, oftentimes imposed and altered, consciously and unconsciously, in politically, socially, and economically asymmetrical ways – colonialism being the most evident and obvious example (Ferguson 2006: 89).

And yet it is not the only example. A most visceral and visible expression of these overlaid and overlapping geographies was experienced during a visit to an annual Laikipia cattle auction and ranching expo, hosted this past June at the neighboring conservancy and cattle ranch of Ol Pejeta. It was in a chance moment there that I saw something that visually connected not only these tangled pasts but arguably gave voice to that third "topography of power" of the international conservation regime. It is a

topography no less fraught, and one that is currently reshaping and "reconfiguring" this landscape's social and ecological terrain (Mackenzie 2000: 717). This final social geography; its particular generation and expression in this sliver of Laikipia; the ways its topographical power hold incredible potential to shape the region; and thus the resulting need for its continual self-critique, will be the topics and narratives examined in the chapters to follow. International conservation's enactment and agenda within Laikipia plays a critical and complicated role in this part of the world. After one last anecdote and sparing glimpse of a cattle auction, in one final effort to both situate and firmly unsettle what remains of this place and its myriad foundations, we move next to international conservation's interactions through Mpala and the dynamic, neighboring communities next door.

"Tintin in Serengeti": An Ending that is also a Place to Begin

Walking behind Mpala's ranch manager, the smells of green grass, cattle, manure, and hay slowly gain prominence as we leave the open parking area and approach a large covered tent and unevenly distributed throng of people, some sitting, others standing, talking, all sociably mingling. Kayla, myself, and two visiting scholars and friends of Mpala's director, have joined the ranch manger for a morning and afternoon at the southerly conservancy and cattle ranch of Ol Pejeta. This early June morning was Laikipia's annual "Field Day," a rotating ranching expo and cattle auction, where those Kenyans well enough off, black and white, bid for the animals they hope to breed in the years to come. Booths are set up alongside the expansive tents to showcase everything from pharmaceuticals and feed to varying kinds of growth enhancers and pest control. Settling into a row of hay bales, the multicultural and polyethnic composition of this

landscape is on full display, with those of darker skin sitting mostly together, while those of predominantly British origins, kids, middle-aged, and elderly, congregate amongst their own families and friends. As we sit, we notice that we have arrived in the middle of the preliminary showcase.

"I think that's exactly the kind of breed we're hoping to get here…good depth, good breadth," a mustachioed man intones, wearing a wide-brimmed hat and pink dress shirt; his distinct British-Kenyan lilt floating in the wind. Younger Kenyan men in tan jumpsuits and black rubber boots stand behind him and to his sides, armed only with short corralling sticks as they lead an auburn bull in a quick, tight circle around the small, mud-filled pen, their skin standing vibrantly against the red and yellow baseball caps on their heads. "This bull, as far as I'm concerned, is producing a perfect animal," our host continues. Breeds of Boran cattle from as far away as South Africa and Somalia are ranged and sold here.

Lunch is served soon after a portion of their cattle is led around the viewing area and mention is made of a variety of scholarship and educational opportunities available to those students pursuing agronomic research degrees at national universities. And lunch is impressive: salad, potatoes, ice cream, and substantial portions of roasted beef. Afterwards, we are allowed to wander around the surrounding area and its plethora of booths. Ol Pejeta's conservancy notably has a large information area set up as well, with materials about their pursuit of new sustainable herding technologies, their chimpanzee rehabilitation sanctuary, and their work protecting the endangered black rhino. After a half hour has passed, the crowd begins to gather around the fenced pens just behind the booths. The auction is about to begin.

The auctioneer opens with remarks regarding the recent drought, the hit in agricultural sales, and optimism about the sale of wheat and maize in the years to come. Soon after he begins introducing a string of bulls, listing their defining characteristics, whether weight, size of shoulder hump or haunch, and focusing on each one's reproductive potential. He ends with the starting price. As I again watch the ranch hands in their red and yellow caps confidently yet carefully lead the animal around the corral, my eyes wander to those individuals likewise listening and watching. Some are noticeably simple spectators such as myself. Others, including an elderly man leaning against the fence just to my left, most likely Maasai, are taking sustained and serious interest. A tall man, lean and strong; he holds a long staff casually at his side, as I would come to see many times as the summer goes on. He turns and gazes off to the side now, ear lobes elongated, a pronounced salt-and-pepper jaw, kokoi long, purple, and bright in the highland sun.

The young man next to him looks to be about sixteen. Towering over me, dressed in shorts and sandals, he has an athlete's build. His sunglasses hang cavalierly from a tether at his neck. He watches the parade of cattle not with an air of affinity or affection, nor relation or connection. He appears to be a white Kenyan rancher's son, and perhaps still growing into the world of expatriate livestock ranching around him. What his future holds may well be unknown, as the economic viability of this way of life grows more uncertain with each passing year. The cultural concerns of cattle ranching may not be entrenched in him yet, and perhaps never will be. My eyes again start drifting to the left, opening into the larger field of action behind me, when the full image of the youth's shirt comes into focus and my gaze lingers a few beats more.

The shirt simply reads, “Tintin in Serengeti;” displayed at the end of this text in *Figure A*. It depicts a scene taken from a comic book from the early 1930s written by Georges Rémi, under the pen-name Hergé, entitled, “Tintin in the Congo.” In this particular scene, our hero, the Belgian reporter Tintin, is falling from the upper left-hand corner, with his ever-faithful dog Snowy in midair just below, clenching the tail of a large and noticeably disquieted male lion. The lion’s immense form is leaping up in pain and dominates the visual field. And there in the bottom left, several paces back, smaller in shape, and not fully in frame, we see a startled, lone African man, bare-chested, clothed in only a leopard print tunic, and clutching a similarly printed spear and shield.

In several ways, the content of the image seems to speak to both the colonial past as well as the centrality of conservation in the present, and in this space of overlapping social geographies and fiercely embedded histories; this place of ranching, herding, and conservation; expatriate British, foreign Americans, and native Maasai; the signals appear especially vivid, the lessons especially poignant. The outsized image of a lion, and appropriation of this image to advertise the Serengeti, seems to reference a reverence for charismatic megafauna and the large predators so often sought for protection in the international conservation community. While the recessed and off-center position of a now-ethnically-ambiguous and racially stereotyped African, speaks not only to a colonial past of big game hunting, but also one of systemic marginalization of local peoples. Indeed, Rémi is known to have later confessed to ethnic bias influencing his rendering of Africa and Africans in this early work, reflecting many years after: "I portrayed these Africans according to ... this purely paternalistic spirit of the time,” meaning such a spirit as found in his dominant social world of colonial Belgium (Sadoul 2003).

That it serves both as a historical artifact of African marginalization, referencing a racially-charged depiction of peoples in the Congo, while acting as an advertisement for the transnational East African park of the Serengeti, lends the image particular potency in the land of Laikipia, where such histories and social geographies are seen to be living still, and where conservation and eco-tourism are arguably vying to surpass ranching and pastoralism as the dominant economic enterprise of the area. That such an entity points both to the past as well as a particular depiction of conservation in the present is salient. Not for its direct relation to the Laikipia highlands, but rather to highlight the critical, substantive, and evolving differences: differences in terms of the conservation needs, financial means, and community-based methods widely employed, and exemplified in the work of such places as Ol Pejeta and, of specific interest to us, Mpala. Such places that are multi-purposed and engaged in multiple uses are actively working to build a different model for community conservation and stakeholder participation in this region. Such work defines, creates, and perpetuates a particular international conservation agenda, with attendant distinctions in power, identity, and resource access and use. Such work also, theoretically, purposefully works against the colonial past and presently concurrent model of parks, striving instead to build something different and something new. It is to this enterprise and experiment, and the expression of this new topography of conservation and development, that we now turn.

Figure A.
"Tintin in Serengeti" T-shirt; taken from a "Google Image Search" for "Tintin in Serengeti," and specifically from an image taken on January 4, 2009, found on the Flickr album of "Mr. Martineau,"
[http://www.flickr.com/photos/73478248@N00/3342037743/]

Chapter Two

Social Entanglements and Sustainable Conservation: Governance, Identity, and Power in Laikipia, Kenya

Introduction

Moving from the material to the symbolic and back again, as with Ol Pejeta ranch, we see in Mpala the physical expression of colonial inequalities alongside the discursive pursuit and enactment of particular modes of sustainable conservation and development. In this chapter, I will trace Mpala from its founding to the present day, illustrating those motives moral and more pragmatic which have propelled it from a post-colonial cattle ranch to the multi-purposed consortium it is today.

In situating it within the broader history and ecology of Laikipia, as well as the integrated discourses of international conservation and development, I will argue that Mpala is a particularly robust and theoretically valuable site in which to study Laikipia's larger acephalous conservation agenda in contrast and relation to larger State-controlled schemes such as protected areas or plantations. I will argue that Mpala is tied to this landscape as a site for "transnational governmentality," in other words as a new form of networked rather than centralized provisioning of medical, education, and social services to both staff and neighboring communities (Ferguson 2006: 40). Finally, I will argue that such responsibilities make Mpala a worthy site for the study of social intimacies and entanglements that embody the challenges of both sustainable *in situ* conservation and site-based transnational social rapport across racial, economic, and subsistence lines.

The Emergence of Mpala

Dovetailing with the rise of the White Highlands, Mpala was first settled in the beginning decades of the twentieth century, coming under the purview of Austrian royalty whose original home incidentally still stands on the property today. While the land served first as the Prince's private hunting grounds, its primary function shifted to cattle ranching in the 1930s as the family's ability to stay in the British colony rested on their production of butter and other products for the coming global war effort. During this time First Prince Schweizenberg and his family became known throughout the highlands for their award-winning butter, cream, flowers, and produce (Mpala Ranch Manager 05/2010 interview). As the decades progressed, properties around the Mpala farm were slowly gathered and consolidated by varying landowners, with the land now currently housing the ranch manager and his wife eventually being acquired by Schweizenberg after the previous head-of-house was lost to the Second World War.

It was at this point that the royal family's fortunes changed as well, recalls a former Mpala ranch manager. Their residence within the British colony had begun during the First World War, with its tense political rivalries playing out on relatively new colonial terrains in Africa, and with the start and close of the Second World War at the turn of the 1950s, they found themselves at the turn of the 1950s again under the awkward gaze of post-war Europe. The privileged position of European powers in colonial Africa was coming to an end given new alliances forged through North American participation in World War II, and the Schweizenberg chapter in Kenya closed quietly without terrible fanfare in 1952, when they were bought out by a Canadian who had served in joint Canadian/British operations in the war.

"Ranching was not a success for Samuel Small," the present ranch manager acutely reflects. Neither married nor with children, he used a small portion of the ranch for his own residential needs, and in addition to managing livestock worked to build a partnership with the British military to use his land as an annual training ground. This laid the foundation for continued use and recently additional revenues today, as the geography and climate of Laikipia roughly approximates the arid lands of Afghanistan and Iraq. Suffering from ill health during the years of his ownership of the property, Sam's death from a heart attack happened suddenly at home, and in accordance with his wishes, the property was bequeathed to his younger brother George.

In taking over Mpala in 1969, George worked to build a more viable commercial cattle operation. However, he also sought to establish new norms of stewardship and scientific management. While working to rehabilitate the overgrazed and arid rangelands, he gained a deep and abiding love for the land, its animals wild and domestic, and the peoples dependent on both. Sitting in the ranch veranda, just steps away from where Sam Small last reclined in the modest cottage off to the side of the larger ranch house, one is treated to an expansive view of Laikipia's famously jagged topography and undulating range. Bougainvillea winds its way around the terraced lattice above and between architectural supports, as vervet monkeys and hornbills watch and wait for human breakfast and teatime remains. While there is a historically appropriate sense of comfort to the setting, with its unbridled access to open air and soft, welcoming furniture, the weight of history is noticeable as well, and its presence somehow appropriate. A deep sense of lived time seems to permeate the air, with two dark, large wagon wheels set

into the walls behind us acting as direct and tangible connections to that earlier frontier past.

After years of watching the cycles of drought so common to Laikipia devastate people and animals alike, George wanted to build Mpala into something larger than its singular role as a commercial cattle ranch. Under his stewardship, the purpose of Mpala dramatically expanded, embracing a more overarching conservation agenda and arguably altering the potential and future of the larger Laikipia region. He wanted Mpala to engage actively with the long-term goals of landscape conservation and rangeland management, while enriching surrounding local communities as well. Mpala's staff was of primary importance; he wanted to ensure that they were able to live with their families on the property and that they felt a part of the larger Mpala family as well.

Towards these twins goals of conservation and alleviating suffering he began working with a past ranch manager, multiple American professors, and a conglomerate of national and international institutions to found the Mpala Wildlife Foundation in 1989 and the Mpala Research Trust in 1991. The Research Centre's founding members include Princeton University, Smithsonian Institution, The National Museums of Kenya, and the Kenya Wildlife Service. The intent was to have an international partnership of American and Kenyan scientific bodies dedicated to sustaining Mpala as a site of conservation, a site of sustainable livestock ranching, a site of world-class scientific research, and a site for community betterment and outreach. Importantly, these agendas converge in the joint mission of the Mpala Research Trust and Wildlife Foundation.

They found physical and institutional form when the Research Trust opened the Research Centre in 1994, only to be further complemented when the Mpala Wildlife

Foundation, which houses both the conservancy and ranch, began a mobile clinic (now run through Community Health Africa Trust) in 1999 and the elementary school for Mpala staff children, whose doors opened to great fanfare just a short time after that[2]. It is a mission where through commercial ranching, ecological research, and community development strategies, larger sustainable connections between wildlife, people, and livestock are unearthed. And importantly, such elucidations are sought to benefit not simply Mpala but the greater Laikipia region and semi-arid and arid lands around the world.

"Mpala facilitates and exemplifies sustainable human-wildlife co-existence and the advancement of human livelihoods and quality of life. We do this through education, outreach, and by developing science-based solutions to guide conservation actions for the benefit of nature and human welfare." So states the opening page of their website, and such a declaration can just as easily serve as a crystalline distillation of what much

---

[2] As noted above Mpala is actually comprised of two separate organizational bodies. The Mpala Wildlife Foundation (MWF), run by a nine-person board of trustees, is a for-profit cattle ranching company that additionally oversees the Mpala conservancy and programs in primary education and health clinic outreach. The Mpala Research Trust (MRT), conversely, is a Kenyan-registered NGO dedicated to pursuing and fostering opportunities for high quality scientific research in the Laikipia region. Though run by a separate board from the aforementioned institutions of Princeton University, Smithsonian Institution, the National Museums of Kenya, and Kenya Wildlife Service, two of the seven trustees are from the Mpala Wildlife Foundation board, including its chair. This signals that while MWF and MRT hold differing missions and decision-making rules, they do at times coordinate and overlap.

With reference to names, when speaking of either institution individually, I will specify their name or abbreviation accordingly. For the activities produced through MRT, I will more commonly use the colloquial reference to the Mpala Research Centre (MRC), as that is how individuals on the ground refer to it. When using the phrase, "Mpala," as I have in previous sections and will continue to do throughout this piece, I am referring to this larger multi-purposed consortium and its collective capacity and work.

integrated conservation-development discourse and myriad projects around the globe seek to promote, enact, and achieve. For many, Laikipia's expansive, largely fenceless mosaic of ranches offers a distinct counter-example and a potentially larger counter-narrative to how multiple stakeholders can approach, articulate, and most importantly, practice a form of conservation that is not only ecologically sustainable but more equitable and participatory as well.

Throughout Africa, wildlife conservation and resource management has occurred over geological time and across myriad geographies and livelihoods. Whether semi-nomadic and nomadic pastoralism, shifting or settled cultivation, and limited industrial or agro-industrial development, human-wildlife and human-ecosystem interaction has created varying circumstances, choices, and consequences for sustainable relations (Fairhead and Leach 1994). Since colonial times, conservation in Africa followed a similar trajectory as much of the rest of the world, emphasizing the creation of protected areas and extractive reserves for ecological preservation and use at the expense and exclusion of local communities. This model has come to be called the "fines and fences" or "fortress" approach to conservation and conjures images of an antagonistic relationship between people and the natural world, one in which people are rightfully removed from ecological cycles rather than embedded and engaged within them. In enacting this model, people are often physically dislocated from traditional and ancestral lands, deemed environmental threats, and ultimately conceived as "part of the problem," (Schwartzman, et al. 2000: 1355) rather than inseparable pieces of larger, socially coupled ecosystems (Raffles 2002a). These physical and social ramifications have

additionally led this approach to be pejoratively called “coercive conservation” (Peluso 1993).

While its roots trace back to the reserve systems implemented in the West Indies and South African Cape in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such exclusionary practices did not come to dominate the conservation discourse until its formal institutionalization in the United States with the creation of the National Wildlife Refuge, Forest Service, and Park systems at the turn of the twentieth century (Hulme & Murphree 2001: 10). In fact it was the U.S. National Park system, classified Category II by the IUCN, that became the legal and institutional model for the first Kenyan protected areas of the colonial era, with 52 such areas currently active throughout Kenya, spanning 8% of its total landmass (Okello & Kiringe 2004). Whether through “outright expulsion” or more subtle “economic dislocation” (Curran 2009: 30), across Africa, “as in Europe and North America, the essence of conservation practice was the preservation of certain selected areas, their landscapes and species” (Hulme & Murphree 2001: 12). “People,” as Hulme and Murphree note, “had little place in this vision of conservation” (12).

In Kenya such practices were indeed “the norm” and “the source of a myriad of conflicts and threats bedevilling biodiversity conservation initiatives” (Okello & Kiringe 2004: 55). The realities of those peoples’ existences however included their systematic displacement, and the resulting social discontent eventually caught up with that vision. Specifically, as is now happening in west and equatorial Africa (Hardin 2011b), discourses and concerns regarding human rights overlay those about conservation, raising its uncomfortable connection to the colonial past and dramatically altering the moral lens through which we view conservation (Adams 2003). Activities such as forced

resettlement, and "the resulting impoverishment…destitution and misery," were deemed "violations of fundamental human rights" (Schmidt-Soltau 2009: 47). Colchester, in fact, frames it even more starkly, noting that with "as many as 85% of the world's protected areas" being inhabited by indigenous peoples, the establishment of people-free parks comes with "ethnocidal if not genocidal" implications (2001: 1366).

Casting fortress conservation in a moral light dovetailed with clarifying sustainability as a new organizing paradigm for development. By linking ecological health to economic growth, and declaring equity and justice (however murkily defined) as necessary rubrics for defining developmental success, sustainable development showed itself to be a "fundamentally different" kind of development (Robinson & Redford 2004: 11). With the inclusion of equity and justice in its bedrock principles, the discourse of development also became irreversibly more complicated. Indeed, coupled with the evolution of morality alluded to above, the international community soon radically transformed the idea of what conservation needs to be: not simply a mechanism for protecting biodiversity, but rather one that requires the balancing of biodiversity with human desires and needs.

This idea, that conservation efforts cannot ignore the communities already there, is at the heart of the conservation-development coupled mandate found in community conservation, whose "seminal" definition notes it as "natural resources or biodiversity protection by, for, and with the local community" with a "direct linkage between conservation and local benefits" (Berkes 2007: 15189). Importantly, such moral arguments as outlined above were met by scholars with equally pragmatic ones as well. Namely that conservation efforts, while potentially able to benefit from local knowledge

and systems of management, more critically have little chance of succeeding without local communities' support.

Common property and political ecology literatures show strong evidence that community participation, local institutions, and peoples' proximity to resources all have a powerful and positive influence over the sustainable conservation and management of resources (Ostrom 1990; Chhatre and Agrawal 2008; Gibson et al. 2000; Agrawal 2007). Importantly, the converse has also shown to be true: without such community involvement or support, areas whether protected or not find their resources increasingly degraded and exploited (Adams 2004). In short, "attention to the livelihoods of people" and those peoples themselves matters when striving to conserve or manage resources well (Sunderlin 2005: 1385). Such findings of necessary support and inclusion have been seen in Kenya as well, with Okello and Kiringe (2004) arguing that myriad "threats arise from the alienation of local communities," matter-of-factly concluding that it "is now apparent that without the support of local communities, no meaningful wildlife conservation can be achieved in Kenya" (56).

This is not to suggest that such integrated approaches are a panacea (Ostrom 2007), and it has been well documented that such criteria as listed above are hard to produce and sustain, and as such, co-beneficial endeavors difficult to achieve (Robinson and Redford 2004). That there are trade-offs between conservation and development is no surprise. But while scholars suggest such trade-offs must be grappled with "deliberately and systematically" (Sunderlin 2005: 1394), oftentimes the complex issues of causality and consequence in sustainable ecosystem management come down to

fundamental questions of institutional power, its dynamics, and on whose terms desired outcomes are made, judged, and acted upon (Persha et al. 2011).

Balancing functioning ecological processes and species' movements; varying groups' socioeconomic and cultural needs; and concerns of equitable stakeholder engagement is an unenviable task. And yet determining how diverse and myriad stakeholders weigh such things as cultural diversity along with biological diversity, equity as well as environmental health, and participation as well as population dynamics is exactly the challenge rooted in the emerging joint discourse of sustainable conservation and development (Adams 2004). The difficulty often comes in unraveling the institutional "complexities of this multilevel world," where actors, power dynamics, and perceived realities can overlap, disconnect, and even clash (Berkes 2007: 15193).

I would be remiss not to note that Kenya has the longest history of any country in Africa attempting to address these concerns of community involvement and coupled conservation and development. As Honey (2009) reflects, it was in the late 1950s:

> …long before ecotourism or community-based conservation had entered the popular lexicon, that two areas—the Masai Mara Game Reserve and Amboseli Game Reserve—took the first important steps toward putting into action the principles of local community participation in wildlife conservation and tourism. (48)

She continues, "These are often considered the earliest ecotourism programs in Africa" (48). However, despite the longevity of these ideas around the world and in Kenya, I would argue the district of Laikipia faces a host of challenges that make it a particularly distinct site to engage in these larger overlapping issues of sustainability, conservation, equity, and justice.

It is a region with the highest diversity of megafauna anywhere in East Africa and is second in megafaunal density only to its southerly neighbor, the Maasai Mara (Georgiadis 2007). It is also a region where over 98% of its land is privately owned as opposed to publicly protected (Sundaresan & Riginos 2010). Due to this lack of federally protected land, as well as the area's dominant livelihoods of ranching, pastoralism, and agriculture, human-wildlife interaction and conflict occurs on a regular basis (Okello and Kiringe 2004). Recent studies have shown that Kenyan national parks are woefully inadequate at conserving biodiversity, with the "overall percentage loss of wildlife" for five well-documented and well-trafficked parks coming to 41% over twenty years, and a high decrease of 78% for a single park (Western 2009: e6140). Notably, large parks are no more immune to such losses than smaller parks. And the reason for such declines, Western notes, "is not surprising" but instead based on "inherent shortcomings in their design" (e6140).

Namely, "[most] parks differentially cover dry season rather than wet season ranges" of the most dominant migratory species and "[only] a modest portion of the annual migratory range of large herbivores is included in Kenya's parks" (e6140). Indeed over 70% of wildlife lives outside of protected areas at least part of every year (Okello 2005). Such a statistic not only helps explain the diversity and density of wildlife found in Laikipia, as it contains virtually no protected areas of any kind, but also exposes why Laikipia has received the conservation attention it has. That Laikipia also houses some of last large populations of endangered species ranging from wild dogs to Grevy's zebra only reinforces such a heightened call for conservation (Woodroffe 2005; Rubenstein 2010).

And this gets to the final articulation of what makes Laikipia Distict so distinct: despite sustained human-wildlife interaction and its almost unparalleled density and diversity of species, Laikipia has an acephalous conservation agenda. If anything, such statistics as those shown above only suggest all the more need to identify and experiment with more varieties of such agendas. It also explains why there is such interest from conservation NGOs in this region, as the various assaults on parks and protected areas, whether political, climatological, cultural, or economic, continue apace.

Acephalous arrangements for conservation, coupled with the embedded histories and overlapping topographies of power explored in the previous chapter, help capture why attention has been focused on landowners' reactions to, perceptions of, and perspectives on human-wildlife conflict (Bruyere 2009; Wambuguh 2007; Gadd 2005). However, given the importance of support, participation, and communication for building and sustaining conservation agendas, particularly in a place *sans* protected areas, engaging the issue of underlying power dynamics driving individual conservation agendas in the region is equally critical for untangling and promoting sustainable social relations in the future.

Mpala Today

It is within this context that we come to Mpala today. I would argue that Laikipia with its acephalous conservation agenda is a theoretically productive landscape to investigate integrated conservation-development options, and that Mpala, as a critical actor in that landscape, is a particularly useful case study for examining how such

conservation agendas can affect inter-community relations, identities and power dynamics.

Much like the pre-colonial ebb and flow of Maasailand and later imposition of the colonial White Highlands, an internationally informed, if decentralized, conservation agenda is now rendering a new "topography of power" across Laikipia (Ferguson 2006: 89). Both social and spatial, this topography of power is institutionally articulated at local and regional levels and internationally visible due to transnational flows of expertise and capital. In this way, my idea of topographical power is multi-scalar, locally variable, contextually dependent, and applicable across time and space. As investigations and scales become more focused and fine-grained, so do topographical contours of influence and inequality.

International conservation's topographical power is growing steadily throughout Laikipia. Emerging both from a recognition among landowners of the need to economically diversify in light of the dwindling sustainability of livestock ranching, as well as the burgeoning interest of international NGOs and private organizations in the economic revenue possible from conservation, it finds a particularly powerful actor in the Mpala Wildlife Foundation and Research Trust.

Using Mpala's institutional evolution from expatriate cattle ranch to transnational multi-purposed organization as a case study, I will illustrate the growth of international conservation's influence and reach in Laikipia, and more importantly, this particularly powerful role a private ranch like Mpala plays in this topography's growth. Specifically, I will argue that Mpala is a site for "transnational governmentality;" that such governmentality is promoting a larger acephalous conservation agenda in this region; and

that this governmentality in turn is producing an entangled conservation economy grounded fundamentally in intimacies that point to both complications and opportunities for the larger goals of sustainable and just conservation relations (2006: 40).

Before continuing, however, a small but important note. This monograph focuses most directly on the sociocultural relations and ramifications of Mpala's larger conservation, research, and development endeavors. However, the economic role and cultural weight of its ranching operation should not be understated or overlooked; and while facets of it, whether interactions with neighboring communities or integrations with rangeland research, will be woven into this narrative, a more in-depth investigation of it is sadly beyond the scope of this paper. Indeed, such an entity, its history and its people, deserves an engagement all its own.

An Expanding Topography of Power

That the social and economic terrain of Laikipia is changing is undeniable. Where once there were immense private cattle operations scattered amidst smaller Maasai ranches, now these same private cattle operations are seen to be expanding their economic repertoire, embracing such things are for-profit conservancies, over-night lodges, and chimpanzee rehabilitation centers in order to harness the power of ecotourism alongside livestock ranching, and in some cases forsake the ranching altogether.

The growth of such activities is perhaps not surprising. As Sundaresan and Riginos (2010) note: "Increasingly, private land around the world is being set aside for conservation," and indeed for "most private ranches" of Laikipia "wildlife conservation and tourism have become important sources of revenue over the last two decades" (17). The desire for this source of revenue can be seen as a response to a slumping cattle

market, in which "ranching has become less profitable as demand has fallen and export regulations have tightened" and "ranchers' ability to control disease spread remains compromised" (19). And Sundaresan and Riginos indeed note that it is in response to such pressures that "most European landholders have established tourism enterprises on their land, and many now actively promote wildlife populations" (19).

Given Kenya's reputation as "a leader in ecotourism" (Honey 2009: 47); its prominent place in Africa as the first country to promote community-based ecotourism (48); and the dominant proportion of its revenue generated by such things are safaris (47), such responses could be seen as simple economics. And yet, the substantive emergence of conservation research as an alternative economic model, as well as providing neighboring communities development aid and assistance suggest that such desires for tourism revenue are not the whole story. Sundaresan and Riginos suggest that one reason conservation in Laikipia has been "relatively successful on privately owned lands" (2010: 17) has been the presence of a larger conservation ethic, as seen earlier with George Small, guiding more "wealthy" landowners' actions; such actions are committed with an eye towards more than just profit and importantly such individuals have the ability "to tolerate small fiscal losses or ride out market fluctuations" (25).

This large-scale shift in livelihood can be seen across Laikipia. "Everyone is in transition," notes a longtime Laikipia ecologist, as the economic power of ranching increasingly becomes less and less sustainably profitable, if it ever was. The ecologist reiterates this idea, simply saying that nowadays "it's hard to make money on cattle." These changes have been seen in Mpala as well. The same ecologist notes that "with the passing of George Small and the trustees taking over the whole shop," Mpala has gone

"from a cattle ranch with a small research center, to a conservancy with a research agenda and some cattle that are kept for...legal and research opportunity." She continues that such a shift has fundamentally altered the purpose of the place:

> That's really different than when I got to Laikipia and Mpala was a cattle ranch, and it had this little research center, because that was a way to diversify. You know, George Small's trust and will and how he wanted things set up radically changed the structure of this place.

She praises the current ranch manager for his openness to this change and for embracing the joining of research and ranching, of conservation science informing grass and rangeland management and allowing research into the more fundamental interactions of cattle and wildlife:

> …he's pretty open-minded about things like that and trying new things. So yeah I think that the openness towards integrating research as both an information source and a livelihood, as a business, an economic enterprise, it dominates the ranch now. The ranch is no longer a cattle ranch with a little research center, it's a research institute with cattle.

Importantly, this convergence of purpose and the coupled need for the economic boon of conservation in addition to ranching was noted by a previous Mpala ranch manager as well, the very one in fact who helped site the Research Centre at its start. He even suggests that but for the Centre, a private ranch like Mpala might not even be around in fifty years time: "Funny enough I think…Mpala's the only one that will hold on. If I had to, in fifty years…you know, let's face it, the only reason I'd reckon it [is] because of this research center. This would be my guess." He goes on to confess that recognizing the benefit of such a Centre would have eluded him even a few years ago:

> I think the ranch, I wouldn't have said so most probably a few years ago, I think the ranch now, I don't say it's

> dependent on the Research Centre, but I think working together you'll be able to keep it…That's why I say I think your chance is better…than anybody else's.

A large part of the benefit of the research center for the ranch is not only the economics, however, but the multi-lateral engagement and investment in its success as well:

> After all you've got a lot of government participation, haven't you, no? And university participation. Now we've even got the Kenyan army participation, haven't we a bit? I think you're lucky, or should be lucky. It's very hard for any government to turn around and say 'Look, to hell with that ranch and your research center, we're giving it to Samburu.'

Indeed, that conservation in Laikipia is largely orchestrated and organized by private landowners and international donors, while supported by the national government, has been previously observed (Sundaresan & Riginos 2010; Sortland 2009). It has been offered, in fact, that not only is tourism is "the second largest source of foreign exchange revenue after agriculture" (Sortland 2009: 3) and a full "45 percent of the Kenyan gross domestic product," but "the influence of international conservation groups rivals that of major corporations and international donors in government decisions" (Fratkin 2008: 156). However, the full picture of conservation's transnational topographical reach is not merely about private ranches' economic diversification or the building of resilient networks of wealthy donors. To explain the inter-community collaboration in which Laikipia's landowners find themselves in today, one grounded in empowerment as well as dependency, a landscape of emergent relations and competing sustainabilities, one must look instead to Kenyan economic policy beginning three decades ago and the ways in which international intervention back then has sculpted and paved the way for international involvement today.

It is an acephalous agenda, which understands the value to sustainable conservation of community participation, yet also one that yearns for the expansion of a cross-cultural conservation ethic and larger conservation-based economy. What began for Mpala, and many of its neighbors, as strategic attempts at community outreach, education, and capacity building has instead become something more complicated and entangled, something more intimate, socially, culturally, and ecologically (Raffles 2002a). Mpala is now "socially '*thick*'" (Ferguson 2006: 36; emphasis author's).

A Site of "Transnational Governmentality"

This "thickness" comes in many forms, whether through relations and commitments to staff or instances of capacity building, aid, employment, and arguable empowerment to neighboring communities. However, it began with a vacuum of governance in desperate need to be filled.

The generative moment of this vacuum can be traced to a particular series of economic interventions seen throughout the developing world during the 1980s. The programs were known as structural adjustment, and while nationally implemented, they were internationally designed, sanctioned, and through political levers, their adoption was strongly encouraged. They also proved developmentally devastating.

In response to a series of national and international economic shocks in the 1970s, the Kenyan government implemented programs at the behest of the IMF and the World Banks "aimed at restoring efficiency in all sectors of the economy and consequently raising the rate of economic growth" (Rono 2002: 83). Specifically these programs sought to pursue "the liberalization of prices and marketing systems; financial sector policy reforms; international trade regulation reforms; government budget rationalization;

divestiture and privatization of parastatals and civil service reforms" (83). All of this was predicated on building "an economic model of private ownership, competitive markets and an outward-oriented development strategy" (83).

There "is now almost unanimous agreement among intellectuals and policymakers in and outside the African continent that orthodox adjustment programmes, as devised and supervised by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, are not working;" and this especially true "among vulnerable groups, families and individuals," those who need accessible and affordable education and medical services the most (84). With the retreat of the state from the social sphere came the steady, and at times sudden, "erosion of social services," (ibid) a corollary disenfranchisement of the young and the poor, and a disproportionate effect on those living in Kenya's rural areas, which account for "approximately 80 per cent of the country's population" (92).

All told, poverty "increased significantly in the 1990s, negatively affecting all sectors of development and the family unit in particular" (95), with many scholars concluding "the reversal from the low unemployment of the 1970s and the 1980s is largely a result of the adjustment programmes" (90). Ultimately, Rono writes, "there is no doubt that they have increased economic stagnation, hardship and social problems" for large numbers of rural populations in Kenya (86).

Sustained unemployment, burgeoning poverty, and a lack of access to secondary schools, health clinics, and hospitals is a common phenomena in Laikipia and have left many local landowners, whether agriculturalist, pastoralist, or otherwise, openly disdainful and antagonistic towards the national government. As noted earlier, it also created a vacuum of governance.

Such vacuums have been known to be filled in Africa by extractive resource industries, such as the international timber concessions of CAR (Hardin 2011a), and religious missions (Ferguson 2006). European-led private ranches during colonialism and after provided forms of social security as well, albeit on a much more localized scale. "'We used to take care of our people, the people who worked our ranches,'" Rebecca Hardin remembers Mpala's present ranch manager "ruefully" reflect on a day he finds logistical troubles in attempting to help a staff member's family upon her sudden, unexpected, and violent death by a water buffalo (Hardin 2010: 7).

And yet, while such examples can be supplied, I would argue there is something different about the acephalous conservation organizations and agendas cropping up in Laikipia, something which combines the internationality of the timber concessions, the inter-community dynamics and social "thickness" of private ranching culture, and the transcendent, potentially transformative ethic of Christian missions to create a distinct entangling of the global, the local, and the frictions between them that now works towards the development of a larger conservation economy and regionally sustainable rangeland management (Tsing 2004).

James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta (2002) call these international resource industries, religious missions, and conservation NGOs conspicuous examples of "*transnational governmentality*" (989; emphasis authors'), and note that while such interventions "are not unique to Africa...they are especially visible and important there" (991). Ferguson and Gupta suggest that such a transnational arrangement "indicates a new modality of government" that emerges from the fact that "the social and regulatory operations of the state are increasingly 'de-statized,'" and instead "taken over by a

proliferation of 'quasi-autonomous non-governmental organizations'" (989). In effect such a shift to transgovernmentality "has, rather, entailed a transfer of the operations of government (in Foucault's extended sense) to nonstate entities" (989), who now often find themselves "organizing local affairs and building and operating schools and clinics where states have failed to do so" (994).

Ferguson, in fact, directly relates this transition to the structural adjustment policies mentioned previously: "As van de Walle has argued, structural-adjustment loans have had 'a negative impact on central state capacity, and have actually reinforced neopatrimonial tendencies in the region'" (2006: 11). He continues:

> 'All over Africa, the withdrawal from social services is patent, particularly outside the capital. In the poorest countries of the region, donors and NGOs have increasingly replaced governments, which now provide a minor proportion of these services. Even in the richest countries, the state's ability and willingness to service rural constituencies has atrophied…(van de Walle 2001: 276).' (12)

Such "outsourcing of the functions of the state to NGOs and other ostensibly nonstate agencies," Ferguson and Gupta argue, holds "rising salience" today (2002: 991). It is a quasi-astatal discourse that "works against "the old 'nation-building' optic" (991) of binary national and community-level interests, and instead speaks across scales, seeing institutions as "collapsed," enmeshed, and in varying degrees of dialogue (996). Importantly, however, this transnational "apparatus does not replace the older system of nation-states (which is–let us be clear–not about to disappear), but overlays and coexists with it" (994). Whether NGOs, concessions, or otherwise, these institutions function as "horizontal contemporaries of the organs of the state—sometimes rivals; sometimes servants; sometimes watchdogs; sometimes parasites; but in every case operating on the

same level, and in the same global space" (994). It is within this transnational social geography of privately owned land and striking economic and social disparity that the international conservation community's expanding "topography of power" has taken shape and found cultural space to flourish.

That such international interventions of NGOs cast an eerie shadow over the present of the colonizing past should not be discounted or overlooked, but rather actively confronted. However, Ferguson argues that "it is worth noting how such enclaves participate not only in the destruction of national economic spaces but also in the construction of 'global' ones" (Ferguson 2006: 13-14). Indeed he expands on this idea, noting that:

> The same processes that produce exclusion, marginalization, and abjection are also producing new forms of non-national economic spaces...new forms of government by NGO and transnational networks...and new kinds of more or less desperate claims to membership and recognition at a supranational level. (2006: 14)

And so, it is here along this spectrum of the local and the global, and within this site of paradoxically coupled oppositions, of dependency and empowerment, opportunity and marginality, that I wish to place Mpala. For indeed while many such spaces of transnational governance "are often fenced off (literally and metaphorically)," Laikipia's lack of fences speaks to a counter-narrative of social porosity between communities, cultures, and even individuals. It is one potentially of both theoretical and practical value; however it is also one decidedly more murky, complicated, and fraught, raising issues of justice, sustainability, and trade-offs between them.

"I have thought of Mpala as like a little country where its government is responsible for providing social services to citizens. It's kind of trippy. Most ranches aren't like that. Most ranches do not take responsibility of…civic governance and healthcare of people who live there, beyond what you'd expect of an employee. Here it's more like a little political entity; it is pretty trippy." - Mpala researcher

While George Small's vision of coupled purposes for Mpala proved to align with the objectives and normativity of integrated conservation and development programs, the statement above shows that such a vision is still enacted at Mpala to a degree differently than other ranches in the area. Such a commitment echoes his desire for Mpala's staff to be treated as kin, and in speaking with a spectrum of their clients and employees, from security guards to research assistants, wait staff and chefs to long-term researchers, the most recent administration shift in 2007 has been heralded as a pivotal step towards sustained positive relations between management and staff as well as the research center and the ranch. Many testified to feeling a degree of social or psychological separation, and even discomfort, between the administration and staff-at-large prior to 2007, as well as a testier working relationship between those at the Research Centre and those at the Ranch. This led to ultimately led to a large-scale staff demonstration and the removal of much of the administrative personnel, including the then-director and -manager of both the Research Centre and the Ranch. Today individuals speak of a palpable degree of harmony and geniality between all actors involved, much to the appreciation and admiration of researcher, staff-person, and administrator alike.

The improved relations can be attributed to numerous things. The change in administration brought together two persons that work very well together and critically in pursuit of a common goal: the betterment of Mpala as both research center and ranch, but filtered through the desire for sustainably healthy rangeland and the example of

cohabiting people, livestock, and wildlife. The direction of both Centre and Ranch are now technically under the purview of the Research Centre's Director. This simplifies the decision-making ultimately, while enabling the discretion to grant the Ranch Manger a high degree of personal and institutional autonomy, letting Mpala benefit from his accumulated experience. The good rapport between managers appears to emote outward and in turn affect osmotically the mood and sense of the larger Mpala community.

Perhaps such feelings, relations, and intimacies can be better expressed through people and their stories. I spoke with one of Mpala's head chefs over tea one early summer morning, and out of a story of familial loss and resulting poverty came a narrative of personal empowerment and economic stability. Wearing a white collared shirt poking out of a dark green apron, and flashing a smile warm and wide, she spoke of her embrace of cooking not simply as a vocation but also a passion. After beginning as a lay worker in a well-known American-led school for orphaned girls, she eventually found her way to the kitchen and gained an affection for working there. Several years and jobs later, she came to Mpala, and upon taking numerous certificate classes, eventually rose to become head chef of the Research Centre. Even after working there for 10 years now, when speaking of Mpala, its opportunities, and its people, she becomes emotional. She expresses affection for and astonishment at the new Director, noting her consistent air of respect and friendliness, and bemusement at her propensity to check for permission before joining other researchers at the center to eat. She goes on to admit the rest of the Mpala staff "are like family," which one imagines might make George Small proud. But perhaps the most pregnant pause came as she spoke of the gratitude she feels towards

Mpala for her employment and the education opportunities it affords her children. Mpala, she says, "is helping to change not just my life, but that of my family as well."

This gratitude for being able to have family near, and the opportunities from education to healthcare that living at Mpala affords, were roundly voiced by employees across the gamut of professions. When asked what has changed in their time living and working there, the most emphatic answers came regarding the birth of the Mobile Clinic and Mpala Primary School, whose staggered creation over the past decade have been met with much support and affection. And yet as I continued listening other acts appreciated by its staff emerged.

With the changing of the managerial guard also came other more subtle changes, from metal roofs with rainwater catchments to regular staff opportunities to take advantage of Mpala's lorries for water collection. Each small empathic act appears to have been noticed. Aid for education in small amounts is given as well and its thanks humbly and deeply voiced. Finally, skills in trades or simply for life, from carpentry to gaining a driver's license to changing a tire, are enthusiastically noted by employees as benefits of their professional and social engagement with Mpala. This sense of shared intimacy between administration and employees can in turn create a sense of shared purpose as well and points to the important role issues of fairness and sound social rapport can have for a well functioning institution. As one long-time Mpala research assistant reflects, "Mpala itself, you can say, the way it now becomes a place, we have these workers here and we have the management, so it is [by] working together, building a team, [that we are] making Mpala, without any causing of problems."

This research assistant incidentally illustrates another formative aspect of this place, which is the fact that many employees' entire work histories, and as with this assistant, their life histories as well, are fully entangled here. Men who are now security guards, research assistants, and even head administrators, began their careers here in the trenches, so the speak. Laying the pipe, building the furniture, and raising the roofs, which would eventually become the dining hall and the dorms, the science labs, and the Research Centre itself. For many employees of Mpala, they have built this place physically as well as socially, and maintain it in much the same way. For those whose fathers worked at the Ranch before they were born, for those whose fathers still do and whose mothers started and still staff the elementary school, Mpala is home.

These kinds of relations raise uncomfortable and difficult questions about competing models of belonging, accountability, and care in Laikipia's presently changing economies. Notions of personal history, institutional memory, managerial responsibility, sensations of family, and feelings of home viscerally confront the issues of financial and social sustainability facing Mpala today (Hardin 2010). Nowhere is this intimate issue placed so clear as when considering the head the research center's security. Having lived at Mpala his entire life, he and his brother rose through various stages of employment there to arrive where they are today. As head of security, he is tasked with coordinating security; keeping track of visitors, researchers, and staff; and is commonly revered as an ever-present force and fount of knowledge and information. Losing him would be an almost immeasurable blow for Mpala both socially and institutionally, and his example ultimately raises both the challenges and doubts of how best to proceed over the coming sustainability hurdles.

Indeed, most ranches "aren't like" Mpala. One often unspoken difference is the purposeful choice to keep their security guards unarmed. This decision speaks to an institutional belief in peace and, as the Director explains, the feeling that the capacity for violence usually simply offers a greater possibility of violence. One other major difference is their openness to allow families to live on the ranch and research center's grounds. For many ranches, and indeed for many employees from farther places such as Turkana District or Lake Victoria, employment comes cast more as occupational migrancy. And yet, George Small felt families should be together, that in the words of on ecologist quoted above, "this is their home." Such a sentiment, however admirable, is also finding itself to be socially and environmentally problematic, as populations in the staff's villages increase while Mpala's total land area and resource base does not. "Something has to be done about the growth of the village," reflects the Director, as this Malthusian dilemma is causing the administration to grapple with the unpleasant calculus of sustainable demographics.

Heightened fear and danger of death or injury is also a lived reality here, as larger groups of people live and gather resources amidst wildlife with the losses that inevitably occur. When news came of a woman gored by a buffalo to my class and professor in nearing the end of August, the ranch manager noted this was "the fourth time this year someone has been injured or killed this way in this area," counseling aloud, "Buffalo must be avoided" (Hardin 2010: 6). It was simply the most recent instance and tragic illustration of why having women and children at such a site of employment can bring tragedy and sadness in addition to happiness and joy.

In addition to the joined sustainabilities of demography and environment, the Director of Mpala notes one of her primary goals for the coming ten years is for Mpala to be sustainable "financially" as well as environmentally. And yet such a goal raises equally pertinent and difficult questions and choices for her: how does one reconcile the "sizable amount" of revenue generated from leasing land for training to the British Army with the larger moral goals of wildlife conservation and environmental stewardship? And of a different valence, how do you balance institutional objectives with institutional capacity? The Mobile Clinic has already been subsumed by a larger community-based organization to the north; will the school's base of operations have to move "off campus" as well? The Director does not know, yet she offers an answer understandably couched in *realpolitik*: "We can't outreach when we're still in-reaching."

These coupled goals do complicate Mpala's narrative. A scholar-in-residence, and longtime ecologist, when asked to describe Mpala in a phrase offered that it was: "a wildlife conservancy with a working ranch, [and] research center, set down in a reasonably pristine part of Kenya with more wildlife than most places." And while such an observation sits well for an audience of conservation professionals, for many of its employees, interviews suggest that Mpala's more formative characteristics and defining aspects of place are something else entirely, namely those social services and empowering capacities Mpala strives to enable and provide. Its outreach arms of the Clinic and the School that bring their children health and education; the depth of its employee communities; the skills and upward mobility its employment offers, including the recent growth of research opportunities for female employees. All of these effects

and endeavors are socially potent for the lives of their staff and, of equal concern, their families.

Such entanglements were encapsulated by an Mpala security guard who, when asked what he feels is the purpose of Mpala, mentioned neither conservation nor ecological research. Instead, he proudly stated its purpose was "to improve the life" of the staff and those communities outside its borders. Such a collapsing, not only of Mpala's mission, but of its very social and cultural space, is salient and telling. And it has happened before. When discussing the boundaries of his domain, the chief of Ilmotiok and Tiemamut notably placed Mpala within his sphere of influence and care. Such a statement serves not simply as an exercise of overlapping governmentalities, but more formidably as a statement of overlapping cultural imaginaries. It also offers a very real example of social porosity.

The existence of this cross-community social porosity points to a larger and more fraught example of Mpala's transnational governmentality, one that speaks not only of the topographical reach of their conservation agenda but the social thickness and intimacies such politics of unequal co-dependency and governance engender, in waves of empowerment and opportunity and tides of marginalization and dependency. I would argue it is in these muddy waters of sustainable social rapport that the success of Laikipia's acephalous conservation agendas arguably rests.

Inter-community Intimacies

It is hard to describe the actions of Mpala and other wealthy, private ranches throughout Laikipia as engaged in anything other than "government-by-NGO" for many of the more impoverished and marginalized Maasai group ranches aligning their borders

and shores. (Ferguson 2006: 40) For the communities of Ilmotiok and Tiemamut, whose journey from precolonial times to the present we explored in the chapter prior to this one, the depth of and gratitude for this relationship was vocalized time and again.

Their consolidation into segmented, if culturally continuous, group ranches was seen to have arguably only exacerbated their agroecological system's difficulties, and to alleviate the effects of such difficulties, what one elder was quoted as calling "a way of changing life" has been pursued both individually and collectively through economic diversification and the promotion of youth's education. Given the economic and political clout of their larger, wealthier, whiter neighbors, such efforts at diversification and education have additionally become strategically intertwined with larger agendas of international conservation.

Such engagements take the form of outside employment as research assistants or security guards at ranches such as Mpala or Ol Pejeta, or conversely can involve joint-ventures more particularly community-focused, as with endeavors to open ecotourism enterprises. Examples of these range from the long-standing "Star Beds" of Koija group ranch and wealthy Loisaba to Ilmotiok's pursuit with the help of Mpala to build and administer the Ol Gaboli lodge. Given the economic and political disparities between institutions and actors, however, many of these cross-community "partnerships" instead feel more like "patron-client" relationships. Such relationships, in fact, seem to have become the bedrock for community-based conservation and development initiatives in Laikipia (Sundaresan & Riginos 2010), with the ecologist from earlier noting that "almost all these group ranches have a private ranch who acts as a benefactor." While such relations are often not, if ever, to the monetary benefit of private ranches,

maintaining sound social rapport is often in fact its own strategic reward for both political as well as ecological reasons, as a long history of intemperate Maasai "walk-ons" attest (Sundaresan & Riginos 2010).

Improved relations between Mpala and their neighbors have in fact been credited as the primary reason why such events and incidents have not occurred for some time. The long-time ecologist again reflects:

> These things these ranches provide to the communities, that in my perception has increased in the last ten years. From a condition in the '90s where not so much of that was going on, and what happened in the '90s is a lot of times there were droughts and all those people came over with their spears and they had walk-ons. They came and invaded the private ranches. And, you know, there's nothing you can do about it. You've got five thousand Maasais camping out on your ranch now 'cause you've got grass and they don't.
>
> By strengthening relationships, providing services, establishing a rapport, when grazing gets tight: *renting* grazing, allowing people on in small, regulated numbers, they haven't had any walk-ons.
>
> Even though last year was one of the worst droughts in history there were no walk-ons, so that tells you a lot about strengthening of relationships between these communities and ranches being benefactors.

The most recent drought, the worst in many's recorded memory, and their necessary dependence on Mpala and other ranches may also have been a catalyst to choose (strategic) passivity as well.

While one does not wish to whitewash ill feelings or downplay structural areas of contention, this most recent summer offered a particularly clarifying moment for grasping and grappling with inter-community relations and dynamics. The pain of the cultural and economic loss of livestock due to drought still hung heavy in the air and the extent to

which Ilmotiok and Tiemamut are socially tied to the good will of Mpala is hard to overstate. Whether the providing of food and water, infrastructure and machinery, tourism administration and grant writing expertise, education scholarships and rides to the clinic, or the renting of grazing lands for more than half a year to aid in lasting out the drought, each activity and all combined entwine the lives of these Maasai to the actions and attitudes of Mpala.

Mpala is seen to be the social services lifeline for several critical needs of these communities. The chief explains, "[If we are] having a problem, like now we [need to] go and bring a small relief from our headquarters, Dol Dol, Mpala are the ones to send us vehicles...Mpala assists us in so many ways." A common example of the breadth of Mpala's aid is told by an elder when asked to describe Mpala:

> ...Mpala is a very good private ranch neighbor we have, because they used to give our people jobs, even his son is there now at Mpala doing as a guard...And also they used to help us especially in times of droughts; they give our cattle to graze there until it rains. They bring our people water, especially on that time of droughts. And also during the construction of the lodge, they supported also them...Especially giving them the tractor...So he said they are very good; they collaborate very well.

This repeated mention of drought and Mpala's aid was the most prominently mentioned piece of assistance, as to be expected coming off of the worst drought in recent memory. Numerous people were recorded noting that if it were not for the actions of Mpala, despite the perceived high prices of grazing, very few, if any, people would have any livestock left at all: "Especially he remembers the last year's drought, the two or one or three or ten cattle that is left with each and every person, it is because of Mpala, because

they have been giving them to graze until it rains." Another voices a similar sentiment while making a point of Mpala's perceived exceptionalism:

> He said during drought season, Mpala has always used to assist them in all ways. Giving cattles, you see he said that somebody who is left with two or three cattles, that is because of Mpala. Giving them where they graze. Because almost the whole of last year, our cattle stayed there grazing until it rains. So the few cattles which remain, it is because of Mpala. If no Mpala, it is sure that nobody, there will be nobody who is left with even a single cow here.
>
> During also this time, they used to bring them water, and also a kind of food. Before he remember, during last year, Mpala used to bring them food, like maize and beans and oil, once a month to this community of Ilmotiok and Tiemamut. So he said that Mpala is always assisting them very much. [There is] no one like them just around here.

This appreciation for Mpala, and the lengths it goes to provide aid, infrastructure, knowledge, and resources to the communities is in direct opposition to the antagonism felt towards the national government, and bespeaks the depth of governance Mpala find themselves entangled in. As one Mpala field guide, who is also a community leader of Ilmotiok reflects, "Mpala is our supporter;" they help "when help is needed."

For many the anger over the government's absent yet restrictive rule was overt, grounded in the sense that "the Kenyan government does not do anything" to provide aid or social services such as healthcare or drought relief to those communities in need. Many felt this antagonism more fundamentally over long-standing issues of land rights and human-wildlife conflict. Particularly, the injustice of bearing the brunt of wildlife's actions, while being unable to receive any material benefit or compensation, was vocalized more than once: ""We want to own elephants like we own cattle…Right now the government owns it, but we can't kill it, so if they [the elephants] harm our

environment, kill our children, we get no compensation." Another elderly man reflects on the danger of elephants: "So many damages and yet they [in the communities] don't see profits. Maybe KWS are the ones who are happy and see profits from wild animals."

The question of how sustainable such a governance-in-absentia strategy is is one ripe for thought and debate. One long-term researcher in these communities opines:

> Basically what's happened is…nobody has stepped in and provided a permanent solution, and so basically what the private ranches are doing is they're putting band-aids over the problems for now until the government steps up. So that's basically the alternative strategy.

Ferguson, however, is doubtful that any such "stepping up" will occur. Instead he suggests that such "weakly governed humanitarian hinterlands might constitute not a lamentably immature form of globalization, but a quite 'advanced' and sophisticated mutation of it" (Ferguson 2006: 41). In either event, although especially if this is the case, managing such a decentralized system of governmentality becomes a critical priority.

However, articulating the role private ranches and international NGOs play in the spread of conservation and development throughout Laikipia can be couched in varying moral valences. Some researchers have written that the "example of these 'private ranches' has prompted pastoralists on community-held lands ('group ranches') to also seek out tourism opportunities and actively promote wildlife conservation on their land" (Sundaresan & Riginos 2010: 19). Others have been more blunt with regards to the underlying political pressures and power dynamics, instead suggesting such group ranches are "pushed by the private ranches and other organizations to engage in conservation."

That NGOs are applying pressure to such communities to engage in the building and maintaining of group ranch conservancies is undeniable, with many of them, including the African Wildlife Foundation for the Tiemamut community, tying educational scholarships—a highly sought after prize— to the proper management and maintenance of conservation areas. Indeed, one of Mpala's founding ecologists reiterated that "development" and Mpala's assistance should only come with the necessary caveat of proven environmental responsibility and stewardship on the part of the communities, with one role for Mpala being to promote an overarching conservation ethic through community employment, education, and otherwise.

However, while we see transnational entities in Laikipia influencing, arguably heavily, the adoption of community conservation practices and places, the narratives that have largely emerged from the communities' leaders are not ones of imposition, but rather ones of pride and ownership. As with the adoption of group ranches explored in the previous chapter, we see in particular instances the appropriation of a larger outside agenda for use as a tool of communal definition and empowerment. Again, as with the narratives recalling the beginning of group ranches, the mention of the larger national or transnational forces in assistance or antagonism is heavily muted. Instead, we see the power of such entanglements between private and group ranches as those outlined above, and we hear the need for and promotion of dramatic cultural and economic change.

As one community leader stated: "We, the community of Ilmotiok, sat down and met, and we decided to have a lodge or a conservancy like that one now in order for us to change our situation, or to change our way of living." For some, as with a Tiemamut

ward counselor, the need for a conservancy was no less necessary, and its rationale two-fold:

> We changed our mind to conservancies because of the changes of climate and we also intend to benefit from the wildlife. We have been with wildlife since the beginning, I think, the beginning of our tribe. We have been living with livestock, and we have to benefit through conservancies. That is the only way we can benefit.

This choice of adopting conservation as tools of diversification and economic betterment, whether a conservancy and lodge at Ilmotiok or a scholarship-contingent conservancy at Tiemamut, can arguably be traced, as discussed earlier, to the uncertainty and worry that has emerged from a fractured agroecological system. As one community leader noted: "This is the fourth year you've seen livestock going down." And as another put it: "They can see that just staying or living with only animals, domestic animals, is also not good, because you gain something little from them." For many the benefit of livestock is being cast in new and more qualified terms. As an Mpala guide and young leader of Ilmotiok reflects, "Livestock are not reliable, but a conservancy will be."

The benefits of engaging in a conservation economy, through conservancies and Ilmotiok's ecotourism lodge roundly were the defining reasons for community members' support of such initiatives. This same Mpala guide reflects, "If we have a conservancy tourists come, we will just get money." Another reason for the conservancy, this guide notes is its benefits for community education: "If we have conservation area," he says, "people [will] just stay and be educated."

"The world is changing," my friend, field assistant, and confidant Joseph noted. The economic and educational benefit and stability of wildlife tourism and aid is seen as a financial strategy of far more prudence and on far sounder footing than the pastoralism

many have watched falter year after year. Such feelings have even led at least one community leader to optimistically state, "Bandas are more good than even the livestock," and another to reflect, "A big conservancy is better than [if] we have a lot of cattles." This bespeaks shifting cultural norms and organizing metrics of identity. Joseph continues that nowadays the measure of man is changing as well: "if you go to school and show good marks, that is the time that you are a warrior."

And yet as these testimonials reflect, while the entanglements of a changing climate, promised aid, and continued employment have worked to build support among community leaders for the adoption of conservation endeavors, ties to these endeavors are nevertheless fraught. As seen in the Preface's opening leopard tale as well as numerous quotations above, there is substantial frustration, fear, and anger surrounding human-wildlife conflict for area pastoralists. The fraught nature of community support can also be seen in the stark material terms in which many people couch their desire for conservation activities whether conservancies, ecotourism lodges, or otherwise. For many the desire for engagement with the conservation economy is grounded not in an ill-defined Western conservation ethic but instead the pragmatic desire for livelihood diversification and economic stability.

While such desires are understandable, their satisfaction hinges on the stability of often-tumultuous tourism market. Cronk (2004) reflects that even though pastoralism can be couched as a "volatile" system of wealth, "opting out of pastoralism altogether in favor of reliance on the market system" can be "a risky strategy" as well (103). Unexpected geopolitical perturbations such as wars or international terrorism can and do adversely affect tourism significantly (106). And although there is some evidence that

ecotourism is more resilient than other forms to these threats (Honey 2009), there is little evidence to suggest it is a particularly effective tool for economic gain (Honey 2009; Blake 2008), especially when considering the "massive imbalance" of revenues which effectively marginalizes small-scale actors in favor of a small economic elite (Lamprey and Reid 2004: 998).

As we saw with one ecologist's explanation for the steady decrease in angered community "walk-ons" onto wealthier, private ranches, as well as the rationale for and response to the recent staff strike and administrative shift at Mpala, there is power in cultivating intimate and equitable social relations, which help forge more sustainable social rapport and foundations for common purpose and partnership. I would argue Mpala's efforts in transnational governmentality create similarly strong entanglements and attendant intimacies, and that managing those relations and maintaining both intra- and inter-community rapport will be critical for the future of sustainable conservation across properties in this region.

The power differential between Mpala and the communities of Ilmotiok and Tiemamut is stark, whether measured in ecological resources, economic tonnage, political heft, or social capital. And yet the governance relationship built between these coupled entities has instilled in the communities not only a sense of gratitude but also those feelings of filial affection and even shared purpose and partnership explored above.

Specifically, there is an attempt from community leaders to show that education, rather than cattle raiding, is the proper way to achieve maturity and demonstrate manhood as a member of the Maasai. In a conversation with several undergraduate students, assistant secretary for Ilmotiok, Nicholas, reflects, "People are trying to change their

minds and see [that] raiding is not good…That going to school is better than raiding." He continues, "Things are changing…[People are] seeing that raiding is not so important…Going to school is now what they are doing," ending with a quote reference earlier: "If you go to school and show good marks, that is the time that you are a warrior."

This is a dramatic evolution in Maasai maturation rites. As Galaty (1993) notes, throughout much of Maasai history a "direct connection between marriage, maturation and raiding has been drawn," exactly because "raiding allowed young men to accumulate enough animals for themselves to marry and thus to attain maturity" (83). This shift has been noticed by other researchers in the area as well, with one prominent Princeton ecologist remarking that aside from possessing cattle and being properly circumcised, in order to be Maasai in these communities, "you must have education."

This transition away from raiding, and the active promotion of the Western education system, can be seen as a byproduct of land tenure changes, sedentarization, and a need to maintain proper, and sustainable, social relations with more powerful and resource-rich neighbors. It can be seen as an important corollary to immersion in the larger market economy and individual economic and social empowerment more generally as have been shown within this chapter.

However, I would argue that their expressions of partnership and joint purpose with Mpala show that their actions are both substantively and symbolically more than that. That such actions, and the inclusive language used to describe them, are an open and non-trivial attempt at building intimacy between Mpala and themselves, with such

relations having repercussions for both parties involved regarding larger questions of identity as well as the hopefully shared goal of conservation.

This was voiced most potently when community members were asked how they can and do assist Mpala as Mpala assists them. Whether young or old, Tiemamut or Ilmotiok, Mpala-employed or not, the answer came back the same. The primary service communities feel they provide Mpala is as able and ready trackers and retrievers of raided cattle and partners in holding those people responsible. This sentiment is voiced by a young Ilmotiok man who recently had begun working as a cultural liason and field assistant for several researchers at Mpala. He notes that:

> …also Ilmotiok is helping Mpala because when they need help from Ilmotiok, they just call us. Everyone in Ilmotiok can go and help them. For example, if their cows have been raided by thieves…then they call for Ilmotiok. Ilmotiok will go over there and then we will track and get [them back]. That's the benefit we do [between] Ilmotiok and Mpala.

This sentiment of readiness to help and rejection of raiding was repeated by an elderly man who worked as one of the first security guards for Mpala back in 1994, even recollecting an earlier affiliation with an old neighbor of Mpala, Jack Fairhole. He reflects:

> He says that what we can help them [with], or a help that we, the community, can give them is that sometimes it will happen that their cattle is lost or get raided by some other people. But not our people here, some other people like Samburu and also Pokot. So we normally be very much ready to assist them. When their cattles get raided or lost, [such as when] they came through this side, we normally follow even before [Mpala]…and show them the foot prints and the direction they are going.

A local pastor in Tiemamut continues:

> We have agreed to relate well with Mpala, because he can be able to remember some days ago, some people used to come from far [away] at Esiolo District, Samburu. They came and raided the Mpala cattles. And once it is raided, we are very much ready to go and help Mpala getting their cattles back. Even if Mpala did not see their cattles…we are there to go and fight against those people and then we bring the cattles back. We call Mpala to come and get their cattles, of which is one help that the community is giving to Mpala.

The chairman of Ilmotiok echoes these sentiments, reiterating that they will hold responsible even those people from within their own community:

> So you see once we collaborate together, we relate together, once we have some problems, they think Mpala will be able to give us a quick help, as well as we do also. For we will be able to give an example.
>
> Maybe some…months ago, their cattles got raided by the warriors, so even he said that we don't have to wait for them to come and follow. Once we see, even if it is our people who has [taken them], we shall have to get them and fight with them until we make sure that we've got back those cattles, got them back to Mpala. So we inform them and we take them back to Mpala. So this is the thing that is good. If they can relate well, collaborate well, work together, communicate…[we can] assist each other.

Staff at Mpala from both Ilmotiok and Tiemamut corroborate these feelings. A security guard from Tiemamut reflects, "The community has helped Mpala because even if the cow is lost, people in the community will not grab it or kill it. No people from the community will come and steal [from] Mpala. So they meant to help Mpala in that." A past Mpala ranch manager reflects that this relationship has been informally in place for decades, remarking that without their help "you wouldn't get" your cattle back.

Chang (1982) suggests that these relations do in fact illustrate a show of intimacy by the Maasai and more specifically, the act of helping a non-relative find property stolen

from them bespeaks "a fictive kin relationship, connoting 'brotherhood' in the same clan" (298). Whether feelings of fictive kinship or not, the language used by my field assistants to describe relations with Mpala demonstrate gratitude, friendship, trust, and shared hope for the future. Indeed, Joseph is quick to say:

> …The workers of Mpala, they are our friends. They are our brothers. And also the management, even them, are our brothers. For example, Mike and our director, they are our brothers and sisters, so there's no need to go and talk to them rudely. You have to be a polite person. You have to be a good person to them, so that they will feel, they will feel you are with them.

In reflecting on how he would like to see the relations of Mpala and Ilmotiok persist in the future, Robert reflects:

> And still what I am going to say is that I would wish to see them on both sides relating well, collaborating well, helping each other…[so that when there is a] problem, we inform each other.
>
> If it happens that we need any kind of assistance, as we normally do, then we shall be very much open and free to go and ask them for help, as well as they can do to us. Ok? Once they need any kind of assistance from us, I can say automatically we are ready to assist them one way or another. So I don't see any kind of problem in between the two, our community and Mpala.
>
> What I would like to see is that, I would like to see them sharing hands and walking together, and also for them to be *free* and open to each other so that they can be able to assist this community and also [we able to assist] our friends there.

In closing, these sentiments hold powerful symbolism and meaning for the maintenance of community relations, both for individuals and wider communities, even if they necessarily speak to unequal economic and political situations. The wish of Robert to share hands and walk together references a common show of pastoral filiality, and as

mentioned by the chairman of Ilmotiok as well as both Joseph and Robert, all three of whom are members of Ilmotiok's group ranch committee: it is in good relations, good communication, and demonstrations of friendship and respect that strong, equitable, and sustainable partnerships are made.

For Mpala, however, the strength and depth of these relationships raises questions of dependency as surely as questions of obligation, with its Director noting that she "would rather have a business relationship" between Mpala and its neighbors, as when renting out pasture land for example, so as to "build dignity" and discourage "handouts." Negotiating the social thickness within and around Mpala and balancing issues of dependency and reciprocity, intimacy and sustainability, institutional boundaries and cultural porosity, is terrain Mpala presently finds itself in. Teasing apart such dependencies, intimacies, frictions, and responsibilities are the necessary and difficult tasks, which lie ahead for all landowners in Laikipia and are what will ultimately decide what sustainable conservation in Laikipia truly means. I would suggest, however, that taking seriously the reciprocal efforts of communities, such as those outlined above, is both a materially and symbolically powerful place to start.

Conclusion

Over the course of this chapter, I have strived to illustrate the degree of social entanglement woven between Mpala and an expanding constellation of peoples' lives, from myriad staff members to community elders, long-time researchers to Kenyan ranchers. I have argued that Mpala is a particularly potent case study with which to investigate the acephalous agenda of international conservation currently playing out

across Laikipia. Like the birth of colonial ranching in this region, as well as the earlier dominating ebb and flow of the Maasai, I posit that the spread of conservation NGOs, ecotourism lodges, research stations, and the expansion within ranches to include conservancies illustrates a growing topography of power in this district, whose influence is articulated through individuals as well as institutions and contextually dependent on landowner relations and corresponding issues of equity.

We have seen in light of structural adjustment policies implemented decades ago, that Mpala along with many other private ranches has grown to assume a role of transnational governmentality— a role that finds them not simply as arbiters between neighboring Maasai communities and the national government but sites of governance themselves. Such an endeavor has been shown to be an entangled affair not simply for Mpala and its employees but neighboring outside communities as well, and I would argue it is one that needs to be navigated with care. Whether providing health services, renting grazing areas, building education programs, writing grants for ecotourism development, or lending infrastructural support, Mpala occupies a socially thick and topographically powerful position in the social landscape, and while its entanglements raise stark issues of dependency and sustainability, they likewise create space for burgeoning intimacies and the growth of conservation measures between communities.

It is these "demands for connection, and for relationship, even under conditions of inequality and dependence" that form the unspoken space of social engagement that Mpala, and indeed all of Laikipia's ranches, much learn to negotiate and navigate. At the epicenter of much human-ecological interaction in Laikipia, and in an increasingly volatile climate and conservation economy, I would argue that Mpala's example as a

multi-purposed consortium makes it an especially productive site to engage these issues of entanglement and intimacy, inter-community reciprocity and relations, and sustainable social rapport towards the ends of producing both more socially sustainable and just maybe more socially just conservation engagements.

As I move to my final chapter, I want to expand the scope of Mpala's topographical influence and portray it not merely as a conduit of international conservation agendas but an active participant in and creator of them as well. As much as its functions of governance, I argue its roles in scientific research, community outreach, and greater area coordination make it not only a particularly powerful node in the Laikipian conservation economy, but in fact a focal point of knowledge and discourse production for the greater Laikipia region as well. I argue that a critical engagement of its capacity to shape the practice and discourse of semi-arid conservation is both prudent, and for larger issues of equity, participation, and alternative ways of knowing, ultimately necessary. In this final chapter, I will tackle the implications of Mpala as a node of knowledge production and offer an alternative path forward towards a more hopeful pursuit of adaptive and equitable conservation across communities.

Chapter Three

The Social Power of Scientific Research: Discursive Nature Shaping and Subaltern Knowledge Sharing

Introduction

In my final chapter, I wish to focus on a different type of topographical influence exercised by Mpala, most notably the often unspoken social power it wields through scientific research, and what the production, storage, and dissemination of such specialized knowledge might mean for the larger intersections of social justice and sustainable conservation explored throughout this piece. As a center of scientific excellence composed of individual and institutional creative tensions, blurred identities, and collective pursuits, I argue that Mpala has positioned itself as a node of knowledge production throughout the Laikipia region, finding an apex in its work with the Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF), an area environmental NGO.

In spite of both Mpala's and LWF's beginning steps towards participatory justice and empowerment in their pursuit of Laikipian conservation, I contend that their work ultimately and problematically is grounded in a dominant global discourse of integrated conservation and development, and that this discourse, in language and practice, serves to consciously and unconsciously silence, and thus marginalize, legitimate alternatives for knowing, organizing, and interacting with the wider socioecological world.

For the remainder of this piece, then, I will delve into this nature shaping power held and exercised so handily by the current discourses of conservation and development,

and using Mpala as a case study, suggest a more flexible and arguably more sustainable option in knowledge sharing.

Using current anthropological constructs, I will present ethnographic evidence that such an alternative is already currently at work within Mpala; demonstrate how my previous examinations of social intimacy and sustainable rapport intermingle with these newly added theoretical gains; and finally conclude with two examples from Mpala's social world that offer possibilities not only for a brighter future for inter-community conservation in Laikipia but a more progressive discussion of conservation justice within it as well.

A Center of Excellence

A well-published researcher at Mpala once posited that Mpala is arguably "more scientifically productive than any other research station in sub-Saharan Africa." In speaking with actors around Mpala, the reasons for this productivity appear to be manifold. First on many people's lists are simply the high quality of material assets and facilities, whether it is access to regularly scheduled meals, daily electricity, and wireless Internet, or the availability of on-site gas stations and an automotive workshop. One visiting journalist for the BBC noted the presence of such amenities to simply be "fantastic" for creating a comfortable space to work, and a scholar-in-residence and top-tier WCS ecologist remarked that "certainly of the field stations I've visited, this is in the top three in terms of infrastructure and equipment," concurring that such opportunities make it easier for researchers to concentrate and as such be far "more productive."

A second, arguably more fundamental, reason for Mpala's scientific productivity comes from the land tenure system it finds itself able to operate within. As one researcher opined: "having the basic jurisdiction" of private property gives Mpala "a great leg up" over other comparable field stations. It lends researchers at Mpala "the ability to do experimental manipulations" of a type and scale very difficult to achieve in federally protected land. A founding ecologist from Mpala writes that even the ability "to do fieldwork at night" and "work outside their cars" gives Mpala researchers extraordinary opportunities for behavioral and experimental work that is "much harder, sometimes impossible, to do in national parks and reserves" (Young 2009: 8).

A third rationale relates to its high degree of social capital. This extends from support provided by Mpala's "strong institutional links" in American and Kenyan scientific bodies to the extensive and universally regarded roster of field assistants and guides contracted to aid in research (ibid). Many have been working with Mpala researchers for years, in some cases working with the same individuals and projects for over a decade. These relationships have created reservoirs of experience and respect for researcher and assistant alike. It also means that the research agendas can be structured for far longer periods of time, with data sets able to be gathered by assistants and researchers alike. In the words of one Mpala ecologist, such "extremely high quality" field assistants and "the ability to create those kinds of relationships that last a long time and where there's a sense of trust and faith in the ability of the people to sort and collect data…means that we can basically be running a year-round data collection operation."

This capacity for manipulation; freedom to build and coordinate long-term experiments; and the privilege found in expert institutional support and long-standing

research relationships speak volumes for what makes Mpala such an extraordinarily productive site for scientific research. However, we would be remiss not to note the caliber of administration needed to run such a show, as well as the underlying capability of researchers whose work makes Mpala a second home. The high proportion of NSF grant monies per researcher speaks to this overall quality.

Finally, we find in the Mpala Research Centre a particular series of research programs that capitalize on "the exciting opportunities to work outside protected areas" offered in Laikipia's predominantly private and unfenced lands. Its unusually open coexistence of people, wildlife, and livestock led one of Mpala's founding ecologists to suggest it is an example of "a living landscape," and that this fact often produces not only niche scientific research but research that is rapidly becoming increasingly relevant as well. However, as we shall see, it is neither possible nor arguably wise to attempt to encapsulate Mpala's character or influence as a research station in either its individual or institutional capacities. Rather, it is at the nexus of individual and institutional actions, tensions, and passions that any larger sense of Mpala's identity fluoresces.

Individual Passions, Creative Tensions, Collective Pursuits

For many conservationists and conservation-minded landowners in Laikipia, their abnormal land tenure scheme has become a point of pride and unraveling its sustainability as a socioecological system a continuing priority. As one prominent Mpala ecologist notes:

> On the whole this is a group of private lands where the owners have by and large…decided that it's possible to have wildlife, and it's possible to have people, and it's possible to have all those things coexisting, if not harmoniously at least in some kind of negotiated

> equilibrium. And so the conservation picture here, and the human welfare picture here has been getting progressively better.

Mpala as an institution has made investigating this possibility of co-specific coexistence an organizing focus as well, though its enactment an expression differs across its varying programs. On a bucolic drive through Ol Pejeta conservancy, Mpala's present ranch manager notes that through Mpala's conservancy the hope is "to show the pastoralists that you can have wildlife *and* cattle…show the world even."

Mpala's director casts the Research Centre's role in a different light, arguing that its primary purpose is to provide "science-based solutions to conservation issues. That's what we focus on here at the Research Centre."

For many of Mpala's scientists, neighbors, and trustees, this goal of providing solutions to Laikipia's overarching conservation and sustainability problems is seen to be of paramount importance. And there is a desire by many of these same people to see the institution play a larger and more coordinated role in the region. One longtime Mpala researcher reflects that wider engagements have increased substantially through the recent efforts of Mpala's director and LWF, but he notes it is still "a little bit piecemeal," arguing:

> I think there's actually a pretty big need at Mpala for Mpala to start becoming relevant to the wider community. And to both become relevant and to be seen as being relevant, and that would require some kind of institutional-level plan that involves engaging with these people in some…planned way…[for] both the communities and the commercial ranches. Clearly explaining what Mpala's doing; and what role Mpala's playing; and how Mpala helps them or doesn't help them; and what Mpala can offer them and what Mpala cannot.

He goes on to note that this kind of "institutional responsibility" he imagines "would make things somewhat easier" for larger conservation relations and research projects. But "there's always a conflict," he explains, "because Mpala as a research center is a place where anybody can come and do any kind of research. So Mpala doesn't set that agenda. The researchers set their own agendas."

This decentralization of researchers' agendas is seen by some of Mpala's trustees and neighbors as complicating the Mpala Wildlife Foundation's larger mission to promote and pursue area conservation and community outreach. Such a desire to steer them back onto Laikipia's larger sustainability problems was expressed during the second annual Discovery Day hosted at the Mpala Research Centre. It is an event where neighbors from around the area come to listen to Mpala researchers present their most recent work and findings. Towards the end of the first question of a concluding Q&A, a white Kenyan of middle age noted, "Perhaps when you decide what to pursue for your Ph.D. maybe you should consult the local people in Laikipia, your neighbors." He concluded, "We have some really serious worries."

Importantly, however, when talking to Mpala's top administrators and scientists, the creative divide between the decentralized focus of Mpala's researchers and larger centralized purpose of Mpala as an institution seems in fact to be part of the design. The director of Mpala reflects that while she agrees, "Mpala as an institution must be much more applied, or what I would say is 'conservation-oriented,'" it is the "independent" nature of so many graduate students and professors, which drives good research in the first place. A founding ecologist reiterates this distinction and point. He describes the Mpala Research Centre as promoting "largely curiosity-driven science," with an

important "institutional component" that seeks to promote sustained neighborly relations and larger conservation agendas. He agrees that MWF and MRC should aid in conservation endeavors and engage in research all its own; however, he emphasizes that he is a "bottom-up guy" and believes that research engaged by individuals will only be done well if grounded in individuals' own personal passion and pursuit. All Mpala can do is encourage such people to come here, he concludes; they can't and shouldn't direct what research should be done.

In speaking with a variety of researchers, those long established and those recently arrived, that sense of individual passion and drive, and an appreciation for the qualities that make Mpala special, shine through. In describing his evolution from being focused on Canadian conservation policy to now East African ungulates, a wildlife biology Ph.D. student reflects:

> I thought, "I don't want to fight with the Alberta government about highway vehicles anymore. I do just want to hold a small mammal in my pocket, be in the situation where this is the best thing I could have done in the morning"...I just wanted to do research.

For many, the love of biology came early on, as one rangeland ecologist admits: "As I look around the world, studying conservation and the human connection has been in my mind as long as I can remember. From whenever, I always wanted to be a biologist." For others, it arose alongside other first loves, from archaeology to sound engineering.

A common foundation for such visceral scientific interest is often found in early experiences with the natural world. As one prominent ecologist notes, "Yeah, I think that kind of stuff, that early exposure was probably what did it. That connection with nature and affiliation with, with wildlife and natural spaces. For lack of a less loaded term."

The passion people feel for their work and this place came out at times as expressions of almost childlike wonder. The same researcher who switched from wildlife policy to ungulate studies continues: "I feel like a little kid in the backyard with my magnifying glass looking at ants. Except they're dik dik, and you know, $1500 GPS collars." Another longtime Mpala rangeland ecologist reflects, "When I was a kid this was like my dream. To live in Africa with wildlife and drive a Land Cruiser around…This is like a kid's dream, like a playground, you know?" Another frames this love as an expression of an otherworldly connection:

> I mean, you come out here and you've got all these elephants and lions and leopards...this really big stuff that strikes a chord with a lot of us, and simple being out here and getting regular exposure to that kind of stuff is a big part of the reason that I love being out here.

And so we see in people chords of common passion. But we also see in people chords of common purpose and a desire to better understanding this larger Laikipian ecosystem. As this same ecologist reflects, "the collective knowledge product of all these people working together really makes us feel like…we are progressively understanding the system better and how it works. And it feels kind of like a team effort."

It is when thinking of the research from Mpala as a "team effort" or "collective knowledge product" that any sharp distinctions between basic and applied research begin to fade away, whether in priority or even plain definition. Our dik dik researcher explains why he feels it so important for Mpala's scientists to pursue both types of research avidly and unequivocally:

> I think the work they're doing is good. I'm glad to be a part of the research community here. I mean, I see people trying to—like at Discovery Day, you see people trying to work on something really practical like how to stop

> erosion, and they're working on these grazing systems. And then other people that are doing things that are far more abstract and Ivy Tower-ish—and I love that mix. I think that represents universities. It represents kind of the breadth of the human mind.

He continues, "I think it's permissible and should be encouraged for people to be curious, and for people to be a part of the same work environment as people who are trying to solve more tangible problems… Both are great, [both are] wonderful."

Many agree, recognizing that oftentimes the best avenue to solving a problem requires first understanding the larger system in question. Basic research at its heart is aimed at doing just that. It is, as one ecologist explains, "analogous to how you might deconstruct a car engine if you don't have any a priori knowledge about it." Others, including Mpala's director, feel the distinction between "basic" or "curiosity-driven" research and more "applied" scientific endeavors is a false and unhelpful dichotomy to begin with. "I don't like that distinction," she says in an aside, "because I think you can take any basic, curiosity-driven research and trace it forward to some application." She offers Princeton's hydrology, ecology, and anthropology-based *Water, Savannas, and Society* project as an example. "You could pick any one of those components and go…'How theoretical,'" and yet when "you put it all together," you wind up seeing:

> …huge potential for us to understand what's going to happen to this landscape. If we get more rainfall, if we get less rainfall, if we continue to graze in the way we are, if we bring goats onto the property instead of cattle. It's huge, huge learning and applied bit of research.

In the end she says, "we need to do a bit of that [inward gazing] as well as what you said, the more applied research, but institutionally," while "having our independent researchers come in and give however they might." In the end, both she and a founding ecologist

reflect that such applied work at an individual level will most often require a certain degree of project maturity and long-term engagement. "I see them giving more towards the applied level as they stay here longer and longer," she concludes.

Blurred Identities, Enhanced Influences

The need for both basic and applied research, and the ultimately uncertain boundary dividing the two, highlights a dynamic that underlies much of Mpala's work and the influence it wields around the area. When speaking with the Mpala Research Centre's accountant, the delineation between MRC and MWF is cast as a sharp line of legal separation. She describes them as "two completely separate entities," noting that "as much as the operations look like they are completely intertwined, they are not…They are completely different."

This line of legality is of course engaged with on a daily basis by Mpala's administration as well. The director reflects on having two boards and bosses and admits "we try to think about ways to integrate those two boards," but "really it is sort of different. One is a limited company; we sell cattle. The other is a Kenyan-registered NGO." She continues, however, that each entity still feels united in a common purpose of conservation and community outreach, with each simply accomplishing each part in slightly different ways. "I would say ultimately the goals are the same, but I would say the way you implement them is done differently; one specializes in one thing versus the other."

And yet, when breaking down the different kinds of activities Mpala engages in, one sees the lines of purpose and autonomy begin to blur. One example raised by the director is the entangled uses their work on Mpala has for wildlife and livestock. While

the ranch and conservancy aim to sell cattle and support wildlife, she explains, "obviously there is a link between wildlife and the Research Centre" since "we study the wildlife here," in addition to a connection to livestock as "we also study the cattle and how they might coexist. So how do you tease that apart?"

Such overlap continues to Mpala's community engagement as well. One example is educational outreach. The director reflects that while the Foundation's ranch and conservancy are "really the human side of things," managing "education [and] human welfare" through a health clinic and primary school, particular MRC endeavors actually "integrate fairly well, because we also do education here at the Research Centre." While MWF's education work is primarily "primary…[and] secondary," the Research Centre covers the higher end of the spectrum with university classes and organized professional trainings. This means that taken together MWF and MRC cover nearly all formal education ages. However, when the director reflects a moment more it becomes apparent that the divide between the two is not even that clear, because "we do Conservation Clubs" through MRC, she notes, helping promote early environmental education for many of the area's youth.

These clubs, run with the help of a longtime Mpala resident and research assistant, and organized and supported through Princeton University and a founding Mpala ecologist, are geared explicitly towards giving primary school children in four surrounding area schools environmental education focused on learning both inside and out of the classroom[3]. Importantly, the Conservation Clubs are a good example not only of outreach overlap between Mpala institutions, but also the muddy lines between

[3] These clubs support education in the Mpala, Ilmotiok, Tiemamut, and Ewaso [Koija] Primary Schools.

individual and institutional engagement and how such influence helps shape Mpala's identity. This muddying can be seen in multiple other overlapping MRC research projects and attendant responsibilities as well.

Institutionally, the Mpala Research Centre engages in several landscape-level oriented research programs. Some of the most prominent include cross-community wildlife surveying and monitoring using line transects, digital camera trapping, and ongoing aerial survey data across both neighboring private and group ranches. After working to integrate and synchronize these varying datasets, MRC hopes to build an approximation of the distribution and density of wildlife across Laikipia's different property schemes. This will help provide a baseline estimate to track against future ecological changes, whether from climatic shifts or new conservation or management practices.

Many Mpala researchers through individually-funded and -pioneered projects are engaged in cross-community endeavors as well. One well-known example is the employment of Maasai community scouts for endangered wildlife monitoring and behavioral studies, including projects focused on Grevy's zebra and African wild dogs. The production this past 2009 of a community-oriented ecological monitoring framework and handbook that uses measurements from a meter stick and pictorial representations offers another potent example. Both of these blur the line as well between ecological research and efforts towards community empowerment and outreach.

The rangeland ecologist who created the monitoring guide explains that "the whole monitoring idea started out really with the idea that what we would do is encourage people." She continues: "it's basically a form of adaptive management. You

monitor your land and you make decisions based on whether it's leading you towards your goals or not." The difficulty came in the need to create quantitative, repeatable measures that are "linked to standard monitoring systems around the world," but nevertheless "easy to use" by laypersons of differing cultural backgrounds, and ultimately "relevant to this landscape" around them.

Both of these examples of community outreach and participation suggest a possible synergy between institutional and individual landscape-level research projects, as well as the influence Mpala can have as a place for cross-community collaboration and building local relationships. Indeed, the effects of such outreach have been seen regionally as well as closer to home. While in the field, one Scandinavian researcher reflects on seeing yellow tarpaulins used as roofing material throughout Samburu. He discovered that they had been recently donated by Mpala researchers for use by displaced people crossing from Laikipia over to Samburu district. Sortland writes that in his travels they "became a hallmark for refugee families" along the way (Sortland 2009: 67).

A wider reach for Mpala-based research can be seen in the hopes for the monitoring handbook as well, whose creator would like it to stretch beyond Laikipia's borders to help other semi-arid and pastoral lands. "We wound up…in producing this manual hopefully producing something that's relevant to a much bigger area than just Laikipia," she explains. This goal for a larger scientific and outreach impact are embedded in the institutions of MWF and MRT as well. The director reflects, "One of the things that we're trying to do here is not just be about Mpala, and not just be about Laikipia, but have information that can then go broader than that to all semi-arid lands, and then to Kenya, and be applicable to other areas as well."

These examples show that for both individuals and the institution of Mpala there is not only a pride in the science Mpala produces but a recognition of the role Mpala can play in Laikipia as a larger hub and node of knowledge. I would also argue these examples highlight the blurriness of research and outreach, individuals and the larger institution, and that the visible output of Mpala and its connected identity are equally blurred as a result. In the following section, I will argue that it is in Mpala's emergent capacity to produce, store, and disseminate internally and externally received scientific information that grants them immense social power across the landscape and lays the foundation for an even greater impact in the practice and discourse of cross-community conservation and development for Laikipia and beyond.

Mpala as a Node of Knowledge Production

The evidence for Mpala as a node of knowledge production, and the resulting reach of its influence and potential, spans multiple scales of interaction and types of information. Specifically, I will argue that its role as an emerging center for scientific education, hub for greater-Laikipia datasets, and active positioning at the interface of rangeland management, livestock keeping, and wildlife conservation speak to a nodal capacity with regional consequence in the present and for the future.

As a place of scientific education, Mpala works across cultures, age groups, and academic disciplines. In addition to Conservation Clubs, it has been hosting university courses on its grounds since even before the Research Centre was built, the first occurring through Princeton University in 1992. The ranks of participating universities have steadily expanded over the years and include those both Kenyan and international,

with some of the most prominent including Kenyatta University, McGill, the University of Florida, and UC Davis. From rangeland management and wildlife ecology to integrated conservation, courses are often structured to include field components in addition to traditional lectures, so as to utilize the bounty of Mpala's conservancy, ranch, and researchers.

For conservation professionals, whether local community scouts, Kenyan scholars, or visiting scientists, Mpala also holds numerous training programs throughout the year. These include courses and workshops on subjects ranging from wildlife monitoring and geospatial data analysis to advanced statistics in the service of biodiversity conservation. Clients include everyone from international NGOs, such as WCS, to neighboring ranches and conservancies such as Ol Pejeta. One Mpala administrator expressed the desire to see Mpala become an educational "reference point" for those universities not only with long-standing ties but those closer to home in Kenya as well.

A final example of scientific education offered by Mpala is the newly established Discovery Day mentioned earlier, where neighbors of all livelihoods and their children are invited to spend an afternoon of fun, food, and discussion at Mpala, learning about what current research is happening there. This extends from those endeavors institutional, such as camera trapping and GIS mapping, to the individual, whether the study of European starlings or the indirect effects of heightened vulture deaths on the spreading of disease.

In an integrative move on this day the director of KWS is also invited to speak. As KWS is both a founding benefactor of Mpala and a key conservation partner in

Laikipia, his presence articulates a larger unity amongst otherwise singular landowners. One rangeland ecologist who helped create the event in 2009 notes that it is "meant to be an open-house for people to come learn what Mpala researchers are doing;" however, she admits that many land managers can "view it as science in a bubble" at times, feeling much of the work lacks connection to the lived world. A founding Mpala ecologist, one who took a leading role in community questions at Discovery Day emphasized a different point. In response to the suggestion that Mpala researchers focus primarily on issues affecting Laikipia, the Princeton ecologist reveals a sentiment of participation and sharing that will be critical for our analysis in the pages to come. "Mpala represents a place of openness" of both study and dialogue, he reflects. "[We are] sharing our ideas with you. We want to hear yours," and in so doing, he suggested, work towards the betterment of everyone.

In addition to being a center for scientific education, Mpala has also been positioning itself as a data collection hub for the greater Laikipia region. Such work includes collecting monthly rainfall data for Mpala as well as baseline vegetation cover datasets for several neighboring ranches. Some of its most consequential data collection and storage, however, extends regionally. As its GIS specialist explains, Mpala "is the center, is the hub, of all the geospatial data [for]…the greater Ewaso" area, covering "from Samburu up to the edge of Laikipia." This work importantly includes "collaborating institutions like Ol Pejeta Science Department" and has the potential to shape both the scientific community's and individual landowners' understanding of landscape-level change for the benefit of sustainable land management and conservation alike. Finally, the ecologist building the standardized rangeland monitoring methodology

sees potential in MRC's capacity to house large datasets as well. As her project progresses, she explains, she hopes to create "a simple database that would encourage people to archive their monitoring data and house it at Mpala." Much like the geospatial data mentioned earlier, this data could be used for "potentially longer-term analysis of trends and management" practices, extending "across [both] Laikipia and Samburu" districts.

The final emerging capacity to be explored in this piece is the potential for MRC to act as a regional knowledge broker and interface between conservation science and possibilities for rangeland management. The seeds for such a nodal capacity sprout from a wide gamut of interconnections previously explored: from research basic and applied; programs administered individually and through the larger institution; efforts at targeted community engagement; and extensive collaborations between Mpala's work as a research center, conservancy, and ranch.

Perhaps the most famous experiment designed and enacted at Mpala has been up and running now since 1995, having been painstakingly sited earlier that decade while the Research Centre was still a glimmer in many people's eyes. The Kenya Long-term Exclosure Experiment, or KLEE[4], consists of six black-cotton soil treatment plots designed to investigate the separate and combined effects of wild and domestic ungulates on varying vegetation scenarios. As one long-time KLEE researcher explains, it was this uniting of both the study of tree-grass dynamics and the interaction between ungulate and livestock across seasons that "was really unique…the fact that it combined both of them

[4] For further information, see: Young, Truman P., et al. 1998. KLEE: a long-term multi-species herbivore exclusion experiment in Laikipia, Kenya. African Journal of Range and Forage Science 14: 92-104.

into one experiment," to try and isolate individual effects and capture as best it could various systems as a whole. This experiment has garnered immense praise throughout scientific circles and continues to evolve and produce groundbreaking science to this day.

Through its attempts to better understand the interactive components of savanna ecosystems, experiments utilizing KLEE plots also offer profound implications for the future of rangeland management, both commercial and pastoral, and the possibility of further coupling this with goals for conservation. A Kenyan national and KLEE researcher notes that in "savannas worldwide, management decisions are based on the concept that wildlife and livestock compete for grassland resources, yet there are virtually no experimental data to support this assumption." This ecologist through experiments conducted in KLEE has found evidence not only "suggesting that wild herbivores can seasonally affect foraging behaviour of cattle" (Odadi, et al. 2009: 120), but succeeding in creating the "first experimental demonstration of either competitive or facilitative effects of an assemblage of native ungulates on domestic livestock in a savanna ecosystem" (Odadi, et al. 2010: 1).

The lead researcher explains in an interview that this demonstration of symbiosis, and, more particularly, facilitation is something that "nobody has ever shown" before and holds immense possibilities for how we can imagine sustainable conservation, commercial ranching, and pastoralism coexisting in this region. The idea that "wildlife both compete with and facilitate cattle," that it is possible for zebras to potentially reduce cattle's internal parasite load, suggests that "the future of conservation, in terms of conservation of wildlife, if you are looking at it from the point of view of competition and facilitation, is then bright," because it gives land managers the opportunity not

simply "to reduce competitive effects as a farmer," but "also devise strategies to augment facilitation, to take advantage of it."

Other researchers are currently investigating alternative methods of livestock penning and migration practices. Originating with the cattle manager at Ol Pejeta, a rangeland ecologist in collaboration with Mpala's ranch manager has begun a pilot project testing the use of metal mobile bomas, in which cattle are penned in more concentrated areas and moved on a faster rotation. Data is still being collected, but researchers are hoping this can shed light on previous theories of intensive holistic management, improved predator control, and more sustainable methods of habitat rehabilitation. This work again shows not only individual and institutional overlap, but also the internal overlap between the missions of the research center and the ranch. Indeed, as one Mpala ecologist notes, the ranch manager not only is "very supportive" of the initiative, but in fact "has a mind towards research and very much tries to integrate ranching ideas and issues and questions…with research objectives."

In the minds of many researchers and area conservationists, more fully integrating research center and ranching pursuits poses an extraordinary opportunity for exactly this kind of theoretical and practical knowledge production. As one wildlife ecologist suggests regarding the ranch: "I think there's a golden opportunity for it to be integrated with this science research side of Mpala in a much better way than is currently being done." Another reflects that Mpala is "in a very unique position, being both a wildlife area and a livestock area to really, from that land management [and] ecological point of view…be a center of learning in this part of the world." Treating "the livestock here as experimental animals that are being used to learn how best to manage land and livestock

and wildlife in Laikipia," would help in the words of one ecologist to not only "make Mpala more of a learning center," but more importantly, allow it to be a "showcase of what can be done" by Laikipian landowners interested in human-wildlife coexistence.

The director of Mpala notes that in many ways the larger institution of Mpala is already moving towards these goals, to a place "where we can use our cattle, use our camels, use our goats to answer really critical questions for the rest of the landscape or [even] Kenya" more broadly. The biggest impediments currently, she points out, are the restrictions placed on areas used strictly used for conservation by the Kenyan government and the fine line between "productively" used and otherwise derelict land. Ultimately, however, for these myriad forms of engagement, the rubber will meet the road outside the experimental confines of Mpala. "The real test of a lot of things," one researcher reflects, "is going to happen out there, where people are applying things in a management context," and seeing how "different land is responding under differing manager scenarios" and contexts. This will require in her view, not simply standardized monitoring techniques "being used across a large area," but the properly accumulated knowledge to lend land managers and conservation professionals the information they may need, and that will require more coordinated and interdisciplinary research directed at exactly these kinds of interactions and tradeoffs.

Taken together, I argue these nodal capacities as educator, information hub, and sustainable rangeland knowledge broker illustrate emergent forms of social influence exercised through Mpala's scientific work. They notably also illuminate the breadth of Mpala's regional reach, highlighting informal and formal connections to private and group ranch neighbors alike.

In several key capacities, we also see Mpala leverage this collective nodal power into varying forms of leadership within Mpala-partnered consortiums of area landowners. One such example formed by Mpala is the CLC, or Central Laikipia Collaboration, which seeks to coordinate conservation activities between five private ranch neighbors. Mpala's director explains that together these ranches "form the central corridor in Laikipia" for much of the megafaunal traffic that moves in between Laikipia and its adjacent districts, making it an especially "critical area" for conservation and inter-ranch communication. Perhaps Mpala's strongest avenue for regional influence, however, can be found in its leadership role within the larger organization of the Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF).

Mpala and LWF

The Laikipia Wildlife Forum has been called "the most influential non-governmental environmental organisation in the district" (Sortland 2009: 57). Through work "supporting, coordinating and facilitating pan-Laikipia conservation and natural resource management," LWF seeks to "conserve Laikipia's wildlife and ecosystem integrity and improve the lives of its people" (LWF website 2011). Created in 1992 as an answer to a KWS conservation initiative for non-protected areas, the Laikipia Wildlife Forum acts as a regional conservation leader across eight distinct programs. These include everything from conservation enterprise planning, tourism support, and environmental education to wildlife conservation, water management, and rangeland rehabilitation. Partner organizations span the national government in the form of KWS to neighboring conservancies such as Mpala and the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, larger national NGOs such as the African Wildlife Foundation, and Kenya's chapter of USAID. But arguably the most meaningful facet of LWF lies in its participatory structure,

bringing together through progressive membership rates the panapoly of voices found in Laikipia: NGOs and government officials, commercial ranchers and conservationists, and of particular pride, local community groups of agricultural and pastoral peoples.

A founding ecologist for Mpala once described Mpala's role within LWF as helping provide "science behind some of the decisions," in the hope that their role as a resource for expert knowledge can ultimately guide more informed efforts, policies, and action. While attending an LWF "Open Day" late last June, evidence of that influence was on visible display.

Hosted at a local Nanyuki athletic club, the event begins in an outdoor patio where close to a dozen research posters hang along the inside walls, the vast majority displaying research currently pursued at Mpala. Facing outside, the club opens onto an expansive lawn and rows of chairs underneath a large standing tent. Walking out onto the grass, a small group of us find seats just outside the tent's shaded cover. With around 100 people in attendance, the cultural gamut of Laikipia appears well represented, and facing us across a long, folding table, joined by LWF's executive director and KWS' senior warden, it is the director of Mpala who first stands and speaks.

After welcoming everyone, she outlines and praises LWF's participatory mission and firmly holistic strategic plan. Soon she is sliding comfortably into the role of expert and scientific communicator, painting overall a sad picture of current national efforts at conservation, noting that since 1997 Kenyan protected areas have lost between 60-70% of their wildlife. This is in stark contrast, she intones, to their district of Laikipia, which has seen its overall numbers rise by as much as 15%. She suggests this difference lies in the work of LWF, and in particular thanks to a simple question that she says begins all

their planning and eventual action: "What do the people of Laikipia want?" This person-centric ethic and drive for collaborative engagement is the reason Laikipia is, in her words, "bucking the trends" found across the rest of Kenya, and why they can find hope in their persistence, commitment, and success for the future.

After she is done, her two colleagues then rise to speak one after the other, exploring in more detail the particular initiatives currently connecting Laikipia's landowners to conservation and sustainable development initiatives. It is an impressive display and demonstrates for the audience both a unity of purpose and a show of visible dedication and competence. KWS's senior warden concludes by noting that LWF's two driving goals are in fact connected. The first, he explains, is to devolve resource responsibility to the people of Kenya, and the second is through this decentralization to create more opportunities for wildlife to be not detrimental but instead beneficial, to be "meaningful contributors to the lives and livelihoods of people." In closing he quotes an Il Ngwesi elder who once reflected that "Conservation is not a project. It is a way of life." The message was that LWF is hoping to integrate that way of life throughout their diverse constituents.

When talking to researchers at Mpala, they are realistic about the logistical and participatory challenges facing LWF but effusive about the work it's been able to accomplish so far. A scholar-in-residence reflects:

> I think that LWF has done a great job. And I think they're posed to really become a voice for Laikipia over issues like water and this huge issue of over-extraction and people downstream paying the price. And I think that certainly LWF is the only forum where these people can come together…it's the only one that's saying, "Hey, this is a problem."

Mpala's director, and now LWF's acting president, agrees that across livelihood, language, and culture: "What brings us all together is the Laikipia Wildlife Forum…that's where the communication thrives." Continuing, she asks:

> How many other places in the world can you pick out where you've got this many people of…such diverse backgrounds sitting down at the table together, and giving power to the guy over there on the group ranch to sit at the table and have as big a voice as the foreign ranch on the other side?

The rangeland ecologist at the heart of the monitoring and mobile boma initiatives echoes these sentiments, offering, "I think one of the real achievements of LWF has been to…coordinate a bit among all the different tourism enterprises, so that people who come to Laikipia as destination...have resources to find [things]." It "spreads things out a bit," she explains, and "gives an opportunity" for those lodges and initiatives less famous or fortunate to gain business and much needed revenue.

The Laikipia Wildlife Forum's regionally oriented focus lends it immense power of persuasion to promote collaboration as well. The previously mentioned scholar-in-residence argues that "It's been a big success" in convincing landowners to start trusting each other and work together to take down fences and build functioning corridors. And it is arguably such endeavors that are making the difference and boosting megafaunal conservation throughout the area. In her first interview, the director of Mpala reiterates the point she made that early June afternoon:

> I mean, we have no formal protected areas here, and we're doing as a district a hell of a lot better in wildlife conservation and even livestock rearing than anywhere else in the country as far as I can tell. And certainly in the protected areas. The protected areas have lost over the past two decades 60-70% of their wildlife, and we have an upward trend of around 15%.

The participation and communication practiced in LWF are often and rightly touted as not only important to those actively pursuing social justice but critical to its larger goals of conservation and development as well, as arguably evidenced in the statistics above. I would rejoin, however, that the unspoken influence of LWF and Mpala speaks to an issue in some ways more fundamental.

So far in this piece I have tried to show that the topographical power Mpala exerts is not merely one of entangled, intimate patronage and governance but also is found in its larger role as a regional node of scientific knowledge production. Whether conservation education for primary students, storing the greater Ewaso area's geospatial data, or advisory partnerships and leadership roles with area consortiums and NGOs, Mpala's influence, both actual and emergent, is seen to be far-reaching and real.

And yet, upon closer inspection, one also sees in this nodal capacity the construction and perpetuation of a discourse that runs throughout its own work, that of LWF, and indeed the greater global conservation and development community. It is a discourse that elevates scientific knowledge and "the rule of experts" above local alternatives, and in the pursuit of a transnationally integrated conservation agenda consciously and unconsciously promotes Western-derived values of science, sustainability, and development (Mitchell 2002). All told, it is a discourse of immense ambition and ever-widening reach, and yet one, I would argue, that leaves key questions of legitimate and illegitimate knowledges, agencies, and justices unattended.

Over the second half of this chapter, I will elucidate more fully this driving, dominant discourse, and argue that a critical reflection on the relationship between discourse and power can lead to a more decentralized yet inclusive definition of

sustainability. I will conclude with the argument that Mpala and its neighbors have the potential to investigate participatory opportunities other regional actors may follow and suggest how all of this might in turn advance a more flexible, adaptive, just, and sustainable model for acephalous conservation in Laikipia.

The Discursive Power of Integrated Conservation and Development

The power of science to shape social practice and the hold discourses can have on alternative forms of knowing have long been known to social scientists. From Germanic scientific forestry and broader natural resource management came the first rationales for colonial game reserves under the auspices of promoting climatic stability and ecological health (Neumann 1998; Hurst 2003). Combined with the overarching aesthetic of "the sublime" (Neumann 1998: 16), these protected areas systemically separated people from the natural world, promoting policies grounded in exclusion around the globe. Some of this discourse's most virulent strains wound up in Kenya, where "rituals of hunting" (Hulme and Murphree 2001: 11) further created Manichean classes of race, labor, and resource use, elevating the safari, denigrating the subsistence hunt, and captured in the social dichotomy of "black poachers, white hunters" (Steinhart 2006).

However, perhaps one of the most potent examples of a scientific discourse affecting marginal populations can be seen in conservation's tumultuous relationship with pastoralism itself. Colonial anthropologists' ethnocentric definitions of rationality led them to label pastoralists as "economically irrational…willfully conservative and ignorant" in land management and decision-making capacities (Warren 1995: 194), and coming off of the "environmental spectre of the American Dust Bowl" (195), many ecologists agreed, defining pastoralists not as ecological partners but instead

"environmental stressors" and "disturbances," whose rate of resource consumption was thought ultimately to degrade soils and actively promote semi-arid desertification (Fratkin 1997: 238).

Such a stance was only emboldened by Garrett Hardin's "tragedy of the commons" thesis in the late 1960s, which posited that private ownership was the only sustainable method to ensure healthy and productive rangeland (Hardin 1968). This logic, and its corollary distrust of collective use, soon became "entrenched" in conservation and development discourses around the world, whose notions of progress and modernity would become increasingly intertwined (Warren 1995: 194). Notably, however, over the past several decades, scholars in the social and natural sciences have painstakingly shown Hardin's precepts to be dramatically limited, and as such, conclusions for pastoral and other common property contexts radically flawed.

In applying the idea of Western, "'rational' ranching systems," (ibid) to nomadic pastoralists, Warren argues that "[the] theory and the methods…paid scant attention to some crucial environmental and cultural features of African grazing systems" (195). These included everything from pastoralists' social transhumance to the underlying biophysical unpredictability found in a landscape dominated by tides of pestilence and cycles of drought (ibid).

For many ecologists today, a new pastoralism paradigm is taking shape, one as described in an earlier chapter, which sees semi-arid systems in a state of "permanent disequilibrium" (193), where pastoral flexibility and mobility are necessary and non-obtrusive responses, "cornerstones of stability and sustainable productivity, rather than prescriptions for degradation and famine" (McCabe 1990: 87). In this paradigm the

larger cultural apparatuses of pastoral peoples are not described as irrational, but rather seen as "effective systems to manage common resources" that are often spatially and temporally patchy (Warren 1995: 196). After seven years of studying the Ngisonyoka Turkana of Kenya, J. Terrence McCabe with a team of ecologists and anthropologists concluded "that pastoral populations do not sacrifice long-term stability for short-term gain at the expense of the environment" (1990: 99).

By this time in the 1990s, however, for many conservation and development professionals the prevailing discourse was not only entrenched, its damage had already been done, oftentimes for decades. A salient example is the promotion of sedentary group ranches in the 1970s and 80s as explored earlier in Chapter One. This post-colonial attempt to impose Western ranching rationality not only did not produce the desired effects, but in curbing mobility and erecting boundaries, it broke many of those mechanisms found to create a sustainable socio-environmental relationship in the first place (Fratkin 2001).

Anthropologist Christine Walley argues that a "common faith in scientized and managerial models" for conservation and development policies, and a corollary distrust of local populations' actions and knowledge, continues to this day (2003: 177).

Many scholars insist that this sustained faith should come as no surprise, tracing its origins to early in the evolution of development theory. While a gross definition of development for many can be expressed as a nation's "relative *progress* in per capita *economic growth*" (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004: 42; emphasis in original), it has been said that "development became a discourse when the range of possibilities was limited to exclusively following the western knowledge system" (Sortland 2009: 47). This sense of

western knowledge as "inherently superior and progressive" (Walley 2003: 180) to other forms of conceiving and organizing the world led in kind to an increasingly narrow definition of development, which "assumed that economic growth would be accompanied by the adoption of Western cultural and institutional practices," to the necessary exclusion of alternative localized forms (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004: 42). The seeds of this discourse can be seen in the colonial era's exclusionary game reserves, the denigration of pastoralists as invasive and irrational, the post-colonial shift to nationally protected parks, and even the more recent policies promoting sedentarizing group ranches and their distinct vision of pastoralist modernization.

Largely through the work of the World Bank, development discourse in recent decades has gone global. Indeed, while often deployed internationally as shown in the examples above, its earliest incarnation was largely seen "as a post-World War II project of recovery from war and colonialism," focused on Western-defined capacity building in areas such as ecological protection, education, and healthcare. Through the leadership of the World Bank in the 1970s and 80s, both the overarching vision and discursive reach of development practice expanded. In essence "the idea of development" was joined with that "of globalization," and in doing so built the foundation for a "'new world economic order'" united under common Western-derived economic policies and grounded in the pursuit of knowledge on Western terms (45). Newly emergent, this global system was presupposed to optimally work for the material benefit of all, though the concurrent rise of dependency theory around this time challenged not only whether the distribution of benefit was equal and fair, but whether transnational relations were structured for impoverished nations' benefit at all.

At the behest of the World Bank, the expanding adoption of development theory and practice by nations in the Global South traced the discourse's evolution as well, seen in the rise of economic neoliberalism and the decentralized, free-market-focused policy prescriptions favored today. These were largely thought, as with the structural adjustment policies discussed earlier in Chapter Two, to have had at best "uneven and contradictory" effects for the countries where they have been used (Goldman 2005: 12).

Goldman (2005) argues that a shift came when the dominance of development discourse and its bedrock precepts promoting Western-defined economic growth and superior knowledge found allies in the disciplines of social justice and conservation, giving rise to a new transnational rubric of "green neoliberalism" (5). In response to social protests over human rights violations sanctioned by the World Bank and other multilateral lenders in the late 1980s, these international entities worked to adapt their paradigms into an arguably more inclusive and holistic form, determining that "there could be no sustained economic growth without a sustainable environment and [the] just treatment" of ethnic minorities and marginalized peoples (97). This sense that development "should be more equitable, human in form and scale, socially inclusive, and participatory as well as sustainable in terms of both the environment and livelihoods" has radically altered the vocabulary used in and stated goals of development discourse, and since gained the implicit blessing and explicit financial backing of many donors and organizations in the conservation field (Parpart and Veltmeyer 2004: 41).

This theoretical coupling has unwittingly created a kind of hegemonic moment, in which increasingly diverse "networks of actors have joined in the production of development knowledge" (Goldman 2005: 156), and seemingly-at-odds factions in

conservation "now accept as fact that there is no alternative to development" (7). This dominance of development, Goldman suggests, has led not only to the integrating of conservation and development goals as explored in Chapter Two, but an ever-expanding "global agenda" predicated on "the concepts of sustainability and sustainability rights," (156) and a vision of "global prosperity" and "sustainable development" largely created by and for Western-determined systems of thought (10). Indeed, the practice and vocabulary of actors ranging from the World Bank to Kenyan conservation NGOs interact to form what Goldman deems a transnational and increasingly homogenous "power/knowledge regime" (5). And it is here at the intersection of Western knowledge's dominance and the social power such actors hold that we find latent issues of participatory justice and il/legitimate systems of knowledge and thought abound—where the social lives of local communities are seen to be under "the rule of experts" and the interaction between discourse and practice can consciously and unconsciously disempower alternative ways of viewing the world and distinctly local capacities for identifying problems and designing solutions (Mitchell 2002: 1).

One unspoken effect of the "rule" of Western experts and their particular forms of knowledge is the very real perception for local communities that "these *new regimes of rule* clearly reflect the *new regimes of truth*" for safely organizing and governing one's world (Goldman 2005: 176; emphasis in original). Indeed, this speaks perhaps most potently to the power knowledge production holds, and the way ideas "are themselves material forces that have a direct impact on the world in which we live" (33). It is not only the tangible practice of policy but also the intangible reproduction of discourse that can "create a representation, analysis, and mode of action for the project of development"

and make the dominance of Western thought, including those ideas of integrating conservation and development, appear "naturalized, legitimate, and durable" (5). It is with this inseparability in mind that Goldman reflects that "the realms of knowledge production and political economics" (33) are not simply "complementary" (32) but "mutually constitutive and codependent" (33). Armed with this information, Mpala's positioning as a node of scientific knowledge production takes on new discursive meaning and gains topographical power.

Discursive Power and Mpala

Both development discourse's transnational dominance and political power can be seen throughout the Global South, and Walley puts forth it is particularly conspicuous in Africa where "the belief that rural Africans fundamentally lack knowledge remains salient in many international circles" today (2003: 207). Sortland (2009) argues such a dominant development discourse is openly found in Laikipia as well, heavily tied to conservation practice and voiced across a majority of its most powerful "discourse communities" (3).

He defines these communities as Kenyan government officials, national and international NGOs, farmers, commercial ranchers, and conservationists, remarking that in "my conversations with non-pastoralists in Laikipia I noticed how they spoke in terms influenced by the governmental development agenda which, combined with colonial narratives, mirrors a global development discourse" (48). He notes this "dominant discourse encourages 'development,' 'modernity' and otherwise what is considered 'civilised' living" (48), gaining recently "a strong focus on conservation measures" (47). He frames this discourse as one in opposition to the "counter-discourse" (48) of

pastoralism, which in Laikipia is still largely viewed in a negative and "destructive" light (26). He argues that "the dominant discourse embraces the colonial image of the pastoralists, blaming the soil deterioration and the poverty that pastoralists [suffer] on the pastoralist mode of production" rather than political and territorial marginalization (61), placing them not in a coupled system but instead dichotomous and apart. They are seen simply as "the human problem" (Broch-Due 2000). He goes on to note that many "post-colonial conservation measures are still dominated by this view on pastoralism" (48).

Ultimately, he finds in these "similar agendas, views and goals" (48) evidence of a "communicative monopoly" across the spectrum of influential stakeholders, bespeaking the discourse's cross-cultural influence and global reach, as well as creating a situation where its precepts are taken as truth and not regularly questioned or discussed (Bauman 1996: 30).

Perhaps it is no surprise then that echoes of this discourse can be seen within and around Mpala as well. Their dedication to pursuing world-class research, as well as myriad forms of conservation consulting, education, and integration, have been shown in depth in the pages above. However, on a closer inspection of language and action, this dedication to conservation often suggests a fidelity to that larger development discourse; its belief in the dominance of Western knowledge; the progressive goodness and need for pastoralist modernizing and development; and a marginalization of alternative ways of seeing the world.

One socioecologist reflects that for many of Laikipia's area ranches, "I think that the communities are seen as the enemy," that "we have to teach them how to conserve…[That we] pretty much know what's going on." Mpala's ranch manager once

couched Mpala's purpose in a similar vein, noting Mpala's greatest function is to "show pastoralists" how their cattle and themselves can coexist peacefully around wildlife.

This idea that there is a need, and that expert knowledge lends them the authority, to influence others, was reiterated by many Mpala ecologists as well, who see the degradation of neighboring lands as a result largely of landowners' lack of information and the ability to conduct long term ecosystem valuation. This need for education extends to pastoralists especially and their livestock dependent way of life. As a scholar-in-residence once mused, "They adapt what they want [to adapt], and don't what they don't." And "one of the keys to good land management here," he continues:

> …is getting the appropriate herd size [and] one of the things that nobody wants to talk about among pastoralists is de-stocking. That's a nonstarter. So if you don't have de-stocking…no matter how much good information you have, it makes it very difficult to actually affect a change.

This scholar's voice speaks of the need for pastoralists to have "good information," suggesting that conversely they must originally possess "bad." Additionally, he points to a particular valuation system for cattle not symbolic or cultural, but instead purely grounded in ecology.

This need and duty of Mpala to elevate their pastoral neighbors was voiced by one of its founding ecologists as well. Regarding social betterment, he posits, there is slowly growing an understanding in Ilmotiok and Tiemamut that Mpala can be an instrument of good and "integral to development." However, he stipulates, that there has to be the understanding that help only comes with necessary caveats: in particular a show of environmental responsibility and stewardship by the communities. Importantly, such responsibility and stewardship are not to be defined by Ilmotiok and Tiemamut but rather

by Mpala and the larger community of conservation science. We see in this statement not only a belief in "development" as a necessary and desired goal, but an understood inequality of power in determining how particular kinds of help are earned, given, and received.

The dominance of modern development theory and conservation science is seen to trickle down through Kenyan institutions to Kenyan elites as well, having been seen in groups of both Samburu and Maasai (Lesogorol 2003). Whether a local counselor for Rumuruti in Laikipia West describing pastoralists as a "problem," or a community member from Tiemamut lamenting the group ranches' "degraded" condition and over-extended "carrying capacity," one sees traces of Western education and knowledge structures shining through. A counselor for Laikipia North perhaps put it best. When asked to describe his job of representing the communities of Ilmotiok, Koija, and Tiemamut, he began with just a single word: "Development."

Another unusual piece of vocabulary came unsolicited from multiple highly regarded community members and leaders when explaining where they find themselves today and what they are hoping in the future to avoid. In describing why they continued wanting to work as research assistants at Mpala, they explicitly noted that a primary motivation for seeking additional employment was to avoid being dependent solely on livestock, to avoid being, in their words, "idle." In addition to signaling a desire to gain new skills and education, the negative context also manages to gesture to the recent colonial past. Sortland notes that historically, "stock wealth was associated with skills, industriousness and careful husbandry rather than idleness," and that it was "in colonial discourse," that the "'idle' pastoralist…was associated with images of 'the lazy native,'

'spoiled' by his 'selfish' pastoral subsistence" (2009: 25). Whether evidence of an unconscious appropriation of discourse or a reaction to present economic realities, whether historical continuity or ethnolinguistic evolution, the similarities give one pause.

Lesogorol makes an analogous point for the Samburu, noting that the use of certain words, including "development" and "'control'…are significant emphases when considered in light of Samburu social structure and the history of privatization" in the area (2003: 539). He continues that while the "forces of capitalism and modernity had an important impact on the motivations of actors in Siambu" (540), it is ironic for so many pastoralist leaders and elites to "have adopted many of the clichés about development that were used by the land officers as justification to grant individual land" deeds that resulted in the authority to take their land away (539).

The point here has not been to suggest attempts of coercion or control through the use of particular language. Nor is it to make generalizations of how Western education and discourse influences pastoralists.

The point is also not to disparage the efforts of organizations like Mpala or those district counselors who provide medical support, clean food and water, and employment opportunities to entangled communities nearby. Nor is it to delegitimize or marginalize the "crisis" nature of conservation work throughout Laikipia or the motives and inspirations governing the actions of Mpala's researchers.

Rather the point is to highlight the often unspoken influence discourse can have on both actions and thoughts, to recognize that *discourses do work* over space and time, consciously and unconsciously. From the earlier sedentarization of Laikipia's pastoral peoples to the present push from private ranches for community conservation and

ecotourism; from the commoditization of livestock into the national economy to the feelings of patronage and dependency by many community members regarding their wealthier, whiter neighbors, we have seen the larger effects, and indeed entanglements, created by this global conservation and development discourse for myriad different actors at and around Mpala. It is critical to note that underlying the expression of a single discourse is often the necessary exclusion and marginalization of others.

Just as important to recognize is that this discourse is found in the practice and output of the science that comes out of Mpala as well, and as a kind of "privileged knowledge," this comes with particular kinds of power, not only to shape, as previously alluded, how individuals' cognitively and categorically organize their world, but also to demarcate those groups able to understand and exercise that knowledge for personal gain, as seen with research assistants and local community leaders (Goldman 2003: 833).

This was expressed by none other than the KWS director, who at the second annual Discovery Day spoke of science's at times exclusionary capacity: "Scientists like to talk to themselves," he noted, and "write in complex language" confusing to individuals untrained. He offered that scientists such as those at Mpala "need to find a way to disseminate knowledge" in appropriate ways to local communities, but also work to "capture" local knowledge otherwise unknown and potentially beneficial. A longtime Laikipia ecologist reflecting on her years living in the area shares this appreciation for what local knowledge and practice can bring: "Pastoralism appeals to me because I think there are things we can learn from reciprocal relationships [and] fluid institutions...I think there's a lot we need to learn from that sooner rather than later."

I would argue the question then is whether institutions can build the capacity to be flexible in their adoption of discourse and open to other forms of knowledge. In the following section, I will elucidate more fully the justice issues exposed by global conservation and development discourses' dominant, exclusionary ways; where this discussion could lead for a place like Mpala; and how work it is presently pursuing already points conservation in these flexible, adaptive directions. I would argue that Laikipia, given the acephalous nature of its conservation and development agendas, offers bright possibilities for endeavors in such capacity building, and with its striking diversity of economic strategies and social relationships, is ripe with opportunities to experiment.

Nature Shaping and Knowledge Sharing

In previous sections, we see an Mpala that is a center of scientific excellence. We also see an organization trying to use its influence and expertise to try and better the larger region around it. In the NGO of LWF we see a genuine effort to right colonial wrongs through inclusive communication and the promotion of a more transparent model for making conservation-minded decisions.

In both, however, is also the unseen power of discourse and examples of how the transnational agendas of conservation and development organizations, discussed in both this chapter and the last, remap Laikipia's natural/cultural worlds. Goldman (2005) argues this is part of a larger trend across the Global South. He explains that with "remarkable synchronicity":

> the sustainability crowd and the neoliberal development crowd have united to remake nature in the [Global] South,

> transforming vast areas of community-managed uncapitalized land into transnationally regulated zones for commercial logging, pharmaceutical bioprospecting, export-oriented cash cropping, megafauna preservation, and elite eco-tourism. (9)

As with transnational governmentality explored in the previous chapter, we see in the evolving economic diversity of Laikipia, from commercial ranching and agriculture to private conservancies and community-based ecotourism, a social and ecological landscape very much "remapped into western discourses of science and development" (Kirsch 1996: 108).

Words like "Conservation, biodiversity, sustainable logging, environmentally sustainable development, and environmental economics are imbued with meanings derived from negotiations among transnational agencies and experts" and as such untethered to local systems of classification and cultural contexts (Goldman 2005: 177). In their universal deployment across landscapes, local actors are often unable to challenge their definition and use and instead find themselves adopting them as not only new tools but often also as new truths.

The deployment of new discourses invariably creates new power structures and social relations, even entirely new kinds and classes of social actors. Specifically, Goldman remarks that in these circumstances we see the rise of a "new subjectivity…of the transnational eco-expert," whose knowledge lends them a special kind of power and influence. However, he notes, these new regimes of truth and their adoption "also reshape the subjectivity of the subaltern" as well (178).

We saw this in the emerging plans of many community leaders of Ilmotiok and Tiemamut for community conservation, as well as through the language used by local

officials and community members educated in Western concepts of rangeland and wildlife management. This subsuming of local discourse into the language of development, of bifurcating uneducated pastoralists and Western-educated ranchers and conservationists, degraded community land versus commercialized cattle ranches and ecotourism enterprises, place previously local and unknown ethics, subjects, and interactions into globally recognizable categories and definitions. In doing so, this work not only makes a landscape and its people "legible, accountable, and available to foreign investors," but some see it as striving for still something more (184).

They see a pervasive and purposeful homogenizing effect in the expansion of this discourse and an enveloping of local inhabitants and their environs. They see in such endeavors an attempt to build a transnational class of "eco-rational" citizens, grounded firmly in the discourse of development with fealty to a globally sanctioned ethic of sustainability (171). In the push to understand and protect the diversity of Earth's non-human life, the expansion of conservation science and sustainable development may times limits the expression of diversity found in humans.

It is such ideas that complicate LWF's seemingly unimpeachable practice of participatory justice and unsettle the moral certainty of mission for an institute like Mpala. These complications, of historical inequity and contemporary cultural dominance, can be couched within multiple philosophical frameworks; however, it is for reasons of practicality as well as philosophy that issues of cultural diversity and empathy become embroiled in broader discussions of conservation justice.

The rubric of indigenous rights perhaps most comprehensively addresses these concerns of discursive domination. Like children's or women's rights, indigenous rights

are thought to fall into a special category conferred to vulnerable populations and groups per the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Parsing an inclusive set of these rights, let alone a coherent definition of indigeneity, is notoriously difficult for both moral and legal frameworks. These difficulties in determining indigeneity can be seen in our earlier exploration of Maasai-Dorobo ethnicity in Chapter One. The fluidity of cultural markers and territory between Maasai and Dorobo groups makes disentangling any definitive identity for either a murky proposition at best.

Leaving aside strict ethnic markers however, an accepted understanding of indigeneity generally rests on four categories of inclusion, including prior occupancy, cultural distinctiveness, self-identification, and non-dominance, all of which the Maasai-Dorobo of Laikipia in some guise possess. Importantly, the term indigenous is largely seen to be "polythetic" in nature, not determined by necessary benchmarks or an all-inclusive definition, but rather is meant to be understood as a composite taken in context, its use and articulation in fact "radically contingent" on past history and present circumstance (Levi and Maybury-Lewis 2010: 33).

At the crux, Hodgson (2002) explains, indigenous rights hinge on a group's understood "right to self determination" (1041). Such a right includes the ability "to control and protect their cultural knowledge and performances, material remains, languages, indigenous knowledge, and biogenetic material" and connectedly "the right to determine their own development" (1041).

Levi and Maybury-Lewis (2010) explain that a critical facet of one's right to self determination is the right to determine one's cultural identity, which for many indigenous groups is not an individual affair but rather a collective one, and in fact often tied to

individuals' very ascription of personhood:

> Indeed, it is chiefly through their belonging to, and participation in, the locally anchored moral universes defined by these groups that individuals achieve their social being and essential personhood. In a very real sense, it is what makes them human in the first place (Levi and Dean 2003:9-18). (Levi and Maybury-Lewis 2010: 29)

Indigeneity has been defined as "a discourse of empowerment and social justice" (17) predicated on the idea that "difference itself may be thought of as a universal right" (30). I would argue that within the rubric of indigenous rights, one can distill much its essence to something more familiarly bounded in the personal, in particular the right to individual cultural respect and agency when interacting with the broader social world around you. All of which relates back to the larger critique of discursive dominance facing LWF and others, that while in many cases such forums offer a platform where the "subaltern is finally able to speak," it is often "mostly through the overdetermined technologies" and vocabularies "of the development world," effectively silencing discursive alternatives of local communities' own devising or choosing (Goldman 2005: 172).

Encroachments on cultural agency can come both from without and from within, as has been noted by Sortland (2009) in his conversations across the landowners of Laikipia. In interviewing those national and foreign national stakeholders associated with Western influence and power, he finds "a lack of respect for pastoralists, and a failure to recognise [their] legitimacy…as moral actors and as rational human beings" (63). Additionally, he recognizes that this lack of respect and denial of moral agency can be found within marginalized communities and individuals themselves, as an often-silent reference to the power of a particular discourse. Sortland contends that in his travels across Samburu and Laikipia, pastoralists "seldom had the power to define their place in the wider social

arena as anything but poor people" (Sortland 2009: 76). This limitation speaks not only to a connection between cultural ontology and cultural identity but the effects ontology can have on cultural agency as well.

Stuart Kirsch echoes this sentiment, noting that creating a binary opposition between engaging with the national economy and maintaining cultural agency and self is both "misleading" and misses the point (1996: 109). Oftentimes such marginalized groups actively "seek greater access to and participation in the national economy," as we have seen with the communities of both Ilmotiok and Tiemamut (109). The point rather is that such communities have the right to define themselves and their interactive cultural space "on their own terms" (109).

If these questions of cultural dominance, marginalization, and justice are to be taken seriously, a series of other questions (and possibilities) then emerge. Can an institute like Mpala become a node not merely of Western knowledge production but one open instead to knowledge sharing across cultures? What would this look like? And what forms would it take? Scholars across the disciplinary spectrum have spoken of the pragmatic and social justice benefits of "dismantling the divide" between scientific and indigenous knowledges, but anthropologist Celia Lowe offers an unconventional medium for achieving it (Agrawal 1995a: 413). "'Friendship'," she argues, "might be one solution to the problem space of the hemispheric divide" (2006: 73). In *philia* we find not only "a primary site of thinking," but within its sociality, the act of building relationships and friends can in turn create "a new geography" of place, arguably one open to fresh and amenable ways of navigating across multiple forms of knowledge. She concludes that "For the preservation of the diversity of life in all its forms," biological

and cultural, "we may find that sharing thought is superior to collecting knowledge, or that forms of friendship have advantages over forms of reason" (74).

We see venues for knowledge sharing across Mpala's associations, whether in the recently created Discovery Days, community-based Conservation Clubs, or larger region-wide engagements with LWF. However, the most fertile ground for the expansion of knowledge sharing amongst Mpala's actors is often seen in that social realm of friendship Lowe espouses. It can be seen in the mutual respect found between Mpala's ranch manager and their many scientists, as well as in the social intimacy that arises between researchers and research assistants. Within these relationships we see the growth of flexibility in discourse, where the need to solve problems merges with relations of trust and camaraderie to blur the lines between scientific and popular knowledge and instead demonstrate the context-specific benefit that can arise from simply "sharing thought."

The intimacy that arises between researchers and their field assistants was expressed throughout interviews with Mpala's scientists and assistants alike. The previously mentioned researcher specializing in African ungulates describes the cooperation necessary and primal satisfaction that comes with tracking and capturing dik dik, a small antelope commonly found throughout East Africa:

> So specifically, what we've done a lot of is capture dik dik, and without Simon I think that would be really difficult. I mean, it's hard to do right now. We spent hours and hours out there walking on tiptoes, trying not to step on a small branch, trying not to roll rocks under our feet, approaching an animal who's, you know, predated upon by just about everything out here, and try to capture that animal. It's not like capturing rodents. These things are hardwired not to be caught, and that's what they do. So to be able to catch them…

> …cornering this wild animal in the night, not using words because it would disturb the animal, but also because there's language barriers, but there's something universal, and the color of our skin just bleeds away, our cultural histories, our gross disparities in income. Maybe this is just idealistic of me, but to me…there's something innate about it that is so cool to tap into, like we're pack animals and the reason why we can take down a mastodon is because we can work together. No single one of us could do it on our own, but we can work together to outsmart animals. That's what we do; that's what we've always done. To be a part of that is amazing.

He continues that consulting his field assistant has become a necessary part of his research planning and execution:

> I try to ask his opinion on almost everything I do, and most of the time, probably for a few reasons, he says, "Yeah, that sounds good. Let's do that." But I always think it's important to ask his opinion because there's always things I haven't thought of… there's things I can do that he can't, and there's things that he can do that I can't.

Those differences in ability and knowledge became especially advantageous when it came to luring and trapping dik dik. As the researcher notes, it is his field assistants who: "once they get the net off:"

> can just scoop this thing up like it's a kid goat and just go down to the road with it, and the animals isn't yelling or anything. It's calm, and it's not kicking or struggling. I've never handled a goat, and I could learn how to do something like that, but it's leaps and bounds away from what I know.
>
> And it's just a small animal to [them] you know…I've seen herders hold goats exactly the same way. So, yeah, those are the things that I love. That's why I love being out here.

Indeed it was the research assistants who knew how to strobe the spotlight and confuse the animal enough with cast shadows to make it turn back and wander into their wake. As a longtime Laikipia ecologist reflected on being told the story: "That was his

assistants who knew that a dik dik would do that. So…[it's like he] said to me, 'traditional ecological knowledge won.' You know, ask these guys how to catch a dik dik, and they'll catch a dik dik."

This rangeland ecologist has worked with the same research assistant going on 10 years and finds herself using his background as a pastoralist as well as past decade of ecological training on a regular basis, asking what he feels would happen under varying livestock and plant circumstances. She reflects, "I use his knowledge a lot in my own work. I rely on his perceptions of nature a good bit," commenting that there has been knowledge sharing the other way as well:

> Fifteen thousand miles from Davis, California, if I needed to think through a research design, I had to explain to him what a randomization was, what are the variables I'm trying to randomize over, and then I needed someone to talk to. He's a damn good ecologist, actually, now. He's had nine years of working as an ecologist.

In an unusual twist, she finds her research entangled irrevocably with past friendships from work in one of Mpala's neighboring group ranches; indeed it is for that social intimacy that she is working on her current project at all. "My whole project on *Sansibaria*, which is the main thrust of my research, I'm doing because the Koija community asked me. They said, 'You want something to work on? Figure out what's going on with this thing,' so that's what I'm working on."

Other examples of research co-development emerge from conversations with field assistants. One reflects on how with his collaborator from Columbia they improved their strategy for banding particular species of birds, noticing that rather than the scatter-shot approach mist nests often used, the line traps the Kikuyu research assistant used for

hunting as a child wound up being both more effective and more selective for trapping, and are now employed regularly in their line of research.

Examples as those above show how trust and respect between individuals and across cultures can in fact blur knowledge lines to the benefit of scientific research. They illustrate in practice the real potential that can be gained from shared thought, shared knowledge, and their appropriate use. More importantly, they also highlight how all knowledge is local in practice, intimate in production, and "fundamentally relational" in both legitimacy and power (Raffles 2002b: 332). Within instances of knowledge sharing, we see both "the ubiquity of affect as a mediator of rationality," which Lowe so praises above, as well as how quickly previously structured "relations of power" can become overturned and, in but a moment, equal (333).

Ultimately these anecdotes show how all knowledge is at heart made of "practice and culture," operating not within an objective rubric of right-and-wrong but rather an ontologically determined spectrum of experience and evidence (Agrawal 1995a: 426). They point to the unique and "messier" place where field science resides, in which its regular embrace of life's contextual difficulties interrogate and in some cases upend the "models of certainty used to uphold science as superior to other knowledges" (Goldman 2007: 314). Breaking free of the modernist trope of science's monopoly on knowledge production is the first step towards creating "real and valuable" space for a "genuine synthesis" across different types of knowledges, in the process building hopefully not only better science but a more culturally-receptive and discursively-neutral place for participation and, in turn, expanding empowerment (Agrawal 1995a: 427). Indeed, as Agrawal suggests, "instead of trying to conflate all non-western knowledge into a

category termed ‘indigenous’, and all western knowledge into another category, it may be more sensible to accept differences within these categories and perhaps find similarities across them” (427).

Working with ecological scientists and Maasai herdsmen in Tanzania, Mara Goldman echoes Agrawal and Lowe’s sentiments and ultimately builds upon them. Recognizing the “substantial power” Western science holds “over the production of knowledge worldwide” (Goldman 2007: 315), she observes that in general “Maasai participation as knowledgeable actors in conservation activities on their lands remains extremely limited” (308). Driven by a desire “to facilitate more ecologically appropriate and culturally and politically responsible knowledge,” she strives to move not only beyond the tired binaries of scientific and indigenous knowledges but the metaphors of scientific integration and bridging-building as well, feeling that not only do they uphold exactly the false divide justice scholars work against but they fail to incorporate an understanding of the ultimately site-specific and contextually-dependent nature of knowledge production (311).

To break away from these prior theoretical constructs, she reiterates the point made in the paragraphs above: that knowledge is built through practice, whether localized as indigenous or globalized as scientific. And it is in that recognition of fallibility and the socially constructed nature of science that moments of engagement and cross-pollination become possible, as we saw in interactions between researchers and research assistants. “It is in the revelation of these hidden messy and actively constructed components,” David Turnbell reflects, “that the possibility lies of working together with people in other spaces” of knowledge newly created (2000: 226). Like the earlier mentioned method of

"friendship," Goldman argues that perhaps the best way to avoid the reproduction of false hierarchies or the creation of entirely new ones is through the "building of dialogues," visualizing knowledges not as entities dichotomously opposed but rather spaces open for conversation (Goldman 2007: 307).

This image of "knowledge spaces" opens up possibilities for more flexible individual overlap and hopefully dialogue in ways previous constructs lack (ibid). By collapsing ideas of legitimacy and validity, and recognizing the critical role of social intimacy in the production of knowledge, space not only for participatory justice and cultural agency but hopefully more accurate and robust research and decision-making results.

If the goal in this is to build conversant knowledges however, Goldman notes there must first be the possibility of comparison, in which terms of engagement within each knowledge space are recognizable "as similar *enough* to enter into dialogue," both by members of each space as well as independent third parties (314; emphasis in original).

The example of such "equitable dialogues" (ibid) Goldman gives is one we have explored previously, namely the use of Maasai community scouts as ecological and wildlife monitors, and who in her examination of wildebeest knowledge between ecologists and Maasai herdsmen recognizes both overlap in understanding as well as at times differences in theoretical underpinnings whose applications if misunderstood could have repercussions "critical to conservation management" (325).

Her primary example of successful dialogue came from a mixed-method approach to measuring animals' distance from transects using both GPS information and

estimations of distance. The theoretically overlap came from the differing methods of estimation. Where in Western science, distance is calculated over space, "Maasai calculate distance in time," whose measurements the author noted were often superior to her own (315). She continues that:

> By recognizing the results as differences in method rather than as fundamental differences in the type of knowledge (subjective versus objective), dialog and compromise were possible. It enabled the dialogic mixing of different knowledges that contributes to successful knowledge creation, even *within* science. (315; emphasis in original)

Such endeavors allow for the emergence of newly active participants, rather than mere conduits, of knowledge creation, in which the "overlap of Maasai and conservation-science knowledge spaces is played out as 'hybrid knowledge' through the activities of Maasai game scouts working for the MR and patrolling village lands" (325).

Ultimately, the use and vision of dialogue as a medium for breaking epistemological and even cosmological barriers can be seen for the advancement of conservation as an *adaptive* choice, both towards the sustainability of social rapport as explored in an earlier chapter, and more particularly towards the creation of more reliable and flexible knowledge production upon which to base decisions. Rather than finding knowledge silenced, static, or separated by a seemingly unbridgeable chasm, Goldman reflects that "Dialogues are active, fluid," and better able to "accommodate direct comparisons and knowledge sharing across different knowledge spaces with different sets of experiences, ways of learning and transmitting knowledge, and rules for what counts as 'valid' knowledge" (313). In the end, dialogue helps turn clients and patrons into partners.

Importantly, we find precedent for building hybrid knowledges and cross-community knowledge sharing at Mpala as well. With these spaces of possibility in mind, I thought back to a conversation I had with the prominent ecologist who helped guide Mpala as a place of research since its inception and who has started a program of community scout employment to help with long-term monitoring of water sources, grass cover, livestock movement, and density and distribution of endangered species. In describing his on-going research agenda impressive in both its interdisciplinarity of focus and attention to community participation, he focused in particular on the ways such an endeavor can build the bonds of trust, respect, and communication needed in such an intrinsically acephalous land.

He sees immense worth in employing local community members from the neighboring ranches of Ilmotiok, Tiemamut, and Koija, noting their cultural knowledge of animal sign and movement has proven invaluable in their employment as scouts, and their capacity and veracity of data collection often as good or better, and staggeringly cheaper, than the standard high-tech alternatives often used in the field (Low 2009; Rubenstein 2010).

And yet, the greatest advantage of their continual presence and employment, he notes, is their ability to act as cultural communicators and knowledge brokers to their respective communities. He enthused that they have the ability to be "Mpala's champions and ambassadors," easing community relations and spreading the word of ecological science's gains for co-specific and co–cultural sustainability. Reflecting on these issues of participatory justice, cultural agency, and the sharing of knowledge, I would argue that just as important is, if in the course of their cross-community

"partnership," they additionally become champions and ambassadors for themselves and the larger cultural and knowledge discourses they possess.

This points to a fundamental capacity held by many of the very people so often marginalized in integrated conservation and development programs and projects. From the research assistants to the community scouts explored above, many local actors "already draw on multiple and competing discourses on nature and the environment" as they interact with differing groups in their day-to-day lives (Kirsch 1996: 109). With this in mind, the question then becomes can conservationists, ranchers, and development practitioners learn from their example of social and discursive liminality?

A hard fact is that discourses of knowledge are invariably tied to larger, and potentially more inscrutable, discourses of ontology, cosmology, and identity. Engaging issues of values and valuation different and at times even cast as antagonistic to one's own is a complicated, difficult, and messy affair. And while the benefits of utilizing alternative forms of knowledge (Berkes 1999; Berkes 2007; Orlove and Brush 1996) and local communities' support and participation in sustainable conservation (Colchester 2001; Jones 2006; Kaimowitz and Sheil 2007) has been long known, the complexities of confronting and artfully navigating larger issues of culture often remain present and largely unattended.

This does not mean, however, that their engagement is not important or beneficial for the practice of sustainable social relations and resource management. In addition to anthropologists and geographers elaborately documenting alternative modes of interacting with the natural world (Ingold 2000; Feld and Basso 1996), recent evidence from political ecology (Jones 2006) and applied conservation ethnography (Remis and

Hardin 2009; West 2005) suggests that not attempting to build understanding and respect for these alternative cosmologies and value systems can create a fractious social environment and ultimately unsustainable conservation practices. Recent ethnographic evidence additionally suggests that deploying dialogue and embracing cultural empathy can be a pragmatic tool for seemingly intractable cross-cultural conflict resolution as well.

Scott Atran and Robert Axelrod (2008) in their investigations and qualitative analysis of international conflicts over resource rights and land, including for example between Israel and Palestine, argue somewhat counterintuitively that "understanding an opponent's sacred values…offers surprising opportunities for breakthroughs in peace" (223). Paying "greater attention to the nature and depth of people's commitment to sacred values," (228) opens not only space for dialogue but space to entertain value systems beyond the "terms of *realpolitik* or the marketplace" (226). They argue that recognizing that such values can be "particularly open-textured" creates possibilities for compromise and understanding that rest on the simple act of "signaling respect" and "acknowledging other peoples' values" (230). In contrast, misinterpreting sacred values for material ones often only exacerbates conflict. They conclude that "even materially intangible symbolic gestures that show respect for the other side and its core values may open the door to dialogue in the worst of conflicts" (242).

The importance of livestock to pastoralists in general, and of cattle to Maasai most particularly, can in many ways be couched in this language of sacred values and as such demand cross-cultural engagement, which take seriously its cultural significance. As Atran, Axelrod, and others have suggested, the Maasai cultural and symbolic

attachment to cattle is not based on an irrationality, as so much Western science has denoted it in the past, but instead on a different system of rational valuation, one tied not strictly to material consequences but sacred commitments as well. Such a connection can be traced back to the observation made by E.E. Evans-Pritchard that the Nuer's "social idiom is a bovine idiom" (1969: 19). However, recent studies of Maasai ranging from Kenya to Tanzania, including my own ethnographic experience, suggest that this cultural affection is alive and well, even in those actors most exposed to Western knowledge and cultural institutions.

Both McCabe (2003) working with Maasai in Tanzania and Seno and Shaw (2002) working with Maasai in southern Kenya note that over the past few decades pastoral Maasai have seen the "adoption of new lifestyles, formal education, and changing aspirations" (Seno and Shaw 2002: 86). This transition from traditional pastoralism to privatized land, market integration, and the rise of conservation economies has been observed in Laikipia as well, and was traced through to today for the Maasai living in Ilmotiok and Tiemamut in Chapter One. Despite these shifts, however, for Maasai in both Kenya and Tanzania, including those around Laikipia, a cultural connection to livestock and in particular cattle remains strong. "Despite changes among the Maasai during the last three decades, all of my research has suggested they still view themselves as 'people of the cattle,'" reflects McCabe (2003: 107), continuing that a singular piece of "cultural understanding is the importance of maintaining a livestock-based livelihood as the core of the Maasai family economy" (106). He quotes one elder commenting that even upon taking up farming and cultivation, "the livestock remain as

the central point for the family," the cultural lodestone around which alternative economic strategies revolve and make sense (107).

Seno and Shaw find similar sentiments in Kenya. "The strong affinity for pastoralism revealed in our study suggests that any transition away from pastoral nomadism will not take place immediately" (Seno and Shaw 2002: 86). Focusing "on strategies that attempt to reconcile the protection of natural resources with the welfare of local communities," they are led recommend the pursuit of a policy that both "provides financial benefits" while facilitating "continued livestock production" as one that has a far greater chance of success "than a proposal that ignores the livestock issues" altogether (86).

Sortland remarks that within the Samburu and Maasai of Laikipia, the cultural connection to livestock and cattle in particular is still an overarching basis of both social identity and their informal "gift-oriented economies," in which the line between economic and social relations fades away as 'future dispersal of livestock into a wider physical and social 'landscape'" form the basis of future relations (2009: 110).

This underlying connection continues for the Maasai around Mpala as well, with a founding ecologist remarking that even in the tumultuous economic transitions they have seen these past few decades, there are three unerring benchmarks of Maasai identity: "you must be educated; you must be circumcised; and you must have cattle."

Assistant secretary to Ilmotiok, and one of my primary field assistants, Joseph, reiterates these claims. "Normally, Maasai will never stay without livestock. That's what is in their mind and also I think in their blood," remarking that while he hopes the

creation and success of group ranch conservancies and ecotourism will allow them to lower their herds overall, in the end he notes, Maasai "will not stay without livestock."

Such evidence as that above suggests a need for engagement beyond the realm of Western discourse. That, as Atran and Axelrod recommend, resolving resource conflicts between ranchers, conservationists, and what ecologists denote as pastoral "degradation," will require instead a genuine effort at compromise, "creative [discursive] reframing," and concessions from both sides (2008: 224). It will require embracing the discourse of pastoralism as a legitimate way of viewing and interacting with the world, and in so doing work towards forging sustainable social relations and in turn sustainable practices of conservation. In the efforts "to conserve wildlife populations while improving human welfare," McCabe admits, "a more flexible approach is needed" (2003: 110). Mpala as a node of knowledge sharing could help facilitate these dialogues, cultural relations, and ongoing inter-community negotiations.

In my final section before closing, I will argue that several building blocks for such a node of knowledge sharing are arguably already largely in place at and around Mpala, and that these persons or policies are positioned to promote more flexibly adaptive management that serves the advancement both of sustainable conservation and measures of social justice throughout Laikipia in the future.

Hybrid Actors, Pasture Sharing, and Adaptive Management

The dismantling of discourses' high walls and the creation of space for friendship, dialogue, and social intimacy has been shown to benefit research and empowerment, and in turn conservation and livelihoods, alike. And yet navigating multiple discourses and building room for particular applications of overlapping knowledges is no easy task.

Much as both natural and social scientists gain aid, friendship, and outside perspectives from working with research assistants, there could arise the need for a new role of hybrid knowledge facilitators and cultural mediators to help those actors, whether government official, NGO professional, conservationist, or rancher, in negotiating what is at times new discursive terrain.

The founding ecologist of the long-time scout program once noted that scouts could be the champions and ambassadors of Mpala, leading myself to wonder what could happen if they were equally champions and ambassadors of themselves. Mara Goldman argues that such "local, educated men…chosen as game scouts" and "respected as smart and knowledgeable in both Maasai and 'schooled' spheres of knowledge" are rising as a new kind of social actor (2007: 326).

I would argue that these scouts around Mpala and the research assistants earlier mentioned occupy a similar vein. And additionally, and perhaps especially, we are seeing in the emerging leadership of those neighboring Ilmotiok and Tiemamut communities a new generation of Maasai women and men with the cross-cultural experience to create new spaces for dialogue and in their wake redefine the terms of knowledge and cultural legitimacy.

Spreading inequality in wealth and education has been noted throughout Samburu (Lesogorol 2003) and Maasai communities in both Kenya and Tanzania (Kideghesho, et al. 2007; Galvin 2009; Sortland 2009), and with these differentials has come concomitantly spreading separations of social power as well, in particular a shift in influence from the old to the young (Lesogorol 2003; Sortland 2009). In the community of Ilmotiok, this shift has become exemplified in the new leadership of their group ranch

governing committee, and in particular by my two field assistants mentioned throughout this piece, Robert and Joseph.

With backgrounds as primary school teachers, Catholic catechists in neighboring Machakos, Mpala field assistants for varying research programs, and group ranch committee secretaries for their village of Ilmotiok, in many respects these men symbolize in the flesh the ability to occupy and navigate multiple discourses as well as the transnational cultural milieu Laikipia presently represents.

In them, we see a desire for education and literacy and conservation, a respect of gender and participation, and a drive to build transparency in group ranch governance and fair and respectful relations both within their community and between Mpala and themselves. Throughout my time with them, they were unfailingly proud to be Maasai and eager to see a new kind of leadership and the benefits that would reap flower and flourish.

This pride in being Maasai, in pushing for progress, and yet retaining cultural connections was evident when listening to and speaking with Joseph. He relates the clash of generations that ensued during that most recent group ranch election:

> This is our first time young people to get elected in the community. It is our first time, and it is because…we fight the old men, because they say, 'Ah, no child can lead us. How will you lead your father? I am more clever than you.' But we told them this was another [generation]. This is another world that we are in now.

It is a world of emerging issues of gender equality and the promotion of complex issues of community empowerment. He continues:

> And this [is] the only time that we get ladies in the committee, because we say, "We need gender'…I don't say [this] because I am now in the committee, but I just say we

> have since [received] a little bit of light, because every person now, he can stand up and say their right. He can stand up and fight for his or her right.

And yet it is also a world increasingly of hybrid actors, hybrid knowledges, and hybrid cultures. In discussing the benefits of conservation, education, and knowledge, Joseph reflects that diversification is critical; and yet, as we have noted above, this diversification is still necessarily tied to culturally moored connections to livestock and larger cycles of pastoralism. He remarks that it is through the unity of both pastoralism and education, the discourses of the West and the discourses of the Maasai, that true community benefit will emerge: "If I bring education to my family and if my dad brings the livestock, then if they come together, we will see it is better."

Ultimately, this sense of unity is echoed by Robert as well, who in reflecting on the kind of leadership he desires for his community, points to that ethic of friendship and dialogue explored above, one grounded in both fairness and respect within and across cultures:

> Leaders are the ones who are supposed to…take the community's problems to the ranches like this one [Mpala], and they are the ones who [bring Mpala's] needs to the community. So if they would be open to both sides and try to work for everybody, and to give the true message, it will be quite good…To bring the true message or needs of the community to our friends there, and to bring what they would like to ask [us] to do for them in a true way to us or to the community, I can say that it will be something very good.

Listening to these leaders' words, we gain a sense that they wish for their communities to be able to define their social place as something other than "poor people" (Sortland 2009: 76), in turn displaying the very desires for openness, inclusion, and dialogue that form the bedrock of building the flexible discourses and knowledge sharing articulated above.

Whether community scouts, research assistants, or local leaders, the increasing ability of indigenous actors to brandish hybrid knowledges and act as cultural mediators can be seen as a critical step towards building not only more participatory cross-community engagements but as argued above more sustainable social relations as well.

An equally, if not more, critical step can be seen in the decision by Mpala to institute a policy that allows for adaptive grazing practices and the inclusive of pastoralists' herds with their own in times of need. Ian Scoones (1996) defines adaptive management as "approaches to planning and intervention that involve adaptive and incremental change based on local conditions and local circumstances," understanding that building adaptable mechanisms that anticipate and respond to local context leads to more flexible and in turn more resilient systems (6). The advantages espoused concerning participatory schemes, whether building capacities of knowledge sharing, cultural empathy between researchers and scouts, rangeland collaborations between scientists and ranchers, or inter- and intra-community dialogue between private ranch owners, community members, and their leaders, all speak to the idea of creating systems of management that are malleable and adaptive rather than reactionary and leaden. Sustainable systems management is iterative and responsive systems management. The need for such systems to be contextually-based and locally-derived was perhaps put best by Robert in describing how he approaches the business of helping lead his community. "First of all, you have to start with what you are; you have to start on the ground."

It is towards this end of adaptive management that Mpala's work with rangeland sharing and flexible stock levels is so appealing. In describing Laikipia's success in maintaining stock levels at a higher rate during the most recent catastrophic drought

compared to parks and communities farther south, Mpala's director reasons, "I think it's [because of] a lot of sharing. I mean, we opened our rangelands to our neighbors," following up that in the future she sees such relationships only continuing and evolving, preferably into something able to be maintained year round. "It has to," she reflects, "I don't think there's any future for these properties, these huge, huge land holdings unless that happens. I would just like to see it get a little more regulated…Let's have something happening year around, so people" don't have to maneuver at the last minute.

This idea of letting local communities rent pasturelands during times of drought has been observed throughout Laikipia, usually "for a fee varying from 50 to 200 KSH per cow" (Sortland 2009: 58). Mpala, however, recognizing the impact extra livestock would have on their rangelands, has begun adopting a more flexibly adaptive response. The director explains:

> So one of the things that I got approved this year was to cut our own herd such that it's easier for us to…expect to have to bring on more cattle from our neighbors. And [where] we have a little trading herd that we can say, "*Fffbt,* We've got to get rid of it now because we need to support other folks." And I do like that. I just think we have to, have to do that, otherwise there's too much its-greener-on-the-other-side-of-the-fence, and why is that particularly white person holding 100 thousand acres?

I would argue this practice is not only an example of adaptive management in its present form, one that ensures a dramatically better picture for livestock survival overall, but an opportunity for opening avenues of cooperation, cultural respect, and the sharing of knowledge between people and properties as well. In thinking back to the social intimacies discussed in the previous chapter regarding neighboring communities' efforts against stock theft, and the discussion in this present one concerning the benefits of

cultural dialogue, hybrid knowledges, and attention to sacred values, one finds immense space for the "creative reframing" of community relations and inter-cultural respect in the sharing of pasture and co-mingling of people and livestock (Atran and Axelrod 2008: 224).

Ultimately, such examples as those persons and policies explored above illustrate why Laikipia and its particular private scheme of land tenure can serve as an especially productive incubator for sustainable conservation and social justice interventions. As Agrawal (1995b) notes: "To successfully build new epistemic foundations, accounts of innovation and experimentation must bridge the indigenous/Western divide," and across each property and its surrounding relations, we are seeing examples of such experimenting and innovation (4). Using Mpala as a single case study has offered us site-specific articulations of the power of discourse, knowledge, dialogue, intimacy, and knowledge sharing within a particular place, presenting us in the end with a "more hopeful narrative" for Laikipia's future conservation outcomes and relations (Lowe 2006: xii).

Conclusion

I began this chapter arguing that the Mpala Research Centre is demonstrably a center of scientific excellence, where individual passions and creative tensions meld into collective pursuits of knowledge advancement and the practice of integrated conservation and sustainable development. I suggested that it is also a place of blurred identity, where the lines of purpose and action between individual researchers and the larger institution often melt away, and that while the legal division between the Mpala Research Centre

and the larger Wildlife Foundation is simple and clean, the boundaries delineating the types of activities both pursue are far less clear.

What is clear, however, is Mpala's growing influence throughout the area, as seen in its informal and formal relationships with private and group ranch neighbors alike. I argue that taken collectively, its agendas, output, and work situate it as a node of knowledge production, storage, and dissemination for the greater district of Laikipia. Its roles in regional education; data creation, maintenance, and storage; and coupled systems research for rangeland management and conservation position it as a focal point for determining the course of conservation discourse and practice across the surrounding landscape for years to come. And along with its spreading role in governmentality, it is this capacity of knowledge production that ultimately defines its topographical power.

Nowhere is this reach more evident than in Mpala's leadership role within the Laikipia Wildlife Forum, recognized as the district's most influential conservation NGO. Both select projects conducted at Mpala and the stated purpose of LWF speak to the larger mission of pursuing sustainable conservation and bettering individual livelihoods, with the goal of participatory justice firmly entrenched in LWF's organization and practice. And yet, upon examination, both the actions and underlying philosophies of Mpala and LWF can be traced to a dominant global discourse of sustainability and green neoliberalism, with deep roots in current and early development theory.

An examination of this discourse's unspoken assumptions, and at times silently exercised authority and power, revealed a unerring fidelity to Western scientific knowledge, even in the face of previous mistakes, and the promotion of a pan-ethic of Western sustainability and historical development trajectory. In the spread of this

discourse's practice and underlying language, I argue, is the conscious and unconscious silencing of legitimate local alternatives for viewing and interacting with a people's wider socioecological worlds.

In Laikipia broadly and Mpala more particularly, this joined conservation and development discourse is echoed by Western academics, Kenyan cattle ranchers, national government officials, and Maasai community members young and old. The bluntness and pervasiveness of its power lies at the heart of my conservation justice critique, with the remainder of the paper examining mediums and methods of counteracting and deconstructing it.

From discursive nature shaping I turn instead to the possibility of knowledge sharing and the evidence in both theory and practice for its benefits for social empowerment and, just as critically, for more adaptive and sustainable conservation. Through the lens of indigenous rights, I argue for the need to dismantle the false divide between Western and local systems of knowledge, positing that previous scholars' suggestions of building friendships and dialogues offer constructive and actionable alternatives, backed by evidence found at Mpala in the production of knowledges between rancher and ecologist, scout and scientist, assistant and researcher.

Ultimately, I support Mara Goldman's formulation that "knowledge spaces" and their comparison allow for a more neutral expression of what differing knowledges have to offer, recognizing that her conception of "building dialogues" offers a clear link to my previous intimations concerning the creation of social intimacies and their connection to sustainable social rapport in the chapter previous. I conclude this section arguing that recent evidence additionally points to the ways in which attempts at cultural

understanding and shows of cross-cultural respect can help diffuse situations of entrenched conflict, especially those in which resources are tied not to material concerns exclusively but sacred commitments as well, as with the Maasai connection to livestock.

Finally, I end by suggesting that two pieces of evidence point to an emergent capacity at Mpala for such a node for knowledge sharing. The first is the rise of hybrid actors in the form of community scouts, research assistants, and local leaders, whose ability to bridge cultural chasms can help mediate and facilitate the creation of liminal knowledge spaces. The second, and arguably more critical example given underlying political and resource inequities, is the policy recently adopted by Mpala to adaptively manage their livestock herds to allow local communities easier access to pasture during times of prolonged or intense drought. Whether expressions of knowledge sharing and intimate connection or more tangible efforts to promote the use of community scouts and adaptive pasture sharing, each points to the creation of empathic cross-cultural space, and as such, towards both hopeful and productive efforts at advancing sustainable conservation while engaging issues of equity and opening space to confront the spectre dependency for Laikipia's group and private ranches alike.

Conclusion

In the end, this thesis has sought to qualitatively investigate multi-ethnic, multi-national, and multi-use conservation relations in an unprotected area of central Kenya. Using the Mpala Wildlife Foundation and Research Trust consortium as my primary site of study, I have attempted to articulate overlapping spaces of collaboration and contention between Mpala and two neighboring Maasai communities, arguing that a critical examination of power dynamics is fundamental for developing sustainable and locally appropriate social relations and through that effective and equitable Laikipian conservation measures.

As Mpala has grown from a colonial and post-colonial cattle ranch to a coupled Kenyan-registered field research station, private wildlife conservancy, and incorporated commercial livestock ranch, its motives and associated work have expanded in kind. Its pursuit of community outreach alongside conservation parallels the moral trajectory of the international conservation movement, and as this movement's influence has steadily spread across Laikipia, Mpala's has matured commensurately as well.

Importantly, we have seen Ilmotiok and Tiemamut likewise change apace. From peoples mobile and autonomous to instead dislocated, sedentary, and corralled, the Maasai-Dorobo of this area have found themselves culturally and geographically repressed under both colonial and post-colonial rule. However, across livelihoods, ethnic

markers, and knowledge space they have proved to be fluid and adaptive in their decision-making and able to turn situations of constraint instead into situations of opportunity and empowerment.

In a land where historical patterns, economic wealth, and cultural hegemony have woven an uneven socioecological mosaic, much like the dominance of colonial ranching and Maasai pastoralism before it, I argue conservation's influence in Laikipia has created a new and distinct topography of power through transnational flows of capital, labor, knowledge, and governance. As conduit and co-creator of this topography, Mpala is a valuable case study for finding lessons in its multi-pronged generation, expression, and impact.

Whether its role in transnational governmentality and de facto education, healthcare, and aid responsibilities in the face of a federal vacuum, or its capacity as an emerging node of knowledge production throughout the wider Laikipia region, we see Mpala as a place building both intra- and inter-community relations and attendant spaces for conflict and cooperation as a result.

Examples of empowerment seen in myriad Mpala staff and local community members are tempered with examples of cultural dominance and social dependence, as with the quasi-coerced adoption of community conservation areas and extensive patron-client relations sustained between group and private ranches. Ultimately, this thesis is about the need to critically examine and thoughtfully navigate such historically embedded and politically uneven social terrain.

It is a terrain in which historical inequalities, internationally driven economic policies, globally emergent discourses, and one individual's love of a place, followed by

many others, have conspired to create a thickly entangled web of relations and intimacies, that however admirably and improbably span across lines of livelihood, wealth, nationality, ethnicity, and race. While issues of resource, financial, and even institutional sustainability arise as a result of these connections, we also find that it is within such intimacies that ranches build sustainable rapport and through that enable inter-community conservation to continue and thrive. This is seen with communities' aid in tracking and retrieving raided cattle as well as Mpala's adaptive decision to modulate their own herd sizes according to other poorer communities' social and ecological needs.

Given predictions of expanding resource scarcity, climatic instability, and issues of geopolitical security for Kenya in the years to come, grappling with the historical past and navigating topographies of power emerging in the present is all the more prudent and needed. Importantly, this has been but a preliminary investigation of one site's intra- and inter-community conservation relations. However, further and more fine-grained research is required. Possible future investigations include work concerning conflicting and converging sacred values; local categorization, adaptation, responses to oncoming climate change; or further possibilities for pastoral and commercial livestock integration. Researchers at Mpala have for years been engaging with issues at the intersection of social-environmental relations, from issues of socioecology, life history, and community health to community governance and the management of coupled rangelands, and it is in their footsteps that any future researcher will tread.

Ann Stoler (2008) reminds us that critically engaging with the socially messy present and historically complicated past while challenging holds real purpose and points to real possibilities. "In doing so," she reflects:

> … the project is not to fashion a genealogy of catastrophe or redemption. Making connections where they are hard to trace is not designed to settle scores but rather to recognize that these are unfinished histories, not of victimized pasts but consequential histories that open to differential futures. (2008: 195)

Laikipia's decentralized land tenure system coupled with an expanding embrace of integrated conservation and development engagements offers immense opportunities for private and group ranches alike and for both differential and united futures to unfold. Ultimately, the efforts of the diverse communities found around Laikipia point not only to the potential for building sustainable conservation in a strikingly unprotected area but the equally immense and difficult task of expanding circles of cross-cultural empathy and understanding as well.

References

Adams, W.M., R. Aveling, D. Brockington, et al. 2004. Biodiversity Conservation and the Eradication of Poverty. Science 36: 1146-1149.

Adams, W.M. and M. Mulligan, eds. 2003. "Nature and the Colonial Mind" Chapter 2 in *Decolonizing Nature: Strategies for Conservation in a Post-colonial Era*. London: Earthscan.

Adger, W. Neil. 2001. Scales of Governance and Environmental Justice for Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change. Journal of International Development 13: 921-931.

Agrawal, Arun. 2007. Forests, Governance, and Sustainability: Common Property Theory and its Contributions. International Journal of the Commons 1(1): 111-136.

-----. 1995a. Dismantling the Divide Between Indigenous and Scientific Knowledge. Development and Change 26: 413-439.

-----. 1995b. Indigenous and scientific knowledge: some critical comments. Indigenous Knowledge and Development Monitor 3(3): 1-9.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1990. Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy. Public Culture.

Atran, Scott and Robert Axelrod. 2008. Reframing Sacred Values. Negotiation Journal.

Barrow, E. and W. Mlenge. 2003. Trees as key to pastoralist risk management in semi-arid landscapes in Shinyanga, Tanzania and Turkana, Kenya. Paper presented at The International Conference on Rural Livelihoods, Forests and Biodiversity 19-23 May 2003, Bonn, Germany.

Bauman, Gerd. 1996. *Contesting Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bekure, Solomon, de Leeuw P N. Grandin B E and Neate P J H, eds. 1991. Maasai herding: An analysis of the livestock production system of Maasai pastoralists in eastern Kajiado District, Kenya. ILCA Systems Study 4. ILCA (International Livestock Centre for Africa), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Berkes, F. 2007. Community-based conservation in a globalized world. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 104(39): 15188–15193.

-----. 1999. *Sacred Ecology: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Resource Management*. Philadelphia: Taylor & Francis.

Blake, Adam. 2008. Tourism and Income Distribution in East Africa. International Journal of Tourism Research 10: 511-524.

Broch-Due, Vigdis. 2000. "Producing Nature and Poverty in Africa: An Introduction." Found in, Broch-Due, Vigdis and Richard Schroeder, eds. *Producing Nature and Poverty in Africa*. Stockholm: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

Bruyere, Brett L., et al. 2009. Differences in Perceptions of Communication, Tourism Benefits, and Management Issues in a Protected Area of Rural Kenya. Environmental Management 43: 49–59.

Chang, Cynthia. 1982. Nomads without Cattle: East African Foragers in Historical Perspective. *Found in* Eleanor Leacock and Richard Lee, eds. *Politics and History in Band Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chhatre, A. and Agrawal, A. 2008. Forest Commons and Local Enforcement. PNAS 104(36): 13286-13291.

Colchester, Marcus. 2001. Self-determination or environmental determinism for indigenous peoples in tropical forest conservation. Conservation Biology 14(5): 1365-1367.

Crate, Susan A. and Mark Nuttall. "Introduction: Anthropology and Climate Change." *Found in* Crate, Susan A. and Mark Nuttall, eds. 2009. *Anthropology and Climate Change: From Encounters to Actions*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.

Cronk, Lee. 2004. *From Mukogodo to Maasai: Ethnicity and Cultural Change in Kenya*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Curran, Bryan, et al. 2009. Are Central Africa's Protected Areas Displacing Hundreds of Thousands of Rural Poor? Conservation and Society 7(1): 30-45.

Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 1969 [1940]. *The Nuer: A description of the modes of livelihood and political institutions of a Nilotic people*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fairhead, James and Melissa Leach. 1994. Modern Conservation and Historical Land Use in Guinea's Ziama Reserve. African Affairs 93: 481-512.

Feld, Steven and Keith H. Basso. 1996. *Senses of Place*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Ferguson, James. 2006. *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Ferguson, James and Akhil Gupta. 2002. Spatializing States: Toward an Ethnography of Neoliberal Governmentality. American Ethnologist 29(4): 981–1002.

Fratkin, Elliot. 2008. "Pastures lost: The decline of mobile pastoralism among Maasai and Rendille in Kenya, East Africa." Ch 7 in *Economies and the Transformation of Landscape*. Eds. L Cliggett and C.A. Pool. Rowman Altamira.

-----. 2001. East African Pastoralism in Transition: Maasai, Boran, and Rendille Caes. African Studies Review 44(3): 1-25.

-----. 1997. Pastoralism: Governance and Development Issues. Annual Review of Anthropology 26: 235-261.

Fratkin, Elliot and Robin Mearns. 2003. Sustainability and Pastoral Livelihoods: Lessons from East African Maasai and Mongolia. Human Organization 62(2).

Gadd, Michelle. 2005. Conservation outside of parks: attitudes of local people in Laikipia, Kenya. Environmental Conservation 32: 50-63.

Galaty, John G. "Chapter Three: Maasai Expansion & the New East African Pastoralism.*" *Found in* Spear, Thomas and Richard Waller, eds. 1993. *Being Maasai: Ethnicity And Identity In East Africa*. London: Ohio University Press.

Galvin, Kathleen A. 2009. Transitions: Pastoralists Living with Change. Annual Review of Anthropology 38: 185-198.

Georgiadis, Nicholas J. 2007a. Savanna herbivore dynamics in a livestock-dominated landscape: I. Dependence on land use, rainfall, density, and time. Biological Conservation 137: 461-372.

-----. 2007b. Savanna herbivore dynamics in a livestock-dominated landscape. II: Ecological, conservation, and management implications of predator restoration. Biological Conservation 137: 473-383.

Gibson, C. C., McKean, M. A. and Ostrom, E. 2000. "Explaining Deforestation: The Role of Local Institutions." *Found In*: Gibson, C. C., McKean, M. A. and Ostrom, E. (eds). *People and Forests: Communities, Institutions and Governance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goldman, Mara. 2007. Tracking wildebeest, locating knowledge: Maasai and conservation biology understandings of wildebeest behavior in Northern Tanzania. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 25: 307-331.

-----. 2003. Partitioned Nature, Privileged Knowledge: Community-based Conservation in Tanzania. Development and Change 34(5): 833-862.

Goldman, Michael. 2005. *Imperial Nature: The World Bank and Struggles for Social Justice in the Age of Globalization*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Hardin, Garrett. 1968. The Tragedy of the Commons. Science 162: 1243-1248.

Hardin, Rebecca. 2011a. Concessionary Politics: Property, Patronage, and Political Rivalry in Central African Forest Management. Current Anthropology 52 (3), Supplement, S113-S125: online at http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/658168.

-----. 2011b. Collective Contradictions of "Corporate" Conservation. FOCAAL: European Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology. June issue.

-----. 2010. "A View from a Death in the Morning: Teaching Sustainability in Kenya." Found in: African Studies Center, ed. *Alliances* 3: 1-16.

Hingston, R.W.G. 1931. Proposed British National Parks for Africa. The Geographical Journal. 77(5).

Hodgson, Dorothy L. 2002. Introduction: Comparative Perspectives on the Indigenous Rights Movement in Africa and the Americas. American Anthropologist 104 (4): 1037-1049.

Honey, Martha. 2009. Community Conservation and Early Ecotourism: Experiments in Kenya. Environment 51(1).

Hulme, D. and M. Murphree, Eds. 2001. *African Wildlife and Livelihoods: The Promise and Performance of Community Conservation*. Cape Town: David Philip.

Hurst, A. 2003. State forestry and spatial scale in the development discourses of post-colonial Tanzania: 1961-1971. The Geographic Journal 169(4): 358-369.

Ingold, Tim. 2000. *Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. New York: Routledge.

Jones, N.S. Carey. 1965. The Decolonization of the White Highlands of Kenya. The Geographical Journal 131(2): 186-201.

Jones, Samantha. 2006. A Political Ecology of Wildlife Conservation in Africa. Review of African Political Economy 33(109): 483-495.

Kaimowitz, David and Douglas Sheil. 2007. Conserving What and for Whom? Why Conservation Should Help Meet Basic Human Needs in the Tropics. Biotropica 39(5): 567-574.

Kantai, Parselelo. 2007. In the Grip of the Vampire State: Maasai Land Struggles in Kenyan Politics. Journal of Eastern African Studies 1(1): 107-122.

Kideghesho, Jafari R., et al. 2007. Factors influencing conservation attitudes of local people in Western Serengeti, Tanzania. Biodiversity Conservation 16: 2213-2230.

Kirsch, Stuart. 1996. Regional Dynamics and Conservation in Papua New Guinea: The Lakekamu River Basin Project. The Contemporary Pacific 9(1): 97–121.

Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF). 2010. "Laikipia District." *Laikipia Wildlife Forum*. <http://www.laikipia.org/>

Lamprey, Richard H. and Robin S. Reid. 2004. Expansion of human settlement in Kenya's Maasai Mara: what future for pastoralism and wildlife? Journal of Biogeography 31: 997-1032.

Lesogorol, Carolyn K. 2003. Transforming Institutions among Pastoralists: Inequality and Land Privatization. American Anthropologist 105(3): 531-542.

Levi, Jerome M. and Biorn Maybury-Lewis. 2010. Becoming Indigenous: Identity and Heterogeneity in a Global Movement. Produced for World Bank; attributable only to authors. Presented to United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Low, Belinda, et al. 2009. Partnering with local communities to identify conservation priorities for endangered Grevy's zebra. Biological Conservation 142: 1548-1555.

Lowe, Celia. 2006. *Wild Profusion: Biodiversity Conservation in an Indonesian Archipelago*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Mackenzie, A. Fiona D. 2000. Contested Ground: Colonial Narratives and the Kenyan Environment, 1920-1945. Journal of Southern African Studies 26(4).

McCabe, J. Terrence. 2003. Sustainability and Livelihood Diversification among the Maasai of Northern Tanzania. Human Organization 62(2).

-----. 1990. Turkana Pastoralism: A Case Against the Tragedy of the Commons. Human Ecology 18(1).

McDaniel, J. 2002. Confronting the Structure of International Development: Political Agency and the Chiquitanos of Bolivia. Human Ecology 30(3): 369-396.

McGovern, Michael. 2005. *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Mitchell, Timothy. 2002. *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Morgan, W.T.W. 1963. The 'White Highlands' of Kenya. The Geographical Journal 129(2): 140-155.

Morton, John F. 2007. The Impact of Climate Change on Smallholder and Subsistence Agriculture. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America 104(50): 19680-19685.

Neumann, Roderick P. 1998. *Imposed Wilderness: Struggles over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Odadi, Wilfred O., et al. 2010. African wild ungulates compete with or facilitate cattle depending on season. Nature Precedings.

Odadi, Wilfred O., et al. 2009. Behavioural responses of cattle to shared foraging with wild herbivores in an East African rangeland. Applied Animal Behaviour Science 116: 120-125.

Okello, M. 2005. An assessment of the large mammal component of the proposed wildlife sanctuary site in Maasai Kuku Group Ranch near Amboseli, Kenya. South African Journal of Wildlife Research 35(1): 63-76.

Okello, M.M. and J.W. Kiringe. 2004. Threats to Biodiversity and their Implications in Protected and Adjacent Dispersal Areas of Kenya. Journal of Sustainable Tourism 12(1).

Orlove, Benjamin S. and Stephen B. Brush. 1996. Anthropology and the Conservation of Biodiversity. Annual Review of Anthropology 25: 329-252.

Ostrom, E. 2007. A diagnostic approach for going beyond panaceas. PNAS 104: 15181-15187.

-----. 1990. *Governing the commons: The evolution of institutions for collective action*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ovuka, Mira and Sven Lingqvist. 2000. Rainfall Variability in Murang'a District, Kenya: Meteorological Data and Farmers' Perception. Geografiska Annaler 82 A(1): 107-119.

Parpart, Jane L. and Henry Veltmeyer. 2004. The Development Project in Theory and Practice: A Review of its Shifting Dynamics. Canadian Journal of Development Studies 25(1): 39-59.

Perfecto, Ivette, et al. 2009. *Nature's Matrix: Linking Agriculture, Conservation and Food Sovereignty*. London: Earthscan.

Persha, Lauren, et al. 2011. Social and Ecological Synergy: Local Rulemaking, Forest Livelihoods, and Biodiversity Conservation. Science 331.

Peterson, Richard, et al. 2008. Seeing (and Doing) Conservation Through Cultural Lenses. Environmental Management.

Raffles, Hugh. 2002a. *In Amazonia: A Natural History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

-----. 2002b. Intimate Knowledge. UNESCO.

Remis, Melissa J. and Rebecca Hardin. 2009. Transvalued Species in an African Forest. Conservation Biology.

Robinson, J.G., and K.H. Redford. 2004. "Jack of all trades, master of none: Inherent contradictions among ICD approaches." *Found in* Chapter 1 of McShane, T. and M.P. Wells, eds. *Getting Biodiversity Projects to Work*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Rono, Joseph Kipkemboi. 2002. The impact of the structural adjustment programmes on Kenyan society. Journal of Social Development in Africa 17(1).

Rubenstein, Daniel I. 2010. Ecology, Social Behavior, and Conservation in Zebras. Advances in the Study of Behavior 42: 231-258.

Sadoul, Numa; trans. Michel Didier from French, copied. Kim Thompson. 2003. "Interview - Hergé: Extracts from *Entretiens avec Hergé.*" *The Comics Journal* 1 (250): 180–205.

Schmidt-Soltau, Kai. 2009. Is the Displacement of People from Parks only 'Purported', or is it Real? Conservation and Society 7(1): 46-55.

Schwartzman, S., A. Moreira, and D. Nepsted. 2000. Rethinking tropical forest conservation: perils in parks. Conservation Biology 14(5): 1351-1357.

Seno, Simon K. and W.W. Shaw. 2002. Land Tenure Policies, Maasai Traditions, and Wildlife Conservation in Kenya. Society & Natural Resources 15(1): 79-88.

Serbe, Gunnar M. 2003. Pastoral Ecosystems and the Issue of Scale. Ambio 32(2): 113-117.

Sortland, Thor Erik. 2009. Pastoralism in Transformation: Conflict and Displacement in Northern Kenya. University of Bergen.

Spear, Thomas. "Part 1: Introduction." *Found in* Spear, Thomas and Richard Waller, eds. 1993. *Being Maasai: Ethnicity And Identity In East Africa*. London: Ohio University Press.

Steinhart, Edward I. 2006. *Black Poachers, White Hunters: A Social History of Hunting in Colonial Kenya*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Stoler, Ann L. 2008. Imperial Debris: Reflections on Ruins and Ruination. Cultural Anthropology 23(2): 191-219.

Sundaresan and Riginos. 2010. Lessons Learned from Biodiversity Conservation in the Private Lands of Laikipia, Kenya. Great Plains Research 20: 17-27.

Sunderlin, W. D., A. Angelsen, et al. 2005. Livelihoods, Forests, and Conservation in Developing Countries: An Overview. World Development 33(9): 1383-1402.

Sutton, J.E.G. "Chapter 2: Becoming Maasailand." *Found in* Spear, Thomas and Richard Waller, eds. 1993. *Being Maasai: Ethnicity And Identity In East Africa*. London: Ohio University Press.

Thomas, Lynn M. 2003. *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Tsing, Anna L. 2004. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Turnbell, David. 2000. *Masons, Tricksters and Cartographers: Comparative Studies in the Sociology of Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic.

Waller, Richard. "Part Five: Conclusions." *Found in* Spear, Thomas and Richard Waller, eds. 1993. *Being Maasai: Ethnicity And Identity In East Africa*. London: Ohio University Press.

-----. 1976. The Maasai and the British 1895-1905: The Origins of an Alliance. The Journal of African History 17(4): 529-553.

Walley, Christine J. 2004. *Rough Waters: Nature and Development in an East African Marine Park.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Wambuguh, Oscar. 2007. Interactions between Humans and Wildlife: Landowner Experiences Regarding Wildlife Damage, Ownership and Benefits in Laikipia District, Kenya. Conservation and Society 5(3): 408-428.

Warren, Andrew. 1995. Changing understandings of African pastoralism and the nature of environmental paradigms. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers 20: 193-203.

West, Paige. 2005. Translation, Value, and Space: Theorizing an Ethnographic and Engaged Environmental Anthropology. American Anthropologist 107(4): 632-642.

Western, David, et al. 2009. The Status of Wildlife in Protected Areas Compared to Non-Protected Areas of Kenya. PLoS ONE 4(7).

Woodroffe, Rosie, et al. 2005. Livestock predation by endangered African wild dogs (*Lycaon pictus*) in northern Kenya. Biological Conservation 124(2): 225-234.

Young, Truman P. 2009. "Mpala Memories Part II: The Reconnaissance, Report, and Establishment," *Mpala Memos, October 2009*.